

bikes  
BIG TRUCKS  
& you

supported by



Royal Mail



CHOOSING A BIKE | SECURITY | SAFETY AROUND TRUCKS | VISIBILITY | TOP TIPS



# Welcome

*Hi! So excited that you are here! How is life for you right now? Hope it is going great. Things have changed quite a lot for me recently: I started cycling to school which I really enjoy and, on Thursdays, my friend Lucy and I walk together to our sports classes. The freedom I get now is pretty awesome but makes me realise that I need to be extra careful.*

*Emily*

## Getting Started

Cycling can do amazing things for you. The effects of exercise from cycling can help to improve your brain power, reduce the amount of times you get sick, make you sleep more deeply and even live longer! That pretty much means that riding a bike turns you into a Superhero!

In 'Bikes, Big Trucks & You', we take a look at how you can stay safe on the bike and make the most of this new found awesomeness!



**Royal Mail**

Bikes, Big Trucks & You is proudly supported by Royal Mail as part of our commitment to keeping road users safe. Our vehicles travel millions of miles every year, and the vast majority of our trips are concluded in complete safety, but we are not stopping there. We want to improve the travel options of children for whom cycling and walking are an important part of growing up and knowing how to use the roads around larger vehicles is an important part of keeping them safe.

# QUICK CHECK!...

## GET THE RIGHT FIT

Although you are probably growing really quickly it's still important not to choose a bike that's too big, so you should be able to stand with the top tube (cross bar) between your legs and your feet flat on the floor. You should have around 5-10cm between you and the bike.

To check your saddle is at the right height, sit on the saddle with the ball of your foot on the pedal. With the pedal at its lowest point, your leg should be almost straight. The handlebars should be roughly in line with the saddle and you should be able to reach the brakes easily.

## CHOOSING A BIKE

Which bike is best for you? Well, that will depend on what sort of riding you do most?



A **Mountain Bike** is a really good all round choice. With rugged tyres, loads of gears and a comfortable riding position you will feel confident on and off road.



Of course if you want to do stunts then a **BMX** is the best choice, but if you haven't got decent brakes they are no good on the road and without gears you won't want to ride too far.



If you've seen the pros on the road then you might want a **Road Bike** to go at top speed. You might find the sporty riding position is less comfortable and think about getting some good all round tyres for extra grip.



## QUICK CHECK!... PUT A LID ON IT!

Your brain is the most precious thing you have, so make sure it is protected. Wearing a helmet will give you this extra protection and getting a good fit is really straightforward.

Measure around your head just above your eyebrows to work out your helmet size.

Place the helmet squarely on your head and adjust the straps until it feels snug all the way around but not too tight. The front strap should be as vertical as possible. The rear strap should join the front strap just under the ears. The buckle should rest under the chin. The helmet should not move around easily.



# RIDING NEAR BIG TRUCKS

It might seem really clear to you that large lorries can be dangerous to people on bikes but every year there are cyclists who get hurt because they didn't understand why they needed to take extra care around large lorries. Here we will explain why.

