Helsinki

AROUND THE BALTIC SEA IN 14 DAYS

A school commute challenge for fifth graders: let's travel to school and our leisure activities on foot, by bike or even on a scooter

For the Teacher

Instructions for playing the game

We are challenging fifth-grade students in Helsinki to take part in the 'Around the Baltic Sea in 14 Days' game and to pay particular attention to their journeys to school and leisure activities for two weeks, and, of course, beyond. The challenge is aimed specifically at fifth graders, but students in other grades can also play the game.

Story Fox and Rally Rat from the Fox Book series on sustainable development in early childhood education and early years education introduce students to the theme of sustainable travel and encourage them to make active journeys to and from school. At the same time, the game teaches players about cities in Scandinavia and the Baltic Sea region and shares stories about transport culture in different countries.

Excellent opportunities to take part in the challenge include national Cycling Week in May and European Mobility Week in September.

For two weeks, make a note in your travel log of all school and leisure journeys between Monday and Friday that you take using your own muscle power. At the same time, you will be able to explore the map of the Baltic Sea alongside Story Fox and Rally Rat and learn about sustainable and active travel.

The curriculum guides students towards practising a sustainable lifestyle:

The necessity of a sustainable lifestyle

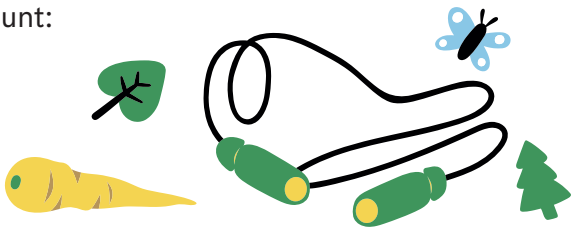
Human beings are part of nature and entirely dependent on the vitality of ecosystems. Understanding this is central to personal growth. Comprehensive education recognises the importance of sustainable development and eco-social education, takes actions accordingly, and guides students towards adopting a sustainable lifestyle. Eco-social education means an understanding of the seriousness of climate change and a commitment to acting sustainably. (National core curriculum for comprehensive education 2014)

Environmental studies and building a sustainable future

Let's reflect on the impact of our own actions on ourselves, other people, animal welfare, the natural world, and society. Let's practise environmentally responsible behaviour in our neighbourhoods.

When selecting content, take the following into account:

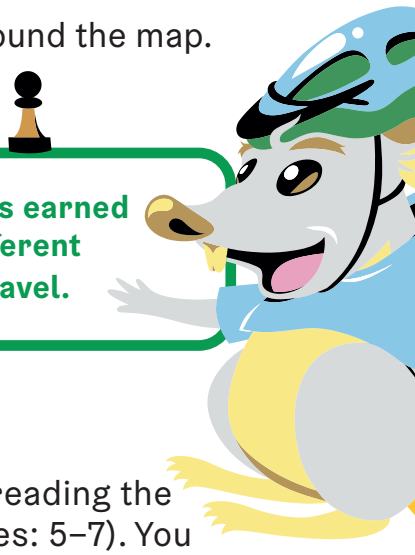
- fostering biodiversity
- climate change and its mitigation
- sustainable use of natural resources
- promoting health
- preserving one's own cultural heritage
- living in a multicultural world
- the global wellbeing of humankind, both now and in the future.



(National core curriculum for comprehensive education 2014, environmental studies in grades 3 to 6)

Preparations for the game

1. Print out an **travel log** to record the distances travelled by the class.
2. Order **a map** (find instructions on Opehuone, on page Kestävä tulevaisuus ('sustainable future') or print it out at A3 size. Put the map up on the classroom wall for the duration of the challenge.
3. Choose **a two-week participation period** that suits your class.
4. Choose **a token** that your class likes and use it to move around the map. You can also colour in the route on the printed map!



The aim of the game is to move around the map using points earned through your own physical activity, visiting as many different towns as possible, whilst learning about sustainable travel.

How to play:

1. **On the first day of the challenge:** The teacher begins by reading the story Around the Baltic Sea along the surface aloud (pages: 5–7). You can project the informational text in the centre of the story – Transport and the environment – how could your mode of transport make a difference? – onto the wall or print it out for the students to read for themselves. The game starts in Helsinki. The teacher reads aloud the story about the city of Helsinki and records the active journeys to school made that morning in the travel log.

2. **Earn points for journeys to school and leisure activities made using your own muscle power:**

- On each school day, work together to count all the journeys you have made using your muscle power to school and to your leisure activities over the previous 24 hours. Enter the points in the travel log table.
- Add up the points. One point is awarded for each single journey to school or a leisure activity. **For every 10 points, you can move one step on the map.**
- Weekend trips are not counted. Any remaining points can be used the following day.

