

Understanding ideas ▼

- 1 Look at the pictures and talk about what you know about the Zhuang and Yao ethnic groups.



Zhuang people



Yao people

- 2 Read the passage and find out what problems the local people solved by working with nature.

1 Imagine mountains wrapped in silver water, shining in the spring sun. Summer sees the mountains turn bright green with growing rice. During autumn, these same mountains are gold, and in winter they are covered in sheets of white frost. These are the colours of the Longji Rice Terraces.

- 2 These terraces were built by the local Zhuang and Yao people, to whom Guangxi is home. Starting in the Yuan Dynasty, work on the terraces took hundreds of years, until its completion in the early Qing Dynasty. Reaching as

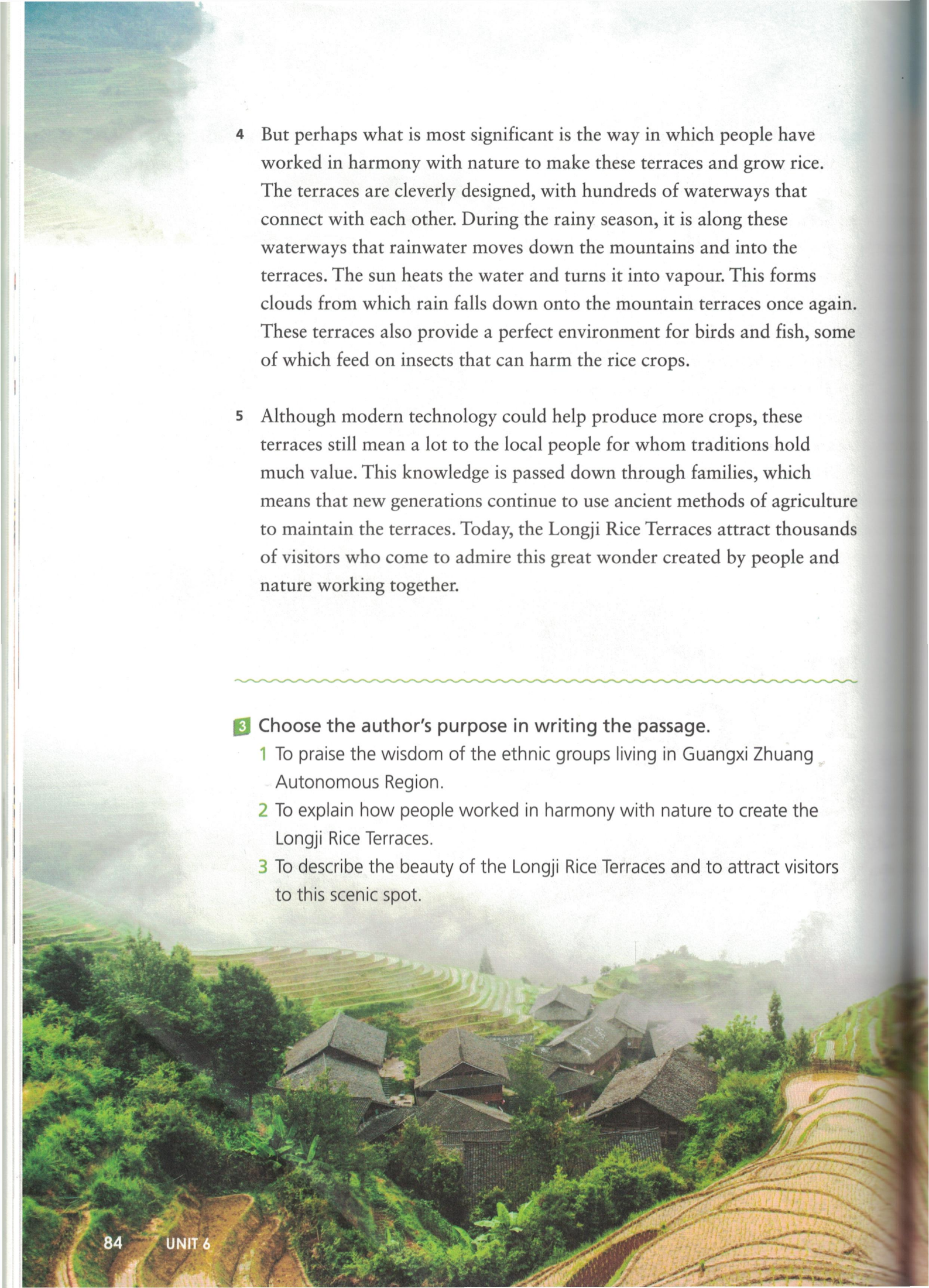
Longji



far as the eye can see, these terraces cover tall mountains, often from the bottom to the very top.

- 3 So why did these people go to so much trouble to turn the entire mountains into terraces? Firstly, there are few large, flat areas of land in the region. Building the terraces therefore meant that they could increase the areas in which they could grow rice. Secondly, although the region has plenty of rain, the mountains are steep and the soil is shallow. The flat terraces catch the rainwater and prevent the soil from being washed away.

