

The Wheel

New words

- **vehicle** – something that transports goods or people
- **shaft** – a long pole
- **cart** – a transport vehicle that has two wheels and is pulled by animals

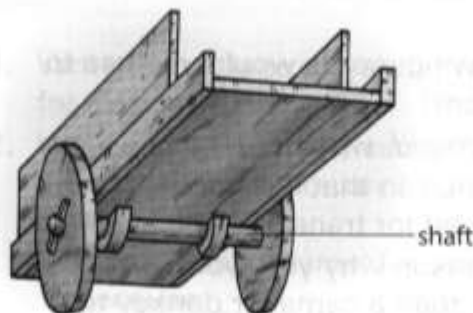
The wheel was invented a long, long time ago and it is one the most important inventions of all time. Imagine trying to transport heavy loads without the help of a wheeled **vehicle**. It would take a long time and it would be very difficult.

Early wheels were wooden disks with a hole in the middle. The axle is the **shaft** on which the wheel turns.



Early wheels were wooden disks with a hole in the middle.

The cart, the bicycle, the motor car and the railway train move on wheels. Even aircraft need wheels for taking off and landing.



A shaft or axle was placed between two wheels to move a cart forward and backward.

Carts, Wagons and Coaches

Carts, wagons and coaches

The invention of the wheel changed people's lives. Now they could transport goods and people in wagons, carts and coaches.

The invention of the wheel

We think that the first wheel may have been invented in ancient Sumer (modern Iraq) about 5 000 years ago. Someone who was using logs to move heavy objects may have thought of a wheel.

The invention of the wheel was so useful that the idea spread and changed people's lives all over the world. The first form of transport to use wheels was the cart.



Logs being used to move heavy objects

Carts and wagons

The earliest carts with wheels were pulled or pushed by people. They were used to carry people, goods and animals. Look at the picture of the Chinese cart below.

But soon people started using animals to pull carts. They could travel much faster and transport all kinds of things much more easily.

Carts have two wheels and are pulled by horses or donkeys. They are used for carrying light loads.

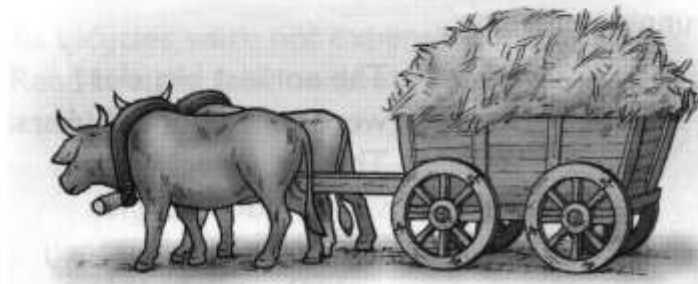


In China, the wheel was used in the earliest cart in about AD 300.



A cart carrying a load of wood

Wagons are much bigger than carts. They are used to carry heavy loads. Wagons have four wheels and are pulled by oxen or horses.



A wagon carrying a load of hay



A coach used to transport people

Carts and wagons were used to carry goods and people. These forms of transport are still used in parts of the world today.

Coaches

Coaches were vehicles used to transport people. They had four wheels and seats inside for people to sit on. Coaches were pulled by two, four or six horses.

Activity 1 - Listen to the video:

(re-CAP-Ed Grade 4 History Transport On Land-1)

Activity 2 - Read the notes above and answer the questions below.

1. What did people use to move heavy objects before the invention of the wheel?
2. What material was used to make the early wheels?
3. What are the differences between a cart and a wagon?
4. Why do you think people started using animals instead of people to pull carts?
5. Name three animals that were used to pull wagons and carts.
6. How did people protect the horse's hooves from wearing out?
7. What was a coach used for?
8. Why do think it was important to have a cover on a wagon and coach?