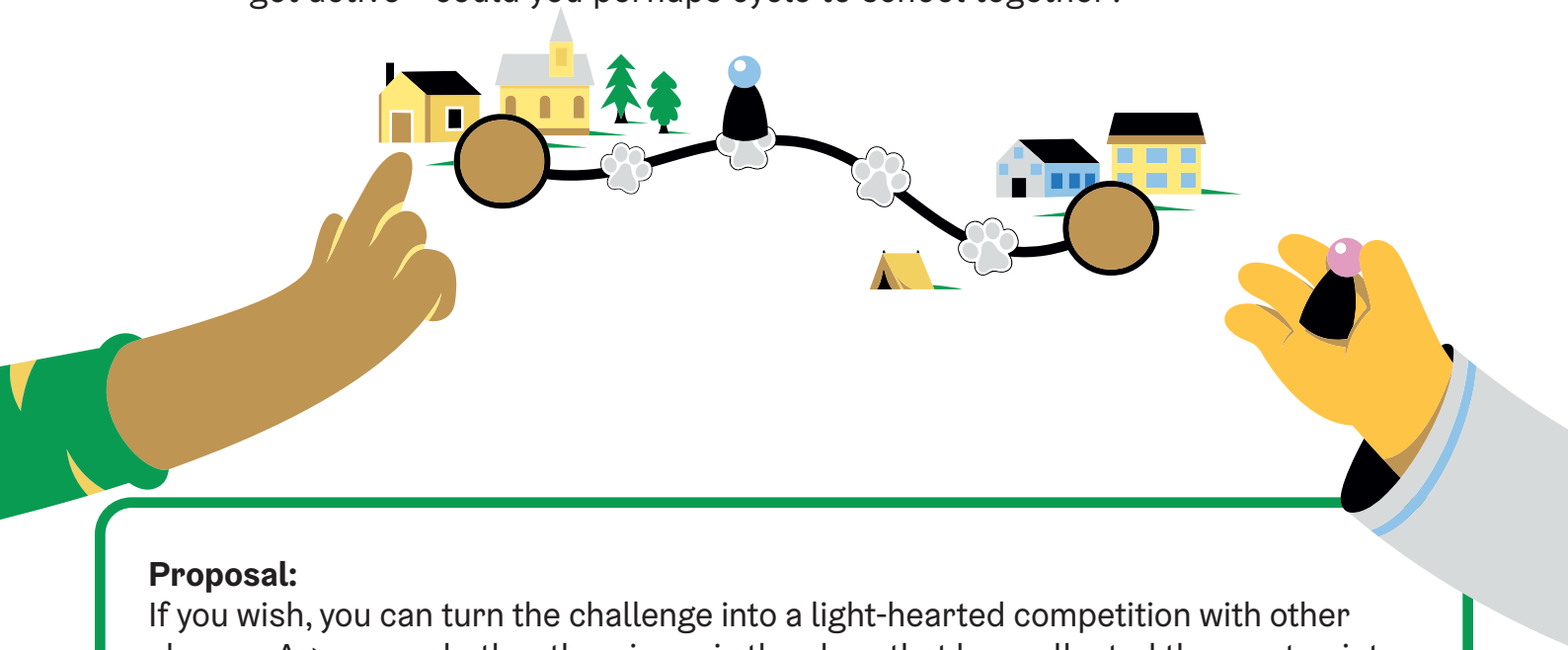
3. **Move your token forward on the map each day according to the number of points you have.** You can decide on the route yourself. You can move around the map by following the white and blue arrows and the brown town squares.

4 **When you land on a city square on the map or move through it**, the teacher will read aloud the related city story and task (city stories on pages 8–29). Alongside the city stories, the challenge includes various tasks. Answer the quiz questions and, if you wish, complete the additional tasks. The correct answers to the quiz questions can be found on the last page. If you have enough points to pass through the town, you can continue your journey in line with the number of steps you have collected. This means you can visit several towns in a single day.

5 You can earn **golden wood-sorrel leaves** by completing some of the city text tasks, and you can use them to travel: **with three wood-sorrel leaves, you can travel directly to any other city** on the game map. Not every task will yield wood-sorrel leaves.

6 The game will run for **two weeks, i.e. 10 school days.** You don't need to go back to the start at the end of the game. On the school day following the last challenge day: make a note of the distances covered on the last challenge day and see how far you end up going. Calculate the total distance travelled. Congratulate each other on being physically active!

7 **Once the challenge is over:** The teacher reads aloud the concluding story from the last page of the material. Discuss whether the class's everyday physical activity has increased. How could I incorporate more physical activity into my daily life? Let's agree to keep encouraging each other to get active – could you perhaps cycle to school together?