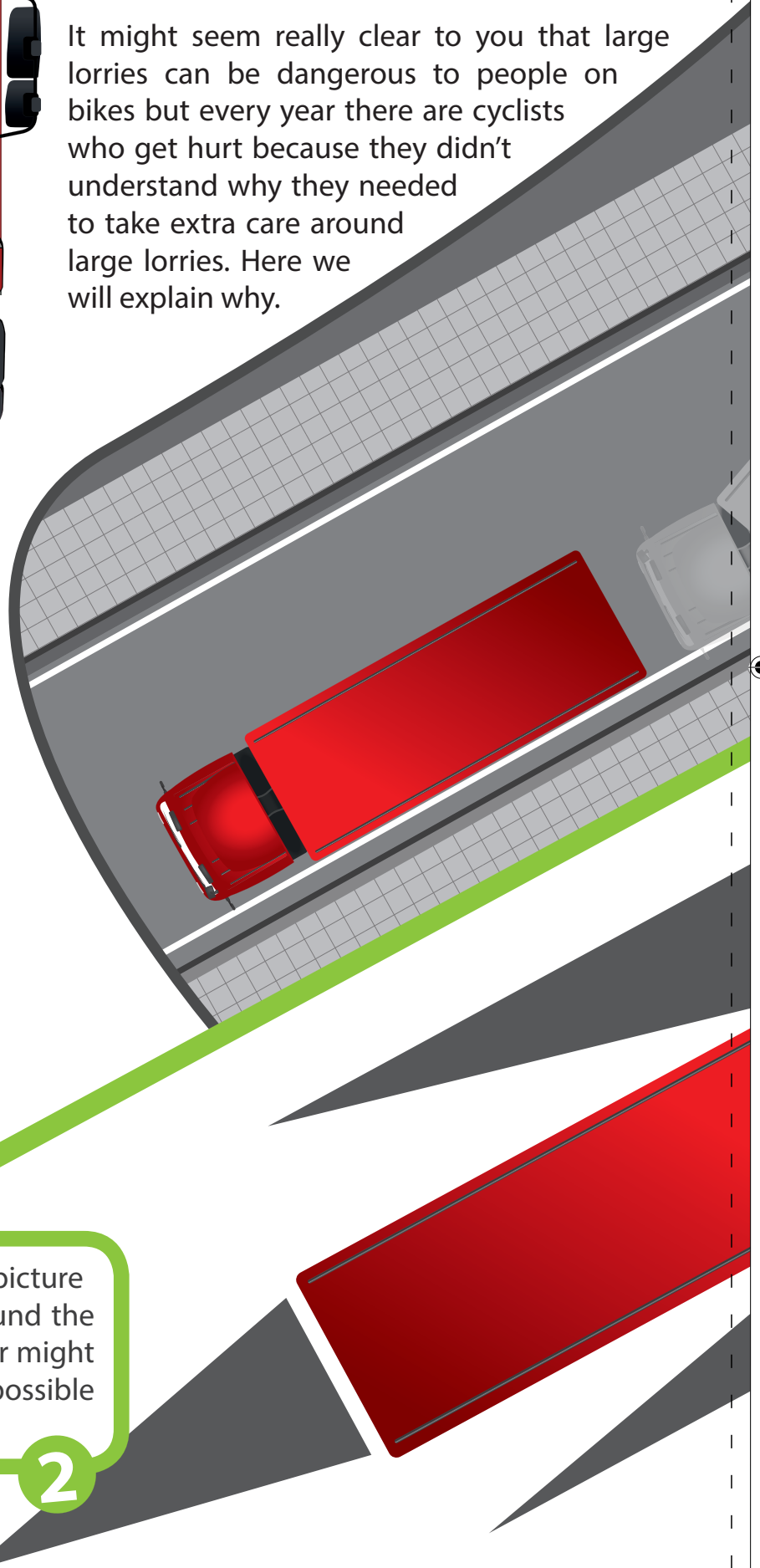
1

The driver cannot see as much as you can. Look at this picture of Jake on his bike in front of a lorry, he would be impossible for the driver to see through the window.



The grey areas in the picture show all the space around the vehicle where the driver might find it hard or even impossible to see you.

2



Lorries don't move in the same way as other vehicles. When a lorry turns a corner, because of its length, it will reduce the space for a bike. If a cyclist has tried to pass on the left they can easily be knocked off or run over. Even pedestrians need to be careful in case the truck mounts the kerb.

3

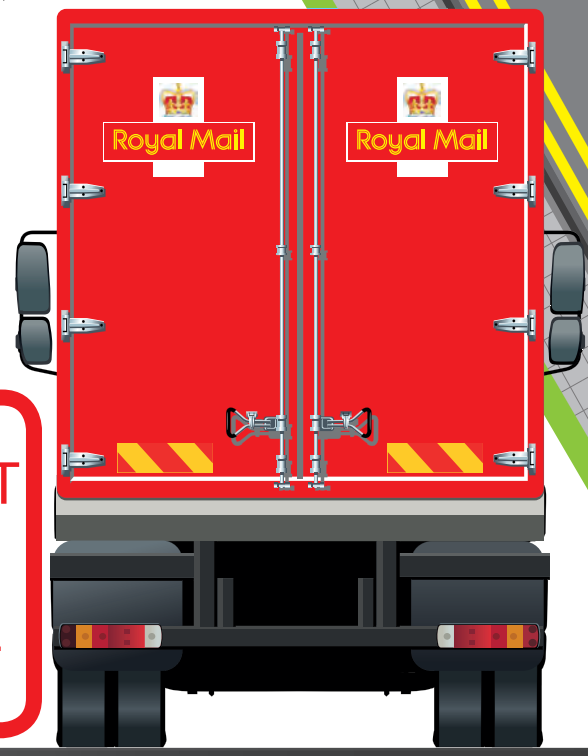
# Road Position

Don't ride too close to the kerb or parked cars. If you ride around 60cm from the kerb it means that traffic behind you will need to slow down and steer around you to overtake. This will make you more visible to drivers and helps you avoid potholes and drain covers at the edge of the road. When cycling past parked cars make sure that you cycle wide enough so that if a car door suddenly opens you can pass safely.

