

Building a Better Bicycle

by Linda Ruggieri



Bicycles have a long, interesting history. The first bicycle was developed more than two hundred years ago. Early bicycles, however, did not look like today's bikes.

One of the first bicycles was called the hobby horse. It was made of wood! People rode by pushing their feet along on the ground.

Later, a bicycle that had pedals and metal tires was invented. It was not comfortable. It was called the boneshaker. Inventors kept working to make bicycles more comfortable

Next, the high wheeler was developed. It had a very big wheel in the front. This bicycle was not easy to ride, because the rider sat high up on the bike. The rider could be badly hurt in a fall. Then bicycles began to have two wheels that were the same size.

Those bikes looked more like bicycles today.

More than one hundred years ago, bicycles began to have rubber tires filled with air. That was a solution to the problem of a bumpy ride. The new tires made riding smoother.

Today, children's bicycles and racing bikes are popular. People ride bikes to get exercise. Bicycling is safer, too. Now people wear helmets, and bikes have reflectors on them.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What was developed more than two hundred years ago?

- A. the first bicycle
- B. the first bike with pedals
- C. the first high wheeler

2. One problem with early bicycles was that they were bumpy to ride. What was used as the solution to this problem?

- A. bikes with rubber tires filled with air
- B. wooden bikes without pedals
- C. bikes with metal tires and pedals

3. Early bicycles were very different from today's bicycles.

What evidence from the text supports this conclusion?

- A. The first bicycle was developed more than two hundred years ago.
- B. People today ride bicycles to get exercise, and wear helmets as they ride.
- C. The hobby horse was made of wood, and people rode it by pushing their feet on the ground.

4. The bicycle with pedals and metal tires was called the boneshaker. What can you infer about the bicycle based on this name?

- A. It was smooth to ride, but the seat made people's bones hurt.
- B. People liked riding this bicycle more than earlier bicycles.
- C. It was bumpy, shaky, and not comfortable to ride.

5. What is the main idea of this article?

- A. Rubber tires are very important to bicycles today because they make riding smoother.
- B. The first bicycle was developed more than two hundred years ago.
- C. Bicycles have changed and gotten better in many ways since they were first developed.

6. Read these sentences from the text.

"Bicycles have a long, interesting history. The first bicycle was developed more than two hundred years ago. Early bicycles, however, did not look like today's bikes." What does the word "developed" most nearly mean here?

- A. created
- B. found
- C. broken apart

7. Choose the answer that best completes this sentence.

The high wheeler was developed _____ a bicycle that had pedals and metal tires was invented.

- A. then
- B. after
- C. before

8. What was one problem with the bicycle called the boneshaker?

9. Why isn't the high wheeler bicycle used by many people today? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

10. This article is called "Building a Better Bicycle." How have today's bicycles solved the problems of earlier bicycles? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Seeds Need to Move

by Rachelle Kreisman



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A plant starts life as a seed. When that seed grows into a plant, that plant makes new seeds. Those seeds, too, can grow and turn into more new plants.

But did you know that not every seed grows into a plant? To become a plant, a seed has to travel. That is because seeds need room to grow. A seed has to be far enough away from other plants so that it gets the sunlight and water it needs. If a seed falls to the ground too close to its parent plant, it may not grow.

Of course, wind can spread the seeds for many plants. But some plants depend on animals to move their seeds. Those seeds are called hitchhiker seeds. They travel on something else that moves!

Many hitchhiker seeds are prickly. They have tiny rows of hooks. The hooks can stick to fur or feathers. Hitchhiker seeds can travel for miles on an animal's body. Then they fall off or are removed. If they fall in a place that is good for growing, the seeds will grow into plants, too!

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What do seeds need to do to become a plant?

- A. stay near other plants
- B. make new seeds
- C. travel away from other plants

2. What kind of seed does this passage describe in detail?

- A. sunflower seed
- B. hitchhiker seed
- C. an animal's seed

3. Some plant seeds are made a certain way so that they will be able to travel.

What evidence from the text supports this conclusion?

- A. If a seed falls to the ground too close to its parent plant, it may not grow.
- B. Not every seed grows into a plant, because a seed needs to travel to become a plant.
- C. Hitchhiker seeds have tiny hooks so they can stick to animal fur or bird feathers.