Proposal:
If you wish, you can turn the challenge into a light-hearted competition with other classes. Agree on whether the winner is the class that has collected the most points over the two weeks or the one that has visited different towns the most. Think of a prize for the winning class. For example, the winning class can decide on the destination for a group spring bike ride or spend a lesson of their choice in the school gym.

Travel log

Every day, the teacher asks the class about the journeys they have made to school and their leisure activities using their own muscle power and records them in the travel log. Work out how many steps you can take on the game board: **10 points = 1 step.**

Time period for completing the challenge (2weeks / 10 school days): _____

Challenge day	Points carried over from yesterday	Yesterday from school to home	Yesterday's leisure journeys	Today from home to school	Total number of journeys (number)
1	_____	_____	_____		
2					
3					
4					
5					
6 7	**Weekend**				
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13 14	**Weekend**				
Total:				_____	

Total number of active trips during the challenge (number):

For the whole class

Story: Around the Baltic Sea along the surface

Rally Rat is frantically clicking away at their laptop with the mouse, and the browser tabs are flickering. It seems that the school's internet connetion cannot keep up with Rally Rat, as there are at least 20 sites open, each crashing one after the other.

"To Hamburg, Oslo, Riga, and then on to Gdańsk and Stockholm," Rally Rat mutters.

"Are you planning a trip?" asks Story Fox as they enter the classroom.

"Do you have a credit card?" Rally Rat asks this without answering Story Fox's question. "I need your credit card – can I borrow it?"

"No, I don't have one. Grandad Fox promised to get me a debit card, but he hasn't remembered to send the form to the bank yet," replies Story Fox. "But what do you need it for?"

Meanwhile, Rally Rat has already scurried out into the corridor, where they stop the principal.

"Could you lend me your credit card? I need to book flights to Germany, Latvia and Sweden, and it's a long journey – I can't remember all the places," Rally Rat says.

"You want to borrow my credit card? First of all – relax – what exactly are you planning?"

Story Fox pricks up their ears as Rally Rat explains their plan to travel to Germany to meet a new friend they have gotten to know at the Rats' Reform Club. From there, Rally Rat plans to fly to Oslo, as they want to explore the Vigeland Sculpture Park, see Riga's famous 'Cat House', go for a swim in the Baltic Sea on Gdańsk's sandy beach during the rats' moonlight swim, and take part in a sing-along at Skansen in Stockholm. Rally Rat has read Jules Verne's book Around the World in Eighty Days and feels inspired to go on a journey: there are so many places to see in the world.

"A tour following in the footsteps of Phileas Fogg!" Rally Rat says excitedly.

"I've just read an article in the Fox Times suggesting a route around the Baltic Sea along the surface," says Story Fox.

"What does 'along the surface' mean?" Rally Rat asks.

Story Fox explains the article and tells Rally Rat that travelling on the surface means moving on the surface of the earth or water, for example by walking, cycling, travelling by train or by boat. As far as Story Fox is concerned, the best thing about travelling overland is that you can take your own bike with you. If Story Fox had to choose one thing to take with them to a desert island, it would definitely be their own bike, with its trailer loaded with books. And a summer holiday in Europe wouldn't be the same if you couldn't explore the cities' hidden gems and take shortcuts to unique destinations on two wheels.

Copenhagen's cycling culture is in a league of its own. Story Fox dreams of how they could easily blend in with the cyclists on their cargo bike, whizzing along the streets of Østerbro to see the Little Mermaid statue. At the same time, the Trampe bicycle lift in Trondheim, which takes you to the top of Brubakken Hill, springs to mind. A bicycle lift! There's no two ways about it – Story Fox is coming along! But on one condition:

"We will travel along the surface," Story Fox insists.

"I don't have a bike, and I certainly wouldn't have the energy to cycle all the way to Germany."

"You can come along in my bike trailer. We'll take our bike on the ferry to Stockholm, then carry on by train to Oslo, from there to Copenhagen, and from Copenhagen by train to Hamburg. We'll be able to travel all the way around the Baltic Sea using a combination of bike, train, bus and ferry," Story Fox promises.

"That's a brilliant idea," the principal chimes in. "But I'll be spending my summer holiday on the shores of Lake Päijänne, paddling on the surface."

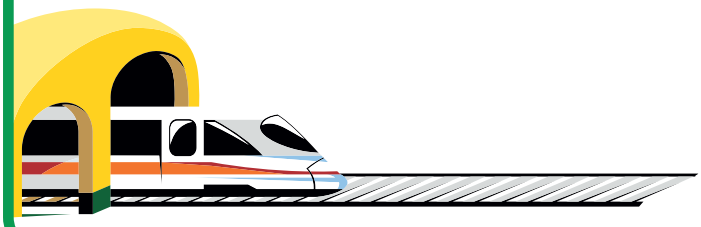
Story Fox digs out a Fox Times article and shows Rally Rat the article's additional information box.

