

## **D**irections

Read this article. Then answer questions 37 and 38.

# Excerpt from *Double Dutch: A Celebration of Jump Rope, Rhyme, and Sisterhood*

by Veronica Chambers

- 1 Tahira Reid was an eight-year-old girl living in the Bronx, a borough of New York City, when she came up with her first invention. There was a poster contest for kids in the third grade, and the theme was: "What would you like to see in the future?" It was the year the Space Shuttle Challenger was launched, and almost everyone drew a picture of astronauts, rockets, or people who lived on the moon. But Tahira thought an invention should be practical, as well as imaginative. Although she was just a little girl, she had already grasped the credo of history's finest inventors.



- 2 As a third grader, Tahira's biggest problem was that she didn't have anyone to turn double Dutch for her when she came home from school. Before, in between, and after classes, she could jump whenever she wanted, surrounded by girls who also loved to turn and jump. In her neighborhood, however, there weren't any kids her age, and Tahira couldn't jump double Dutch alone. She came up with the idea for a machine that would turn the ropes for you.

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You just push a button, and *voilà!* Two ropes would spin like eggbeaters before you. Tahira's poster won first place in the contest. She was too little to figure out how to make the machine, though, and just had to jump when she was at school.

3 Ten years later, Tahira was a student at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York, studying mechanical engineering. In one of her first design courses, she was again presented with an inventing problem. Her professor asked her to draw up plans for a machine that challenged the limits of sports. At first, Tahira was stumped. She kept thinking about traditional games such as football and basketball, and she came up with nothing at all. Then she remembered her third-grade poster project. What she knew about football she could squeeze on the head of a pin, but what she knew about double Dutch could fill an entire book.

4 With a team of fellow students, Tahira invented the automatic double-Dutch machine—a real-life embodiment of her third-grade dream. With this device, ropes are connected to two wheels on opposing metal posts. After an engine is turned on, the ropes spin into action. Although it took more than a year to get the machine to actually work, Tahira got an A in the course. Even better, her device has been exhibited at museums such as the Smithsonian Institution and featured in newspapers and on television shows across the country. She even holds a patent for her invention. If you go to the U.S. Patent Office in Washington, D.C., you can find her name in the registry: Tahira Reid, inventor of the automatic double-Dutch device. To this day, the thought makes her dreamy. “Everyone paid attention,” she says. “I remember thinking, This is a historic moment—no one's ever jumped double Dutch without turners before.”

embodiment = something that is a perfect example of an idea

5 Even now that she's grown up, Tahira still loves to stop and watch when girls in her old neighborhood are playing double Dutch. “It's like a sorority,” she says. “You are sisters in this love of double Dutch. When you get together, there are no pretenses or barriers. You all share these happy memories of being girls in the rope.”

sorority = a club of females

37 In paragraph 3 of “Excerpt from *Double Dutch: A Celebration of Jump Rope, Rhyme, and Sisterhood*,” what does “At first, Tahira was stumped” mean? Use two details from the article to support your response.

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38 In “Excerpt from *Double Dutch: A Celebration of Jump Rope, Rhyme, and Sisterhood*,” what did Tahira think about the sport of double Dutch as an adult? Use two details from the article to support your response.

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**GO ON**

## **D**irections

Read this article. Then answer questions 39 and 40.

### **Excerpt from *It's Our World, Too!***

*by Phillip Hoose*

1        Something about the battered old bicycle at the garage sale caught ten-year-old Justin Lebo's eye. What a wreck! It was like looking at a few big bones in the dust and trying to figure out what kind of dinosaur they had once belonged to.

2        It was a BMX bike with a twenty-inch frame. Its original color was buried beneath five or six coats of gunky paint. Now it showed up as sort of a rusted red. Everything—the grips, the pedals, the brakes, the seat, the spokes—were bent or broken, twisted and rusted. Justin stood back as if he were inspecting a painting for sale at an auction. Then he made his final judgment: perfect.

3        Justin talked the owner down to \$6.50 and asked his mother, Diane, to help him load the bike into the back of their car.

4        When he got it home, he wheeled the junker into the garage and showed it proudly to his father. "Will you help me fix it up?" he asked. Justin's hobby was bike racing, a passion the two of them shared. Their garage barely had room for the car anymore. It was more like a bike shop. Tires and frames hung from hooks on the ceiling, and bike wrenches dangled from the walls.

5        After every race, Justin and his father would adjust the brakes and realign the wheels of his two racing bikes. This was a lot of work, since Justin raced flat out, challenging every gear and part to perform to its fullest. He had learned to handle almost every repair his father could and maybe even a few things he couldn't. When Justin got really stuck, he went to see Mel, the owner of the best bike shop in town. Mel let him hang out and watch, and he even grunted a few syllables of advice from between the spokes of a wheel now and then.

6        Now Justin and his father cleared out a work space in the garage and put the old junker up on a rack. They poured alcohol on the frame and rubbed until the old paint began to yield, layer by layer. They replaced the broken pedal, tightened down a new seat, and restored the grips. In about a week, it looked brand new.

7 Justin wheeled it out of the garage, leapt aboard, and started off around the block. He stood up and mashed down on the pedals, straining for speed. It was a good, steady ride, but not much of a thrill compared to his racers.

8 Soon he forgot about the bike. But the very next week, he bought another junker at a yard sale and fixed it up, too. After a while it bothered him that he wasn't really using either bike. Then he realized that what he loved about the old bikes wasn't riding them: it was the challenge of making something new and useful out of something old and broken.

9 Justin wondered what he should do with them. They were just taking up space in the garage. He remembered that when he was younger, he used to live near a large brick building called the Kilbarchan Home for Boys. It was a place for boys whose parents couldn't care for them for one reason or another.

10 He found "Kilbarchan" in the phone book and called the director, who said the boys would be thrilled to get two bicycles. The next day when Justin and his mother unloaded the bikes at the home, two boys raced out to greet them. They leapt aboard the bikes and started tooling around the semicircular driveway, doing wheelies and pirouettes, laughing and shouting.

11 The Lebos watched them for a while, then started to climb into their car to go home. The boys cried after them. "Wait a minute! You forgot your bikes!" Justin explained that the bikes were for them to keep. "They were so happy," Justin remembers. "It was like they couldn't believe it. It made me feel good just to see them happy."

12 On the way home, Justin was silent. His mother assumed he was lost in a feeling of satisfaction. But he was thinking about what would happen once those bikes got wheeled inside and everyone saw them. How would all those kids decide who got the bikes? Two bikes could cause more trouble than they would solve. Actually, they hadn't been that hard to build. It was fun. Maybe he could do more. . . .

13 "Mom," Justin said as they turned onto their street. "I've got an idea. I'm going to make a bike for every boy at Kilbarchan for Christmas." Diane Lebo looked at Justin out of the corner of her eye. She had rarely seen him so determined.

**GO ON**

- 14 When they got home, Justin called Kilbarchan to find out how many boys lived there. There were twenty-one. It was already June. He had six months to make nineteen bikes. That was almost a bike a week. Justin called the home back to tell them of his plan. "I could tell they didn't think I could do it," Justin remembers. "I knew I could."

- 39 In paragraph 2 of "Excerpt from *It's Our World, Too!*," what made the bike seem "perfect" to Justin? Use two details from the article to support your response.

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**GO ON**

*Planning Page*

You may **PLAN** your writing for question 40 here if you wish, but do **NOT** write your final answer on this page. Writing on this Planning Page will **NOT** count toward your final score. Write your final answer on Pages 15 and 16.



**GO ON**





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