

The Process of Creating Gummy Worms in a Blue Bucket (or How I Learned What the Word Somnambulism Meant)

By Deirdre Heggie

I find it truly amazing just how seemingly complicated the English language is. This all started on a normal Wednesday afternoon. My homework was all done, I had nothing else I needed to do, and I was extremely bored. Impulsively, I opened my dictionary to a random page. The first word that was on the page that revealed itself to me was this: somnambulism. I had never heard the word before, so it meant nothing to me. For all I knew, it could mean “the process of creating gummy worms in a blue bucket”! So, trusting myself with the task of finding out its definition (and something to do) I set off on a quest to find the meaning of this intelligent-sounding new (to me) word.

First, I approached my Dad. Being a retired English teacher and practically a walking, talking dictionary, of course, he knew. But still I pushed on in the amazing world of human intelligence, my interest sparked by this potential time-consumer

I decided to start a survey, just to see how many people knew the definition of this strange, random word I had found. I asked everyone, friends at school, friends not at school, sick friends, older friends, not-so-very-friendly friends. I became a roving reporter, set on finding the number of people (out of 100) who knew the word. Everywhere I went, I brought with me a little pad of paper and a pen, carefully tallying each yes or no answer to the question “do you know what the word somnambulism means?” I went “hither and thither” and “over and yon” to complete my task and watched as the ‘no’ column grow steadily longer as the ‘yes’ column only seemed to grow shorter.

Some people knew the definition off the top of their heads and some people deduced it by deciphering the Latin roots. Some got so close with their answers, but many simply had no clue. And so, the number of tally marks I had multiplied, until I had only one more to go. So, as I asked that simple question for the last time, I felt a deep satisfaction. As it so happens to be, the final (100th) answer was “I have no idea.”

My survey was complete! As it is, 7% of the people I asked knew what the word meant: three were JRMS teachers, one a retired teacher, one a friend’s mom, and two friends. The other 93%? They simply did not know. But now I and some of the people who originally didn’t know, know. And now, you too will know: the word somnambulism means “the act of walking while asleep,” or in other words, sleepwalking.

So, my theory of it meaning “the process of creating gummy worms in a blue bucket” was way off target. Maybe I should make up a word for it such as “gumbluecketing” or “womnabluation.” On second thought, maybe I shouldn’t.

Recovery By Eva Mullineaux

I was floating.

Everything was happy and fine. And I was floating. I was drifting in and out of the clouds, watching the sun rise on the horizon. I swished towards it, feeling as if I really were closing in on the sun, like it was a small, baby gazelle and I was a silent, hungry lioness.

But above everything else, I was happy. I could feel a faint breeze kiss my cheeks and I heard laughter all around me. It wasn’t the crazy manic laughter that had filled my life but it was the laughter of a new born baby, gurgling and full of pure innocence.

Life. That was what was missing. I searched within myself, trying to hear my heart beat in its steady *thump*, pause, *thump-thump* but it just wasn’t there. I strained to feel the blood coursing through my veins, carrying with it strong and beautiful life but I found none. I looked around sadly, almost detached, as I sunk back to the world below me. My feet landed lightly on the sandy beach and I disappeared into the sand.

My heart thumped.

‘Twas the Night Before Last

By: Mrs. Hafkemeyer

‘Twas the night before last, when all through the school not a student was talking, nor breaking a rule. The notebooks were packed in the lockers with care, in hopes that vacation soon would be there. The children were nestled all snug in their seats, with visions of sledding and sleeping next week. The teachers were trying to teach them their math but they had settled their brains for a long winter’s nap. When out of the office there arose such a clatter, we jumped from our seats as our eardrums were shattered.

The silence was broken by announcements galore The kids gathered their stuff and they ran for the door.

The floor it was shaking from the stampede

As the nice office ladies continued to read when, what to my wondering ears I should hear, but a call for the vans and the buses so dear.

With a little announcement, so lively today, I knew in a moment it must be Ms. J.

More rapid than eagles, these buses they came, And she whistled and shouted and called them by name:

Now sixteen, now fifteen, eleven and one
On van A, on bus two, on van B please come!
They ran to the door, and tore off down the hall
Now dash away, dash away, dash away all!

As snowflakes during a wild noreaster fly,
when they meet with an snowplow, mount to the sky
so up to the front all the teachers they flew,
Knocking kids down by the dozen, custodians too!

To the front of the pack all the teachers did go
And right out the door, those kids were too slow!
They had in their hands their gloves and their keys
They blew past the buses beginning to leave.

