

WE ALL ARE DIFFERENT

Patricia R. Gruber, M.S.
Extension Agent
Harrison County

Shirley C. Eagan, Ed.D.
Extension Specialist
Volunteer Leadership

We all are different, yet each has something valuable to contribute.

The face of America is rapidly changing. Now as never before in our history, we are composed individuals from all the nations and races of earth who have come to our shores. In many ways, we continue to be the "American mix." A unity through our diverse makeup has been one of America's strengths from the beginning, and our motto "E pluribus unum" (from many, one) expresses that idea.

Our challenge is to get to know, value, and learn to work and live with each other as individuals. Each must strive to make this a world where each and every human being has a place. Mankind has had to work to live together in harmony.

As individuals we may not realize the impact that other nations or cultures have on our everyday lives. Try the following quiz for some fun and facts about the source of some of our customs. Circle the letter of the country where you believe the product originated.

1. Wedding Ring:
a. Germany b. England c. Egypt
2. Clothes Iron:
a. China b. Russia c. Greece
3. Bathroom:
a. India b. Scotland c. Greece
4. Cough Drops:
a. Egypt b. Belgium c. Germany
5. Sunglasses:
a. Italy b. China c. Mexico
6. Ketchup:
a. Italy b. Russia c. China
7. Eye Drops:
a. China b. Switzerland c. USA
8. Rosary:
a. Italy b. Greece c. India
9. Pretzel:
a. Germany b. Italy c. China

10. Toothbrush:
a. Egypt b. India c. France
11. Aspirin:
a. France b. China c. USA
12. Eye Glasses:
a. Italy b. Germany c. England
13. Suntan Lotion:
a. USA b. Mexico c. Egypt
14. Ice Cream:
a. Holland b. China c. Spain
15. "Cinderella":
a. China b. Italy c. England
16. Toilet Paper:
a. USA b. Egypt c. Japan

As we learn to build on differences, we need to remember the following things.

1. Focus on recognizing every person as an individual, different from ourselves, yet worthy of our respect.
2. Become continually more aware of our use of stereotypes and how they interfere with our ability to perceive and interact with people as they are.
3. Remember that there are more differences within groups than between groups.
4. Recognize that we all are part of many groups, none of which can ever totally explain or define who we are.
5. Learn to look at things from the other's point of view.
6. Adapt a more humble, tentative attitude about the accuracy of our judgments. Consider alternative explanations for a person's actions.
7. Be willing to learn more about the culture and background of people different from ourselves.
8. Take opportunities to use balancing actions to neutralize stereotypes when we hear them.

ANSWERS

1. **Wedding Ring: 2800 B.C. Egypt**

"A circle having no beginning or end, signified eternity--for which marriage was binding."

2. **Clothes Iron: 4th Century B.C. Greece**

Smooth, wrinkle-free clothing has been a symbol of refinement, cleanliness, and status for at least 2,400 years. First iron was similar to a rolling pin and ironing was done by slaves.

3. **Bathroom: 8000 B.C. Scotland**

Inhabitants of Orkney islands off Scotland built first latrinelike plumbing systems to carry wastes from the home.

4. **Cough Drops: 1000 B.C. Egypt**

Produced by Egyptian confectioners for physicians to soothe and relax coughing muscles in the throat.

5. **Sunglasses: Pre-15th Century China**

Used by Chinese judges to conceal their eye expressions in court until the trial's conclusion.

6. **Ketchup: 1690 China**

"Ke-TSIAP," a tangy sauce for fish and fowl.

7. **Eye Drops: 3000 B.C. China**

Chinese used extract of the Mahnang plant to create solutions to treat eye irritations.

8. **Rosary: Pre-500 B.C. India**

India priests recited prayers on a string of knots in ancient Sanskrit. It was referred to as the "remembrancer" because it assisted people's efforts to count and pray simultaneously.

9. **Pretzel: 610 Northern Italy**

"Pretiole," a "little gift" created by a medieval Italian monk to reward children for memorizing their prayers. Shape was derived from folded arms of children in prayer. Germans called it "Brezol."

10. **Toothbrush: 3000 B.C. Egypt**

"Chew Stick" - A pencil-sized twig with one end fashioned into soft fibers.

11. **Aspirin: 1853 France**

Preparation based on powder made originally from bark of willow tree and used as a painkiller.

12. **Eyeglasses: 13th Century Italy**

Optical physician Salvino Armato turned to glass making to improve his own sight.

13. **Suntan Lotion: 1940s USA**

Government invention to protect American soldiers from sunburning in the scorching sun of the Philippines.

14. **Ice Cream: 2000 B.C. China**

A favored dish of Chinese nobility, created not long after people began milking farm animals. Originally a paste made of overcooked rice, spices, and milk and packed in snow.

15. **Cinderella: 9th Century China**

"Yeh-Hsien" - Mistreated by ill-tempered stepmother, aided by a magic 10 foot-long fish, and found by the province's wealthiest merchant with the aid of a "golden slipper."

16. **Toilet Paper: 1857 USA**

Introduced by businessman Joseph Gayety; replaced store catalogs, fliers, newspapers.

Were you surprised at the origin of some of these products? Culture and diversity cut across behaviors that have become rituals for many of us.

You and I

We meet as strangers, each carrying a mystery
within us. I cannot say who you are.

I may never know you completely.

But I trust that you are a person in your own
right, possessed of a beauty and value that are
the Earth's richest treasures.

So I will make this promise to you:

I will impose no identities upon you, but will
invite you to become yourself
without shame or fear.

I will hold open a space for you in the world and
allow you right to fill it with an authentic
vocation and purpose. For as long as your search
takes, you have my loyalty.

--Author Unknown

1994: 10M