THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

by John Watson

When you think "outside the box", you can come up with the craziest ideas. Israeli inventor and designer Izhar Gafni had such an idea. He created a bicycle made almost entirely from cardboard.

"To make the bike was extremely difficult," Gafni said in a recent interview. "It took a year and a half, with lots of testing and failures." But in the end he got it right. First, Gafni drew the shape onto cardboard and then he cut it out. After that, he added a secret mixture of organic materials to the cardboard. This made the bike waterproof and fireproof. Next, he attached rubber wheels to the bike. Finally, he put all the pieces together andpainted it.

Gafni is very positive about his invention. "When we started a year and a half or two years ago, people laughed at us, but now we are getting at least a dozen e-mails every day asking where they can buy such a bicycle, so this really makes me hopeful that we will succeed," he says. According to Gafni's business partner, mass production of the bike will begin in the next few months.

Gafni's cardboard bike has many advantages over a regular bike. Firstly, it is very light, weighing only about nine kilos. Secondly, it is inexpensive to produce. The materials, mostly cardboard, with some other parts from old cars, cost very little.

Gafni says his bikes will also have a number of social benefits. Because they are affordable, they will provide an important means oftransportation for people living in poor countries. In addition, his bikes can help reduce traffic in big cities and cut down on pollution.

Only time will tell how popular Gafni's new bike will be, but there is no doubt that it is original.

Answer the questions.

1. What was Izhar Gafni's crazy idea? (lines 1-4)

ANSWER:_____

_____

2. In lines 5-11, the writer explains (-).

(i) why the bike was painted

(ii) how Gafni tested the bike

(iii) how the bike was made

(iv) why the bike is a failure

3. What did Gafni do to make this bike fireproof? (lines 5-11)

ANSWER:_____

_____

4. Gafni is optimistic because (-). (lines 12-17)

(i) people are interested in his product

(ii) the bike is waterproof

(iii) he has received many orders

(iv) he has a new business partner

5. PUT A ✓ BY THE TWO CORRECT ANSWERS. (lines 18-21)

In what way is Gafni's bike different from a regular bike?

(i) It is waterproof.

(ii) It weighs less.

(iii) It is fireproof.

(iv) It is safer.

(v) It is cheaper.

(vi) It goes faster.

6. Why does the writer mention "parts of old cars"? (lines 18-21)

COMPLETE THE SENTENCE.

To explain why the cardboard bike doesn't_____

7. Why will people in poor countries benefit from Gafni's invention? (lines 22-25)

Because the bikes aren't_____

8. According to Gafni, how will his bikes improve the quality of life in big cities?

Give TWO examples. (lines 22-25)

ANSWERS: (1)_____

(2)_____

9. What is the writer's opinion of Gafni's bike? (lines 26-27)

COMPLETE THE SENTENCE.

He thinks_____

10. Another title for this article could be (-).

(i) The Life of an Inventor

(ii) The Cardboard Bike Wins the Race

(iii) A New Invention

(iv) The History of Bicycles

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