

Gum

Pre-Reading

A. Warm-Up Questions

1. Do you like to chew gum?
If so, what is your favorite kind of gum?
2. Do you ever chew bubble gum?
Can you blow bubbles with bubble gum?
3. What do you think chewing gum is made from?
4. When do you think people
first started chewing gum?
5. When do you think gum was
first sold in vending machines?



B. Vocabulary Preview

Match up as many words and meanings as you can.

Check this exercise again after seeing the words in context on page 2.

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| _____ 1. sap | a) the outer covering of a tree |
| _____ 2. catalyst | b) selling |
| _____ 3. artificial | c) a sticky, black substance |
| _____ 4. elastic | d) a person who comes to live in a newly developed country |
| _____ 5. bark | e) to lessen or remove pain or discomfort |
| _____ 6. tar | f) something that causes change |
| _____ 7. prehistoric | g) the liquid from a plant or tree |
| _____ 8. relieve | h) a thin layer or covering |
| _____ 9. invent | i) able to stretch easily and return to normal shape |
| _____ 10. coating | j) before history was written down |
| _____ 11. settler | k) not natural |
| _____ 12. vending | l) to create or make something new |

Reading

1. Chewing gum is made from a gum base. In the past, the gum base was usually the **sap** or resin from trees. Today, the base consists of man-made polymers. A polymer is formed when many units of a simple chemical are repeated and then joined together using heat, pressure, or some kind of **catalyst**.
2. To make the gum sweet and chewy, natural or **artificial** sugars, vegetable oil, and flavorings are added. The warmth of a person's mouth makes the hard piece of gum soft and chewy. The base of bubble gum is more **elastic** than regular gum, and that is why people can blow large bubbles with it.
3. Chewing gum has been around for thousands of years. Stone Age people chewed birch **bark** tar, which forms when the bark is heated. Scientists have found **prehistoric** samples of this **tar** with human teeth marks in them. Because most of these marks are small, they think that the tar was chewed mainly by children and teenagers. They may have chewed it to **relieve** a sore throat, to make their mouths feel fresher, or simply because it tasted good.
4. The ancient Maya Indians of Mexico chewed chicle, which is the sap of the sapodilla tree. Natural chicle was the basis of Chiclets gum, which was invented by American Henry Fler in 1906. Fler added a sugar **coating** to the chicle to make it taste better.
5. The history of chewing gum in North America began with the native people, who chewed the sap of spruce trees. **Settlers** learned the habit from them. From about 1850 to 1930, several American inventors worked to improve the quality and flavor of gum.
6. In 1871, Thomas Adams **invented** a machine that would make gum, and in 1888, in New York City, gum was sold for the first time in a **vending** machine. Today, people all over the world chew gum.

Fun Fact

Many people chew gum on planes to get their ears to "pop." It is not the chewing action that pops the ears. The extra saliva production forces a person to swallow more. This opens a tube that balances the pressure inside and outside the eardrum.

Comprehension

A. True or False?

Read the statements below.

If the statement is true, write T beside the sentence.

If it is false, write F and correct the information.

- _____ 1. Chewing gum is a recent invention.
- _____ 2. The Maya Indians chewed birch bark tar.
- _____ 3. The Chiclets brand of gum was invented by Thomas Adams.
- _____ 4. It is easier to blow bubbles with bubble gum because it has more sugar in it.
- _____ 5. Chiclets were first made from the sap of the sapodilla tree.

B. Ask and Answer

Practice asking and answering the following questions with your partner.

Then write your answers in complete sentences in your notebook.

- 1. How has the base of chewing gum changed over the years?
- 2. What other ingredients are now in chewing gum? Why are these added?
- 3. How does a hard piece of gum become soft and chewy?
- 4. What evidence have scientists found that shows that Stone Age people chewed gum?
- 5. What is chicle?
- 6. Why did Henry Fleer add a sugar coating to the gum base in Chiclets?
- 7. When and where was gum first sold in a vending machine?

Vocabulary Review

Complete the sentences using vocabulary from page 1.

You may need to change the word forms.

1. Susan always forgets to water her plants, so they always die.
She should buy some _____ ones instead.
2. I'm hungry. I'm going to get a hot dog from the _____ cart down the street.
3. She has a terrible headache. She should take some aspirin to _____ the pain.
4. Many new _____ came to the United States looking for religious freedom.
5. It is easier to dress little children in pants with _____ waistbands rather than with zippers and buttons.
6. Many people like to eat maple syrup on pancakes.
Maple syrup comes from the _____ of maple trees.

Discussion

1. Why do you think people like to chew gum?
2. Do you think that students should be allowed to chew gum in school? Why or why not?
3. Does it bother you if someone is chewing gum near you?
4. What do you think are the most popular flavors and brands of gum in your country?
5. Some people think that chewing gum helps them to lose weight. Do you think this is true? Why or why not?