Bicycles

Pre-Reading

A. Warm-Up Questions

1. What do you think the first bicycles looked like?
2. How are bikes like airplanes?
3. Are bicycles popular in your country?

B. Vocabulary Preview

Match up as many words and meanings as you can. Check this exercise again after seeing the words in context on page 2.

1. steer - (a) very big
2. pedal - (b) almost the same
3. giant - (c) a person who rides a bicycle
4. cyclist - (d) to turn in a certain direction
5. similar - (e) a flat square that you push with your foot
Did you know that the first bicycles didn’t have foot pedals? Cyclists had to run down a hill and jump on the seat. There was no way to steer either. These bikes were called “hobbyhorses.”

The next bicycles didn’t have foot pedals either. Inventors added hand pedals first. When inventors finally added foot pedals, they also added a giant front wheel. These early bikes had metal tires and weren’t very safe. People nicknamed them “boneshakers.”

Did you know that riding a bicycle is a lot like flying an airplane? The way that you balance, turn, and glide is similar for both. The first flying machines were made of bicycle parts. The Wright Brothers loved bicycles. They had a bicycle shop. In the back of the shop, they invented the airplane. They attached wings to their bicycles. This helped them learn about speed and wind.

Can you guess which country has the nickname “Bicycle Kingdom”?
Comprehension

Discuss these questions in pairs, and write the answers below.

1. What was the first type of bike pedals?

2. What was funny about the first bikes with foot pedals?

3. Why do you think people called these bikes “boneshakers”?

4. What is riding a bicycle similar to?

5. Who used bicycle parts to invent a flying machine?

Bonus Question

Can you guess which country has the nickname “Bicycle Kingdom”?

- The United States
- England
- China
- The Netherlands
Practice

A. Odd One Out

Look at the three words in each list. Two words in each list are related. Circle the one that doesn’t belong.

1. giant  
   - large  
   - glide  

2. inventor  
   - creator  
   - either  

3. alike  
   - a lot  
   - similar  

4. attached  
   - connected  
   - flew  

5. bike  
   - turn  
   - steer  

B. Word Jumble

Read the clues and try to unscramble the words. Then gather up all of the bold letters. Can you unscramble the mystery word to complete the sentence?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Clue</th>
<th>Scrambled</th>
<th>Unscrambled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>give a different name to a person or object</td>
<td>mecknian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>the negative form of &quot;too&quot;</td>
<td>herite</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>the opposite of &quot;dangerous&quot;</td>
<td>fesa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>has two wheels and two foot pedals</td>
<td>yicbelc</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>very big</td>
<td>ntgai</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>you make these go around with your feet</td>
<td>dalpes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A person who rides a bike is a ____________________________.
Listening

Listen to a recording of this reading. Fill in the gaps. Listen again and check your answers.

Bicycles

1. Did you know that the first bicycles didn’t have foot pedals? __ __ __ __ __ __ had to run down a hill and jump on the seat. There was no way to __ __ __ __ either. These bikes were called “hobbyhorses.”

2. The next bicycles didn’t have foot pedals either. Inventors added hand pedals first. When inventors finally added foot __ __ __ __ __, they also added __ __ __ __ front wheels. These early bikes had metal tires and weren’t very safe. People nicknamed them “boneshakers.”

3. Did you know that riding a bicycle is a lot like flying an airplane? The way that you balance, turn, and glide is __ __ __ __ __ __ for both. The first flying machines were made of bicycle parts. The Wright Brothers loved bicycles. They had a bicycle shop. In the back of the shop, they invented the airplane. They attached __ __ __ __ to their bicycles. This helped them learn about speed and wind.

4. Can you guess which __ __ __ __ __ __ has the nickname “Bicycle Kingdom”?
Answer Key

Lesson Description:
Students learn about the history of the bicycle through reading, speaking, listening, and vocabulary tasks.

Level: Low Int – Int
Time: 1–2 hours
Tags: bicycle, bike, reading, discussion, vocabulary, discovery

Pre-Reading

A. Warm-Up Questions
Answers will vary.

B. Vocabulary Preview
1. d  2. e  3. a  4. c  5. b

Reading

Read individually, in small groups, or as a class. You can also play the listening as your students read along. A gap-fill version of the reading is available on page 5. Help your students with vocabulary and expressions that they are unfamiliar with.

Comprehension

1. Hand pedals were the first type of bike pedals.
2. The first bikes with foot pedals had a giant front wheel.
3. These bikes were called "boneshakers" because they had metal wheels and were not very safe or smooth.
4. Riding a bicycle is similar to flying a plane.
5. The Wright brothers used bike parts to invent the airplane.

Bonus Answer: China

Practice

A. Odd One Out
1. glide  3. a lot  5. bike
2. either  4. flew

B. Word Jumble
1. nickname  3. safe  5. giant
2. either  4. bicycle  6. pedals

Mystery Word: cyclist

(continued on the next page...)

Copyright 2017, Red River Press Inc. For use by ESL Library members only. (VERSION 1.0)
Answer Key cont.

Listening

1. Cyclists, steer       4. wings
2. pedals, giant        5. country
3. similar

More Facts to Share:

1. In New York City, people can usually get to work faster by bicycle than by car.

2. A cyclist once rode his bicycle across the US with only his back wheel on the ground. This trick is called a “wheelie.”

3. There are close to 300 million bicycles in China. However, China is now entering its “automobile age.”

4. In 1979, a cyclist crossed the English Channel in a human-powered flying machine. It was part bicycle, part hang glider.

5. When he was a teenager, Lance Armstrong got hit by a truck and fell off his bike. He wasn’t wearing a helmet and almost died.

6. About 18 bicycles can fit in one parking spot.

Editor’s Note:

Students who complete a task quickly can color in the image on page 2.