

STUDENT NAME _____



State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness

English II

STAAR Alternate 2

Administered Spring 2025

RELEASED

ENGLISH II

A Global Feast: Interesting Foods from Around the World



Have you ever tried toasted grasshoppers with your guacamole? This popular snack from Mexico is one of many interesting foods from around the world adventurous eaters should try.



© bonchan/Shutterstock.com

A common breakfast in China is a rice cereal called congee topped with a century egg. The egg is similar in taste and texture to a hard-boiled egg. To prepare a century egg, the egg is soaked in a mixture of salt and ash, which causes the different parts of the egg to change color from white and yellow to shades of brown.

2b



© iStock.com/chengyuzheng



© iStock.com/Oleh Muslimov

3a



© iStock.com/JannHuizenga

If you want something more exciting than a peanut butter and jelly sandwich for lunch, try a hákarl sandwich from Iceland. Hákarl is shark meat that has been fermented to remove its natural poisons. Hákarl has an extremely strong smell and can be a challenge to eat the first time you try it.



You might also like to try a few slices of durian fruit to go along with your hákarl sandwich. Durian fruit looks like a spiky melon but smells like gym socks, rotting meat, or garbage. The smell is so unpleasant that in Singapore it is not allowed in public places. Nevertheless, the fruit has a sweet taste that many people enjoy.

Hákarl and durian fruit come from Iceland.

Hákarl and durian fruit are tasty on sandwiches.

Hákarl and durian fruit have strong smells.

For dinner, if you like vegetarian food and want a change from pasta or rice, try fufu and groundnut stew from Ghana with a Mexican cactus salad on the side.



Fufu comes from Ghana and has become popular in many other parts of Africa and the Caribbean. The recipe for fufu starts with mashing yams or cassavas to make a dough, and then the dough is boiled to form a dumpling. People use fufu as a kind of eating utensil, picking off small pieces to scoop up their food. Fufu is great to eat with West African groundnut stew, which includes peanuts, vegetables, and spices.

4a

When you are ready for your cactus salad, have no fear. The cactus spikes are removed from the flat green pads of the Mexican nopal cactus. Then, the cactus pads are cut into small, thin strips that are cooked ahead of time and served cold. Cactus salad can also include tomatoes, peppers, and cheese.



© Guajillo studio/Shutterstock.com

4a

Finally, for dessert, you might want to try avocado ice cream, which is popular in Brazil and some other Latin American countries. Or, if you prefer something warm and crisp, you might like a breaded, deep-fried candy bar that was invented in Scotland.



© Brent Hofacker/Shutterstock.com



© Brent Hofacker/Shutterstock.com

If you have enjoyed your global feast, just remember that you do not have to travel very far to explore interesting dishes from around the world. Restaurants, special grocery stores, and online recipes can bring food from around the world right to your kitchen table.

