



Mars: Over 100 Years of Chocolate

Listening Questions 1:

1. What was the original company name of Mars Inc?
2. How much was the company's sales total in the year that it launched Milky Way?
3. What 2 hit products launched in the early 30s?
4. Who took over the business after the founder passed away?

Listening Questions 2:

1. How many employees does Mars have around the world?
2. How much did Mars and Berkshire Hathaway pay to acquire the Wrigley Company?
3. Which Mars-owned pet food brands generate over \$1 billion in sales each year?
4. In 2013, what was the number one Halloween product in the US?

Transcript 1:

The founder of Mars Inc, Frank C. Mars, suffered from polio as a child so his mother had to teach him at home. While they were at home, she also taught him how to make hand-dipped chocolate candy. He went on to found the Mar-O-Bar Company in 1920 in Minneapolis, USA. It became Mars Inc in 1929.

In 1922, the first chocolate bar that the company sold, the Mar-O-Bar, was not a hit and generated less than \$100,000 in sales. The following year, the company introduced the Milky Way chocolate bar which was a huge hit and boosted sales to \$793,000. In the early 30s, Snickers and 3 Musketeers bars were launched and both products have been sold for over 80 years now.

In 1934, Frank C. Mars passed away and his son, Forrest, took over the business. Under Forrest's leadership, Mars Inc diversified its business and introduced more hit products such as M&M's.



Transcript 2:

The modern-day Mars Inc is still family-owned and it is one of the biggest family-owned companies in the US. In 2013, it had net sales of over \$33 billion and over 75,000 employees worldwide. The business has expanded far beyond chocolate to include chewing gum, drinks, pet food and other petcare products.

In 2008, Mars entered the chewing gum market by acquiring the Wrigley Company, which is the world's largest chewing gum manufacturer, for \$23 billion. Berkshire Hathaway, the holding company that is led by Warren Buffett, joined Mars in the acquisition as a minority shareholder.

Three of Mars' pet food brands (Whiskas, Pedigree, and Royal Canin) each generate over \$1 billion in sales per year.

In the US, October is one of the biggest periods for Mars' chocolate products. In 2013, Mars had over \$1 billion in Halloween chocolate sales for the first time and Snickers was the number one product handed out to kids.