

Name:

Date:



## **Popcorn, The All-American Food**

*by Ben Sutter*

Popcorn is not just fun to eat. It is an all-American food. Most of the world's popcorn is grown here in the USA. Popcorn is not a new invention, though. It is one of the oldest kinds of corn. People in the Americas have been making popcorn for more than 1,000 years. They didn't just eat the popcorn. Some people wore it around their necks. Popcorn was used as a decoration, too. Even today, people still string popcorn as a decoration during the winter holidays.

Today we cook popcorn in many ways. We can put it in a pot with oil. (Make sure the pot has a lid!) We can put bags of popcorn in the microwave oven. There are even poppers that blow hot air to cook the corn.

Many years ago, people of the Americas cooked popcorn in different ways, too. They would toss an ear of the corn into the fire. When the corn heated, the cooked kernels would fly out. Sometimes people would just toss kernels into the fire. When the popcorn popped, they would pick up the cooked popcorn from all around the fire. Another way to cook popcorn was to put it in a pot with sand, instead of with the oil we would use today. The popcorn would jump to the top of the sand when it popped.

After they cooked the popcorn, Native Americans would eat it by the handful. They also used it to make popcorn soup. When settlers came to America, they learned about popcorn from the Native Americans. The settlers found a new way to eat popcorn: with milk poured over it, just like you eat cereal. Now we like to eat popcorn with butter and salt.

### **The Science of Popcorn**

No matter how you eat it, popcorn is fun. The real question is: what makes it pop?

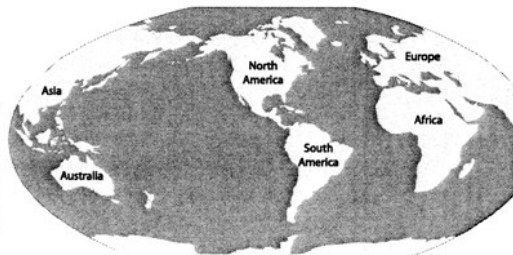
When you look at those tiny kernels of popcorn, they look dry. But popcorn kernels are all wet on the inside. Inside each kernel is a tiny drop of water. When the kernel is heated, the water heats up, too. What happens when the water heats up? Think about a pot of water on the stove. When the water boils, you see steam.

The same thing happens inside the tiny kernel. The drop of water heats up and turns to steam. This is when the fun begins. Steam takes up more space than water. As steam fills the inside of the kernel, the corn inside starts to puff up. There is no room in the tiny kernel. The inside of the kernel gets bigger and bigger. The hard shell of the kernel pops wide open. The kernel turns inside out, and the popcorn is ready to eat.

This just goes to show that popcorn can be many things. It is a decoration and a fun food that is fun to eat, and it is a way to learn about science, too.

Each kernel grows to more than 30 times its size. That's why it only takes 2 tablespoons of popcorn kernels to make about 5 cups of popped popcorn.

People in the Americas have been making popcorn for more than 1,000 years.



- 1: According to the article, popcorn has been used all of these ways **except** as
  - F** jewelry
  - G** decoration
  - H** a means to learn science
  - J** a means to make heat
  
- 2: Read this sentence from the article.  
**There are even poppers that blow hot air to cook the corn.**  
 Popcorn "poppers" are most likely
  - A** kernels of corn that do not pop
  - B** people who pop the corn kernels
  - C** electric machines that pop the corn kernels
  - D** bags of corn kernels that pop in the microwave
  
- 3: Which subheading would be **best** for the first four paragraphs of the article?
  - F** History of Popcorn
  - G** Reasons to Eat Popcorn
  - H** Truths About Popcorn
  - J** Importance of Popcorn
  
- 4: Why does the author **most likely** use the subheading "The Science of Popcorn" in the article?
  - A** to introduce a new idea in the article
  - B** to separate facts in the article from fiction
  - C** to show that the article is about a serious topic
  - D** to break up the article in the middle so it is easier to read

- 5: Complete the chart below by giving **two** ways popcorn is cooked today and **two** ways it was cooked many years ago.

How popcorn is cooked today	How popcorn was cooked many years ago
1.	1.
2.	2.

