



# GREAT INVENTIONS

## THE ERASER



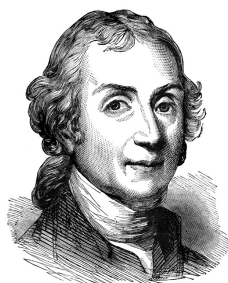
Even though it is not spring yet, we are already preparing for state exams. We practice different exercises every day and read for half an hour to improve reading comprehension.

Sometimes, we do the exercises in pairs, but most of the time we do them individually. Then, we check our answers to see which ones we got wrong and correct them.

Every couple of weeks, we practice different techniques to get the best results. One of them that I like is to read a text, think about what I read, read the question, and look over the answers. When we think we know the answer, we make a mark by the answer with our pencil. After we review the answers, we erase the pencil marks we made and mark our answer.



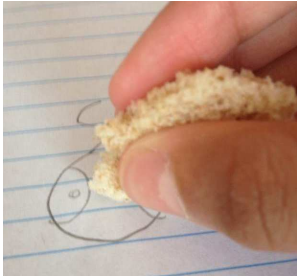
Unfortunately, on the day of practice, I didn't have my eraser and couldn't complete all the exercises on time because I had to share an eraser with someone else. When I left school, my dad took me to the store to buy a new eraser. I asked him how the eraser was invented. He didn't know the answer. He promised that when we got home, we would look it up on the computer. That afternoon, we sat down in front of the screen to find out how the eraser was invented and other interesting facts about them.



Joseph Priestley

The most surprising thing I found out was that the invention of the rubber eraser happened accidentally by the scientist Joseph Priestley in the 18th century. The inventor said he was making some strokes with the pencil and just happened to rub a piece of rubber on paper. Suddenly, he could see the strokes were erased, as if by magic.

Until Joseph Priestley's discovery, everything that was written down on paper could not be erased very well. This discovery allowed people to fix written ideas cleanly without having to do everything over again.



Before Priestley's discovery with rubber, people used breadcrumbs to erase what they had written, but it was not clean and would blur it and turn it gray.

Returning to the discovery of the eraser, Joseph Priestley was not the one who marketed it. The mass marketing was started by a British merchant and engineer named Edward Nairne, who already made elastic bands from natural rubber at that time. Erasers made with natural rubber were such an exorbitant price that they were considered luxury items, and many could not afford to buy one. Another problem with the erasers Mr. Nairne manufactured was that natural rubber rotted quickly, and so, the erasers did not last very long.

Around 1844, Charles Goodyear, an American inventor, developed the process of vulcanization, which by heating rubber with sulfur made it harder, less sticky, and more durable.



Early Pencil Eraser



Because of advances in science, they can manufacture fully synthetic erasers that work on all kinds of graphic strokes. These are used by millions of people every day around the world.

The eraser has also evolved in terms of its shapes, colors, and prices. One of the most manufactured models in some countries has the eraser attached to the top of the pencil. You can carry both writing tools together, without having to bring each separately.

The next time I have an exam practice, I won't forget to bring a pencil with an eraser.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



# THE ERASER

Answer the questions.



1. What does the expression exorbitant price mean in the text?

- a. It was very cheap.
- b. It was free.
- c. It was very expensive.
- d. It was easy to get.



2. Why was the eraser a helpful invention?

- a. Several merchants became very rich.
- b. People no longer had to rewrite everything if a mistake was made.
- c. They stopped producing breadcrumbs to produce erasers.
- d. They did magic with the pencil.



3. Why was the eraser invented accidentally?

- a. Joseph Priestley rehearsed until he created the eraser.
- b. They usually used breadcrumbs.
- c. It was discovered without having planned it.
- d. Joseph Priestley was a friend of Edward Nairne.

4. Why did the main character look for information about the eraser on the internet?

- a. The internet has a lot of information on very diverse topics.
- b. There aren't any encyclopedias to look for information.
- c. His dad doesn't know anything at all.
- d. He didn't have time to ask his teacher.

5. What part of the text talks about the different eraser models?

- a. the beginning
- b. the middle
- c. the end
- d. does not say

# THE ERASER

6. Who marketed the eraser?

- a. Joseph Priestley
- b. Edward Nairne
- c. Charles Goodyear
- d. the main character of the story



7. After reading the story, it can be deduced that \_\_\_\_\_

- a. if one practices before final exams, good results can be obtained.
- b. the eraser is a useless invention because it makes life easier for everyone.
- c. never lend your school supplies to anyone.
- d. all the answers are correct.



8. What rubber item is talked about in the text?

- a. hair band
- b. chewing gum
- c. stretching bar
- d. eraser



9. What is the vulcanization process?

- a. A process that Edward Nairne invented to make erasers.
- b. A process by which the eraser changes shape and color.
- c. A process by which the eraser becomes harder and does not rot.
- d. A process by which the eraser becomes soft and does not rot.

10. In ancient times, the eraser was invented by Charles Goodyear, using the vulcanization process.

- a. True
- b. False