

The Story of BUBBLE GUM







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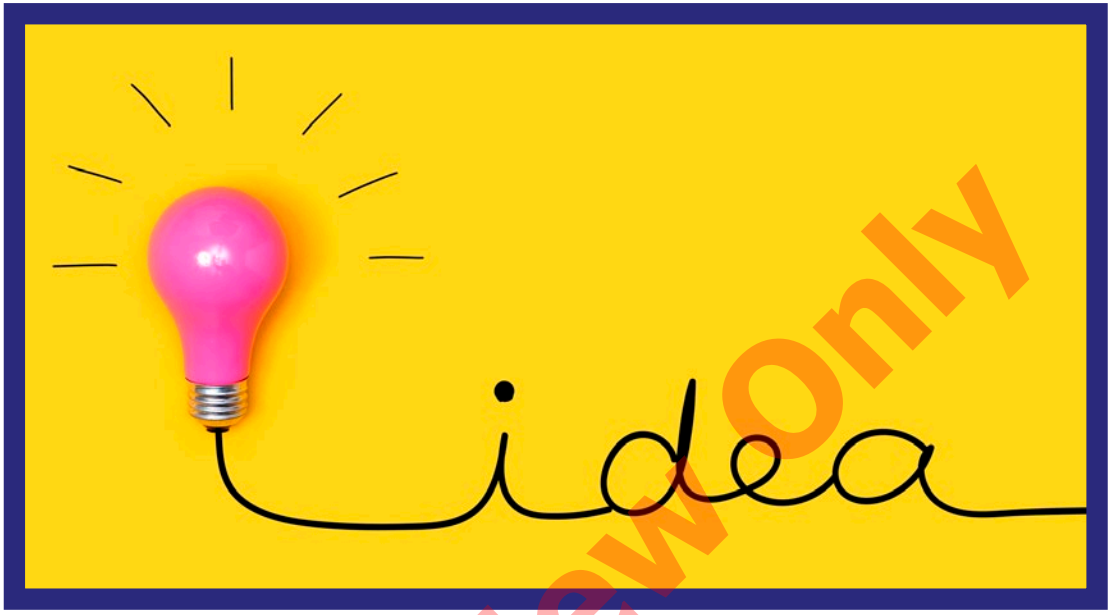
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Sticky Idea

Chewing gum and blowing big, pink bubbles is fun! But did you ever wonder how bubble gum is made? Who invented it? What makes it so chewy? And why is it pink?



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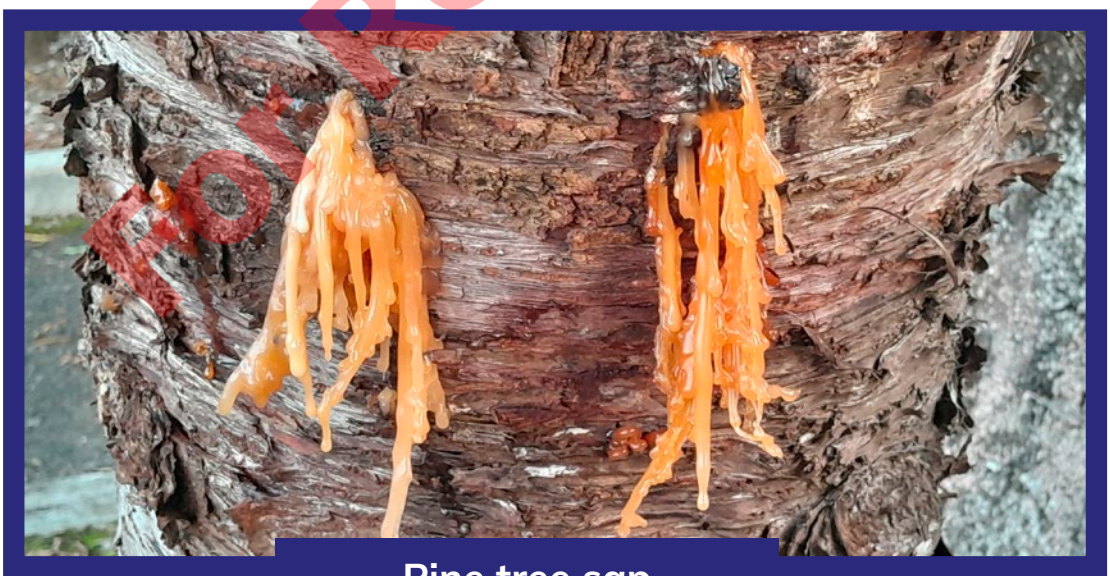


The story of bubble gum is about trying new things. We learn from mistakes, and we keep trying until we get it right. If we're lucky and work hard, our idea just might stick!

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Gum from Trees?

