

That Goo You Chew

by Linda Schneider

GUM! Lots of people love it. But hardly anybody knows where it comes from. Like, who first discovered it? Could it have been . . . animals?

The Original Gummy Bears?

North American Indians showed European settlers how to chew gum. But how did the Indians find out about it? Maybe from watching bears.

Bears sometimes scrape away the bark of spruce trees with their strong claws. Then they may pucker up, tugging at the sticky goo that oozes out and stuffing it into their mouths. No one knows if that gave the Indians the idea to try it. But somehow or another, they got stuck on gum too.

Tropical Gum Tree

The Mayan Indians found gum growing in the jungles of Central America—inside sapodilla trees. The tree has a stretchy sap, called *chicle*.

④ The Mayans began chewing clumps of the hardened sap. Chewing on chicle made their mouths water. So it was a juicy treat for dry throats. The Mayans called the chewy chicle *cha*—the sound it made when chomped.

The Name Game

The first time you could buy chewing gum made in the United States was in 1848. It was called State of Maine Pure Spruce Gum. Black Jack was the first flavored gum. It tasted like licorice. The first candy-coated gum was called Chiclets (made with chicle, of course). Blibber-Blubber was the first bubble gum made, but was never sold because it was too sticky. Dubble Bubble came next and was a big hit.

What a Stretch

What makes gum so . . . well, gummy? It's the sticky, stretchy stuff in it, called latex (LAY-tex). The latex holds everything together, even when it's pounded or pulled.

Bubble gum is stronger and stretchier than regular chewing gum. So when you blow your hot air into bubble gum, it expands—just as a balloon does.

Why Chew?

Since people—and even some animals—have found gummy stuff yummy for so long, there must be something to it. But what?

For one thing, chewing seems to be relaxing. So if you're the nervous type, maybe a stick of gum will help you feel calmer. It may also help some people cut back on bad habits, such as smoking or eating too much. And chewing helps others stay alert when they're feeling tired.

Mostly, gum is neither especially bad nor especially good for you. For example, it may help freshen breath and clean teeth. But it doesn't beat a good, old-fashioned brushing and flossing. And it sure doesn't do any good on the bottom of someone's shoe. So always be sure to get rid of it right!

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1. What is this selection *mainly* about?
 - A why Indians chewed gum
 - B how bears discovered gum
 - C the history of chewing gum
 - D the different kinds of gum

2. According to the selection, which was the first bubble gum ever made?
 - A Black Jack
 - B Blibber-Blubber
 - C Chiclets
 - D Dubble Bubble

3. How is bubble gum different from regular chewing gum?
 - A Its flavor lasts longer.
 - B It is stickier and gummier.
 - C It can make a person alert.
 - D It is stronger and stretchier.

4. The fourth paragraph says *cha* is the sound gum “made when chomped.” Which word means the same as *chomped*?
 - A broken
 - B chewed
 - C hardened
 - D swallowed

5. The selection says that sticky, stretchy stuff in gum is called “latex (LAY-tex).” What does the information in parentheses tell the reader?
 - A a different word for latex
 - B the spelling of latex
 - C the meaning of latex
 - D how to pronounce latex

6. Which question asks for more information than is given in this selection?
 - A About how many people chew gum in the United States?
 - B Who were the first people to chew gum?
 - C What makes gum sticky and stretchy?
 - D Why do some people like to chew gum?

7. Why are titles such as “The Original Gummy Bears” and “What a Stretch” used?
- A to introduce the topic of the section in a funny way
 - B to describe a scientific experiment
 - C to introduce the topic of the section in a serious way
 - D to explain the author’s opinion

End of Set

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EOG Grade 4 Reading Sample Items

Selection Title	Question Number	Correct Answer	Thinking Skill	Objective Number
That Goo You Chew	1	C	Analyzing	2.05
That Goo You Chew	2	B	Knowledge	2.04
That Goo You Chew	3	D	Analyzing	2.05
That Goo You Chew	4	B	Analyzing	1.03
That Goo You Chew	5	D	Knowledge	2.01
That Goo You Chew	6	A	Analyzing	2.02
That Goo You Chew	7	A	Analyzing	2.04