

Coca-Cola's secret recipe revealed?

Level 1 • Elementary

1 Key words

Fill the gaps in the sentences using these key words from the text. The paragraph numbers are given to help you.

fizzy

recipe

secret

executives

flavouring

1. A _____ is something that is only known by a few people. (title)
2. A _____ is a set of instructions for preparing a particular type of food or drink. (title)
3. A _____ is something added to a food or drink to give it a particular taste. (para 1)
4. _____ drinks contain bubbles of gas. (para 1)
5. _____ are senior managers in businesses or companies. (para 1)

century

sweetener

caffeine

myth

formula

6. A _____ is a list of the exact amounts of the ingredients that are used for making something. (para 4)
7. _____ is a substance in coffee and tea that makes you feel awake. (para 5)
8. A _____ is a story that people wrongly believe is true. (para 6)
9. A _____ is a substance added to food or drink instead of sugar. (para 6)
10. A _____ is a period of 100 years. (para 7)

2 Find the information

Look in the text and find this information as quickly as possible.

1. How many flavourings are used in Coca-Cola?
2. When was Coca-Cola first made?
3. Where do people believe the original recipe for Coca-Cola is kept?
4. Who first created the recipe for Coca-Cola?
5. When was cocaine removed from Coca-Cola?
6. When was sugar removed from the drink?

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Coca-Cola secret recipe revealed? It's the real thing, says radio host

Ed Pilkington in New York
16 February, 2011

- 1 The recipe for Coca-Cola has been a secret for almost 125 years. This has been an important part of Coca-Cola's marketing plans. According to the story, the famous seven flavourings used in the fizzy drink have not changed since Coca-Cola was first made in 1886. Today, people say, only two Coke executives know the recipe. They cannot travel together on the same plane in case there is a crash and the secret dies with them.
- 2 Now, one of America's most famous radio broadcasters says he has discovered the Coke secret. Ira Glass, of the programme *This American Life*, says he has found a copy of the recipe. People believe the original recipe is kept in a bank in Atlanta.
- 3 John Pemberton, an Atlanta chemist, first created the recipe for Coca-Cola. In 1887, he sold the recipe to a businessman who immediately placed it in a local bank so it would be safe.
- 4 Glass found a recipe that he believes is the secret formula in an old copy of a local newspaper while he was researching a different story. On an inside page he found an article about the secret formula with seven flavourings. The recipe came from an old notebook that belonged to Pemberton's best friend, RR Evans. Glass did some research and found the notebook had been passed from generation to generation until it reached a chemist in Georgia called Everett Beal.
- 5 The recipe includes extract of coca leaves, caffeine, plenty of sugar, lime juice, vanilla and caramel. Then the seven flavourings are added: alcohol and six oils – orange, lemon, nutmeg, coriander, neroli and cinnamon. The formula is very similar to the recipe described by Mark Pendergrast who wrote a history of Coca-Cola in 1993.
- 6 Coke's secret recipe is actually partly just a myth. The recipe has in fact changed a lot over the last hundred years. Cocaine was removed from the drink in 1904. Coca leaves are still used but only after the cocaine has been removed. In 1980, the company replaced sugar with a cheaper sweetener that is often found in American food and drink.
- 7 Despite these changes, one thing has not changed: Coca-Cola keeps its recipe secret. People have been talking about the secret recipe for more than a century and this has been good for business. The company has reacted to the *This American Life* story in its usual way, stating: "Many people have tried to discover our secret formula but they've been unsuccessful."

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3 Comprehension check

Match the beginnings and endings to make sentences about the text.

1. According to the story, only two Coca-Cola executives ...
 2. People say the original recipe ...
 3. Ira Glass found the recipe when ...
 4. The recipe for Coca-Cola has ...
 5. There are seven flavourings ...
 6. The Coca-Cola company says that no-one ...
- a. ... is kept in a bank in Atlanta.
 - b. ... has found the secret formula.
 - c. ... know the secret formula.
 - d. ... including nutmeg and coriander.
 - e. ... changed a lot over the last hundred years.
 - f. ... he was researching a different story.

4 Chunks

Rearrange the words to make phrases from the text.

1. 125 almost years for
2. the a recipe copy of
3. copy newspaper an a local of old
4. inside on page an
5. hundred over last the years
6. more century for a than

5 Ingredients and flavourings

Three of these words are ingredients and three are flavourings. Write *I* after a word which you think is an ingredient of Coca-Cola and *F* after a word which is a flavouring. Check your answers in the text.

1. orange _____
2. sugar _____
3. lime juice _____
4. lemon _____
5. caramel _____
6. cinnamon _____

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6 Word stress

Divide these words into two groups according to their stress.

create	react	famous	believe	secret	chemist
copy	notebook	despite	include	describe	usual

0 o	o 0

7 Discussion

Do you believe the stories about Coca-Cola? Why? Why not? Why do you think it has been an important part of Coca-Cola's marketing plans to keep the recipe a secret?

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KEY

1 Key words

1. secret
2. recipe
3. flavouring
4. fizzy
5. executives
6. formula
7. caffeine
8. myth
9. sweetener
10. century

2 Find the information

1. seven
2. 1886
3. in a bank (in Atlanta)
4. John Pemberton
5. 1904
6. 1980

3 Comprehension check

1. c
2. a
3. f
4. e
5. d
6. b

4 Chunks

1. for almost 125 years
2. a copy of the recipe
3. an old copy of a local newspaper
4. on an inside page
5. over the last hundred years
6. for more than a century

5 Ingredients and flavourings

1. F
2. I
3. I
4. F
5. I
6. F

6 Word stress

0 o	o 0
famous	create
secret	react
chemist	believe
copy	despite
notebook	include
usual	describe