Transport and the environment – how could your mode of transport make a difference?

Travelling by different modes of transport has different effects on the natural environment and the climate. A large proportion of transport still runs on **fuels** such as petrol and diesel. When fuel burns in the engine of a car, bus or aeroplane, various gases and particles are released into the air. These are known as transport emissions, and they contribute to global warming and affect air quality.

The most significant gases are **carbon dioxide** (CO_2), which contributes to global warming, and nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and carbon monoxide (CO), which impair air quality. In addition to this, volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and fine particulate matter (PM) are produced, which may be harmful to health.

A carbon footprint indicates how much carbon dioxide is produced by human activities, such as travel. The smaller the carbon footprint, the more environmentally friendly the mode of transport. A climate-sustainable level of carbon emissions has been estimated at around 2,500 kg of CO_2 equivalent per person per year. On average, a Finn's **carbon footprint** is much larger: around 8,000–10,000 kg per year.



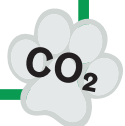
A comparison of modes of transport:

Walking, cycling, riding a scooter and skateboarding are, in practice, emission-free ways of getting around. The only emissions come from the manufacture of the means of transport, but the journey itself does not produce any emissions. What's more, in everyday life, one of the best ways to get around is by public transport. When several people travel on the same mode of transport, the share of emissions per passenger is lower.

A bus's emissions depend on the type of fuel it runs on. In Helsinki, a large proportion of buses are electric, making them an environmentally friendly option. Trains are one of the lowest-emission ways to travel, even over long distances, particularly in Finland, where a large proportion of trains are electrically powered. Trams and metros are also powered by electricity and are a convenient option for getting around the city.

Emissions from shipping depend on the ship's engine system. Traditional diesel engines produce a lot of emissions. Newer electric and hybrid ships are significantly cleaner. Electric ferries are increasingly being used for short journeys, such as those in the archipelago. You can travel from Turku to Stockholm on a biogas-powered passenger ferry, which has a small carbon footprint.

Air transport accounts for a significant proportion of global transport emissions. In Finland, domestic flights are short, but the emissions they cause are high. A single average flight within Europe can produce as many emissions as several months' worth of everyday travel.



Rally Rat is not entirely convinced that it's worth giving up flying. Doesn't the journey take an awful lot of time, and isn't planning the route rather difficult? But what about Phileas? How did he plan his own journey across the surface at a time when mobile phones and the internet only existed in the imaginations of inventors?

"Let's ask our friend Inventor Fox for help; they know where to start when planning a route, as they're familiar with all the modes of transport," suggests Story Fox. "I don't think buying train tickets online is any more difficult than buying plane tickets. And the journey itself – isn't that part of the holiday, or does the holiday only really begin once you've arrived?"

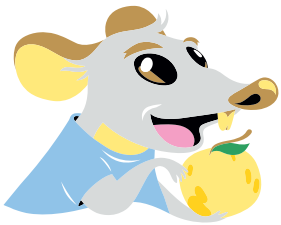
"Travelling by train can be quite charming," muses Rally Rat, and imagines gazing out of the train window at the rural landscapes, forests and mountains, or the long, dark train tunnels. "I've already opened the Deutsche Bahn website – there are sure to be tickets here! I'm going to book a table for dinner in the first-class sleeper carriage right now," Rally Rat continues.

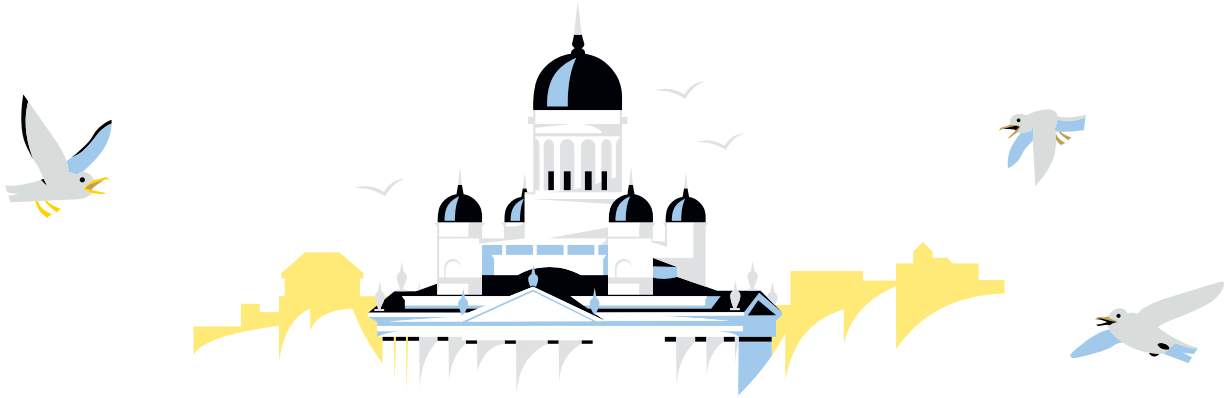
"Keep your cool, Rally Rat! We need to consider our route and mode of transport carefully. I also need to check that I can take my bike with me."

