Building a Better Bicycle
By Linda Ruggieri

Bicycles have a long, interesting history. The first bicycle was developed more than two hundred years ago. Early bicycles, however, did not look like today’s bikes.

One of the first bicycles was called the hobby horse. It was made of wood! People rode by pushing their feet along on the ground.

Later, a bicycle that had pedals and metal tires was invented. It was not comfortable. It was called the boneshaker. Inventors kept working to make bicycles more comfortable.

Next, the high wheeler was developed. It had a very big wheel in the front. This bicycle was not easy to ride, because the rider sat high up on the bike. The rider could be badly hurt in a fall.

Then bicycles began to have two wheels that were the same size. Those bikes looked more like bicycles today.

More than one hundred years ago, bicycles began to have rubber tires filled with air. That was a solution to the problem of a bumpy ride. The new tires made riding smoother.

Today, children’s bicycles and racing bikes are popular. People ride bikes to get exercise. Bicycling is safer, too. Now people wear helmets, and bikes have reflectors on them.
1. What was developed more than two hundred years ago?
   A) the first bike with pedals
   B) the first bicycle
   C) the first high wheeler

2. One problem with early bicycles was that they were bumpy to ride. What was used as the solution to this problem?
   A) wooden bikes without pedals
   B) bikes with metal tires and pedals
   C) bikes with rubber tires filled with air

3. Early bicycles were very different from today’s bicycles. What evidence from the text supports this conclusion?
   A) The first bicycle was developed more than two hundred years ago.
   B) The hobby horse was made of wood, and people rode it by pushing their feet on the ground.
   C) People today ride bicycles to get exercise, and wear helmets as they ride.

4. The bicycle with pedals and metal tires was called the boneshaker. What can you infer about the bicycle based on this name?
   A) It was smooth to ride, but the seat made people’s bones hurt.
   B) People liked riding this bicycle more than earlier bicycles.
   C) It was bumpy, shaky, and not comfortable to ride.

5. What is the main idea of this article?
   A) Bicycles have changed and gotten better in many ways since they were first developed.
   B) The first bicycle was developed more than two hundred years ago.
   C) Rubber tires are very important to bicycles today because they make riding smoother.
6. Read these sentences from the text.
"Bicycles have a long, interesting history. The first bicycle was developed more than two hundred years ago. Early bicycles, however, did not look like today’s bikes."

What does the word “developed” most nearly mean here?

A) created
B) found
C) broken apart

7. Choose the answer that best completes this sentence.
The high wheeler was developed _____ a bicycle that had pedals and metal tires was invented.

A) then
B) after
C) before

8. What was one problem with the bicycle called the boneshaker?

__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

9. Why isn’t the high wheeler bicycle used by many people today? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

10. This article is called “Building a Better Bicycle.” How have today’s bicycles solved the problems of earlier bicycles? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________