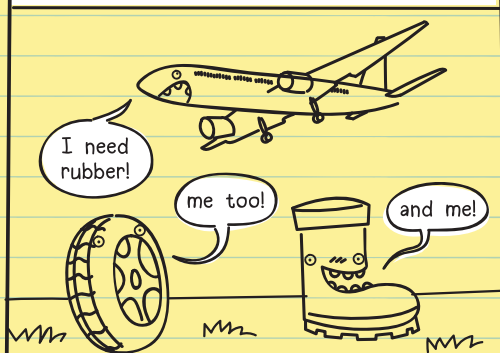


# from OOPS to AWESOME

The accidental invention of Silly Putty®

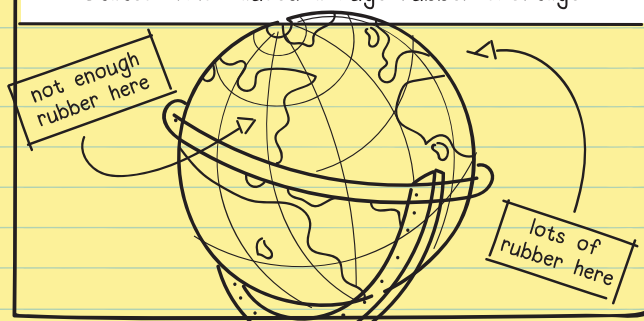
This story starts with rubber. Rubber is used to make all kinds of things, from boots to car tires to airplane parts.



Before the 1940s, most of this rubber was made from natural latex, which is found in the sap of the rubber tree.



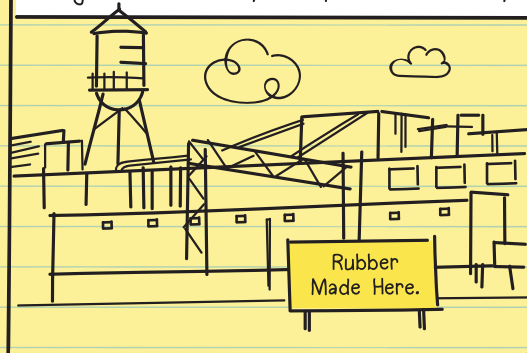
Rubber trees grow mostly in Asian countries. During World War II, the fighting made it almost impossible to transport rubber into the United States. This caused a huge rubber shortage.



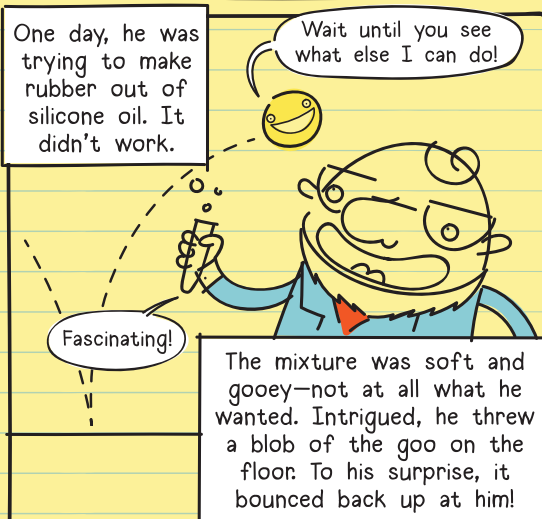
This was a really big problem. People had to figure out how to make a lot of synthetic rubber, and fast.



Through a lot of hard work by many people, the push to create synthetic rubber for the war was successful. But along the way, an engineer named James Wright made a very unexpected discovery.



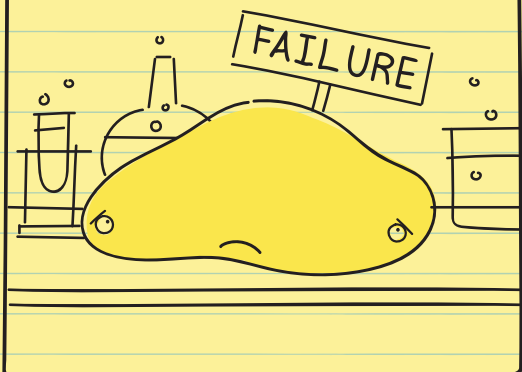
One day, he was trying to make rubber out of silicone oil. It didn't work.



The mixture was soft and gooey—not at all what he wanted. Intrigued, he threw a blob of the goo on the floor. To his surprise, it bounced back up at him!

As a rubber substitute, the new material was a complete failure.

But the bouncing goo was so interesting that Wright didn't want to leave it on the shelf. He shared his discovery with other researchers in the hopes that someone would find a use for it.



Someone did! Wright's goo become one of the most popular toys ever made—Silly Putty®.

In fact, people found many uses for the putty!



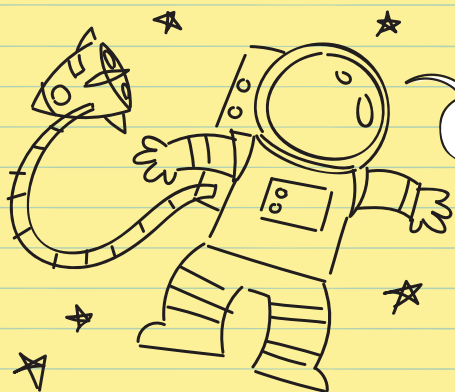
Rub it on a dirty surface to pick up dust.



Squeeze it to regain hand strength after an injury.



Stick it under a table leg to fix a wobble.



I use it to hold down tools in zero gravity!

And it's all because Wright failed to make rubber—but kept his eyes open and discovered something new instead!

Now that's what I call a happy accident!