They sprang to their cars and called out a whistle
And away they all flew like the down of a thistle
But you could hear them exclaim as they drove out of sight,
Happy vacation to all and to all a good night!

Stop Hunger Now

By May Blumenfield

I recently had the experience of working toward a good cause. The mission of Stop Hunger Now, where I volunteered, is to feed people around the world by sending out meal packets made up of rice, soy, a vitamin packet, and dried vegetables. When I volunteered at one of their packaging events, it was different than what I thought it would be. People from all different religions were gathered there at long tables packaging and preparing the food packets. It was also cool that the little kids could participate. They were called the runners and carried plastic bins around, taking our completed bags to the packaging table. The energy in the room was high due to our enthusiasm for helping little children in developing countries.

I talked to one of the organizers of the packaging event, Don Weber. He told me that he picked this organization because “it was meaningful for even the little kids, the runners, because everyone could help out. Also, it was kids working to feed kids.” He also told me that they were going to package around 73,000 meals that day. That’s enough to feed 200 kids for a year! Some of it was going to Uganda, Africa and the rest was going to Nicaragua, South America. If you would like to know more about this organization, go to www.stophungernow.com



Recipe continued from page 8.

Melt butter in large sauce pan over low heat, stir in cocoa until smooth. Remove from heat. Add sugar, 3 eggs, 1 ½ cups of flour and chopped almonds. Mix well. Pour into prepared pan. Bake 20 minutes.
1. Meanwhile, whisk together remaining egg, 1/3 cup flour, sweetened condensed milk and almond extract. Pour over baked layer; sprinkle with Mini Kisses and cherries. Return to oven. Bake additional 20-25 minutes or until set and edges are golden brown. Cool completely in pan on wire rack. Refrigerate until cold, 6 hours or overnight. Cut into bars. Cover; refrigerate leftover bars

Makes about 48 bars

Gravity

By Gwenyth Mars

About Gravity

Gravity is a natural phenomenon by which physical bodies attract with a force proportional to their mass. If we did not have gravity it would affect our universe too. Planets would collide and the Earth would not be on a perfect angle. The Earth would spin in different directions, and this would cause rapid weather change. Nothing would live on the Earth without gravity. All objects with mass have gravity. Gravity acts like a magnet pulling things together and keeping them in place. No one really knows what causes gravity. Gravity is a mysterious source. Gravity keeps the moon in orbit around Earth. It attracts, governs, shapes, makes, and takes all objects with mass. Nothing escapes gravity’s pull. It made our world. Gravity holds our sun together. It is the most pervasive force in the universe. We need gravity.

Theories about Gravity

Isaac Newton is the scientist who discovered gravity. He was sitting under an apple tree and some say an apple fell on his head. He wondered why the apple was attracted to the ground. His theory was that gravity was a force. Newton had a famous drawing called Principia. It was showing that if you shoot a cannon ball fast enough it will go into orbit around the Earth. Newton had many ideas that helped scientists solve problems. He helped scientists figure out gravity was there, but Albert Einstein was the one to figure out how it worked. Einstein’s theory of gravity was not a force at all. His theory was that gravity was a “fourth dimension”. Einstein figured out that gravity is caused by huge objects like stars and planets bending space. He described gravity as a curvature in space and time. Einstein discovered mass warps in space and time. He discovered that space is curved. Gravity can be our friend and our foe.

What we did in Class

In class we dropped objects to see which ones would fall first. We dropped a wooden block, a feather, a big rock, a small rock, a marshmallow, and a paper clip. You would have one person on the floor timing and one person on the table dropping. The person on the table would have a ruler and the object while the other person would sit on the floor with goggles, timing how long it takes for the object to fall to the ground. We would repeat this three times with each object. We would write down the results on a chart and get the average. I was surprised that all the objects fell at the same rate except for the feather that is affected by air resistance. If you could block the air, it would fall at the same time. It does not matter about the mass of an object; gravity pulls it down at the same rate. For example, if you had a tennis ball and you went on a roller coaster, the roller coaster went straight up and straight down. You drop the ball as you go down. The ball would float in the air right where you dropped it. Gravity works in strange ways.

What we Have Learned

I have learned that all objects drop in the same amount of time, if they have the same mass and surface area ratio. Gravity pulls them down with the same force. Gravity is very mysterious and scientists obsess over finding out more about it. It is a good thing we had Isaac Newton and Albert Einstein to help us figure gravity out. We still have not really figured out why gravity is there, but later on if we make more advanced technology we could figure it out. I learned that we would never live if we did not have gravity we would not be here. There is a lot more to gravity than you think.

