

Name: _____

Chew on These Bubble Gum Facts!

By Lydia Lukidis

Here is a riddle for you. What tastes good, is fun to chew, but can't be swallowed? You guessed it, bubble gum! People love to chew gum. In fact, people around the world have been chewing gum for thousands of years. But have you ever wondered how gum is made?



You may not believe this, but gum comes from trees. Ancient Greeks chewed something called resin. They got it from the bark of mastic trees. Ancient Mayans, who lived in South America, used something different. They chewed chicle. Chicle is very rubbery. It is made from the sap of the sapodilla tree. The indigenous people of North America chewed the sap from spruce trees.

In 1871, the chemist Thomas Adams created chewing gum made out of chicle. He manufactured it. That means he used machines to make a lot of gum. Then he sold it to many people. The good thing about chicle was that it did not melt when you chewed it. Instead, it got softer the more it was chewed.

Chicle was used to make gum for many years. Then in 1928, Walter Diemer invented modern bubble gum. The first bubble gum was pink. Diemer called it "Dubble Bubble." Today, pink is still the most popular color for bubble gum. But chicle is no longer needed to make gum. Chemists figured out ways to create artificial gum. Everything could be made in a lab. Chemists discovered other things too. For example, they figured out how to make the gum's taste last longer. That made people happy!

But people who chew gum need to remember something. Gum is not meant to be

swallowed. When we eat food, it is digested in our bodies. That keeps us healthy. However, our bodies cannot digest gum. Some people believe the gum sticks together in our stomach and blocks everything. Others even believe that gum stays there for seven years. This is not true. If you swallow gum, it will just come out when you go to the bathroom.

There are many ingredients in today's bubble gum. There is sugar, corn syrup, softeners, flavoring, and latex. The latex makes the gum stretch. That way, you can blow bubbles.

Speaking of bubbles, do you know who blew the biggest bubble in the world? According to the Guinness Book of World Records, Chad Fell from the United States did. In 2004, he blew a bubble 20 inches wide and he didn't even use his hands! That's pretty impressive. You can also practice blowing big bubbles. But be prepared to get some gum sticking to your face once the bubble pops!

About the Author



Lydia Lukidis is a published children's author with a multi-disciplinary background that spans the fields of literature, theater, and puppetry.

Lydia's picture book, *Gerbs in the House: The Dilly Dally Bedtime Routine*, is now available. Find out if Mocha will ever get his silly son to sleep!

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1. According to the information you read in the article, which statement is true about bubble gum?
 - a. Gum was first invented by Thomas Adams in 1871.
 - b. Walter Diemer called his modern day bubble gum, "Hubba Bubba."
 - c. People in ancient times, such as the Greeks and the Mayans, chewed different types of tree sap as a form of gum.
 - d. Modern day bubble gum only has one or two ingredients in it.

2. Is chicle still used to make bubble gum? Why or why not?

3. Based on the information in the article, what did Chad Fell do?
 - a. He made bubble gum out of resin.
 - b. He manufactured chewing gum made out of chicle.
 - c. He invented modern bubble gum in a lab.
 - d. He blew a 20 inch bubble in 2004.

4. A myth is a popular belief that isn't true. What are two myths about bubble gum that some people believe?
 1. _____
 2. _____

5. What ingredient in modern day bubble gum makes it stretch? _____

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Match each vocabulary word from the reading passage with the correct definition.

_____ 1. impressive

a. a copy or replica of something that occurs naturally

_____ 2. resin

b. food items that you combine to make a specific dish

_____ 3. indigenous

c. awesome; worthy of admiration

_____ 4. chemist

d. a question or statement that is posed in such a way that requires it to be solved

_____ 5. artificial

e. cause food or drink to pass down the throat

_____ 6. manufactured

f. native; originating from a particular place

_____ 7. ingredients

g. the body's way of breaking down food so it can be used to supply nutrients and energy

_____ 8. riddle

h. a sticky substance that comes from trees and plants

_____ 9. digest

i. chemical researcher; expert in chemistry

_____ 10. swallow

j. make a large quantity of something using machinery

ANSWER KEY

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1. According to the information you read in the article, which statement is true about bubble gum? **c**
 - a. Gum was first invented by Thomas Adams in 1871.
 - b. Walter Diemer called his modern day bubble gum, "Hubba Bubba."
 - c. People in ancient times, such as the Greeks and the Mayans, chewed different types of tree sap as a form of gum.**
 - d. Modern day bubble gum only has one or two ingredients in it.
2. Is chicle still used to make bubble gum? Why or why not?
Chicle is not used to make bubble gum anymore because chemists now make artificial gum in labs. The ingredients in modern day bubble gum help the flavor to last longer.
3. Based on the information in the article, what did Chad Fell do? **d**
 - a. He made bubble gum out of resin.
 - b. He manufactured chewing gum made out of chicle.
 - c. He invented modern bubble gum in a lab.
 - d. He blew a 20 inch bubble in 2004.**
4. A myth is a popular belief that isn't true. What are two myths about bubble gum that some people believe?
 1. **If you swallow bubble gum, it will block everything in your stomach.**
 2. **If you swallow bubble gum, it will stay inside you for seven years.**
5. What ingredient in modern day bubble gum makes it stretch? **latex**

ANSWER KEY

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- | | | | |
|----------|-----------------|-----------|---|
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