- 6: Which statement from the article is an **opinion**?
- A** "Popcorn is not a new invention, though."  
**B** "Today we cook popcorn in many ways."  
**C** "We can put bags of popcorn in the microwave oven."  
**D** "No matter how you eat it, popcorn is fun."

## ***Laddie Boy Comes to the White House***

*by Robin Spevacek*

"Here, Laddie Boy," the President called. Warren Harding bent down, and the wiry Airedale trotted straight to his master.

There have been many stories written about Presidents and their pets, but the story of President Warren G. Harding and his faithful dog Laddie Boy is perhaps one of the best.

Given to Mr. Harding by an old friend, the shaggy puppy moved into the White House and soon became a household favorite. He was gentle and fun loving and always willing to please. The President took many long walks with his dog and proudly presented him with a Washington dog tag printed with the words "Number One."

Every morning Laddie Boy delivered President Harding's newspaper to him. Since his days as a newspaper editor in Ohio, Mr. Harding took a keen interest in reading the paper. He also liked the game of golf and often took his dog with him. When the President hit a bad shot, Laddie Boy would rush into the trees to find the lost ball. Once he found it, he would return with the ball in his mouth, tail wagging. Laddie Boy loved the game as much as the President.

Because he was so special, Laddie Boy was given his own hand-carved chair, which he sat in at important White House meetings. Even though the dog could not speak, he was often questioned by the *Washington Star* newspaper that printed his "ideas" on everything from government to hours for working dogs. In May of 1921, Laddie Boy was asked to lead the "Be Kind to Animals" parade held by the Humane Education Society. The Society had a float built just for Laddie Boy, and he rode on top of it. Sitting very still with his head tilted to one side, the dog watched the people in the crowd cheer and smile as he passed by.

As Laddie Boy's fame spread, his admirers sent him many gifts. They mailed him sweaters, blankets, and toys. The gift that was talked about most, however, was a huge four-layer cake made up of dog biscuits and covered with white frosting. Such a grand cake called for a party, and one was planned. Laddie Boy, the other White House dogs, and many dogs of Washington-area friends were invited. The dogs ate their cake while news reporters snapped pictures.

With all this attention, Laddie Boy was named the official presidential pet. He was treated like a king and even had his own caregiver who gave the dog daily baths and fed him large bowls of a special broth and dog biscuits.

The President's pet was so beloved nationwide that the Newsboys' Association asked every newspaper delivery boy in the country to donate one penny to a special fund. The money they raised would be used to build a statue of Laddie Boy. The statue, when finished, was to be presented to Mrs. Harding as a gift.

In all, nineteen thousand one hundred thirty-four pennies were collected and melted down. Laddie Boy's likeness, made from the copper in the pennies, still stands in the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.

- 7: Which statement **best** shows that Laddie Boy was famous?
- F** He attended important meetings.
  - G** He received a special dog tag.
  - H** He was given a hand-carved chair.
  - J** He received many gifts from his fans.
- 8: The article says that Laddie Boy was President Harding's "faithful dog."  
The word "faithful" means
- A** clever
  - B** happy
  - C** loyal
  - D** strong
- 9: The statue of Laddie Boy was made out of
- F** wood
  - G** golf balls
  - H** dog biscuits
  - J** copper
- 10: Which sentence from the article is an **opinion**?
- A** "Laddie Boy loved the game as much as the President."
  - B** "They mailed him sweaters, blankets, and toys."
  - C** "The dogs ate their cake while news reporters snapped pictures."
  - D** "With all this attention, Laddie Boy was named the official presidential pet."
- 11: Summarize the actions that were taken to create the statue of Laddie Boy. Use details from the article to support your answer.

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12:

Here is a paragraph a student wrote. There are some mistakes in the paragraph. Some sentences may have more than one mistake, and other sentences may contain no mistakes at all. There are no mistakes in spelling.

Read the paragraph and find the mistakes. Draw a line through each mistake in the paragraph. Then write the correction above it.

My school had an invention fair last weekend. It was called "Inventions of The Future." When I hear about the fair, I decided to make something really interestingly. For several days, I thought about my invention. I thought of names, created drawings, and even thought about what color it would be. On the day of the fair. My father asked me where my invention was. I couldn't stop laughing! I had a name, a color, and a drawing of them, but I had forgotten to make the invention. I guess I am starting early for next year's fair!