TOOTHBRUSH - A CLEAN STORY

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PDF 1: Reading Passage + Comprehension

Title: Toothbrush: A Clean Story – Reading & Comprehension

Level: Pre-Intermediate to Intermediate (A2–B1)

Time: 20–30 minutes



Vocabulary

Word	Meaning	Sounds like
chew stick	a small twig used for cleaning teeth	CHOO stik
bristle	the stiff hairs on a brush	BRIS-uhl
hygienic	clean and safe, free from germs	hy-JEE-nik
breakthrough	an important discovery or invention	BREAK-throo
nanobots	very tiny robots	NANO-bots

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Reading Passage

Toothbrush: A Clean Story

We brush our teeth every day, but have you ever wondered about the story behind the toothbrush?

THEN (Ancient Times):

People have been cleaning their teeth for thousands of years. In ancient Egypt, Rome, and many other cultures, they used **chew sticks** (also called miswak) — small twigs with one end frayed into soft bristles. Some also used bronze scrapers or powders made from crushed shells.

NOW (The Modern Brush):

The first toothbrush similar to today's version appeared in China in 1498, with bristles made from pig hair. The real breakthrough came in 1780 when **William Addis**, an Englishman in prison, invented the modern toothbrush. He got the idea from a broom, drilled holes into a bone handle, and inserted pig bristles. After leaving prison, he started a successful toothbrush business. In 1938, nylon bristles replaced pig hair, making toothbrushes softer and more hygienic.

NEXT (The Future Clean?):

Today we have manual and electric toothbrushes. In the future, scientists are working on smart toothbrushes and even **dental nanobots** — tiny robots that could clean teeth automatically. The simple toothbrush continues to evolve, but its goal remains the same: keeping our teeth healthy and clean.

Comprehension Questions

A. True or False **True / False**

1. Ancient people never cleaned their teeth. _____
2. William Addis invented the toothbrush while he was in prison. _____
3. Pig hair bristles were replaced by nylon because nylon is more hygienic. _____
4. Dental nanobots already clean our teeth every day. _____

B. Multiple Choice

1. What gave William Addis the idea for the toothbrush?
   a) A broom
   b) An electric toothbrush
   c) A chew stick
2. What does the image show in the "NEXT" section?
   a) Ancient chew sticks
   b) Dental nanobots and future technology
   c) Only manual toothbrushes

C. Short Answer

1. What is the difference between "Then", "Now", and "Next" in the toothbrush story?
2. Why is the toothbrush considered an important invention?

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