



The Mini Page

Next Week:
What is
Juneteenth?

Issue 22, 2024

Founded by Betty Debnam

Hop On!



photo by Richard Masoner

Do you have a bicycle? More and more adults and kids are getting on their bikes and taking to the road, lane or path. Today, about 100 million Americans cycle. Some cycle more than others, but the number is growing.

This week, The Mini Page learns more about cycling and bicycles.

Why cycle?

Many people think cycling offers a way to:

- get where you are going;
- stay healthy and keep in shape;
- save money on transportation;
- help planet Earth by not polluting the air;
- cut down on traffic congestion.

When kids or adults are cycling, they can notice things they miss from a car, such as sounds of the neighborhood and seeing friends.

Who cycles?

Workers in Oregon and the District of Columbia bike to work more than people in any other state, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

Police officers are using bikes to get around cities more easily and have more contact with people.

Pedicabs, or bikes with a small passenger compartment attached, are popular in many cities around the United States. People hire the rider to deliver them to another location, just as a taxicab would.



photo by Alex Smith
These police officers in Bellingham, Washington, use bikes to patrol the city.

Some schools have started bicycle trains — groups of kids who bike together to school with adult supervision. Having a group to ride with can make parents feel better about letting their kids pedal to school.



Cities getting involved

In many cities, bicyclists have convinced the government to make changes that make biking safer and more convenient. For example, some streets may have bike lanes painted on the surface. Drivers of cars know that bikes may be in that lane.



photo by Slackhacker

Transportation such as buses and trains are providing bike racks so that bikers can ride part of the way to work or school and pedal the rest of the way.

Bike power

You might have started seeing electric bikes, or e-bikes, on the streets in your town. But electric bikes have been around for decades. Ogden Bolton Jr. received a patent in 1895 for a battery-powered bike.



An e-bike from 1932.

Today, there are many different types of e-bikes that help riders get around.

A little bike history

While bicycles have evolved over many years, they've also stayed somewhat the same. Early **velocipedes**, or human-powered land vehicles, could have up to five wheels.

The first bicycle with pedals was introduced in the early 1860s in France. Early bikes were made entirely of wood and metal, which made them rough and uncomfortable to ride. Later, solid rubber tires and a large front wheel made riding a bike more fun. But bikes still didn't have brakes, which made them dangerous to ride.



In the late 1800s, bicycles were improved with chain-driven wheels and **pneumatic**, or air-inflated, tires.

Before automobiles were common, bicycle clubs sprang up in Europe and the United States.



Women started wearing "Betty bloomers" so they could sit astride a bicycle.

Resources



On the Web:

- bit.ly/MPbikesafety

At the library:

- "Wheels of Change: How Women Rode the Bicycle to Freedom" by Sue Macy

Try 'n' Find

Words that remind us of bicycles are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:

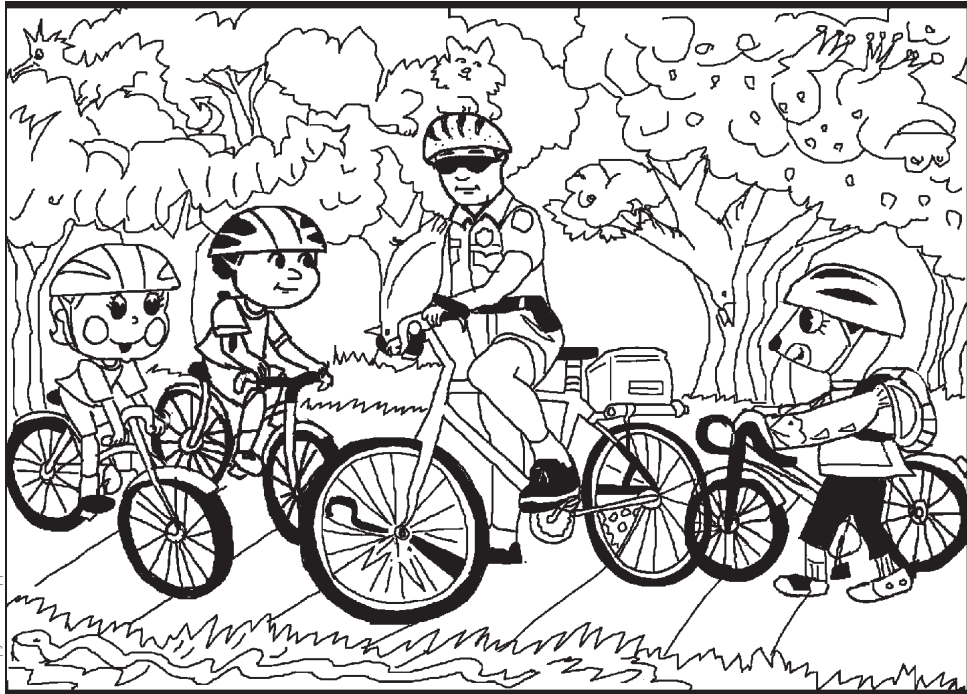
- BATTERY, BICYCLE,
- BLOOMERS, CLUBS,
- CONGESTION, ELECTRIC,
- HEALTHY, LANE, PEDAL,
- PEDICAB, PNEUMATIC,
- POLICE, RACK, RIDE,
- RUBBER, SCHOOL,
- TRAFFIC, VELOCIPEDE.

A L H A E D E P I C O L E V A
 B H V L P B A S C H O O L N M
 A E L C O N G E S T I O N M R
 C A A B G E E J T R A F F I C
 I L N J D C R U B B E R R G L
 D T E I B L O O M E R S S X A
 E H R G Y R E T T A B U X A D
 P Y C L U B S C I R T C E L E
 Y E E E B I C Y C L E I Q J P
 E C I L O P D S P K R A C K J



Mini Spy Classics

Mini Spy and her friends are talking with a bicycle policeman. See if you can find the hidden pictures. Then color the picture.



Mini Spy Classics appear in the first issue of each month.

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- exclamation mark
- elephant head
- croissant
- frog
- fish
- dragon
- number 7
- question mark
- word MINI
- funny face
- snake
- pizza slice
- letter D
- flying bird
- mushroom
- letter A
- bell
- bird
- cat

Mini Jokes



Betty: What's the hardest thing about learning to ride a bike?
Bryan: The pavement!

Eco Note



Chinese scientists say they have devised tiny electronic vests that can be attached to fish to monitor their movement based on the disturbances created as they swim through water. Writing in the journal *Microsystems & Nanoengineering*, researchers at the Chinese Academy of Sciences say the wearable electronic devices can, in ways never before possible, measure when a fish turns, speeds up or dips.



photo courtesy Chinese Academy of Sciences

adapted with permission from Earthweek.com

For later:

Look in your newspaper for items about bicycle clubs, rides or races.

Teachers: Follow and interact with The Mini Page on Facebook!



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