



Worksheet Set - Reading Comprehension Level 4

SKILLS COVERED:
Reading Comprehension
Word Meanings

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STORY 1

Did you ever hear the saying, "Money doesn't grow on trees?" If you were an ancient Aztec, it did. That is because the Aztec Indians of Mexico used the beans of the cacao tree as money. You probably know them better as cocoa beans. They are the same beans we use today to make chocolate.

While we do not use chocolate as money today, people continue to find uses for it. Some companies use chocolate to advertise. They order special candies with their company name stamped on them and hand them out to customers. Some artists use chocolate to make fancy sculptures. People have even invented chocolate perfume and chocolate soap!

What might be the most unusual way to use chocolate can be seen in New York, Paris and Tokyo. Every year, these cities hold a fashion show that gives new meaning to the phrase "eat it or wear it." People from all over the world come to see clothing and jewelry made from chocolate.

Chocolate may have even more uses. Scientists are currently studying the chemicals in chocolate. Some of these chemicals are good for your health. Some of the chemicals in chocolate help lower blood pressure. Others have been shown to help control coughs. There is even a chemical in the husks of cocoa beans that helps prevent tooth decay.

If you would rather eat chocolate than study it or wear it, you are not alone. People from all over the world enjoy chocolate. Of course, some people enjoy it more than others do. In Brazil, people eat a little over two pounds of chocolate per person per year. People in Switzerland and Austria consume ten times that much. It is estimated that people in those countries eat over twenty pounds of chocolate per person per year. Chocolate is such a big business that in the United States there are 995 companies that manufacture chocolate products.

1. Read the story and circle the correct answers.

1. The story of chocolate talks about several topics related to chocolate.

Which topic is NOT included in the story?

- a) Unusual Uses for Chocolate
- b) Transportation of Chocolate all over the World
- c) Chocolate Consumption around the World
- d) Medical Uses for Chocolate

2. How many times greater is the consumption of chocolate by people in Switzerland than by the people of Brazil?

- a) 995
- b) 2
- c) 10
- d) 20

3. Which statement is an opinion, NOT a fact?

- a) People in Brazil eat about two pounds of chocolate each per year.
- b) The most unusual way to use chocolate is by making chocolate clothing or jewelry.
- c) Some artists use chocolate to make sculptures.
- d) Some chemicals help lower high blood pressure.

4. What might be a reason why more and more people will buy chocolate in the future?

- a) They will try to make their country the biggest consumer of chocolate.
- b) They will want to eat it for its healthy benefits.
- c) They will want to make their own clothing to copy fashions from Paris.
- d) They will start to use it as money.

5. Why do you think we do not use cocoa beans as money today?

Choose the four most sensible answers.

- a) The beans would be too hard to carry if you wanted to buy something expensive.
- b) If you kept the beans too long they might start to go rotten.
- c) There are no more Aztecs to grow the cacao trees.
- d) People would grow their own cocoa beans instead of working to earn the money.
- e) Someone might decide to make some chocolate and the money would be gone.

Match each event (cause) with its effect.

Clothing is made out
of chocolate.

People go to unusual
fashion shows.

Chocolate is healthy.

People get free chocolate.

Chocolate is used
for advertising.

People eat it to lower
blood pressure.

Chocolate is a big business.

995 companies
make chocolate.



Worksheet - Reading Comprehension Level 4
STORY 1 - PLURALS

Type the singular form of each of these plural nouns.

cities _____

coughs _____

candies _____

chemicals _____

companies _____



Worksheet - Reading Comprehension Level 4
STORY 1 - PARTS OF SPEECH - NOUNS & VERBS

Circle NOUN or VERB to identify the part of speech
of each of these words as used in the story.

paragraph 4: coughs NOUN or VERB

paragraph 4: lower NOUN or VERB

paragraph 2: order NOUN or VERB

paragraph 3: show NOUN or VERB

paragraph 4: control NOUN or VERB

1. Read the story and circle the correct answers.

1. In paragraph 2 there are three pronouns.

Pick the NOUN to which this word refers:

"IT"

- a) chocolate
- b) people
- c) money

2. In paragraph 2 there are three pronouns.

Pick the NOUN to which this word refers:

"THEM"

- a) customers
- b) companies
- c) candies

3. In paragraph 2 there are three pronouns.

Pick the NOUN to which this word refers:

"THEY"

- a) chocolate
- b) companies
- c) candies

Complete each sentence with a word that is related
to the underlined word.

The underlined word and the word that fits
the blanks both have the same base word.

The first letter is given to help you start the word

1. The company gets so much business that the workers are
too b_____ to have a break.
2. At the end of a production line is a tasty p_____.
3. Prevention of tooth decay can p_____ big dental bills.
4. In this story, sculptures are s_____ out of chocolate.

Use each of these words just once to complete this story:
advertise, chemicals, husks, decay, estimated, manufacture

The sculptor who made the chocolate statue _____
the amount of cocoa beans he would need to buy. He took
off their _____ and put them into the the compost
pile where they would _____. He ground up the beans
into cocoa powder and added special _____ to the cocoa
to keep it from melting after he made the statue. It was hard to
_____ chocolate that does not melt in the heat.
The statue was used to _____ a new brand of ski boots.

STORY 2

How old is chewing gum? Thousands of years ago, ancient Greek people chewed bark from small shrubs. Scientists think the first chewing gum was made from tree sap. People used the gum to sweeten their breath and clean their teeth.

In South America, the Mayan people chewed on a tree sap called "chicle." Native American people chewed sap from spruce trees. Later, early settlers picked up the tree gum chewing habit.

