

The Life of George Stephenson

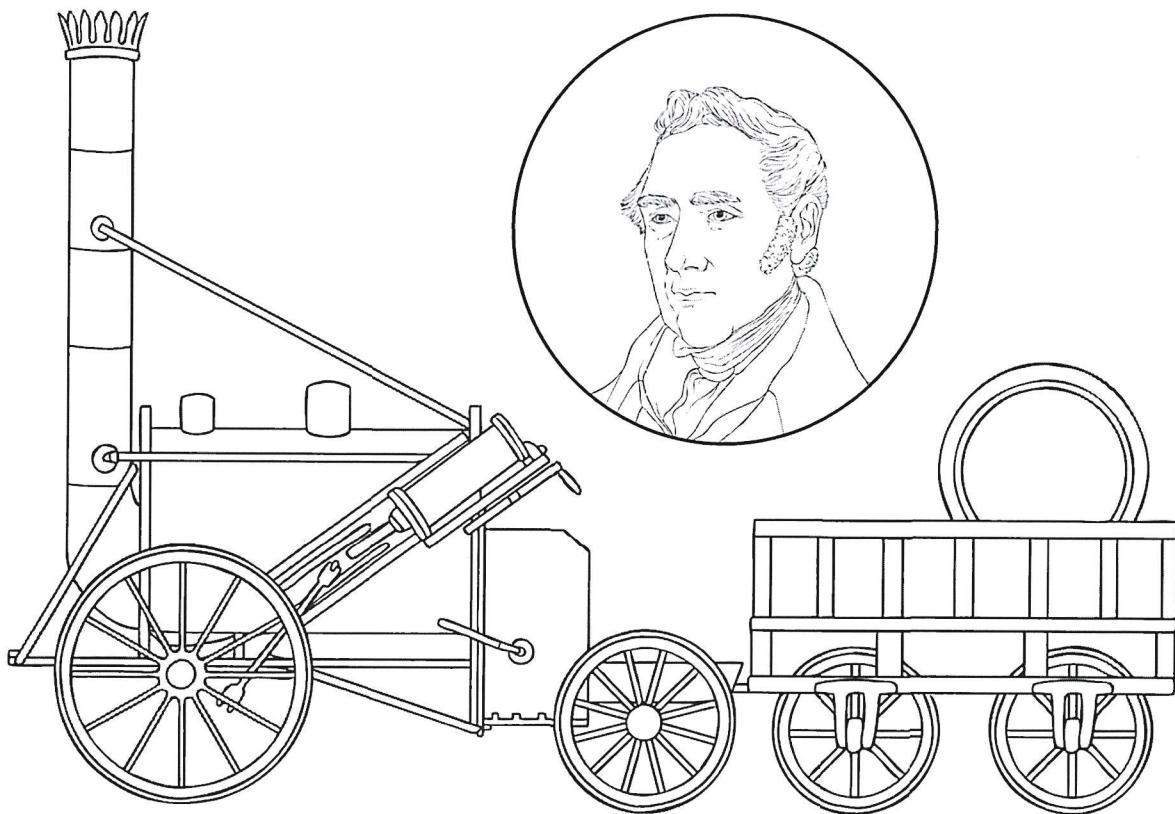
Amazing Fact

On September 15th 1830, William Huskisson became the first person to be killed in a railway accident. He was attending the opening of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway and attempting to shake hands with the Duke of Wellington through a train window, when he failed to notice Stephenson's Rocket coming towards him on the other line.

Challenge

George Stephenson is a very important figure in the history and development of the railways. He developed the 'Rocket', an early locomotive, and built the first passenger railways.

Learn more about his life by carefully reading the fact cards and placing them in chronological order.



You could also try to find out:

- what else William Huskisson was known for;
- where memorials to him can be found;
- how quickly the railway in Britain developed;
- who the Duke of Wellington was and why he was voted 15th in a poll to find the 'Greatest Britons'.

Mild

①

He persuaded local backers to support his plan for a locomotive engine. In 1814, he built 'Blucher', his first locomotive, which travelled at 4mph while pulling a load of 30 tonnes.

②

As a young boy, he had a number of jobs before going down the pit to mine coal at the age of ten. At 14, he became an assistant fireman and later worked on the winding machine, which pulled the cages of miners up from the pit face.

③

At age 20, in 1801, George decided to go to Scotland and study engines. Later, he helped his father on many projects and became a famous engineer and bridge builder in his own right.

④

The Stockton to Darlington line was the world's first passenger railway. The Liverpool and Manchester Railway was opened in 1830 and in 1838, the line from Birmingham to London was completed.

⑤

George did not know how to read or write until he was 18. He went to night school and taught himself. He wanted to learn as much as possible about engines.

⑥

In 1828, the Railway Board announced a competition to determine which was the best engine. Stephenson's 'Rocket' beat four other entrants on the grounds of weight, speed, power and reliability, achieving the dazzling speed of 29 mph on the final lap.

⑦

His father, Robert, worked on the engines that were used to pump water from the mines and the young George Stephenson longed to be in charge of these steam-driven engines.

⑧

In 1823, Stephenson opened a locomotive factory in Newcastle. Two years later, the first journey of his 'Locomotion No 1' with its carriage 'Experiment' took place. The 'Locomotion' cost £500 to build, could carry 450 passengers and travel at 15 mph.

⑨

Stephenson was one of six children born into a poor mining family in Wylam, Northumberland on June 9th, 1781.

⑩

In 1811, George fixed the broken pump engine at a local flooded mine and impressed the owners. This led to him being promoted and acknowledged as a local expert on engines.

The Life of George Stephenson Answers

1. Stephenson was one of six children born into a poor mining family in Wylam, Northumberland on June 9th, 1781.
2. His father, Robert, worked on the engines that were used to pump water from the mines and the young George Stephenson longed to be in charge of these steam-driven engines.
3. As a young boy, he had a number of jobs before going down the pit to mine coal at the age of ten. At 14, he became an assistant fireman and later worked on the winding machine, which pulled the cages of miners up from the pit face.
4. George did not know how to read or write until he was 18. He went to night school and taught himself. He wanted to learn as much as possible about engines.
5. At age 20, in 1801, George decided to go to Scotland and study engines. Later, he helped his father on many projects and became a famous engineer and bridge builder in his own right.
6. In 1811, George fixed the broken pump engine at a local flooded mine and impressed the owners. This led to him being promoted and acknowledged as a local expert on engines.
7. He persuaded local backers to support his plan for a locomotive engine. In 1814, he built 'Blucher', his first locomotive, which travelled at 4mph while pulling a load of 30 tonnes.
8. In 1823, Stephenson opened a locomotive factory in Newcastle. Two years later, the first journey of his 'Locomotion No 1' with its carriage 'Experiment' took place. The 'Locomotion' cost £500 to build, could carry 450 passengers and travel at 15 mph.
9. In 1828, the Railway Board announced a competition to determine which was the best engine. Stephenson's 'Rocket' beat four other entrants on the grounds of weight, speed, power and reliability, achieving the dazzling speed of 29 mph on the final lap.
10. The Stockton to Darlington line was the world's first passenger railway. The Liverpool and Manchester Railway was opened in 1830 and in 1838, the line from Birmingham to London was completed.