Planning a trip takes time, but it's fun. Rally Rat and Story Fox weigh up which routes to take around the Baltic Sea and look for interesting places where they might stop for a while. Inventor Fox calculates the carbon footprint of the friends' journey and recommends the lowest-emission car ferry for crossing the Baltic Sea. Packing for the trip also requires some planning.

"I'm going to take a book with me that's so thick it'll last me even the longest train journeys," says Story Fox. "What are you taking to read on your trip?"

"I'll take a pile of comics, Tom and Jerry!"





Helsinki

Story Fox and Rally Rat set off on their journey from Helsinki, the capital of Finland. In Helsinki, there are many different environmentally friendly ways to get from one place to another: on foot and by bike, of course, but also by local trains, trams, the metro, buses and the Suomenlinna island ferry. Many families don't need a car at all.

In Helsinki, you can combine cycling with public transport, as you can take your bike on the metro, train or ferry. Cycling and then taking the train or the metro often makes your journey quicker. For example, if you're heading out on a trip to Nuuksio or Sipoonkorpi National Park, the easiest way to get there is to take your bike on the train and cycle the rest of the way. You can also get to places by bike that you can't reach by car or public transport: for example, you can take the train to Vantaankoski Station and cycle down along the Vantaanjoki river.

It's also nice to explore other towns in Finland by bike. You can take a local train to Hämeenlinna, for example, and go on a sightseeing tour by bike from the station. If you want to explore Tallinn by bike, you can also take your bike on board the ferry.

"Shall we head north, south, east or west first?" Story Fox asks.

"Let's go to Joensuu in mouth-eastern Finland first; my cousin lives there," Rally Rat suggests.

"I think you mean south-eastern Finland. We can also choose to head north-east, south-west or north-west."

"Speaking of mouth, let's have lunch – I'll have a Danish smørrebrød and a glass of oat milk, please!" Rally Rat says.

From Helsinki, you can take a ferry to Estonia, Sweden and even Germany. The distance from Finland to Estonia is 80 kilometres, and the ferry journey takes two hours. The journey from Helsinki to Stockholm takes around 18 hours and is approximately 400 kilometres.

Aarhus

The area around the Danish city of Aarhus (or Århus) has been inhabited since the 8th century, when the Vikings founded the city at the mouth of the River Aarhus. Owing to its location, it was an important trading centre both during the Viking Age and in the Middle Ages.

A Viking-era shipbuilding site has been discovered in the city area. The Vikings built long ships that had both masts and oars. The journey could therefore be made either by sailing or by rowing. The Vikings were indeed skilled seafarers who were great at navigation and undertook long voyages from the Nordic countries across the Atlantic to the American continent and up rivers as far as the Middle East.

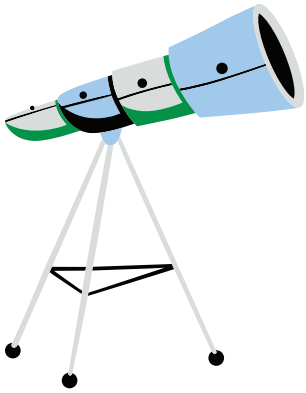
Story Fox and Rally Rat gaze out towards the horizon. A cargo ship is approaching from afar, coming from Iceland. The friends wonder whether they should continue their journey in the Viking tradition by ship and board a cargo vessel bound for Reykjavík. However, Story Fox is nervous about the long sea voyage across the Atlantic Ocean, and the journey would take up to four days each way. Iceland will have to be the destination of the next adventure.

Quiz question 1:

What helped the Vikings navigate at sea during long voyages?

- **a** They simply followed the coastline and never sailed out to the open sea.
- **b** They had maps showing the whole of the Atlantic.
- **c** They used a sun compass and stones to help them find their way

If you answer correctly, you will get golden wood-sorrel leaves.



Abisko

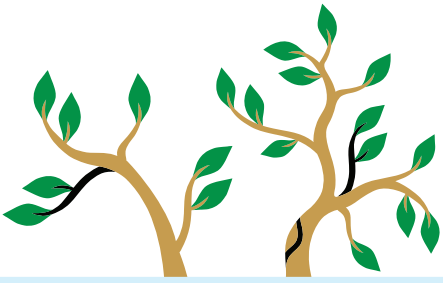
Story Fox and Rally Rat arrive at a small railway station in Swedish Lapland, on the edge of Abisko National Park. Abisko Station is one of Sweden's best -known and northernmost stations, and for many travellers it is the gateway to the fells and wilderness of Lapland.

