



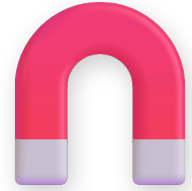
Accidental Inventions

Grade 4

Name: _____

Read the story carefully. Then answer each question below in a full sentence using evidence from the text.

Sticky Burrs, Brilliant Idea



George de Mestral loved taking his dog for walks in the Swiss Alps.

One crisp autumn day in 1941, after a long hike, he noticed something annoying. His dog's fur and his own trousers were covered in tiny, prickly burrs. He spent a long time picking them off, but his curiosity was sparked. Why did these burrs stick so well?

Instead of just throwing them away, George decided to look closer. He carefully examined a burr under his microscope. What he saw amazed him! Each burr was covered in hundreds of tiny, stiff hooks. These hooks were perfectly designed to catch onto anything with loops, like fabric threads or animal fur. He realized this natural design could be a new way to fasten things without buttons or zippers.

It took George many years of hard work and experimenting with different materials.

Finally, he developed a new fastener using two strips of fabric: one with tiny hooks and the other with soft loops. He called his invention "Velcro," combining "velour" and "crochet." Today, Velcro is used everywhere, from shoes and jackets to space suits and medical equipment, all thanks to a curious walk and some sticky burrs.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

(1) What did George de Mestral notice after his walk that sparked his curiosity?



(2) What natural event sparked George de Mestral's idea for Velcro?

(3) In the first paragraph, what does the word "prickly" mean when describing the burrs?

(4) Based on the passage, why do you think George de Mestral spent many years developing Velcro after his discovery?

(5) What did George de Mestral see when he looked at a burr under his microscope?



(6) Do you think George de Mestral's accidental discovery of how burrs stick was a good thing? Use information from the passage to support your answer.

