

TRANSPORT (noun):

the activity or process of moving things or people from one place to another



Early humans dreamed of going faster and further than they could on foot. They probably first achieved this in northern countries before 3000 BC (before Christ) using skis. The wheel was invented around 3500 BC but carts were very slow without roads. So for many centuries the fastest and most popular means of transport was the horse, which can run at about fifty-five kilometres an hour. This record for speed was unbroken until the end of the eighteenth century when the hot-air balloon and the railway both began to develop.

The hot-air balloon made its first free flight in 1783. Two Frenchmen, the Montgolfier brothers, were working as papermakers when they had the idea for the balloon. A fire heated the air, making the balloon rise. During the first flight, the two passengers were admiring the view when they suddenly saw smoke! The balloon was burning but, luckily, they managed to put the fire out and land safely.

The railway developed gradually from carts on tracks. The first vehicle with an engine to run on tracks was developed in 1803 by an Englishman,

Richard Trevithick. In 1804, he took the first passengers, although they didn't have to buy a ticket. Unfortunately, they were travelling in the train when it began to fall off the tracks and Trevithick realised that the tracks were not strong enough to take the weight of the train. The passengers escaped unharmed, but it was another example of how dangerous the development of transport can be.

Perhaps unexpectedly, the bicycle didn't appear until around 1840 when a Scotsman, Kirkpatrick McMillan, created the first one to have pedals. People rode bicycles without pedals before then, but they were slow and not very popular. It took around 140 years for McMillan's design to develop into modern mountain bikes.

The twentieth century saw the development of many other means of transport, including the hydrofoil and the hovercraft. The petrol-driven car (invented in 1885 in Germany) completely changed the way people thought about transport, and so did the aeroplane. People have always dreamed of

3 Read the text again. For questions 1-5, choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which you think fits best according to the text.

1 The wheel didn't lead to fast means of transport because

- A people could already travel fast.
- B they invented it after skis.
- C good roads didn't exist.
- D people preferred to use horses.

2 The passengers discovered the fire

- A while they were checking the balloon.
- B while they were in the air.
- C before they left the ground.
- D after they landed on the ground.

3 The invention of the train

- A came as a complete surprise.
- B grew out of things that came before.
- C took longer than anyone expected.
- D didn't make Trevithick much money.

4 The writer is surprised by the fact that

- A the inventor of the bicycle was Scottish.
- B nobody had invented the bicycle earlier.
- C McMillan's bicycle had pedals.
- D we waited over a century for the mountain bike.

5 What can we say about the aeroplane?

- A It had a great effect on people's attitudes.
- B It wasn't as popular as the car was.
- C It came to the Wright brothers in a dream.
- D People didn't want to allow it at first.

flying. One day, in 1903, that dream became a reality. Two American brothers, Wilbur and Orville Wright, managed to make a short flight in their aircraft, the Flyer. From there, a huge industry grew that allowed, and still allows, people to visit the whole world, easily and cheaply.

The challenge for the twenty-first century is transport in space. Since the first Moon landing in 1969, technology has developed to give us the space shuttle (1981) and even the space tourist (2002). The future of transport will probably be as exciting as its past.

Word BOX

- 4 Match the words from the text in the box with the correct definitions.

cart • tracks • hydrofoil
vehicle • pedal • hovercraft

- 1 This is a kind of fast ship that partly lifts out of the water.
- 2 This is a general word for a car, a bus, etc.
- 3 This floats on a cushion of air on land or on water.
- 4 Trains travel on two of these, made of metal.
- 5 This has four wheels and might be pulled by a horse.
- 6 You put your foot on this on a bicycle.