The Abisko region is famous for being one of the best places in the world to view the northern lights, as the area has very few clouds and a dry climate. Many people travel to Abisko on the night train to see the northern lights. Story Fox and Rally Rat are planning to sleep under the open sky and watch the northern lights all night long. However, snoring can be heard coming from the warm sleeping bags quite soon. Until a strange sound rouses the friends:

"What's that sound? Who's that screaming and shouting?" Rally Rat asks.

"Look, there's a grey fox over there. Why, it's Arctic Fox in their summer outfit!" Story Fox exclaims.

The arctic fox is a highly endangered species in the north and a good old friend of Rally Rat and Story Fox. Arctic Fox greets the travellers and stays with them, as a magnificent display of the northern lights has just begun in the darkening sky.



Idea for an additional task:

Find out what the arctic fox sounds like and how arctic foxes are protected.

Gdańsk

Story Fox and Rally Rat arrive in Gdańsk, a city in northern Poland on the shores of the Baltic Sea.

“This sandy beach is huge,” Rally Rat sighs, sinking their paws into the sand. “Bury me completely in the sand, so that you can only see my snout!”

“I’ll certainly dig you a sandpit, but it’s a bit crowded here – how about we take the local train to the beach in Sopot? It takes half an hour to get there from here. There are over 30 kilometres of beautiful sandy beaches in the Gdańsk area, so there’s sure to be plenty of space, even though there are lots of tourists here,” suggests Story Fox.

“Yeah, there would still be room for one more rat here, but never mind that – let’s go to Sopot,” Rally Rat agrees.

Story Fox is leafing through a travel guide to Poland and comes across some interesting information about the destination:

“This travel guide says that Sopot has one of the longest quays in Europe. After a stroll along the quay, you can also take part in a forest opera or a moonlight swim.”

“How could I have forgotten that today’s the night of the rats’ moonlight swim! I’m going to the rat party; why don’t you pop over to the edge of the forest to see if any of your fox relatives are at the concert?” Rally Rat suggests.

Quiz question 2:

You can find large shifting dunes on the shores of the Baltic Sea in Poland. The dunes are also known as the ‘Sahara of Europe’, as they form the largest dune area in Central Europe. How much do the dunes shift each year as a result of the winds over the Baltic Sea?

(a) 10 cm (b) 10 m (c) 10 km

If you answer correctly, you’ll get golden wood-sorrel leaves.

Hamburg

Hamburg is Germany's second-largest city and home to the country's most important port. The city is situated in northern Germany, on the lower reaches of the River Elbe.

Hamburg is also one of the most important rail transport hubs in the whole of Europe. Hamburg's central railway station, Hamburg Hauptbahnhof, is huge and bustling, with trains departing from there to almost all of Germany's major cities. The city is, in fact, a good starting point for a train adventure across the whole of Europe. Story Fox and Rally Rat are standing on the upper platform of the railway station, watching the trains as they arrive and depart.

"I, for one, love this travelling atmosphere and watching the travellers: some have a rucksack on their backs, others a suitcase or a briefcase. I can't help but imagine their stories – where they're coming from and where they're going," Story Fox says.

"There are train tracks from here to so many cities across Europe that you could easily head off to just about anywhere. That sign says 'Netherlands' and that one says 'Austria' – what on earth are those places?" Rally Rat asks.

"They sound familiar – have a look and see if you can find them on your map of Europe, Rally Rat. Hey, that night train's just setting off for Denmark – it says 'Danmark' on it," Story Fox points out.

Story Fox and Rally Rat are so engrossed in studying the map that they miss the train! To ensure that they can exchange their train tickets, which they have already purchased, for tickets on the next train at no extra cost, please carry out the **following task:**

Idea for an additional task:

Find out what 'Netherlands' and 'Austria' are called in Finnish. Do other countries or cities have different names in Finnish, English or their own language?

Are there any countries or cities that have the same name in Finnish, English or the country's own language?

Honningsvåg

Honningsvåg is Norway's northernmost town. It is situated on an island right on the edge of the Arctic Ocean. Honningsvåg has a bustling harbour, and a great deal of fish is caught in the area.