to encourage the reader to try foods
that people from other countries enjoy

to help the reader identify countries
where unusual foods are prepared

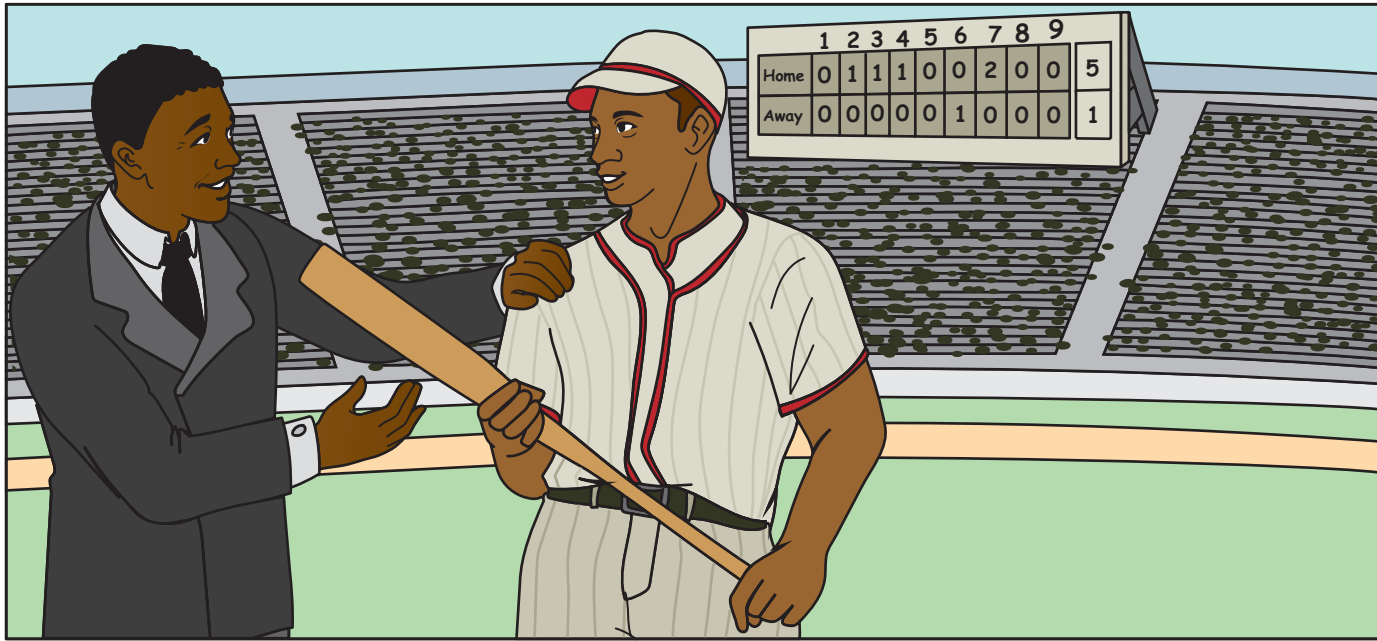
to explain to the reader how salads and
desserts are different in other countries

The Baseball Bat



Every time Andy asked his mom whether he could play with the old baseball bat that was mounted on the wall even for just a swing or two, her answer was always the same.

"No way!" Mom would say. "That bat belonged to your grandfather. It was given to him by Baseball Hall of Famer Pop Lloyd, who was a famous shortstop in the 1920s."



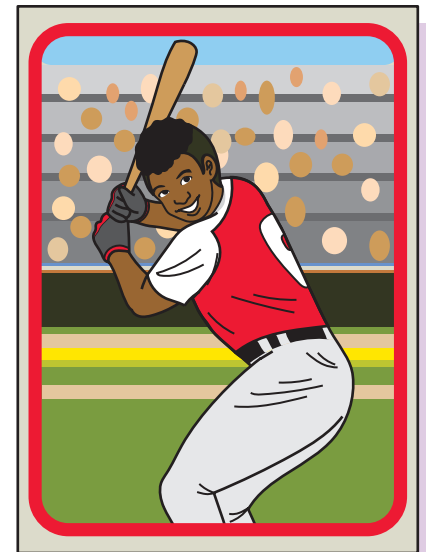
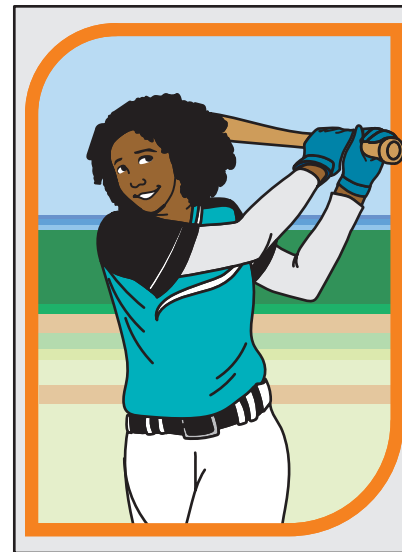
The story was that Pop Lloyd gave the bat to Andy's grandfather during an interview right after a game. Lloyd was in a bad mood after losing the game. Andy's grandfather was a sports reporter with a great sense of humor. Lloyd was upset about the loss, but Andy's grandfather made him laugh. "Thanks, I needed cheering up," Lloyd said and then handed him the baseball bat.

He saw things in a funny way.

