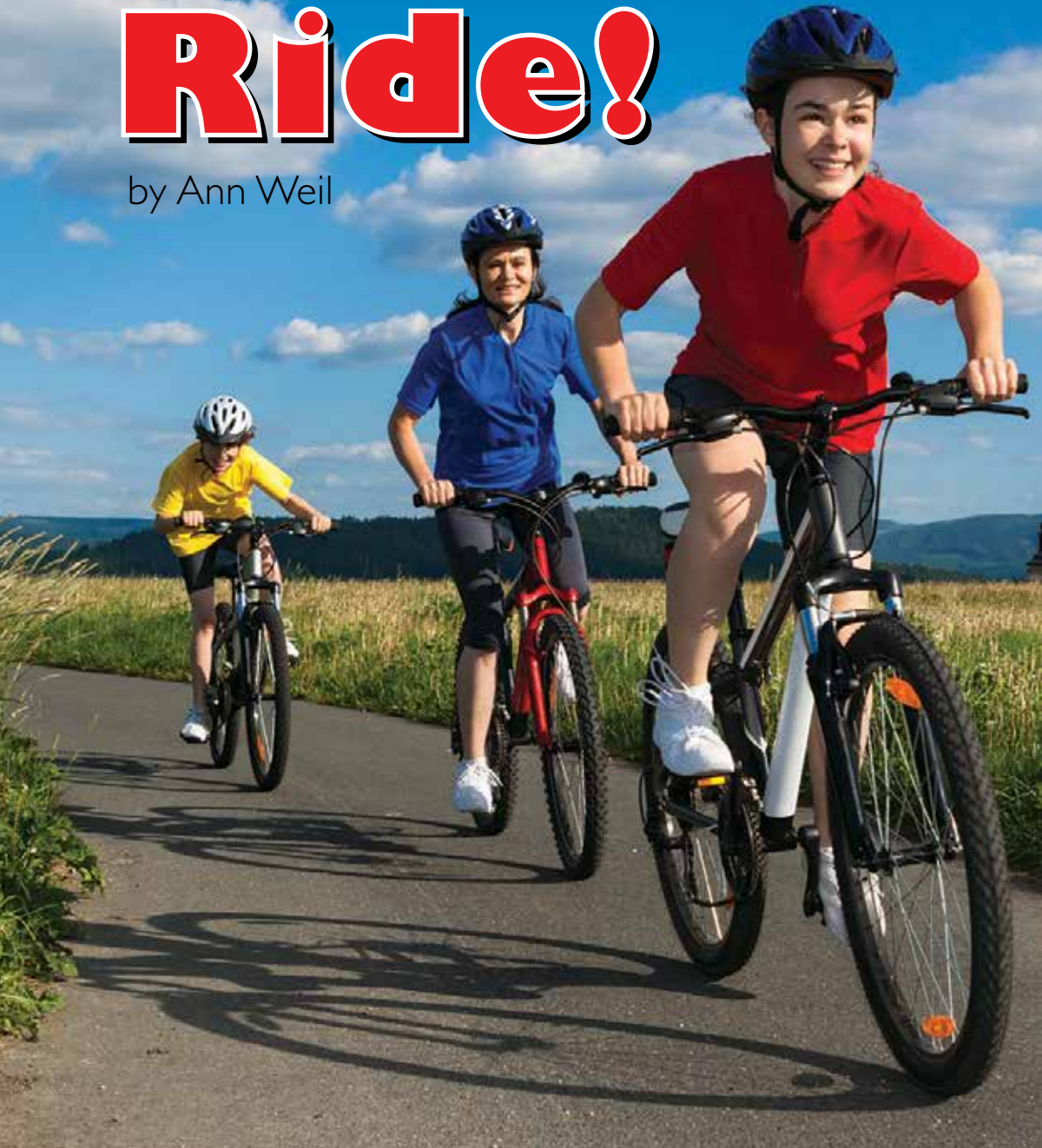


# Ride!

by Ann Weil



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Imagine green, leafy images flashing past your eyes and wind blowing against your face. You are breathing hard as you pump your legs up and down. Can you guess what you are doing?

If you guessed riding a bicycle, you're right! Biking has been a form of entertainment since the 1800s. Back then, riders sat atop the **boneshaker**, a wooden bicycle with metal wheels. The ride was anything but smooth, causing bikers' teeth to rattle with every pump of the pedals. Today, bicycles are more comfortable and offer a smoother ride, so bikers no longer have to worry about their teeth rattling. Biking is more popular than ever for several reasons, including greater body and brain fitness and the social opportunities it presents.



Biking can be a fun activity for everyone.

## Amplify Atlas™

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## Ride!

### Level V

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One of the many benefits of riding a bicycle is that it is gentle on your bones. That means there is no **impact**, or force, put on them. Biking also strengthens your body's largest muscles. When your muscles work hard, they need more **oxygen**, a gas that people need to survive. This triggers your body to make additional tiny **blood vessels**, the small, thin tubes that carry oxygen to your body's cells. Your cells use the oxygen to create the energy you need to continue moving.

Your body needs physical activity every day. Being active helps keep you at a healthy weight. If you aren't active on most days, your body will put on more weight. That extra weight means your body, especially your heart, has to work harder. Biking is a fun way to get moving.

Health Benefits of Riding
Helps keep brain cells healthy
Makes heart stronger
Makes lungs stronger
Increases muscle tone
Strengthens leg muscles
Helps control weight
Reduces blood pressure



Biking is beneficial to the body and the brain.

Biking also improves mental fitness. Think of the last time you tried to remember a specific detail or the words to a popular song. Your brain's ability to recall such information improves with exercise, such as biking. Exercise causes your heart to pump faster to deliver more oxygen to all areas of your body, including your brain. More oxygen in the brain produces **proteins**, or materials that control how the body works. Some proteins help the brain remember things.

Body and brain fitness are two great benefits of biking, but there are social benefits, too.

For instance, have you ever heard of organizations such as Cycle Kids, or groups like Team Extreme? They are just two of hundreds of bicycle clubs across the country whose members ride together for fun, friendship, and fitness.

Put on a helmet, adjust your seat, and start pedaling. You'll be on your way to better health, a sharper memory, new friends, and loads of fun.

Biking with others is a great way to make friends.



## Glossary

**blood vessels (n.):** small, thin tubes that carry oxygen to your body's cells

**boneshaker (n.):** a wooden bicycle designed in the 1860s in France. The bicycle had wooden wheels rimmed in metal. The handlebars shook powerfully, giving the bike its name, the boneshaker.

**impact (n.):** force of one thing hitting another

**oxygen (n.):** a gas carried in the blood. Cells use oxygen to produce the energy a body needs to work.

**proteins (n.):** substances, or materials, that control how the body works

**Level V**

Informational

Ride!

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