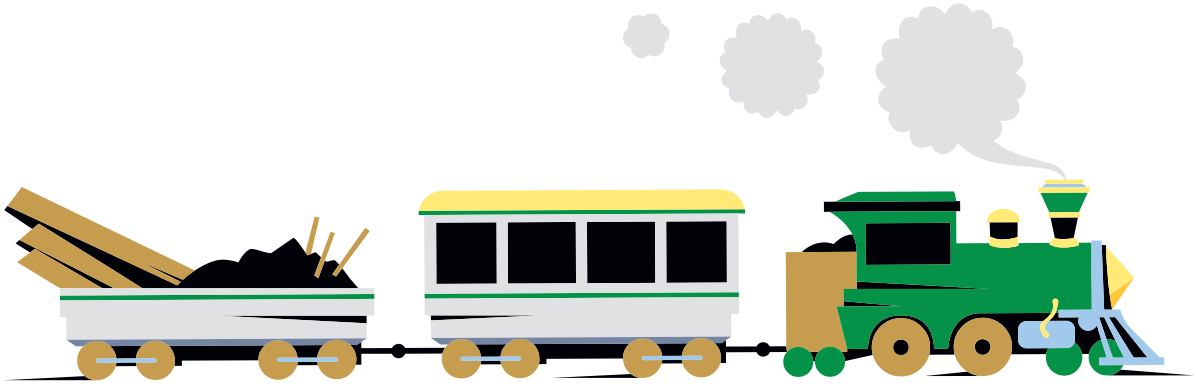
Honningsvåg is also well known amongst cyclists, as it serves as the gateway to the famous North Cape, the northernmost point of mainland Europe. Many long-distance cyclists start or end their journeys here and take a photo of themselves in front of the Globe Monument at Nordkapp. Rally Rat climbs onto the Globe Monument and jumps for joy at the northernmost point of the journey. However, the wet weather makes the monument slippery, and they slip. Luckily, Story Fox's bike is parked right in the rat's flight path, and Rally Rat falls straight into the bike trailer.

"You'd have missed out on the rugged cliffs and sweeping sea views of the Arctic Ocean if you had hurt yourself."

"Luckily for me I do not have to see the doctor. I want to set off straight away to look for reindeer," Rally Rat says.

In the Honningsvåg area, you can go on short day trips by bike or choose longer routes, such as the ride towards Olderfjord or Skaidi, which wind their way through fjords and fells. In summer, the sun does not set at all, so you can go cycling and spot reindeer even in the middle of the night.

Once you reach Honningsvåg, the northernmost point in the game, you'll receive golden wood-sorrel leaves!



Hämeenlinna

Story Fox and Rally Rat arrive in Hämeenlinna. Story Fox has read a book on the history of Finland and learnt that Finland's first railway line was completed in 1862, running from Helsinki to Hämeenlinna, and that the first train ran on 17 March 1862.

"Can you imagine, back then, over 160 years ago, there were no cars or buses in Finland," Story Fox says to Rally Rat.

"People travelled by horse, boat or on foot. The journeys were often slow and arduous. But then Finland's first railway was completed, and train services began. People called the train the 'fire horse' because it produced smoke and noise and looked like a living animal."

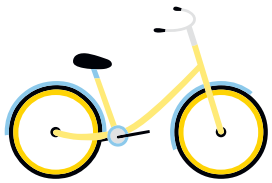
Rally Rat listens in amazement and wonders why our country's first railway was built right here. "Wouldn't an express train to Turku have been more important, after all?"

Story Fox knows that the first railway was built between Helsinki and Hämeenlinna, because Hämeenlinna was a key trading centre and Helsinki was the administrative centre of the coast. The railway line promoted industrialisation and the transport of goods, such as timber and grain, to Helsinki and export ports. Later on, of course, Turku got its own railway line too.

Quiz question 3:

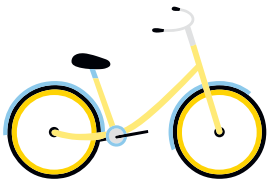
How many kilometres is it from Helsinki to Hämeenlinna?

(a) 20 km (b) 100 km (c) 300 km



City Stories

Joensuu



Story Fox and Rally Rat arrive in Joensuu, in eastern Finland. People cycle a lot in Joensuu; it is the second most popular city for cycling in Finland after Oulu. The friends join the group of cyclists. Story Fox understands perfectly why the people of Joensuu are such keen cyclists:

“Cycling promotes health and improves fitness; it doesn’t pollute, saves space in the city, saves on materials and energy, and, on top of all that, is a fast, silent and affordable way to get around the city’s streets!”

“Let’s go and see my cousin in Joensuu. They said that their bike tyre has studs in it and that’s probably why it’s flat,” Rally Rat laments.

“Or could it be that your cousin has studded tyres on the bike? With studded tyres, you can cycle even in winter in slippery conditions and enjoy the benefits of cycling all year round,” Story Fox says.

Idea for an additional task:
Come up with more reasons to cycle and make as long a list as possible of the benefits.