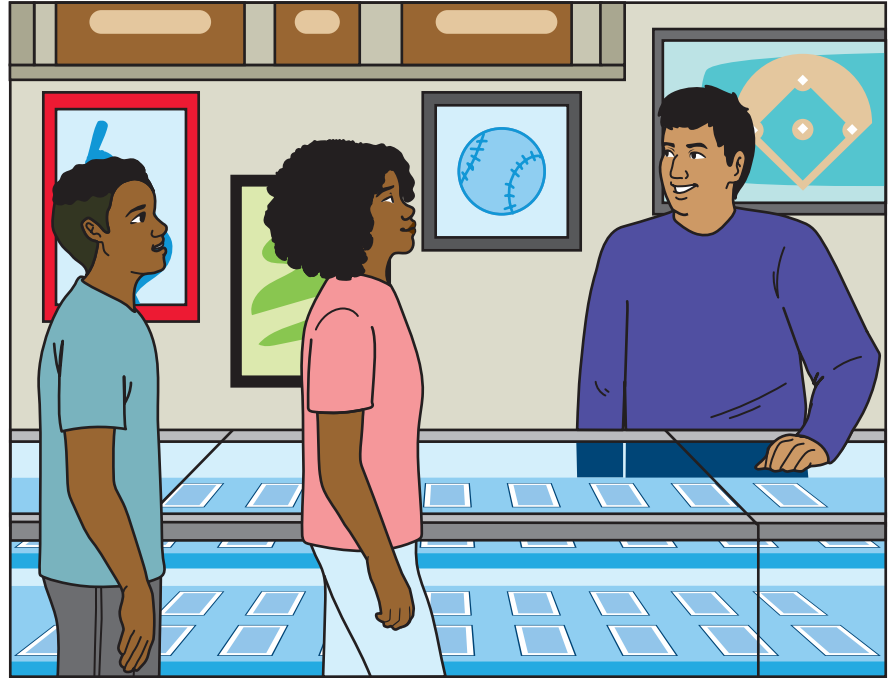
He was passionate about baseball.

When Andy's mom was a child, she loved basketball. She didn't know that the baseball bat was important. To her it was just a bat used for Sunday afternoon games in the park. But Granddad wanted his daughter to share his love of baseball. So one day he told her the story of the bat. "Louisa," he said, "this bat might not look like much, but it once belonged to the great shortstop Pop Lloyd. If you let me teach you how to play baseball, I'll give it to you."

Mom responded by asking, "Who's Pop Lloyd?" Granddad's answer must have convinced her that a bat like that wasn't something that comes along every day. She agreed to learn baseball, and she played the game all through her childhood. When she was grown, she decided to mount the bat on the wall. Andy never got to use the bat, but the story of the bat inspired him to play baseball too. In high school, Andy played on the varsity baseball team.



One afternoon, during the summer before his senior year, Andy and his mom were downtown and walked into an antique store. Mom was interested in some old baseball cards in a display case near the counter. She learned in a conversation with the store owner, Mr. Anderson, that he had a special interest in antique sports equipment. Of course, Mom mentioned the bat, and she told him she'd bring it by sometime.



Mom decides to sell the baseball bat because Andy is never going to use it.

Mom wants to trade the old baseball bat for several rare baseball cards.

Mom learns that the store owner is interested in old sports equipment.

Andy and his mom couldn't stop wondering how much the old bat might be worth. When they returned to the antique shop, they watched as Mr. Anderson rubbed his hand along the grain of the wood and gripped the bat to feel the balance of it in his hands.



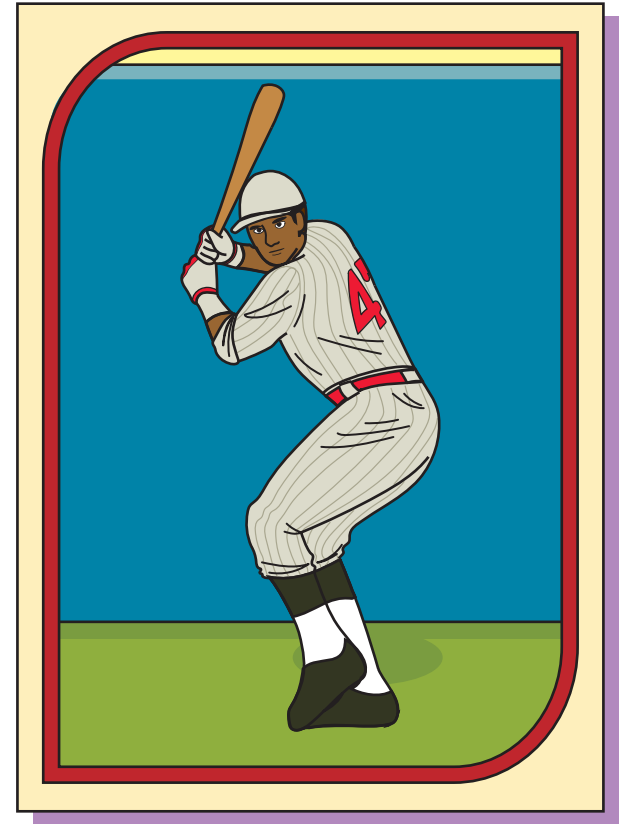
"That's a fine bat," he said, handing it back to Mom. "I can tell it has been treasured by several generations."

