

You might be surprised to know that bicycles have existed for less than two hundred years. No one is sure who invented this popular two-wheeled machine, but it was probably either the German Karl von Drais, in 1817, or the American W K Clarkson, in 1819.

5 The early models didn't look much like the bicycles of today. The front wheel was much bigger than the back one, and also there weren't any pedals – riders had to move themselves forward by pushing their feet against the ground.

Pedals finally arrived in the 1840s, and in 1879 an Englishman named Henry Lawson had the idea of connecting them to the back wheel with a chain. Gears, which made things much easier for those cycling uphill, first appeared in the 1890s.

10 There are now approximately one billion bicycles in the world – more than twice the total number of cars – and they are the main form of transport in some developing countries. They have to compete with cars on the streets of all the world's cities, and the two forms of transport don't always mix well. In London in 2005, for example, over 300 cyclists were either killed or seriously injured in accidents involving cars. Even though bicycles are much more  
15 environmentally friendly than cars, most governments don't do much to encourage people to ride rather than drive. In China, which is famous for having a huge number of bicycles (about 200 million), the authorities in the city of Shanghai even banned cycling for a while in 2003.

Cycling is on the rise in the United Kingdom, and the number of annual journeys made by bike in London has increased 50 % over the last five years. Experts say there is a mixture of  
20 reasons for this boom: concerns about the environment, the desire to keep fit, and also the fact that cycling is often not only cheaper but also quicker than travelling by car.

However, although one in three British adults owns a bicycle, they still don't use them nearly as much as they could. Bikes are used for a mere 2 % of journeys in the UK, while the figure for The Netherlands is an impressive 2 %.

25 Cycling is becoming more popular as a competitive sport, and the most famous race is of course the three-week *Tour de France*, which takes place every July. The American Lance Armstrong won this event every year from 1999 to 2005 – one of the greatest individual sporting achievements of all time.

adapted from: <http://www.pedalinghistory.com/PHhistory.html>  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bicycle>  
<http://inventors.about.com/library/inventors/blbicycle.htm>  
<http://insideout.net>

**a) Multiple Choice**

*Read the text very carefully. Then mark the correct answer according to the text.*

- A) Nobody is really sure when the bicycle was invented, but it was probably in one of two years. Which answer is correct?
- 1682 or 1684
  - 1757 or 1759
  - 1817 or 1819
  - 1825 or 1827
- B) Why didn't early bicycles look much like today's models?
- They only had one wheel.
  - The wheels were different sizes.
  - They were made of wood.
  - They were made of metal.
- C) According to experts, which of the following sentences is not an explanation for the recent increase in bicycle use in London?
- People want to keep fit.
  - People have more money, so they can afford to buy good bicycles.
  - Travelling by car is often slower than travelling by bicycle.
  - Going by bike is less expensive than going by car.
- D) In The Netherlands, what percentage of journeys is made by bicycle?
- Less than 5 %.
  - About 5 – 10 %.
  - More than 25 %.
  - More than 45 %.
- E) What was Lance Armstrong's amazing achievement?
- Cycling to work every day for twenty years.
  - Winning the *Tour de France* seven times.
  - Cycling all the way around the world.
  - Winning the *Grand Prix of France* seven times.

**b) True/False/Not in the text**

According to the text which of the statements are **“True”**, **“False”** or **“Not in the text”**?

Mark the right box with a cross. (X)

	True	False	Not in the text
A It wasn't impossible to cycle uphill until the 1890s.			
B Bicycles didn't have pedals until the 1920s.			
C The bicycle chain was invented in the 1870s.			
D Cycling was banned in Shanghai, China, in 2003 for a short time.			
E Not many people cycle in developing countries.			
F In London in 2005, fewer than 50 cyclists were killed or hurt in accidents involving cars.			
G There are about one billion bicycles in the world today.			
H About 20 % of the world's bicycles are in China.			
I In Spain more and more cyclists are fighting for eco-friendly transport.			

**c) Table filling**

Find the most important facts about the *“Development of bicycles and their importance”* in the text.

Write down the time and a short **English** word group (1 - 5 words only).

Time	Facts
18.....	
.....	
18.....	
.....	
1999 – .....	
20.....	
2005	
today	