People have been chewing on sticky things for more than 9,000 years! **Aztec** people in South America used to chew **chicle**, which came from trees. Chicle means "sticky stuff." North American people chewed on soft birch bark and pine tree sap.



Pine tree sap

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In the 1850s, a man named John Curtis made a kind of chewing gum from wax and spruce tree **resin**. He also built the first gum factory in Portland, Maine.

This gum was not the sweet pink gum we enjoy today. It was brown and did not taste very good.

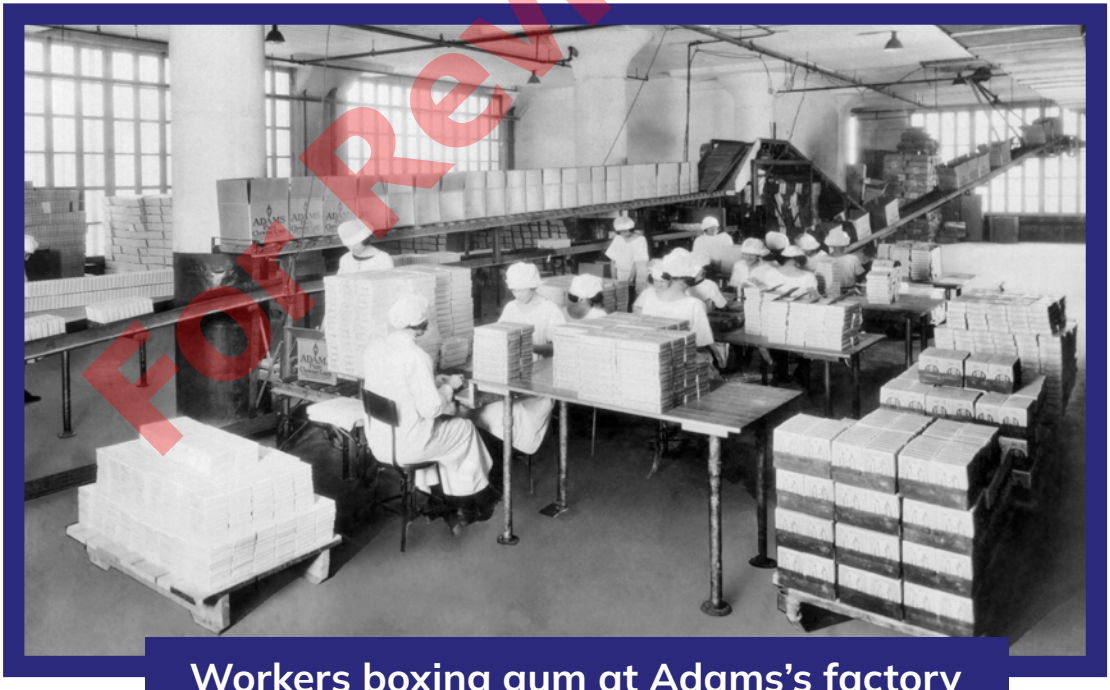


John Curtis

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Try, Try Again

Thomas Adams was an inventor who liked working with chicle. In the 1870s, he tried to make car tires out of it, but he couldn't get it right. He decided to try making chewing gum instead.



Workers boxing gum at Adams's factory

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His gum was softer than Curtis's gum. He also added flavors such as peppermint and **cloves**. It was a hit!

In 1906, another inventor named Frank Fleer tried to make a gum that would stay chewy longer. He called his gum "Blibber-Blubber." It was the first chewing gum made for blowing bubbles.



Making gum at Fleer's factory

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Fleer's bubble gum was good, but it still wasn't perfect. The gum was gray, and when the bubble popped, it stuck to your face!

A man named Walter Diemer worked for Fleer. In 1928, Diemer had an idea for a better bubble gum. He made some changes to the recipe. The new gum made it easier to blow bigger bubbles.

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Diemer thought his gum should have color, so he added the only **dye** he had—red. But the gum came out pink! He named it "Dubble Bubble."



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National Bubble Gum Day Activities

Did you know that the first Friday of every February is National Bubble Gum Day? It was started in 2006 by children's book author Ruth Spiro. On National Bubble Gum Day, kids can donate money to buy a piece of gum from their school. The money goes to a charity, and the kids get to chew gum in school without breaking the rules!

Here are some fun activities to help celebrate:

1. Hold a bubble blowing contest! Measure bubbles by (quickly) wrapping a string around them and then measuring the length of the string.
2. Try blowing a bubble after chewing bubble gum for 10 seconds. Then try blowing a bubble again after 5 minutes. What changed?
3. Make a list of new gum flavors. Who can come up with the wildest flavor idea?
4. Brainstorm ideas for reusing old gum. Could it replace the shingles on a roof?
5. Fill a glass jar with gumballs. Have your friends and family guess how many gumballs are in it. Give the winner a fun prize!



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