

8 A Wild Guitarist

In front of a huge crowd, Jimi Hendrix stood on stage and played an electric guitar. He lifted the guitar up to his mouth and picked the strings with his teeth. Then he strummed the guitar with his fingers while holding it upside down behind his head. The crowd cheered wildly as Jimi threw the guitar down on the stage, doused it with lighter fluid, and set it on fire.

From what you pictured...

What is the main idea of this story?

Why do you think Jimi Hendrix picked the strings with his *teeth*? Why not just use his fingers?

Do you think it would be hard to strum the guitar while holding it upside down behind your head? Why or why not?

Why do you think the crowd cheered *wildly*?

Do you think Jimi had only one guitar or many guitars? Explain.



26 Faces of Stone

Hundreds of enormous stone statues shaped like thin heads sit on Easter Island. Some of the statues sit on the coast, staring out at the ocean. Others stand atop a tall mountain. Long ago, natives cut big blocks of stone out of a mountain cave and carved them into the heads. Some scientists think the natives tipped the big statues onto logs. Then the natives tied ropes around the statues. As they pulled on the ropes, the logs rolled like wheels beneath the statues, and the natives pulled them slowly across the ground.

From what you pictured...

What is the main idea of this story?

Why do you think the natives carved the stone statues?

Why do you think the natives placed some of the statues on the coast?

Why do you think they may have tipped the statues onto logs?

Do you think it took a few natives or many to move the statues? Explain.

27 The First Submarine

In 1620, Cornelius Drebbel placed a rowboat upside down on top of a second rowboat that sat right side up. He wrapped thick sheets of greased leather around the two boats to form a submarine. Then he drilled six small holes on each side of the sub and plugged each hole with long wooden oars. A fifteen-foot-long air tube stuck out the top of the sub. Later, in a river, the sub floated a few feet underwater with Drebbel and a crew of men sitting inside. The air tube stuck out of the water as the crew rowed the sub downstream.

From what you pictured...

What is the main idea of this story?

Why do you think Drebbel stacked two rowboats on top of each other?

Why do you think Drebbel wrapped the boats with greased leather?

Why do you think the air tube was fifteen feet long?

Why do you think the sub floated a *few feet* underwater? Why not deeper?

38 Emperor Norton

In 1859, Joshua Norton—a poor man in San Francisco—proclaimed himself Emperor of the United States. He wore a blue uniform with gold trim, and a top hat with a peacock feather on the side. Wielding a long sword, Norton patrolled the city streets. People on the streets saluted him as he walked by. He cleared sidewalks of debris and inspected cable cars for defects. He also wrote letters to the U.S. Congress, asking them to make new laws. When Norton died, people lined up at his grave for miles to pay their respects.

From what you pictured...

What is the main idea of this story?

Why do you think Norton proclaimed himself Emperor of the United States?

Do you think people would have saluted Norton if he weren't dressed in uniform? Why or why not?

Do you think the U.S. Congress took Norton's letters seriously? Why or why not?

Why do you think so many people lined up at Norton's grave?

39 The World's Strongest Man Contest

Each year, a group of muscular men gather for the World's Strongest Man contest. The men compete in many events, such as a race to lift and carry a boulder. In one event, a man straps on a harness attached by a thick rope to a jet plane. Then the man begins to trudge forward, pulling the heavy plane behind him. He slowly tows the plane toward a white painted line on the ground a hundred feet away. After the plane's front wheels cross the line, the tired man drops to his knees to catch his breath. At the end of the contest, a judge awards the best competitor a trophy and titles him "World's Strongest Man."

From what you pictured...

What is the main idea of this story?

Do you think just any man can compete in this contest? Why or why not?

Why do you think the man uses a harness attached to a rope to pull the plane?

Do you think you could tow a jet plane? Why or why not?

Do you think many people watch this contest? Why or why not?

53 Around the World on Human Power

In 1994, Jason Lewis began a thirteen-year trip around the world using his own muscle power. He started in London and rode a mountain bike to the coast of the English Channel. There he climbed inside a long canoe-shaped boat. The covered boat had spaces at either end for storage and sleeping. A roof with windows covered the middle part of the boat. Jason sat in the boat beneath the roof, stretched his legs out in front of him, and placed his feet on a set of pedals. The pedals turned a propeller at the back of the boat to push it across the Channel.

Jason tied his boat to a dock in a French harbor. A crew in a van, which pulled a trailer and carried Jason's bike, food, and clothes, met him there. They loaded his boat onto the trailer and then followed Jason as he rode his bike south along the sunny roads of France and Spain. Jason camped at night by mountain lakes and in green pastures. After biking almost two thousand miles, Jason reached the coast of Portugal and set out in his boat across the Atlantic Ocean.

Jason faced many dangers at sea in his boat. Once, a whale rubbed its back against the bottom of the boat, rocking it from side to side and nearly tipping it over. During a storm, strong winds and huge waves made it hard for Jason to control the boat. He dropped a heavy tire, tied to his boat by a long rope, into the sea as an anchor, and waited for the storm to pass. Later, the boat neared an island and got stuck on top of a coral reef. Luckily, a wave soon lifted the boat and pushed it off the coral. After almost four months at sea, Jason docked in a Florida harbor.

Jason traveled west through the United States on in-line skates. The van followed close behind with his boat. At the Pacific Coast, he launched his boat from beneath the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco and pedaled out to sea. He stopped at the island of Hawaii to hike on the side of a volcano, and then pedaled his boat to Australia. There he rode a bike through the hot dry outback. In India, he biked through small villages and hiked through the Himalaya Mountains. In Egypt, he biked along the Nile River and around the Mediterranean Sea to Europe.