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Opening extract from

How We Make Stuff

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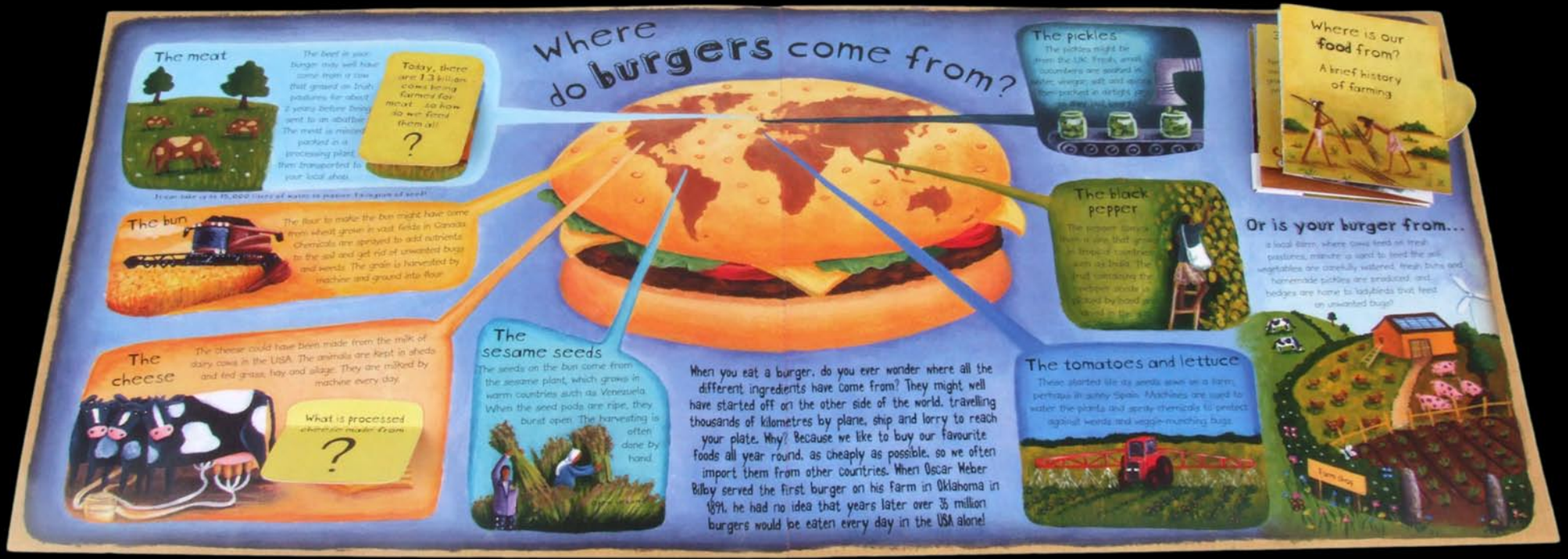
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Textiles
1769
1782
Iron making
1784
Transport
1803
1876
1885
Electricity
1878
Who invented factories?
Every day, we use an awful lot of stuff – from clothes and food to books and computers. So where does all this stuff come from? Just a few hundred years ago, everything was made using simple tools in homes or small workshops. But in 1769, a British wig-maker called Richard Arkwright invented a machine for spinning cotton, and constructed a large building filled with workers to operate these machines. This was the first factory.
Artisans
The story of stuff
1 Extraction
2 Manufacturing
3 Shopping
4 Using our stuff
5 Recycling
6 Dumping
SUPERMARKET
ELECTRONICS

Where do burgers come from?



The meat

The beef in your burger may well have come from a cow that grazed on lush pastures for about 2 years before being sent to an abattoir. The meat is minced, packed in a processing plant, then transported to your local shops.

Today, there are 1.3 billion cows being farmed for meat – so how do we feed them all?

The bun

The flour to make the bun might have come from wheat grown in vast fields in Canada. Chemicals are sprayed to add nutrients to the soil and get rid of unwanted bugs and weeds. The grain is harvested by machine and ground into flour.

The cheese

The cheese could have been made from the milk of dairy cows in the USA. The animals are kept in sheds and fed grass, hay and silage. They are milked by machine every day.

What is processed cheese made from?

The sesame seeds

The seeds on the bun come from the sesame plant, which grows in warm countries such as Venezuela. When the seed pods are ripe, they burst open. The harvesting is often done by hand.

When you eat a burger, do you ever wonder where all the different ingredients have come from? They might well have started off on the other side of the world, travelling thousands of kilometres by plane, ship and lorry to reach your plate. Why? Because we like to buy our favourite foods all year round, as cheaply as possible, so we often import them from other countries. When Oscar Weber Bilby served the first burger on his farm in Oklahoma in 1891, he had no idea that years later over 35 million burgers would be eaten every day in the USA alone!

The pickles

The pickles might be from the UK. Fresh, small cucumbers are washed in water, vinegar, salt and spices, then packed in jars by [illegible]

The black pepper

The pepper [illegible] is one that grows in tropical rainforests such as India. The fruit containing the pepper seeds is picked by hand and [illegible]

The tomatoes and lettuce

These started life as seeds sown on a farm, perhaps in sunny Spain. Machines are used to water the plants and spray chemicals to protect against weeds and veggie-munching bugs.

Or is your burger from...

a local farm, where cows feed on fresh pastures, manure is used to feed the soil, vegetables are carefully watered, fresh buns and homemade pickles are produced, and hedges are home to ladybirds that feed on unwanted bugs?