

Assignment 1

Factual & Negative Factual Information Questions

The Postage Stamp

1 The postage stamp has been around for only a relatively short period of time. The use of stamps for postage was first proposed in England in 1837, when Sir Rowland Hill published a pamphlet entitled “Post Office Reform: Its Importance and Practicability” to put forth the ideas about postal rates. He stated that they should not be based on the distance that a letter or package travels but should instead be based on the weight of the parcel and that fees for postal services should be collected in advance of the delivery, rather than after, through the use of postage stamps.

2 Prior to Hill’s revolutionary suggestion, postal fees were usually charged to the recipient of the mail, as opposed to the sender, which created severe problems for the postal service. One of the most critical was that the British postal service had no effective method of collecting postal fees if the recipient refused to pay for the mail being delivered. Another issue was that of limiting the size and number of packages sent from one location to the other; there was no incentive for people sending mail to put restrictions on the size or amount of parcels, since they were not the ones that were charged for the delivery. This created cumbersome loads of mail for postal workers to deliver, and the issue was compounded if the recipient refused to pay, which rendered the mail undeliverable.

3 Fortunately, the ideas proposed by Hill went into effect in England almost immediately after the publication of his pamphlet. The first English stamp, which featured a portrait of then Queen Victoria, was printed in 1840. This stamp, the “penny black,” came in sheets with an adhesive backing that needed to be separated with scissors and provided enough postage for a letter weighing 14 grams or less to any destination. Another more expensive stamp, the “two pence blue” was put on sale within days of the first stamp’s introduction to provide for the delivery of heavier pieces of mail.

4 Other countries noted the success of the new system of postal delivery and followed suit within a few years of the inception of the English stamp. In 1843, Brazil was the next

nation to produce national postage stamps, and various areas in what is today Switzerland also produced postage stamps later in the same year. Postage stamps in five- and ten-cent denominations were first approved by the U.S. Congress in 1847, and by 1860 postage stamps were being issued in more than ninety governmental jurisdictions worldwide. Most original postage stamps followed a pattern similar in design and structure to England’s “penny black”; the stamps were rectangular in shape and typically depicted images of queens, presidents, or other political figures prominent in the respective nations. One primary exception was the Brazilian stamp; the government of Brazil opted to put an abstract image on the postage in order to prevent their leader’s image being marred by a postmark, a necessary mark indicating the stamp had been paid for.

5 As postage stamps became more widespread in their use, innovations occurred to improve the convenience and appeal of the stamps. About a decade or so after the stamp’s initial appearance, perforations between the individual stamps were included on the sheets of multiple stamps. These small holes dividing the postage greatly increased the ease and speed of separating individual stamps. Instead of needing scissors to carefully cut between the stamps, the postage could now be separated by tearing along the perforated lines. Another innovation involved the images on the stamps. As time progressed, countries moved away from solely depicting national leaders on the small squares and began to use the stamps to display other images of national pride, including plants and wildlife, celebrities, and even icons symbolizing the nation. In the United States for example, stamps have been issued with famous cartoon characters, such as Mickey Mouse and Bart Simpson.

6 It is these diverse images that have caused stamps to become popular as collectibles. Serious collectors track down stamps with diverse images, especially stamps that have not been separated from their sheets, or stamps that have a clean postmark. Stamps issued in limited runs, which restrict their circulation, are particularly sought after, and can be worth much more than their face value.

Assignment 1

Factual & Negative Factual Information Questions

1. According to paragraph 1, postage stamps were first suggested
 - A. in the first half of the eighteenth century
 - B. in the second half of the eighteenth century
 - C. in the first half of the nineteenth century
 - D. in the second half of the nineteenth century
2. It is indicated in paragraph 1 that Sir Rowland Hill believed that postage fees
 - A. should be paid before delivery
 - B. should be related to distance
 - C. should have nothing to do with how heavy a package is
 - D. should be collected after the package is delivered
3. According to paragraph 2, prior to the use of postage stamps
 - A. mail carriers refused to deliver heavy pieces of mail
 - B. the receiver often paid to have mail returned to the sender
 - C. the sender would limit the amount and number of packages sent
 - D. the size and volume of packages sent were problems for the postal service
4. What is stated in paragraph 3 about the first English postage stamp?
 - A. It was designed by Queen Victoria.
 - B. It contained a drawing of a black penny.
 - C. It was produced in sheets of fourteen stamps.
 - D. It could be used to send a lightweight letter.
5. According to paragraph 4, Brazil introduced postage stamps
 - A. before England
 - B. before Switzerland
 - C. after the United States
 - D. after Switzerland
6. It is mentioned in paragraph 4 that in 1847
 - A. postage stamps were in use in ninety different countries
 - B. it cost fifteen cents to mail a letter in the United States
 - C. two different denominations of postage stamps were introduced in the United States
 - D. the U.S. Congress introduced the “penny black” stamp
7. Which of the following is an innovation in the production of stamps mentioned in paragraph 5?
 - A. Scissors were no longer included with each sheet of stamps to assist in separating them.
 - B. Stamp images of national leaders and heroes were introduced.
 - C. Small holes were punched into the sheets of stamps to make the stamps easier to separate.
 - D. A single sheet of stamps included stamps with various images.
8. It is mentioned in paragraph 6 that some stamps
 - A. preserved in complete sheets are considered more valuable to collectors
 - B. have decreased in value
 - C. duplicate images to appeal to collectors
 - D. have unlimited circulation

Assignment 1

Factual & Negative Factual Information Questions

Chewing Gum

1 Throughout the course of history, chewing gum has come from multiple sources, in fact, chewing gum and automobile tires share an odd commonality: at one time, both included resin from the rubber tree, a material prized for its flexible yet durable qualities. However, this resinous substance was not the only, or even the first, material to be used as chewing gum. Gum from 5,000 years ago has been uncovered, with teeth imprints still visible, that came from the tar¹ of birch tree bark. Today, chewing gum is more likely to be made from synthetic forms of rubber, or latex, since these can be produced more easily and abundantly than the natural rubbery sap that is drawn from trees.

