

AE+

Name Min Kyu Park  
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• Reading Comprehension Assessment

**Directions:** Read the passage. Then answer the questions below.

**The Incredible Machine**

Everyone has a favorite attraction at an amusement park, and I am no different. However, unlike most people who seem to prefer rollercoasters, my favorite ride is a little more gentle. Every time I go to Coney Island, Navy Pier, or the Santa Monica Pier, I absolutely have to ride the Ferris wheel.



The Ferris wheel is simple and yet also quite complex. That is, riding it is easy, but how it works is complicated. A series of carts are attached to a wheel, which is attached to a rim. That rim rotates vertically around an axis, and gravity keeps the carts upright. As simple as the ride seems, only advanced engineers can make safe and fun Ferris wheels.

**What It Lacks in Thrills...**

While the Ferris wheel is not as thrilling as a rollercoaster, it is still very exciting. The fact of being high in the air makes it so much more entertaining than a lot of rides. I mean, how often do you hang from that high up in daily life?

Nevertheless, I have to admit, I don't seek Ferris wheels out because of their excitement. Rather, I find them very relaxing. At the top of the Ferris wheel, you get beautiful sights of the park. You also get a sense of calm that you don't get in the hustle and bustle of the park below.

Additionally, Ferris wheels are also gorgeous to look at when they are lit up at night. In fact, the original Ferris wheel was designed as much to be seen as to be ridden.

**It Happened at the World's Fair**

The first Ferris wheel was made by and named after George Washington Gale Ferris, Jr. He designed it for the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. It was the tallest attraction there, standing 264 feet high.

However, visitors to the fair were impressed by the size of the ride as well as the mechanics of it. In 1893, anything that was not turned by hand was considered a sight to see. And the wheel, which was a machine, was truly incredible to see. Further, as one visitor put it, the wheel was amazing because it seemed to be missing support. That is, it did not look like it could stand on its own. And yet it did and even rotated!

**They Keep Reaching Higher and Higher**

Ferris wheel technology has only improved since then. Most of today's Ferris wheels are much larger than that first one. The largest in the world is the "Singapore Flyer," which stands slightly taller than twice what Ferris's did!

Today, the Ferris wheel is the most common amusement park ride. But that does not mean you should take them for granted. Instead, be thankful for Ferris' invention. The next time you're at an amusement park, don't just look up at the impressive wheel in the sky on your way to a newer attraction. Take it for a spin!

-lights/light bulbs ✓  
 -It seems like all you need to do is flip a switch and lights are on, wiring inside the wall is what's so complicated

9) In paragraph 3, the narrator says, "While the Ferris wheel is not as thrilling as a rollercoaster, it is still very exciting." Can you think of any other machines that are not "thrilling" but still "exciting"?

I think that deep sea submarines are exciting because you can go deep under the ocean and see stuff you normally can't see, yet it is not thrilling because the submarine does not move super fast.

10) In the final section of the passage, we learn how Ferris wheels "keep reaching higher and higher." This seems to be a common trend among the developers of modern technology. What makes us want to continually strive to create something bigger and better? Is this good? Discuss.

I think that this "better" thing is good to a certain extent, we want better until we get comfortable lives, but not to the extent like huge nuclear bombs that can blow up a country.

Need more  
 pros?  
 cons?