"It is really amazing," Mom replied, "that we somehow ended up with Pop Lloyd's bat."

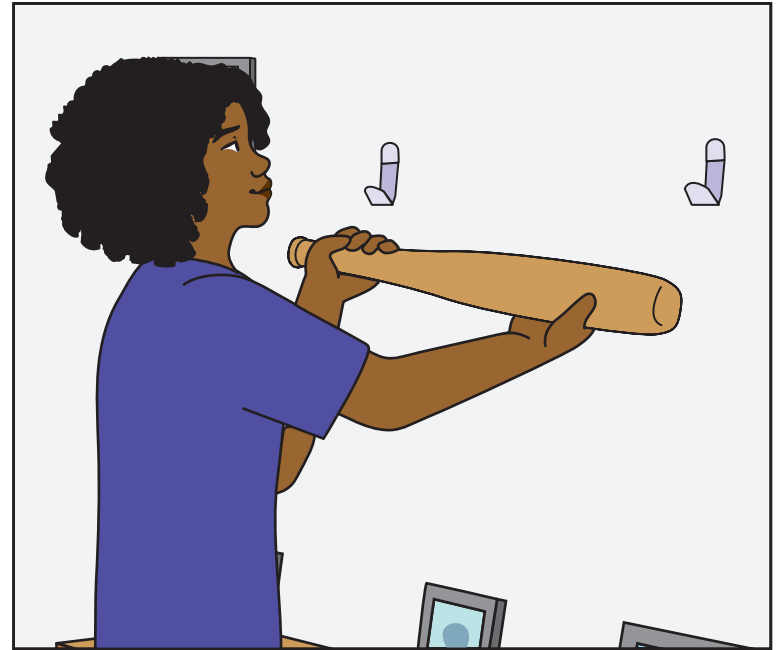
Mr. Anderson cleared his throat a little nervously and paused. Finally he said, "Unfortunately, it isn't really worth a great deal of money, so I can't offer to buy it from you."

Mom thanked Mr. Anderson, and she and Andy left the store. As they got in the car, Andy asked, "Why don't we prove him wrong and take it to another antique dealer?"

"Oh, Andy," she answered, smiling slightly, "he's an expert, so I imagine he's right."



When they returned home, Mom carefully placed the bat back on the wall. Andy realized that it really didn't matter how much the bat was worth. It was important because it had become a part of his family's history, going all the way back to his grandfather's Sunday afternoon games. That alone made it worthy of its place of honor on the wall.



Andy realizes that —

the bat is more important to his family's history than how much it is worth to an antique dealer

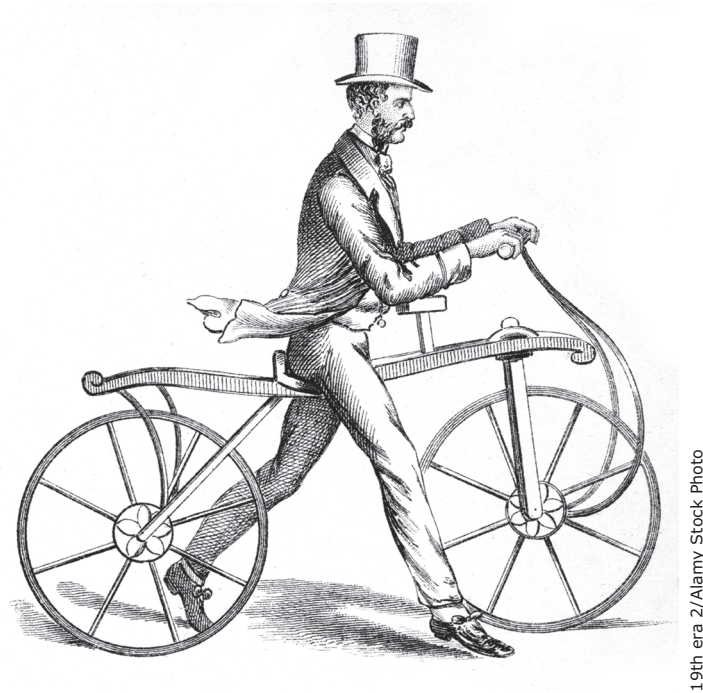
the store owner does not want to buy the old bat because customers want to buy newer bats

his mom is disappointed because she had hoped to sell the old bat to buy tickets to more baseball games

Bicycles have changed and improved. They were first invented more than 200 years ago.



