

The Problem of the Penny Lick

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Once upon a time, long before you or even your grandparents were born, ice cream was a special treat, just like it is today. But there was one big problem: there were no cones! ?

People would buy a scoop of ice cream from a street cart, and the vendor would serve it in a small glass dish called a "penny lick." You would lick the ice cream out of the dish and then hand it back to the vendor. The vendor would give it a quick rinse (or sometimes just a wipe with a rag!) and serve the next person. It wasn't very clean, and sometimes the glass dishes would break. There had to be a better way!

A Happy Accident at the World's Fair

The year was 1904, and a huge World's Fair was happening in St. Louis, Missouri. It was a hot summer day, and everyone wanted a cold treat. An ice cream vendor named **Arnold Fornachou** was selling scoop after scoop, and he soon ran into a big problem—he completely ran out of clean dishes!

Right next to his booth was a man named **Ernest Hamwi**. Ernest was from Syria and was selling a very thin, crispy waffle-like pastry called a *zalabia*. Seeing that Arnold was about to lose business, Ernest had a brilliant idea. He took one of his warm *zalabias*, rolled it into a pointed shape, and let it cool. It hardened into a crispy cone!

He handed the cone to Arnold, who put a scoop of ice cream on top. Voilà! The world's first ice cream cone was born out of a happy accident. People could eat the ice cream and then eat the container, too. It was delicious, convenient, and clean. No more penny licks!

The Cone Becomes Famous

The new invention was a massive hit at the World's Fair. People loved the "World's Fair Cornucopia," as it was called. Soon, inventors started creating special machines to roll and bake cones perfectly every time.

So, the next time you're enjoying a delicious scoop of your favorite ice cream in a crispy, crunchy cone, you can thank Arnold and Ernest for their quick thinking on a hot day over a hundred years ago. They didn't just solve a problem; they created one of the world's favorite treats.

Ice Cream Cone Writing Prompts

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1. **Invent a New Cone:** Imagine you are an inventor like Ernest Hamwi. Design a brand new type of ice cream cone. What is it made of (pretzels, cookies, fruit leather)? What shape is it? What special flavor does it have? Draw a picture of your invention and write a paragraph describing why it's the best cone ever created.
2. **The Magical Ice Cream Cone:** You buy an ice cream cone from a mysterious cart that just rolled into Mandan. After the first bite, you realize it's magical! What magical power does it give you? Can you fly, talk to animals, or turn things into chocolate? Write a short story about the adventure you have before the cone is all gone.
3. **A Cone's Big Day:** Write a story from the point of view of an ice cream cone. What is it like to be baked in the factory? What do you see from your spot in the ice cream shop? Describe your journey from being filled with a scoop of delicious ice cream to being enjoyed on a sunny day at Harmon Lake.
4. **The Case of the Last Cone:** It's the hottest day of the year in North Dakota, and the local ice cream shop is down to its very last, most perfect waffle cone. But just as the server is about to fill it, it disappears! Who took it? A sneaky squirrel? A younger sibling? A friendly ghost? Write a short mystery story where you are the detective solving "The Case of the Last Cone."
5. **My Perfect Ice Cream Memory:** Think about the best ice cream cone you've ever had. Where were you? Was it during a special event like the Mandan Rodeo Days or just a simple summer evening? Describe the experience using all five senses. What did the cone look, feel, smell, sound (the crunch!), and taste like?

