

Key moments in the evolution of bicycles

Read the text and match the description with the image.



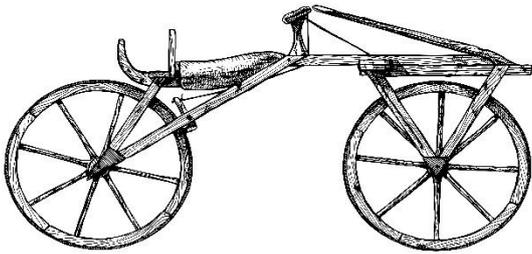
A)



B)



C)



D)



E)



F)



G)

1) The first bicycle prototypes appeared in late 18th and early 19th century. One was the French celerifere, which had two equal-sized wheels and a seat, but no steering, brakes, or pedals. Riders would start walking or running, and later glided, especially downhill. Another was the German Laufmaschine or velocipede, which looked similar, except that it had a steerable front wheel.

2) In the 1850s and '60s, the French added pedals and began making velocipedes for sale. They were sometimes called "boneshakers" because they were completely made of metal. If you rode them over cobblestone roads, which were common in the day, it was very uncomfortable.

3) Around the same time in England, an engineer invented the "penny farthing" or the "high wheeler". The name came from the large front wheel which looked like a penny, and the small back one, resembling a farthing coin. They were difficult to ride, and quite dangerous, as many people would fall off and get injured or killed.

4) The most important year in bicycle history is 1885 when John Kemp Starley invented the first Rover Safety Bicycle in England. This is the first model which looked like a standard modern bicycle. It had a low seat, a strong metal chain, and two wheels of roughly the same size. Although rubber tyres already existed, now they also became inflatable.

5) Not much happened in the development of bicycles for fifty years or more. Then, in 1930s, the cruiser bike was invented. Also, the first patent was filed for an electric hub motor. This was one of the first times that people considered bicycles could be operated only by power, while pedals would be optional. It was the precursor of today's motorbike. In the US, bicycles were finally accepted by adults, and not considered only a children's toy.

6) Another great change came in late 1970s and 1980s. It was then that the Mountain Bike was created in California. These were the first bicycles with tough frames, which could endure downhill racing and difficult off-road paths. After a while, cogs were added to the rear gear cluster, which increased the number of speeds.

7) Although electric models were an early idea in the evolution of bicycles, they only caught on in the 1990s, when torque sensors and power controls were developed. New, less heavy types of batteries meant that e-bicycles could be lighter and faster. Their market has been on the rise ever since.

The 21st century has so far seen only minor changes in the development of bicycles. Lithium batteries are now regularly used to power e-bikes, the number of speeds has risen to 30, and electronic gears, as well as instant inflation and deflation of tires, have been introduced. What does the future have in store?

Task:

Bicycles have a long and interesting history. In small groups, pairs, or individually, research some of its highlights. Prepare a presentation and share it with your class.

- Records connected to bicycles
- Bicycles races
- Bicycles and women
- Bike booms
- Inventors who made bicycles what they are today
- Famous cyclists
- Countries with most bicycles per capita
- Amazing journeys on bicycles
- Types of bicycles
- Bicycle brands