

## **The world's first steam train**

Richard Trevithick was a mining engineer from Cornwall who had grand ideas. In the early 1800s, he experimented with steam power. People already used steam to power machines, but nobody until Trevithick had thought of putting the engine on wheels. He did just this, and then watched as the steam powered the wheels, and the engine moved. Trevithick had invented the locomotive!

Trevithick's manager saw what he had done, and was impressed. He decided to place a bet with another manager. He bet 500 guineas that Trevithick's locomotive could pull ten tons of iron along ten miles of track. The bet was accepted.

Trevithick tested his locomotive on 21st February 1804 in front of a curious public audience. The heavy iron locomotive was ready at one end. Five wagons loaded with iron were attached, and the engine boiler filled with water.

The locomotive was fired into action. The wheels started to turn, spinning against the iron rails until they gripped. Then, almost imperceptibly, the train began to move. It went slowly at first, but then sped up, chuffing all the way. The crowd cheered, and pointed at the train, which was unlike anything they had seen before. It was only going at five miles per hour, but it was moving all the same.

After a few miles, the train came to a low bridge. "Watch out!" cried one of the spectators. But it was too late. The top of the engine's chimney hit the bridge and crashed to the ground. Men quickly rushed to replace the chimney, and it was soon up and running again.

The train just about made it along the rest of the track, pulling the loaded wagon. The experiment had proven that steam-powered locomotives could carry heavy loads for miles at a time. Trevithick had made history.

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## Understanding words:

- a Write the sentence in which you found the word 'grand'.
- b From that sentence, suggest what 'grand' means.
- c Write a new sentence using the word 'grand'.
- d Use a dictionary to find words with a similar meaning (synonyms) to 'grand'.
- e Draw a small picture showing what you think 'grand' means.

## Sequencing:

Write these sentences in the correct order, so they make sense:

- The train moved, and the crowd cheered.
- People had used steam to power machines, but Trevithick was the first to make a steam locomotive.
- Despite the problem, the train carried on, proving that steam locomotives could carry loads for miles at a time.
- His managed was impressed by the locomotive, and he placed a bet on it being able to pull wagons.
- Part-way through, the train hit a bridge, and the chimney had to be replaced.
- Trevithick tested his locomotive in 1804 in front of a public audience.

## Get to the facts:

1. Where was Trevithick from?
2. Who was impressed by Trevithick's engine?
3. How many wagons were attached to the engine?
4. What hit the low bridge and crashed to the ground?
5. What had the experiment proven?

## Make a story...

Branch on the line

The locomotive puffed into view, and I cheered in excitement. But when I looked at the track ahead of the locomotive, I saw that a branch had fallen onto the line. If I acted now, I would just have enough time to stop a disaster... (now complete the story)