

Everyday Items With a Dark History (C1)

A. WARM-UP QUESTIONS

- 1.What product from your daily life might have a hidden history?
- 2.Should companies apologize or pay for historical harm?
- 3.How can consumers avoid being part of exploitation?
- 4.When is a recall the right response?
- 5.Which everyday item today might look unethical in 50 years?

B. VOCABULARY PREVIEW

Match up as many words and meanings as you can. (Definitions are shuffled.)

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| ___ 1. legacy | a. relating to control of one country by another |
| ___ 2. tainted | b. damaged by association with something bad |
| ___ 3. colonial | c. strong public anger or protest |
| ___ 4. exploit | d. official rules made by a government |
| ___ 5. patent | e. to use people or resources unfairly for profit |
| ___ 6. addictive | f. a legal right to make or sell an invention |
| ___ 7. propaganda | g. a negative mark of shame |
| ___ 8. outcry | h. the responsibility to watch carefully and correct problems |
| ___ 9. regulation | i. causing a strong desire to keep using something |
| ___ 10. recall | j. something handed down from the past |
| ___ 11. stigma | k. an order to return a product because it's unsafe |
| ___ 12. oversight | l. biased information used to influence opinion |

Reading

Hidden Costs of Convenience

When the past clings to the present

1. Sweet treats can carry bitter stories. The global rise of sugar was fueled by colonial plantations and forced labor, leaving behind a legacy that is complex and uncomfortable. Even today, some chocolate brands work to map their supply chains and remove exploitation, yet the scars of history remain. Consumers often see only the colorful wrappers and the price tag, while the human cost stays hidden. Real progress in the food industry means facing this history honestly and making ethical choices, both in production and in consumption.
2. Many products once celebrated as progress later revealed dangerous consequences. Early "radium" cosmetics promised a radiant glow but left factory workers gravely ill. Leaded gasoline was hailed as a technological solution to engine knocking, yet it released toxins that polluted entire cities and harmed public health. These examples show how innovation without foresight can bring lasting damage. The true cost of a product is not just its price in the store, but its long-term effect on people and the environment.
3. When harm becomes visible, societies often push back. Public outrage can lead to stricter regulations, product recalls, and greater oversight of industries. While these changes help prevent future harm, they cannot erase the past or its effects. Memories of harm can leave a lasting stigma, reminding us that progress should never come at the expense of human well-being. True advancement requires learning from mistakes and remembering the full story behind what we buy and use.



COMPREHENSION

1. What historical factors contributed to the global rise of sugar?
2. How are some chocolate brands trying to address past exploitation?
3. What dangers came from early "radium" cosmetics and leaded gasoline?
4. According to the text, what is the "true cost" of a product?
5. What actions can society take when a product's harm becomes known?

VOCABULARY REVIEW

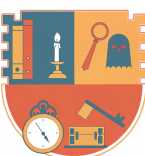
1. The scandal left the brand permanently ____ in the public eye.
2. Activists demanded stronger ____ to protect workers.
3. The company issued a product ____ after safety tests failed.
4. Some ads were little more than ____ for the regime.
5. A famous ____ protected the inventor's design for 20 years.
6. The museum explored the colonial ____ behind the spice trade.
7. He faced social ____ after the news report.
8. New policies increased government ____ of factories.
9. Unscrupulous owners tried to ____ cheap labor.
10. The drink's formula was mildly ____ and kept customers coming back.

GRAMMAR REVIEW - MIXED CONDITIONALS & INVERSION

1. If regulators ____ (act) sooner, cities wouldn't be dealing with so much pollution now.
2. Had the company tested the product properly, it ____ (not/reach) the market.
3. If consumers ____ (be) more informed, they might have resisted the propaganda.
4. Were the supply chains fully transparent, fewer abuses ____ (go) unnoticed.
5. If the workers ____ (know) the risk, they ____ (refuse) the job.
6. Had there ____ (be) stronger oversight, the recall would have been unnecessary.
7. If the fuel ____ (remain) unleaded, air quality ____ (improve) earlier.
8. Were historical costs priced in, some items ____ (seem) less cheap.
9. If the outcry ____ (fade), reforms would ____ (stall).
10. Had officials apologized, would the stigma ____ (lessen)?

DISCUSSION

1. What responsibility do buyers have for past harms?
2. When do regulations go too far-or not far enough?
3. How can museums present dark histories responsibly?
4. Which product today will the future judge harshly?



CRITICAL THINKING

Pick one everyday item with a troubling past. Map its timeline: origins, harm, public response, and lessons for future designs.

