

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# A POP!-ULAR INVENTION

by Kelly Hashway



Did you know that the invention of chewing gum was an accident? People have been chewing gum-like substances since the early times. Some were made from thickened resin, a substance that comes from plants. Others were made from grains and waxes. But chewing gum, as we know it today, was invented by mistake in 1870 when Thomas Adams, a photographer, became friends with a Mexican military general, Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna.

After Santa Anna defeated the Texans at the Alamo, he was exiled from Mexico. Santa Anna stayed with Thomas Adams in New York and introduced him to a gummy substance people in Mexico liked to chew called chicle. Chicle was the milky sap from sapodilla trees that grew in the tropical rain forests in Central America.

Adams wanted to use the chicle to invent a cheaper substitute for rubber. He tried to make all sorts of items out of chicle, including toys and rubber boots, but each of his experiments failed.

One day, while he was contemplating his failures, he remembered that people in Mexico chewed chicle. Curious, he popped a piece of the chicle into his mouth and began to chew on it. Adams added licorice flavor to the chicle and opened the world's first chewing gum factory.

Much like Adams's discovery of chewing gum, the invention of bubble gum was also an accident. In 1928, Walter Diemer, an accountant for the Fleer Gum Company in Philadelphia, stumbled upon the invention while experimenting with new recipes for chewing gum. Diemer created a gum that was less sticky and more stretchy than regular chewing gum. Diemer learned he could blow bubbles with this new gum.

Accidents or not, chewing gum and bubble gum are two inventions that people across the globe pop over!



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1. What is chicle made from?

- a. rubber
- b. licorice
- c. tree sap
- d. tropical fruits

2. When Santa Anna defeated the Texans, he was exiled from Mexico. What does the word exiled mean?

- a. hidden from
- b. forced to leave
- c. called a hero
- d. retired

3. Put these events in sequential order.

Write 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, or 6th on each line.

\_\_\_\_\_ Adams becomes curious to find out what chicle tastes like, so he tries it.

\_\_\_\_\_ Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna comes to New York and stays with Thomas Adams.

\_\_\_\_\_ Adams tries to make toys and boots out of chicle.

\_\_\_\_\_ Santa Anna introduces Thomas Adams to chicle.

\_\_\_\_\_ Adams opened the first chewing gum factory in the world.

\_\_\_\_\_ Walter Diemer invents bubble gum.

4. Explain why the invention of chewing gum is considered an accident.

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# A POP!-ULAR INVENTION

## Vocabulary Activity

**Part 1:** Reread "A Pop!-ular Invention" by Kelly Hashway. As you read highlight the following vocabulary words in the story.

resin

exiled

tropical

contemplate

licorice

accountant

defeated

**Part 2:** Match each vocabulary word on the left with its definition on the right.

\_\_\_\_\_ 1. resin

a. to concentrate or engage in deep thought

\_\_\_\_\_ 2. exile

b. flavor from a plant used in food

\_\_\_\_\_ 3. tropical

c. to win a victory over

\_\_\_\_\_ 4. contemplate

d. warm climate with lots of rainfall

\_\_\_\_\_ 5. licorice

e. to force someone to leave

\_\_\_\_\_ 6. accountant

f. someone whose job it is to keep track of money for a business

\_\_\_\_\_ 7. defeat

g. clear, yellowish, or brownish substance that oozes from certain trees; sap

**Part 3:** Use a vocabulary word from the list to complete each sentence.

8. Henry didn't like shoveling snow, so he moved to a place with a \_\_\_\_\_ climate.

9. If you would like a job as an \_\_\_\_\_, you should have excellent math skills.

10. The Buffalo Sabres hockey team will \_\_\_\_\_ the Boston Bruins.

11. The chess player sits quietly and tries to \_\_\_\_\_ his next move.

12. Black, \_\_\_\_\_-flavored gumdrops are my favorite.

# ANSWER KEY

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Write 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, or 6th on each line.  
  
**4th** Adams becomes curious to find out what chicle tastes like, so he tries it.  
  
**1st** Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna comes to New York and stays with Thomas Adams.  
  
**3rd** Adams tries to make toys and boots out of chicle.  
  
**2nd** Santa Anna introduces Thomas Adams to chicle.  
  
**5th** Adams opened the first chewing gum factory in the world.  
  
**6th** Walter Diemer invents bubble gum.
  
4. Explain why the invention of chewing gum is considered an accident.  
  
**Adams was trying to invent an artificial rubber substance when he tried chicle and realized it would make great gum.**

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