Name_____

The Great American Dessert

Frozen desserts have been around much longer than you might imagine. Over two thousand years ago, Alexander the Great enjoyed snow and ice flavored with nectar. During the Roman Empire, runners were sent to the mountains for snow, which was then flavored with fruit or juice. Much later, the great explorer Marco Polo brought a recipe from the Far East that was similar to sherbet. Historians surmise this evolved into the ice cream we know today.

Frozen desserts incorporating cream appeared in France, England, and Italy during the same time period. At first, it was a dish for royalty. Ice cream was first served to the public at a café in Paris in the late 1600s. The dish had milk, cream, butter, and eggs.

Ice cream didn't arrive in America for another hundred years. Historical records indicate George Washington and other early presidents dined on ice cream. A merchant's advertisement from the time claims ice cream was available "almost every day." Even so, it was a dish reserved mostly for the elite.

In the early 1800s, insulated ice houses made the storage of ice cream much more practical. By the middle of the century, ice cream had become quite an industry in America. The Industrial Revolution resulted in an increase in ice-cream production. New freezing processes and equipment made it easier to make ice cream.

Ice cream evolved through the invention of various products such as "ice-cream sodas." Some people claimed such treats were too rich to eat on Sunday. On Sundays, the carbonation was left out, leading to the ice-cream sundae. During times of war, ice cream became a tangible way to boost the morale of the troops. During the rise of the supermarket and prepackaged foods, ice-cream parlors declined. Recently, however, specialty ice-cream shops have become popular once again.

Text Questions

1. Which of the following best describes early frozen desserts?
   a. cream poured over ice
   b. snow flavored with fruit or juice
   c. a concoction made with milk, cream, sugar, and eggs
   d. a mixture of salt and snow poured over syrup

2. Which is a synonym for the word *morale* as it is used in the text?
   a. assurance
   b. resolve
   c. confidence
   d. spirits

3. Who might be credited with a frozen dessert that led to ice cream as we know it today?
   a. Alexander the Great
   b. the Romans
   c. people in the Far East
   d. George Washington

4. According to the passage, how did technology influence the ice-cream industry?
   a. Insulated ice houses and improved freezing techniques made it easier to produce and store ice cream.
   b. Advances in communication and advertising made it possible for more people to know about ice cream.
   c. When presidents ate ice cream, that made it more well-known to the general population.
   d. Advances in transportation made it possible to bring ice cream to more people without having it melt.

5. What would you predict to be the next new development in the ice-cream industry? Give reasons for your answer.

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LIVEWORKSHEETS