

Reading

1. Read the article. How do you feel about roller coasters?

The History of the Roller Coaster

Sometime in the 1600s, St. Petersburg, Russia became home to the world's first roller coaster. This ride had a wooden tower. Water was poured over a ramp on one side of the tower until a thick layer of ice formed. Riders climbed up a ladder on the opposite side of the tower. They sat in chairs or sleds and they slid down the icy ramp. Some of these towers were as tall as an eight-story building.

The most important improvement in the roller coaster was the addition of wheels. This made it possible for roller coasters to be used year round, not just during the coldest months of the year. Wheels also made the ride smoother. Some historians believe that the Russians were the first to add wheels. Others say it was the French. We do know for sure that there were two large roller coasters in France by the year 1817.

The first roller coaster in the United States was not in an amusement park. It was in a coal mine in Pennsylvania. The owners of the mine found that a roller coaster was the fastest and easiest way for them to move large amounts of coal down the side of the mountain. The views of the countryside during the ride down the mountain were wonderful. So when the mine stopped using the coaster for coal, it began to carry people. Every year from 1873 until 1929 thousands of tourists took a ride on the Mauch Chunk Railway.

2. Complete the sentences with information from the reading.

1. The first Russian roller coaster was made of wood_____.
2. Some Russian roller coasters were tall as _____.
3. An important change in roller coasters was the addition of _____.
4. By 1817 there were _____ roller coasters in France.
5. The first roller coaster in the United States was used to carry _____.
6. Until 1929 _____ could ride the Mauch Chunk Railway.