Bicycles have changed and improved since they were first invented more than 200 years ago.



The first bicycles were called velocipedes. A wooden seat and two wheels with metal rims. However, not pedals. Riders sat on the seat and pushed their feet against the ground to make the velocipede move forward.

They had a wooden seat and two wheels with metal rims; however, they did not have pedals.

Besides a wooden seat and two wheels with metal rims, not pedals.

The penny-farthing bicycle was all metal, with a large front wheel and a very small back wheel. The penny-farthing was faster and more fun to ride than the velocipede. But it was dangerous. Hitting something in the road would cause the rider to fall off the bicycle. And getting on and off the bicycle was difficult. However, the penny-farthing became very popular.

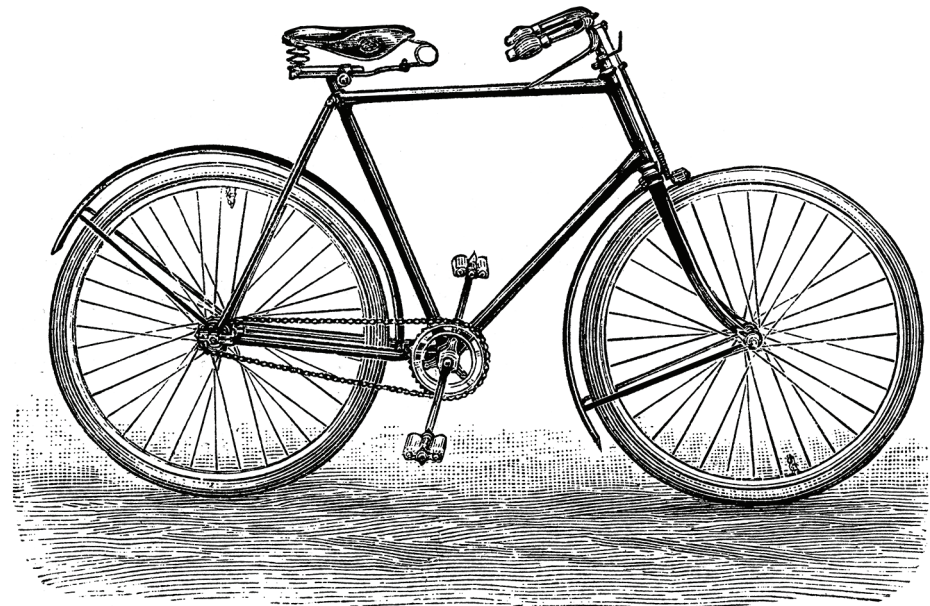


Hitting something in the road would
cause the rider to fell off the bicycle.

Hitting something in the road would
cause the rider to falling off the bicycle.

Hitting something in the road would
cause the rider to fall off the bicycle.

With the invention of the Rover Safety Bicycle, the penny-farthings became less popular. The "Safety Cycle" was easier to ride, and it was safer because the rider was closer to the ground. The pedals powered the back wheel using a chain and gears.



© iStock.com/Nastasic

Bicycles today including mountain bikes and road bikes are similar to the Rover Safety Bicycle that was first built more than 100 years ago.

Bicycles today including mountain bikes, and road bikes, are similar to the Rover Safety Bicycle that was first built more than 100 years ago.

Bicycles today, including mountain bikes and road bikes, are similar to the Rover Safety Bicycle that was first built more than 100 years ago.

Bicycles today including mountain bikes and road bikes, are similar to the Rover Safety Bicycle, that was first built more than 100 years ago.

Grizzly bears and polar bears are alike and different.