2 Historically, chewing gum has served a valuable purpose cosmetically. The ancient Aztecs produced a type of gum from chicle, an organic rubber source, which the women in this culture frequently—more so than the men—used as a breath freshener, a common use for gum today. Besides adding freshness to the breath by promoting the production and circulation of saliva², the stickiness of gum removes food particles from between the teeth that contribute to bad breath, as well as reducing cavities or holes in the teeth caused by decay. Both of these advantages improve the health and appearance of the mouth and extend the life of teeth, which in ancient times was a clear symbol of youth and attractiveness. Unfortunately, in modern times, this benefit is diminished by gum that is high in sugar, so most contemporary health professionals recommend sugarless gum.

3 Chewing gum has also been shown to provide medical benefits, especially in treating conditions that have an effect on the digestive system. Studies have indicated that chewing gum after specific types of stomach surgery may reduce recovery time. It also appears to benefit certain patients suffering from other stomach-related diseases. The chewing of gum seems to enhance production of saliva, which stimulates the digestive system in both instances, and that in turn encourages the secretion of digestive juices. The digestive juices help to neutralize potentially harmful stomach acid, and aid in the

elimination of undigested particles in the digestive tract. In addition to benefiting the digestive system, some research has concluded that chewing gum may also alleviate stress and reduce jaw pain.

4 Despite providing medical benefits, chewing gum, and its close relative, bubble gum, are mainly promoted as a recreational habit, primarily to young people. Bubble gum, a popular treat with children, was invented by the Flier Chewing Gum Company. An accountant for the company, Walter Diemer, was experimenting with recipes when he noticed one that was less sticky and stretched more easily than regular chewing gum. He colored it pink, his favorite color, and it was eventually marketed as Double Bubble. It was instantly successful, due in part to the strategy of teaching all salespeople how to blow bubbles.

5 The founder of one of the most popular American brands of chewing gum, Wrigley's, ironically did not set out to sell gum. Wrigley's chewing gum was actually developed as a premium to be given away with other products rather than as a primary product for sale. William Wrigley Jr. initially sold soap as a wholesaler, giving baking soda away as a premium, and using a cookbook to promote each deal. Over time, the baking soda and cookbook became more popular than the soap, so Wrigley began a new operation selling baking soda. He began hunting for a new premium item to give away with sales of baking soda; he soon decided on chewing gum.

6 Once again, Wrigley realized that demand for the premium was stronger than the demand for the original product. Consequently, he created the Wm. Wrigley Jr. Company to produce and sell chewing gum. Wrigley started out with two brands of gum, Vassar and Lotta Gum, and soon introduced Juicy Fruit and Spearmint. The latter two brands grew in popularity, while the first two were phased out. Juicy Fruit and Spearmint are two of Wrigley's main brands to this day.

GLOSSARY

1 tar—a sticky, thick substance produced from the heating of organic material, such as wood

2 saliva—the liquid that is produced naturally in the mouth

Assignment 1

Factual & Negative Factual Information Questions

9. It is NOT stated in paragraph 1 that chewing gum
- A. is flexible and long-lasting
 - B. from thousands of years ago was discovered
 - C. is made today from mostly natural materials
 - D. can be made more easily from synthetic rubber
10. According to paragraph 2, among the Aztecs chewing gum was
- A. used for cosmetic purposes
 - B. more popular among men than women
 - C. made from chicle
 - D. used to eliminate bad breath
11. It is NOT indicated in paragraph 2 that a benefit of chewing gum is
- A. encouraging the production of saliva
 - B. removing small pieces of food from the teeth
 - C. increasing sugar levels in the mouth
 - D. promoting a healthy mouth
12. All of the following are mentioned as medical benefits of gum EXCEPT
- A. decreasing levels of depression
 - B. reducing recovery time after surgery
 - C. stimulating the digestive system
 - D. relieving jaw discomfort
13. In paragraph 4, all of the following are stated about bubble gum EXCEPT that
- A. it was invented by an employee of a chewing gum company
 - B. it proved to be habit-forming
 - C. demonstrations assisted in its sales
 - D. its color was based on a personal preference
14. It is NOT mentioned in paragraph 5 that Wrigley later
- A. sold baking soda
 - B. used chewing gum as a premium to sell baking soda
 - C. sold chewing gum
 - D. used baking soda as a premium to sell chewing gum
15. According to paragraph 6, the Wm. Wrigley Jr. Company did all of the following EXCEPT
- A. begin with two brands of gum
 - B. add new brands to the original two
 - C. phase out the last two brands
 - D. phase out the first two brands
16. According to the passage, it is NOT true that
- A. gum originally-shared something in common with another widely used product
 - B. gum is primarily valued for its medical benefits in modern times
 - C. both chewing and bubble gum target young people in their advertisements
 - D. gum showed itself to be more popular than products it was used to promote