Name _____

Static Electricity

By Cindy Grigg

Have you ever had someone rub a balloon against your hair? What happened? Did your hair stand up? Did the balloon then stick to the wall? How did that happen? All matter -- every object, you, even the air -- has tiny bits of electricity called **electric charges.**

Every atom of matter has electrons having electric charges. When you rub two objects together, you can cause these charges to move from one object to another. The balloon picked up charges from your hair. The balloon and the wall have charges that are unlike (or opposite from) each other. Unlike charges attract or pull toward each other. This pulling force between unlike charges makes the balloon stick to the wall.

Try rubbing two balloons with a piece of wool. If you hold the two balloons near each other, they will push away from each other. The balloons will have electric charges that are the same. Like charges push away from (repel) each other.

This kind of electric charge is called **static electricity.** Static electricity builds up on an object, like the balloon. When you rub the balloon, you are moving electric charges from one object to the other. It is called **static** because it doesn't move by itself.

Static electricity builds up on an object. When you walk across carpet and touch a metal doorknob, that shock you feel comes from static electricity. You build up electric charges on your skin. When you reach for the doorknob, the charges can jump. You might see a spark when this happens. You might get a shock! Lightning is a form of static electricity. Electric charges jump from cloud to cloud. They can jump from a cloud to the ground, too. Static electricity can't be used to run your TV or lights.

Questions

_____ 1. Tiny bits of electricity in matter are called _____.

A. Electric charges
B. Electric currents
C. Electric circuits
D. Static electricity

2. The word "static" means _____.

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_____ 3. An example of static electricity is _____.

A. lightning
B. thunder
C. electricity in your house
D. all of the above

_____ 4. Charges that are unlike or opposite from each other will _____ each other.

A. pull toward
B. attract
C. both A and B
D. neither A nor B

5. Like charges or charges that are the same will _____.

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Name _____

Describe an example of static electricity you have seen in your own life.

Write five facts you have learned about static electricity.