Rice Terraces

- 
- 4 But perhaps what is most significant is the way in which people have worked in harmony with nature to make these terraces and grow rice. The terraces are cleverly designed, with hundreds of waterways that connect with each other. During the rainy season, it is along these waterways that rainwater moves down the mountains and into the terraces. The sun heats the water and turns it into vapour. This forms clouds from which rain falls down onto the mountain terraces once again. These terraces also provide a perfect environment for birds and fish, some of which feed on insects that can harm the rice crops.
- 5 Although modern technology could help produce more crops, these terraces still mean a lot to the local people for whom traditions hold much value. This knowledge is passed down through families, which means that new generations continue to use ancient methods of agriculture to maintain the terraces. Today, the Longji Rice Terraces attract thousands of visitors who come to admire this great wonder created by people and nature working together.

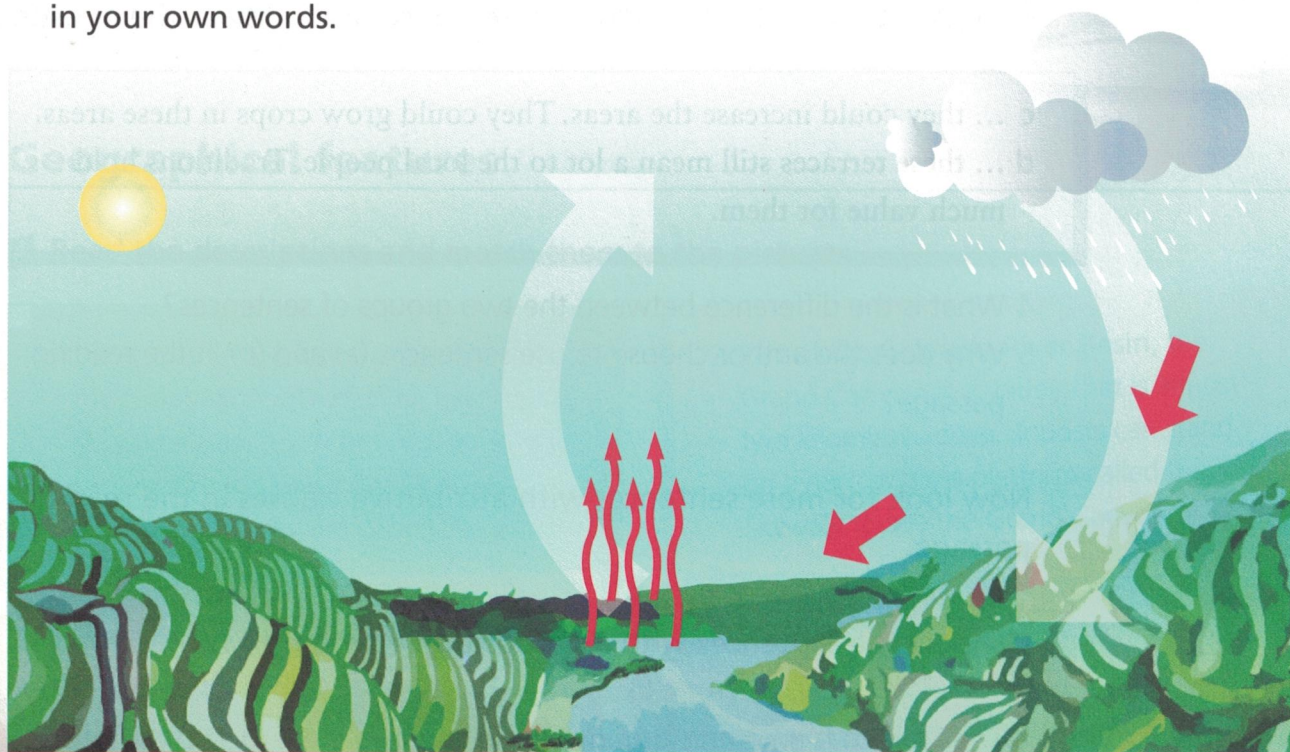
3 Choose the author's purpose in writing the passage.

- 1 To praise the wisdom of the ethnic groups living in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.
- 2 To explain how people worked in harmony with nature to create the Longji Rice Terraces.
- 3 To describe the beauty of the Longji Rice Terraces and to attract visitors to this scenic spot.

4 Read the summary of the passage and correct four factual mistakes.

The Longji Rice Terraces were built by the local Zhuang ethnic group alone. Though there are many large, flat areas in the region, they built terraces on the mountains to have more areas to grow rice. The terraces are cleverly designed, and can wash away the shallow soil. There are hundreds of waterways, along which rainwater moves down the mountains and into the terraces. Today, local people use modern methods to maintain the terraces, and they attract lots of visitors from all over the country.

5 Work in pairs. Read the passage again and find out the working principle of the Longji Rice Terraces. Then use the picture to retell it in your own words.



- 1 Why do the local people still keep their traditional way of growing rice?
- 2 In what other ways do people live in harmony with nature? Give examples.

Think & Share