

"Silk is a beautiful fabric. Do you know how it's made?"

"Silk comes from the silkworm. Its cocoon is made of silk fiber."

Circle the boldfaced word that means "it is." Underline the boldfaced word that shows ownership.

Its and **it's** sound the same but are spelled differently and have different meanings. **Its** is a possessive pronoun; it means "belonging to it." **It's** is a contraction made from the words *it is* or *it has*.

See Handbook Section 30

Part 1

Circle the word in parentheses that correctly completes each sentence. (1–15)

Silk fabric is prized for (its/it's) luster. (Its/It's) one of the most luxurious fabrics made.

The silkworm is a kind of caterpillar. Like all caterpillars, the silkworm spins itself into a cocoon during one part of (its/it's) life cycle. (Its/It's) cocoon is made out of one long thread. To make silk, a person steams a cocoon, unwinds (its/it's) thread, and weaves it with other silk threads.

(Its/It's) well known that mulberry tree leaves are the favorite food of silkworms. The *Bombyx mori* species is the most common source of silk. (Its/It's) diet consists almost entirely of mulberry leaves. (Its/It's) important for silk producers to cultivate healthy mulberry trees. In the first few weeks of (its/it's) life, the silkworm does almost nothing but eat. During those weeks, the silkworm grows to about seventy times (its/it's) original size and increases (its/it's) weight ten thousand times. Most silkworms are cultivated in China. (Its/It's) the biggest producer of raw silk in the world. According to legend, a Chinese empress discovered silk around 2700 B.C. by accidentally dropping a silk cocoon in hot water and unwinding (its/it's) single thread. Because silk was so valuable, the people of China kept (its/it's) origin a secret as long as they were able.

Two thousand years ago, silk became an important product in the Middle East and Europe. Until the third century A.D., only people in China and India knew how to make silk. Then, four women took the secret to Japan. In A.D. 552, two monks smuggled silkworm eggs and mulberry seeds out of China. (Its/It's) not surprising that other countries soon developed silk industries.