4

**DON'T RIDE HERE**

So whether it is because you cannot be seen or how the lorry moves as it turns, never ride in the red box!



# Route Selection

It's a good idea to think about the best route before you start off. Try and find roads which are quiet and don't have very busy junctions. Look for roads that have slower speed limits. If you have to cross a busy road look for safe places to cross such as Zebra, Toucan or Puffin crossings.



Emily needs to get to her friend's house on the other side of the park. Think about the routes that she could take and decide which would be the safest route for her on the bike. Make sure you think about using dedicated crossings and off road paths.

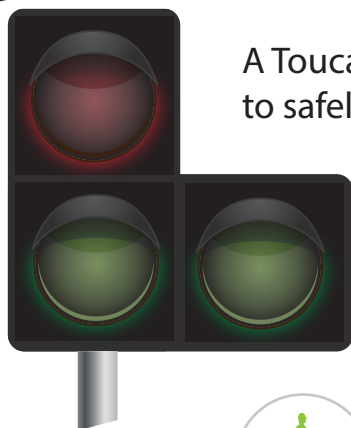
# VISIBILITY

**HI VISIBILITY CLOTHING** - Wearing hi-vis stuff when cycling makes it easier for you to be seen by car drivers. Wear bright clothes with fluorescent and reflective strips or accessories. Fluorescent only helps you to be seen during the day, reflective strips will help you to be seen at night as well.

**SOUNDS** - Having a bell on your bike, or calling out 'excuse me' will allow you to warn pedestrians and other cyclists you are there. Do not leave the warning to the last moment, or you can frighten people. You must not wear headphones whilst cycling, as music can be a distraction and will stop you hearing approaching traffic.

**LIGHTS AND REFLECTORS** - If you cycle at night without lights you run the risk of not being seen by other road users so make sure that you have lights and reflectors in all the right places. This means a constant beam white light at the front and a red light at the rear. Similarly, a white reflector on the front, red to the rear and orange on your pedals.

## Toucan Crossings



A Toucan is a special crossing designed for pedestrians and cyclists to safely cross the road together. It works a lot like a Pelican or Puffin crossing whilst allowing a cycle path to cross the road at the same point.



### Activity

Can you work out what goes where?  
Simply draw lines to show which of the pictures shown are used on the lights at a Toucan Crossing. If you are not sure which symbols to put where, you could try searching on the internet for 'Toucan Crossing' to find some examples.

## Refuges

Sometimes we find a great place to cross, especially on busy roads, where an island has been installed in the middle. So how do you use a refuge like this?

The key is to imagine that you are crossing the road twice.



First get off your bike so that you can walk it across the road, this will give you much better control when you are stationary in the middle.

Use your Green Cross Code of 'Think, Stop, Look & Listen' on each section of the road you are trying to cross.

You will want to keep your bike secure to prevent it being damaged or stolen. Different options are available depending on where you are going to be keeping your bike and you should also think about the security of removable items such as lights, wheels & saddles.

# Security

**AT SCHOOL** - If you cycle to school and there is no secure parking, ask whether this can be provided, or find out if there are suitable places nearby to store your bike.

**AT HOME** - If possible keep it indoors, in either a locked garage or shed, preferably secured to something heavy or immovable.

**IN TOWN** - look for specific bike parking locations with dedicated heavy bars to lock on to. Use something like a good quality cable lock or D-Lock to be sure.



# Maintenance



## CHECK YOUR BRAKES

With regular use brake blocks will need replacing. If the brakes are pulled tight, but still do not work to slow or stop the wheel very well, you probably need to replace the brake blocks. Your brakes are critical to your safety, please seek advice from your local bike shop on how to replace them.

## CHECK YOUR TYRES

They will probably need to be pumped up at least once a month. The correct tyre pressure for your tyres will be written on the tyre rim. You can test the pressure of your tyre with a pressure gauge. Having your tyres at the correct pressure will mean cycling is easier and that you are less likely to suffer from punctures.

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