

WHEN IT RAINS, IT POURS



When everything seems to be going wrong in your life, there's one expression that you're likely to hear from friends and family: When it rains, it pours.

It's that expression that allows us to say something when there's really nothing else to say. It helps us make sense of a string of bad luck. And we all say it. Our mothers say it, our grandmothers say it, even 50 Cent says it. But where did that expression come from?

Its origin comes from a fairly unlikely place: the Morton Salt Company. Yep, that's right. That expression which you use at least a handful of times a month was developed by ad execs in the early 1900s to sell salt. It's still, to this day, one of the most successful and lasting ideas to originate in those early days of advertising.

The Morton Salt Company was looking for a way to promote its new product, a free-flowing table salt. The product it was selling then looks nearly the same today, a blue cylindrical tube of free-running table salt with a handy pouring spout (a patent of the company's) seen in almost all kitchens across the country.

In 1911, the company had started adding magnesium carbonate, an anti-caking agent, to salt; this allowed it to pour freely. (Morton Salt now uses calcium silicate.) Before that addition, salt would clump if the weather wasn't agreeable. The company wanted to emphasize the idea that this salt would pour freely, even in damp weather.

The famous umbrella girl was the first idea decided upon, and from there the team worked on coming up with the copy. The original pitch was "Even in rainy weather, it flows freely," but they found that too long and clunky. They tried the old proverb, "It never rains, but it pours," but found it too negative. And, just like Goldilocks and the three bears, they eventually found one that was just right: "When it rains, it pours."

Since 1914, the slogan and the girl (both company trademarks) have been pasted on their salt product and sold all across America. Though many have wondered, the Morton Salt girl was not inspired by a real person; she was just an illustrator's creation. That hasn't stopped her from being one of America's most iconic girls.

According to the company's website, "Each year she appears in parades, at costume parties and in school rooms throughout the country, brought to life by creative youngsters and adults." And after six redesigns, it looks like this version of the Morton Salt girl is here to stay -- she has not been tampered with for over 40 years."

Comprehension questions:

1. According to the article, what happens to salt when it is exposed to water or damp (wet) weather?

- It flows freely
- It clumps together
- It evaporates
- It becomes calcium silicate

- What ingredient/compound did Morton Salt **originally** add to its formula in 1911 to stop the salt from clumping?

- Water
- Sugar
- Calcium Silicate
- Magnesium carbonate

2. The girl pictured on the Morton Salt logo was inspired by a real person.

- True
- False

3. What message was Morton Salt trying to send by using their slogan "When it rains, it pours"?

- Even when it's raining and damp, the salt will pour freely
- If bad things are happening around you, they will continue to happen
- Morton Salt is the best salt, even in the rainiest of days
- It is good practice to keep salt next to your window when it's raining

4. This version of the logo pictured above (the girl with the umbrella with the salt spilling out) is the version that still appears on their products and advertisements today. According to the article, how many times was the Morton Salt girl redesigned since 1914?

- Four
- Five
- Six
- Seven