

Bicycles

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I

The bicycle is one of the most sensible means of transportation ever invented. It is inexpensive, easy to take care of and pollution-free. The first bicycle was invented in the early 19th century. It was simply two wheels and a seat. It didn't have pedals, so the rider pushed the bike along with his feet. The bicycle as we know it today has remained almost the same since 1885.

II

Before the invention of the automobile, and for quite some time after, bicycles were the most popular way to get from place to place. In the 1950s, automobiles became more and more popular, and fewer people rode bicycles. In the 1970s, however, there was a world-wide oil crisis which made gas very expensive. For a while, people could not afford fuel for their cars, so they rode bikes instead. Unfortunately, as soon as the crisis was over and gas was cheaper again, most people returned to the comfort of their cars.

III

Today, the bicycle can help prevent another crisis: the pollution of the environment. One way to reduce the pollution caused by cars and trucks is by riding bicycles where possible instead of taking a car. Bicycles offer other advantages. They save money and provide exercise. In cities, riding a bike can also save time, since a bicycle can pass by all the traffic jams.

IV

Many cities in the world are trying to encourage people to use bicycles. In Copenhagen, for example, over 2,000 bicycles are available for public use. In the 1980s, Japan decided to increase the parking space for bicycles, rather than for cars in its cities. This saved both money and land.

V

If more people left their cars at home and rode bicycles, we would all benefit from cleaner air, less traffic and better health.



About the Story

A. Mark the following statements True (T) or False (F) according to the text.

- ___ 1. The first bicycles were like the ones we see today.
- ___ 2. Many people rode bikes during the oil crisis.
- ___ 3. Bicycles do not cause pollution.
- ___ 4. In Copenhagen, 1980 bicycles are available for public use.
- ___ 5. Japan increased parking for cars to make money.

B. Answer the following questions.

- 1. Why did people ride bicycles during the oil crisis?

2. List three advantages of using a bicycle according to paragraph 3.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

3. Which two places mentioned encourage bicycle use?

a. _____

b. _____

4. According to paragraph 5, what would happen if more people rode bikes instead of driving cars?

C. Match the beginning of each sentence in column A to its ending in column B.

A	B
1. In the early 19th century,	___ a. for public use in Copenhagen.
2. The bicycle as we know it today	___ b. oil crisis in the 1970s.
3. There was a world-wide	___ c. the first bicycle was invented.
4. There are over 2,000 bicycles	___ d. bicycle parking in the 1980s.
5. Japan increased	___ e. was invented in 1885.



Vocabulary

A. Match each word in column A to its meaning in column B.

A

1. sensible
2. inexpensive
3. almost
4. remained
5. returned

B

- ___ a. stayed
- ___ b. practical
- ___ c. cheap
- ___ d. went back
- ___ e. nearly

B.

Circle the word that doesn't belong.

- | | | |
|----------------|-----------|----------|
| 1. remain | change | stay |
| 2. avoid | prevent | cause |
| 3. less | fewer | more |
| 4. fortunately | almost | luckily |
| 5. provide | offer | take |
| 6. run | walk | ride |
| 7. comfort | encourage | convince |
| 8. advantage | available | benefits |
| 9. people | popular | public |
| 10. oil | fuel | air |