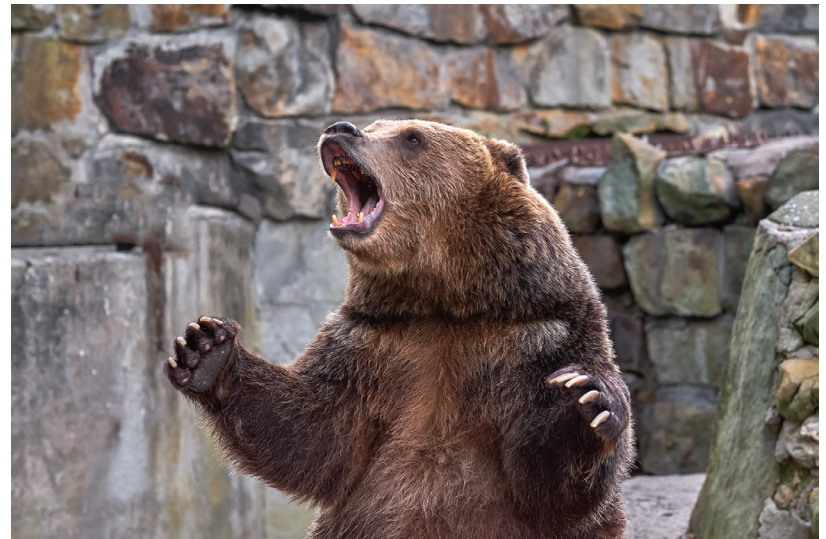


Grizzly bears and polar bears can be compared and contrasted because they are alike and different in several ways.

Both grizzly bears and polar bears are extremely large bears with thick fur coats and large paws. Polar bears have enormous paws they use for swimming. Their claws are short and sharp than the grizzly bears' claws so that they can walk on ice. Grizzly bears have longer and stronger claws that they use for digging and climbing.



© iStock.com/Andyworks

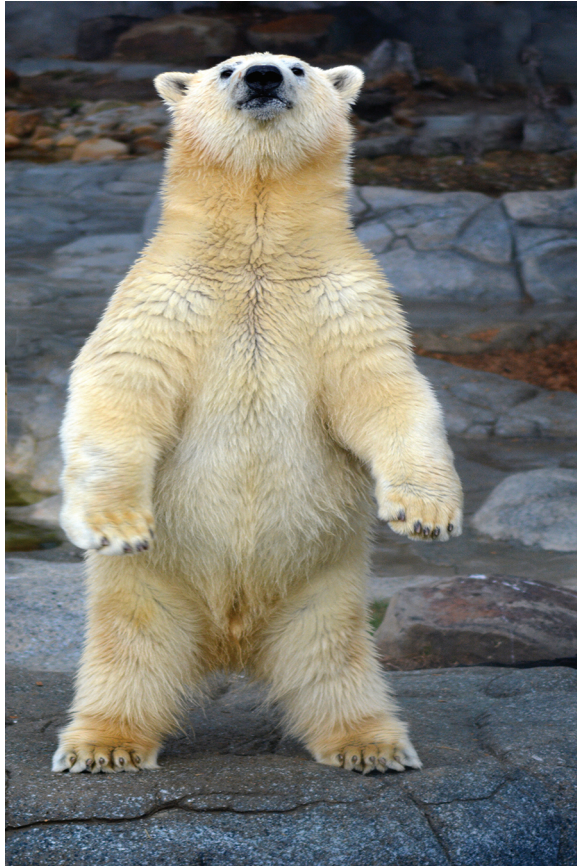


© iStock.com/fotoslavt

shorter and sharper

shortest and sharpest

15a



© iStock.com/chameleonseye



© iStock.com/wanderluster

Polar bears and grizzly bears are both excellent swimmers. Both of these bears can walk on their hind legs. Polar bears are usually larger than grizzly bears. Polar bears almost always eat meat. Grizzly bears prefer to eat fish.

Polar bears almost always eat meat, therefore grizzly bears prefer to eat fish.

Polar bears almost always eat meat, anyway grizzly bears prefer to eat fish.

Polar bears almost always eat meat, while grizzly bears prefer to eat fish.

16a



Polar bears live in arctic regions with harsh weather conditions. Polar bears are born with thick layers of fat that they need in order to keep warm. Some polar bears live in dens during the winter. Others continue to hunt for food all year.

