

# Once Upon a Bike

Energy Revealed  
Activity  
Grade Level: 4-7



## Main Objective

Learners consider what they like about biking and play a true-or-false game to discover how the use of bikes differs over time and place. Learners will interview someone who can tell them about cycling in another time or place to help them learn more about the historical, cultural and social role of bikes. Learners identify any obstacles to cycling, then come up with a bike design that overcomes some of those obstacles. They also suggest changes to rules, roads, and other infrastructure that might increase the amount people cycle.

## Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, learners will:

- Make connections between culture, history, infrastructure and governance and their relative influence on the role of cycling in communities
- Set criteria and then select about who to interview on biking
- Conduct an interview based on a student-generated or student-modified questionnaire
- Identify what affects choices, to understand obstacles and to suggest solutions to biking challenges

## Length of Activity: 4 hours

**Step 1+2:** Introduce the topic about cycling and how to conduct an interview

**Step 3:** Class discussion

## Materials Required

- Internet-enabled device
- Energy Needs: The Ways We Use Energy Backgrounder
- Energy and the Environment: The Impacts of Our Energy Use Backgrounder
- Taking Action: Personal Choices About Energy Use Backgrounder
- Journals or other graphic organizers
- Cycling: True or False? Worksheet
- Keys to a Good Interview Handout
- Permission Form for Guardians (see sample at the end)

## Activity

### Step 1: Cycling: True or False?

- Ask learners to make a journal entry on biking. You may wish to introduce biking with a picture book or short story. For younger learners, consider *Let's Go: The Story of Getting from There to Here* by Lizann Flatt. Give learners the choice to write about themselves or a character in a book. To help get them started, pose questions:
  - What do you like about bikes and biking?
  - What is your favourite cycling memory?
  - What type of biking do you enjoy?
  - What are the pros and cons of using a bike for transportation?
- Have learners pair up to share their entries and identify four important points that came up in their discussion.
- Have the pairs complete the worksheet, *Cycling: True or False?* Explain that they are to read each statement and make a quick decision and mark whether it is true (T) or false (F).
- After the learners have worked through all the statements, provide each pair with a copy of the answer key. Ask learners to discuss the information on the sheet they did not match correctly.
- Have the pairs move into groups of four and ask each person to share two pieces of new knowledge and what surprised them the most.
- Invite the groups to share what surprised them most with the class.

### Step 2: Main Activity

#### PART A

- Tell learners that to learn more about cycling from another time or place, they will be interviewing someone. Explain that the goal of the interview is to gather information about the everyday role of bicycles in another time or place, to explore how things are different here and now, and to identify any challenges their interviewee might have with riding.
- Explain that anyone who has ridden a bike may have an interesting story to tell. Ask learners what they think would make a story interesting. Gather ideas from the class.

- As a class, discuss how to set criteria for selecting someone suitable for an interview. You may wish to draw on these examples to support diverse perspectives:
  - A senior would know about cycling in a different time.
  - Someone from another place, someone new to Canada or someone who has traveled a lot, would know about cycling in a different place. Note that the Cities for Mobility website offers perspectives from Europe:

 <https://www.cities-for-mobility.net/>

- Someone who rides a bike for fun every chance they have might have an interesting story to tell.
- Someone who cycles to and from work might have an interesting story to tell.
- Ideally, learners will conduct face-to-face interviews, but alternatively, they could choose someone they could interview by phone or video conference (e.g., Skype). If learners are finding it difficult to arrange interviews, consider inviting several people from the community to visit, or be visited by, the class.
- Ask learners to list who they could interview and indicate why that person would be a good choice and how they would be able to meet. Have learners rank their choices using the criteria they helped develop in the previous step.
- Hand out a letter to communicate information about the project to guardians (a sample is provided at the end of this lesson). Ask learners to review, with their guardians, the criteria and their list of people before finalizing their selection and setting up the interview.
- Before the interview, ask learners to predict what their interviewee might tell them about cycling and add this to their notes.

## **PART B**

- Discuss what makes a good interview question. Generate a variety of questions, as a class or in teams. Use the sample questions below to assist you.
  - What do you like about cycling?
  - When and where did you start cycling?
  - What was cycling like there at that time?
  - When did you do the most cycling? What was it about those times that made cycling a big part of your life?
  - What is your best cycling memory?
  - Do you still cycle or when was the last time you went cycling?
  - A lot of people find cycling is not their first choice when they are choosing a way to get around. What do you think is the problem?

- What would need to happen to make cycling possible for more people today?
- What would you need to cycle more?
- What kind of features would you like on a bike?
- How would you like our town to be organized for more cycling?
- Why do you care about this issue?
- Is there anything else about cycling that you'd like to add?
- Do you have any questions for me?
- b. Identify which questions would be suitable for most interviews and have each learner select a total of ten questions that suit the person they plan to interview. Alternatively, you could select ten as a class that all learners would use and prepare a handout.
- c. Conduct a peer review for the interview questions and provide learners time to exchange ideas and make revisions.
- d. Hand out and discuss the Keys to a Good Interview and specify when the interview needs to be completed. If learners have access to a tape recorder, tell them they may want to take it with them.