4. Why might a seed not grow if it falls to the ground too close to its parent plant?

- A. The parent plant might take up all the sunlight and water that the seed needs to grow.
- B. The seed might not get pushed into the soil if it falls too close to the parent plant.
- C. The parent plant might give the seed all of its water, which is not good for the seed.

5. What is the main idea of this article?

- A. A seed has to move far away enough from other plants to become a plant because seeds need room to grow.
- B. Hitchhiker seeds can travel for miles on an animal's body, then fall off and grow into a plant.
- C. All seeds grow into plants, but only some plants are able to make new seeds.

6. Read these sentences from the text.

"But some plants depend on animals to move their seeds. Those seeds are called hitchhiker seeds. They travel on something else that moves!"

What does the phrase "depend on" most nearly mean in these sentences?

- A. move
- B. need
- C. hold

7. Read these sentences from the text.

"Of course, wind can spread the seeds for many plants. But some plants depend on animals to move their seeds."

What does the word "their" refer to?

- A. some plants
- B. animals
- C. the wind

8. What are hitchhiker seeds?

9. Why do seeds need room in order to grow?

10. Read these sentences from the text.

"Hitchhiker seeds can travel for miles on an animal's body. Then they fall off or are removed. If they fall in a place that is good for growing, the seeds will grow into plants, too!"

What would a place that is good for the hitchhiker seed to grow be like? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

How Not to Save a Sand Castle

by Linda Ruggieri



Gavin and Lily were working hard on their sand castle. They decorated it with shells. They built towers and doors. Their castle was gigantic!

Lily built a high wall to protect the sand castle from the wind. Gavin said he thought the wall would stop people from accidentally stepping on the castle and smashing it.

People walked by and said nice things about the sand castle. Lily and Gavin's mom took a photograph of it. Then she said it was time for lunch. Lily and Gavin ran with their mom to the snack bar. "We will finish our castle when we get back," they said.

After lunch, the children went back to the beach. But where was the sand castle? Did the wind blow it down? Did someone step on it?

Lily and Gavin's mom explained what had happened. The ocean waves had moved up the beach. The rise and fall of the big waves had pushed water farther up onto the shore and the sand. The water must have washed away their castle.

"Some of our shells are scattered around here," said Lily. "We should build another sand castle."

"Okay," Gavin agreed. "Let's get started!"

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What are Gavin and Lily doing at the beginning of the story?

- A. They are swimming in the ocean.
- B. They are taking a photograph.
- C. They are working on a sand castle.

2. Where does this story take place?

- A. at the beach
- B. at a park
- C. at a skating rink

3. Read this sentence from the story.

"Gavin and Lily were working hard on their sand castle."

What evidence from the story supports the idea that Gavin and Lily were working hard?

- A. They could not find their sand castle when they came back after lunch.
- B. Their sand castle was gigantic.
- C. Their sand castle was washed away by the ocean waves.

4. How do Gavin and Lily feel when they learn that their sand castle has been washed away?

- A. Gavin and Lily are upset and never want to build a sand castle again.
- B. Gavin and Lily are eager to build another sand castle.
- C. Gavin and Lily are surprised that the ocean was strong enough to wash away their sand castle.

5. What is the main idea of this story?

- A. Gavin and Lily build a big sandcastle, but the waves wash it away.
 - B. Lily, Gavin, and their mom go to a snack bar for lunch.
 - C. The people who walk by Gavin and Lily's sand castle say nice things about it.
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6. Read this paragraph from the story.

"After lunch, the children went back to the beach. But where was the sand castle? Did the wind blow it down? Did someone step on it?"

Why does the author start writing questions in this paragraph?

- A. to show that none of the characters know what has happened to the castle
- B. to show readers what the children are thinking
- C. to show that even authors sometimes do not know what is happening in a story

7. Choose the answer that best completes this sentence.

The big ocean waves moved up the beach, _____ they washed away the sand castle.

- A. so
- B. because
- C. but

8. Why does Lily build a wall?

9. What does Gavin think the wall that Lily builds will stop people from doing?

10. Do Lily and Gavin do a good job of protecting their sand castle? Why or why not?
Support your answer with evidence from the story.