Grizzly bears also live in cold climates. They build up their body fat while they are getting ready to hibernate through the winter season. They can hibernate for up to seven months. First, grizzly bears dig a hole for their den.



They slow down their heart rate, and they are inside the den, and their fat will last longer.

Then, so their fat will last longer, they slow down their heart rate once they are inside the den.

Then slow down their heart rate, their fat will last longer, inside the den.

Shoes with a Soul



Photo by Stefanie Keenan/WireImage/Getty Images

Blake Mycoskie got the idea for TOMS Shoes when he was on vacation in Argentina and saw many adults and children barefoot because they did not have shoes.



Photo by Stefanie Keenan/WireImage/Getty Images

Mycoskie traveled to Argentina, where he met an American woman who was distributing donated shoes to people in the poor areas of the country. Mycoskie realized that the small number of donated shoes was inadequate to give to all the people who needed them. Mycoskie wanted to do something especially to help children who needed shoes to protect their feet from infections and to give them the opportunity to attend school where shoes were required.

not enough

the right amount

Mycoskie decided to use what he knew about business to give shoes to children all over the world. His idea was to give away a pair of shoes to someone who needed them every time he sold a pair of shoes. Many people he spoke with were interested in his shoe business. However, many others thought it was a dumb idea. They said that you can't make money by giving away your product, but they did not consider the power of Mycoskie's story.



Courtesy of TOMS Shoes

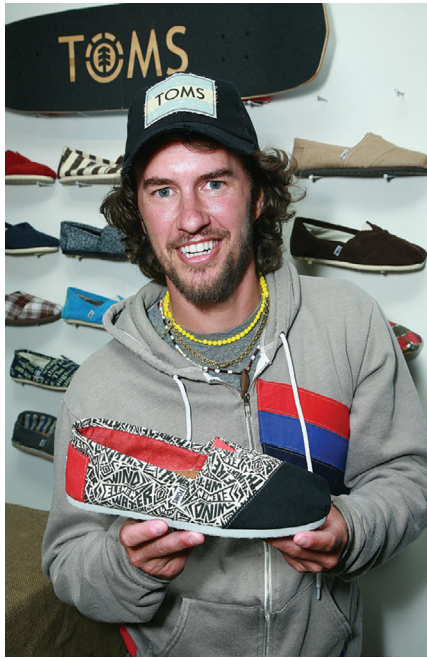


Photo by Tiffany Rose/WireImage/Getty Images

Mycoskie had seen many people in Argentina wearing a style of shoe called the alpargata. The alpargata is a lightweight shoe without laces. The top is made of fabric, and the bottom is often made of braided rope. Mycoskie asked several Argentinian shoemakers to make different styles of the alpargata shoe. He left Argentina with 250 pairs of shoes that he hoped to sell in the United States.

Mycoskie wanted to sell shoes in the United States to help children in Argentina.

Mycoskie wanted shoemakers in the United States to make shoes like the shoemakers in Argentina.

Mycoskie wanted alpargata shoes because they reminded him of his trip to Argentina.



Russell Hart/Alamy Stock Photo

Mycoskie returned from Argentina and started his new shoe company called TOMS, which stands for "Tomorrow's Shoes." His plan was that for every pair of TOMS sold, the company would give one pair of shoes to a child in Argentina who didn't have any.

In the United States, Mycoskie found a store willing to sell TOMS shoes. A newspaper article told people about the shoes and how the company hoped to help children in Argentina. The day the article was published, Mycoskie had more than 2,000 orders. Because he had only 250 pairs of shoes ready to sell, Mycoskie traveled back to Argentina to have more shoes made.



Courtesy of TOMS Shoes

Magazines started showing pictures of famous people wearing TOMS shoes. Soon people around the world wanted to buy the shoes. They enjoyed the simple and comfortable alpargata shoe style. They also enjoyed knowing that the shoes they bought helped someone else.

TOMS has given more than 75 million pairs of shoes to children around the world. Mycoskie likes to say, "Start something that matters." He has shown the world how something as simple as a shoe business can matter to millions of people.

In the United States, Mycoskie found a store willing to sell TOMS shoes.

Magazines started showing pictures of famous people wearing TOMS shoes.

TOMS has given more than 75 million pairs of shoes to children around the world.



STAAR ALTERNATE 2
English II
Spring 2025

1161620

1 2 3 4 5 A B C D E

Printed in the USA

ISD41759