

The history of the bicycle



The bicycle was invented around 200 years ago.



The Walking Machine or Hobby Horse

was invented in 1817 by a rich man to help him get around the paths of his very big garden. It was made of wood and you pushed yourself along with your feet, a bit like balance bikes today.

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The boneshaker

was invented in the 1860s. It had two pedals fixed to the front wheel. The wooden wheels had a metal rim which made it uncomfortable to ride and was why it was called the boneshaker.

What's missing on the handlebars?

No brakes!



The Penny Farthing or Ordinary Bicycle

was first produced around 1870. It had wire spokes on the wheels and a larger front wheel to cut down on shocks and bumps from the road.

It became known as 'The Penny Farthing' because the wheels were like the small and large coins. Getting on and off was difficult and people would often fall off head first!



The Safety Bicycle

was invented in 1885 and was the first bicycle to look like our bikes of today.

It had a steerable front wheel and the two wheels were the same size. A chain was added to drive the rear wheel. It was called the safety bicycle because it was much safer than the Penny Farthing. The first ones had solid rubber tyres but by 1890 the tyres had air in them which made them much more comfortable to ride.

Modern bicycles



Racing bikes, dropped handlebars



Mountain bikes for off-road cycling



BMX bikes for tricks and jumps

This time trial bike from the 1990s is made from carbon fibre so it is very light but very strong.





Cycling is good fun and a good way of getting exercise.
It is even an Olympic sport!

I wonder what bicycles of the future will look like?