## **PART C**

- When the interviews are complete, have learners share their findings in small groups. Ask groups to summarize and share their most interesting observations.
- As a class, have groups share their findings and explore the obstacles people faced or face around biking. For example, you may want to sequence your discussion as: What did cycling used to be like? What is biking like in other places? What prevents people from biking more?
- During the discussion, write a list of obstacles to cycling for everyone to see. This list may include topics such as weather, safety, skills, and bike access.
- Use the following examples to assist in drawing out learners' ideas on how to address obstacles to biking:
  - Design a license plate with a clever slogan to encourage drivers to keep their distance.
  - Design some safety equipment that riders can wear or impose new safety rules on motorists.
  - Establish times when roads are dedicated to cyclists and motorized vehicles are not allowed.
  - Create special bike lanes on existing roads or suggest special bike designs (e.g., three-wheelers for elderly cyclists).
  - Use a railway line that is no longer being used for trains as a commuter bike trail.

- Add two to three new rules for the road to increase bicycle use.
- Redesign transit routes, sidewalks and/or roads.
- Have learners design a special bike, or a place, that would encourage people to get out and bike more. Instruct learners to provide a labeled diagram with a paragraph to explain how their design helps achieve this goal.

### Step 3: Conclusion

- Ask learners to summarize what they have learned and record any changes to their own plans for cycling by adding an information box with a personal note to their design.
- Invite learners to share their designs with the class. They could create an attractive display on a high traffic area bulletin board, for example. Lead a discussion to identify how learners could share their interviews and designs with other learners and their community.

## Extension Activities

- **Wheel Day.** Provide each learner with a paper wheel to use to describe what it would be like to use a bike instead of an automobile. See *Divorce Your Car*, by Katherine Alvord. Ask learners to think about using a bike for the various activities of a regular day, and what would help make it happen. Have them record a different activity in each segment of the wheel and then comment on how they could accomplish the same activity, or something comparable to it, by bike.
- **Create your best cycling memory.** Ask learners to plan an ideal day on a bike and explain why. Given them time to live it, and then report on it in class. You might ask them to visit resources like the one below to see cyclist stories:

 <https://www.lovetoride.net/global/stories>

- **Find the news angle to your story.** Write an article for the local newspaper that describes how many people were interviewed, what learners learned and how they were impacted by what they learned, and what they plan to do next. Include an invitation to any events for the public or calls to action.
- **Take learners on a bike ride to a community destination.** Combine this trip with a field trip plan or other event. Provide opportunities for learners to reflect on the experience afterwards and share/celebrate experiences (related directly to cycling memories). This can be combined with effort(s) to get bikes to school for trips. Resources like the *Geography of Hope* by Chris Turner provides hopeful stories from all over the world; you might choose to share excerpts from it with learners along the way. BC Car Free offer suggestions on places you can travel:

 <https://www.carfree.ca/>

- **Share what you've learned.** Host a guardian or community open house. Create a display with salvaged or simulated bike parts. Make the display interactive with questions and answers that reveal interesting facts and figures. Set up a booth to help visitors track their transportation choices using the online calculator.

[school letterhead]

[date]

Dear Guardian,

As we explore sustainable transportation in our [subject area] unit this month, learners will be interviewing someone who can tell them about cycling in another time and/or place to help them learn more about the historical, cultural, and social role of bikes. We are encouraging learners to find unique stories. The class will review what makes a good interview and how to be a good interviewer and prepare a set of questions.

As a class, we will work together to set criteria that will help each learner select an appropriate person to interview. That person may have cycled many years ago or cycled in another part of the world or cycle regularly today. If possible, the person your child interviews will be available to meet face-to-face. If that is not possible, learners can also conduct their interviews by phone or video conference (e.g., Skype).

With our criteria in mind, learners have made a list of people they could interview. They may have identified a grandparent, another relative, a neighbour, or someone else in the community. Here are suggested steps for you and your child:

1. Ask your child to review their list with you and explain how they came up with their ideas. Discuss any other people that you think your child could consider.
2. Talk about which person your child thinks would be most appropriate to interview. Evaluate the list and decide together.
3. Complete the bottom portion of this form and return it to school with your child.
4. When learners have prepared their interview questions, they will bring them home and be ready to conduct the interview.
5. It would be helpful if you would assist your child with arranging the interview time and location and provide transportation, if needed. You are invited to watch while your child conducts the interview.

Please contact me if you have questions or require additional information. We look forward to sharing the results of our project with you as we learn more about how people use the bicycle. Thank you for your support!

Sincerely,

[your name]

Select one:

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (guardian name), hereby give permission for my child  
\_\_\_\_\_ (print name), to interview \_\_\_\_\_

(Print name of person selected).

or

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (guardian name), prefer that my child is provided with someone to

interview at the school.

Guardian signature:

Date:

\_\_\_\_\_