In 1848, Bacon Curtis of Maine thought of selling gum in stores. He made his gum from spruce tree sap. He boiled some sap, took out bits of bark and sticks, and shaped it into a slab. He cut the slab into strips. Curtis dusted his gum strips with cornstarch, a powder made from dried corn. The cornstarch kept the gum strips from sticking together.

Curtis took his gum to some stores, and it was a big hit. By 1852, he had built the first chewing gum factory in the world. But spruce gum was hard to chew. It also tasted terrible! Curtis soon created another gum. It was made from paraffin, a candle wax. He added flavors to his waxy gum. He put in vanilla and licorice.

The gum that Curtis created gave another inventor an idea. Thomas Adams had been working with chicle, a sap from trees in South America. He was trying to use it to make rubber. He couldn't get it to work. One day, Adams saw someone chewing Curtis's gum. He thought chicle could be used to make gum. In 1869, he made some chicle into sticks. He wrapped them in colored paper and sold them to stores.

Early chewing gum sold well. Many people went into the chewing gum business. In 1891, William Wrigley, Jr. sold baking powder. He gave away two free sticks of gum as a bonus for buying his baking powder. His gum was more popular than the baking powder! He started working with the Zeno Gum Company. They made gum from paraffin. Wrigley got them to change to a chicle base. He created new flavors. He created Juicy Fruit and Spearmint.

Wrigley was a good salesman. He put up giant ads for his gum. He also gave away millions of free sticks of gum. By 1910, his Spearmint flavor was the most popular gum in the United States.

Today, gum comes in many different flavors and shapes. You can buy it in sticks, squares, or even shaped like eyeballs. There is gum without sugar and gum that won't stick to your teeth. Nowadays only a few gums are made with chicle. Gum bases are made in labs, not taken from nature.

Gum has come a long way since it was first made from tree sap.

1. Read the story and circle the correct answers.

1. Why do people chew gum today? Pick three.

- a) It has tasty flavors
- b) It is a habit
- c) It comes from nature
- d) It sweetens breath

2. Why did Bacon Curtis stop making spruce gum? Pick two.

- a) It tasted terrible
- b) It was hard to chew
- c) He wanted to use chicle instead
- d) He used cornstarch instead

3. Which three substances were used in the past as a base for chewing gum?

- a) paraffin wax
- b) spruce tree sap
- c) chicle from rubber trees
- d) vanilla

4. How did Thomas Adams and William Wrigley, Jr. make their gum products more popular? Pick three ways.

- a) Gum was dusted with baking powder
- b) Giant ads told people about the gum
- c) Gum was wrapped in colored paper
- d) Gum came in new flavors



Worksheet - Reading Comprehension Level 4
STORY 2 - TRUE or FALSE?

Read each sentence then circle TRUE or FALSE.

Mayan people chewed spruce tree sap.
TRUE / FALSE

Juicy Fruit became the most popular flavor.
TRUE / FALSE

Ancient Greeks chewed bark.
TRUE / FALSE

Curtis made gum with spearmint flavor.
TRUE / FALSE

Chicle can be used for candle wax.
TRUE / FALSE

Wrigley made gum with licorice flavor.
TRUE / FALSE

Thomas Adams tried to make rubber from chicle sap.
TRUE / FALSE

Bacon Curtis put baking powder on the sticks of gum.
TRUE / FALSE

Wrigley gave away free gum as a bonus.
TRUE / FALSE

Spruce sap was first formed into slabs, then cut into strips.
TRUE / FALSE



Worksheet - Reading Comprehension Level 4
STORY 2 - LANGUAGE, STYLE & VOCABULARY

1. Read the story and circle the correct answers.

1. Which word is NOT a compound word?

- a) cornstarch
- b) company
- c) salesman
- d) eyeballs

2. Two flavors in nature are licorice and spearmint.

Why is the word spearmint written with a capital letter in this report?

- a) It is the proper name of a specific product
- b) It stands out better that way
- c) Maybe licorice should have a capital too
- d) It is the name of Mr. Wrigley's company

3. Which word has long the long sound of u as in cute?

- a) rubber
- b) sugar
- c) squares
- d) bonus
- e) popular



Worksheet - Reading Comprehension Level 4
STORY 2 - WORD MEANINGS

Match the words with their meanings.

ancient	person who goes to live in a new country
habit	the usual way of doing something
settler	the main part of the part you start with
bonus	a wax used in candles
nowadays	a flat, thick piece of something
licorice	very old or from long ago
base	black root used for flavoring
paraffin	four-sided shape
square	at the present time
slab	reward or gift

Circle the correct form of the underlined verb.

1. The cornstarch kept the gum sticks from sticking together.
Nowadays you do not need cornstarch to
[keep / keeping / keep] the stick apart.
2. Curtis built the first chewing gum factory. He did not
[building / built / build] any other factories.
3. The store sold the new gum.
They kept [selling / sell / sold] more gum.



Worksheet - Reading Comprehension Level 4
STORY 2 - PARTS OF SPEECH - NOUNS & VERBS

Look at the underlined word in each sentence and then circle whether it is used as a NOUN or a VERB.

The sticks of gum are wrapped in paper. NOUN or VERB

People taste with their tongues. NOUN or VERB

The taste of gum can be sweet. NOUN or VERB

I will shape the gum into balls. NOUN or VERB

Sometimes gum sticks to your teeth. NOUN or VERB

The shape of gum is a square. NOUN or VERB

The biggest change in gum was its flavor. NOUN or VERB

Flavors can change the taste of gum. NOUN or VERB