Jyväskylä

Story Fox and Rally Rat come to Central Finland, to the beautiful city of Jyväskylä, surrounded by lakes. The town was founded in 1837 at the junction of several waterways, on the shores of Lake Jyväsjärvi. Even before the town was founded, the place was known as a bustling hub for trade and transport routes.

Inland waterway transport was vital before the advent of railways and roads. Lakes and rivers provided transport routes, energy and sites for factories.

Story Fox and Rally Rat are watching the sunset from the shore of a rugged lake and enjoying the beautiful scenery in central Finland.

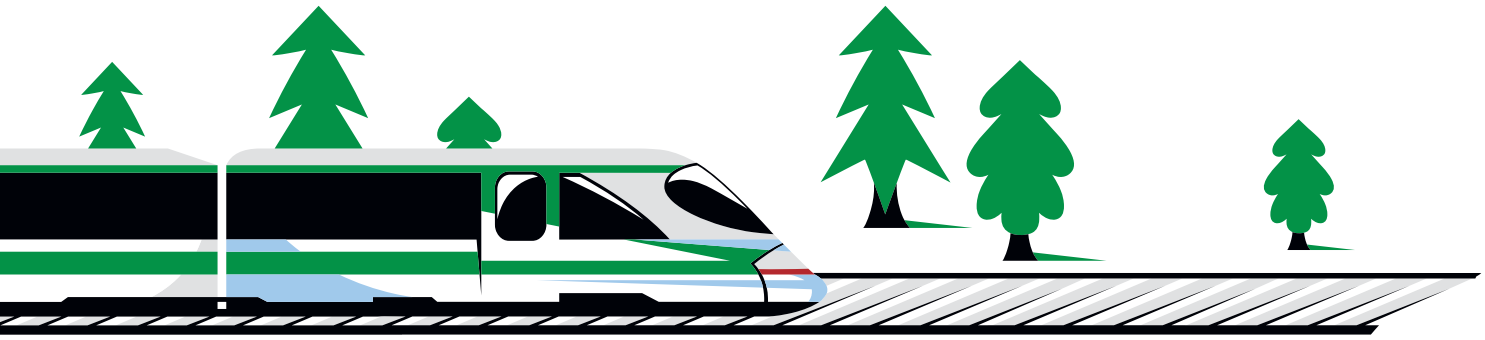
“The pine forests and the stretches of shore are so beautiful,” Story Fox hums.

“Look over there, on the other side of the lake, where the meadows are in bloom. Let’s go and make some flower wreaths that can fit over our cycling helmets.”

Quiz question 4:

Which of the large lakes in the Jyväskylä region supplies drinking water to the capital region?

a Lake Päijänne b Lake Saimaa c Lake Palokkajärvi



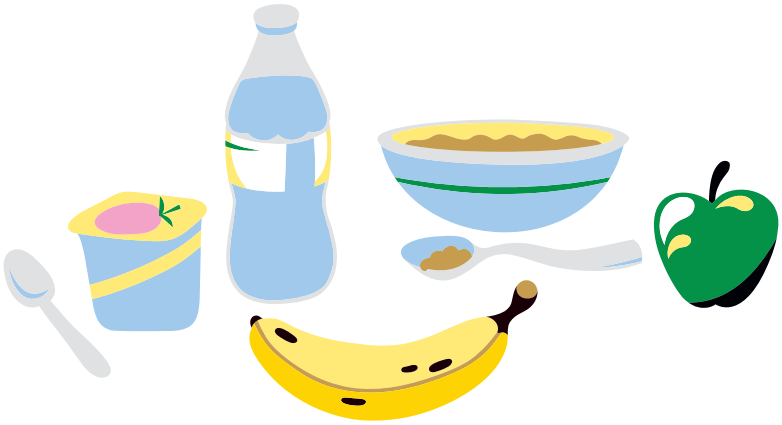
Kolari

Travelling by train is an environmentally friendly and comfortable way to get to the north. Rally Rat and Story Fox boarded the night train in the evening, slept on the train overnight, and by morning they had already arrived. The train has sleeper carriages with beds and even showers. The train also has a dining car where you can have dinner and breakfast.

“This is just like a hotel on the move!”, Rally Rat exclaims.

“It’s lovely to drift off to sleep to the sound of the train and have wonderful dreams,” Story Fox adds as the train pulls into Kolari.

Kolari is a municipality in Lapland, right on the Swedish border. It is situated near the fells of the north, and many people want to travel there for hiking and skiing. Kolari is home to Finland’s northernmost railway station, which serves as the terminus for night trains.



Idea for an additional task:

Kolari is about 900 kilometres from Helsinki. The journey by train takes about 13 hours. Work out how many kilometres per hour the train travels on average, taking stops into account.

Copenhagen

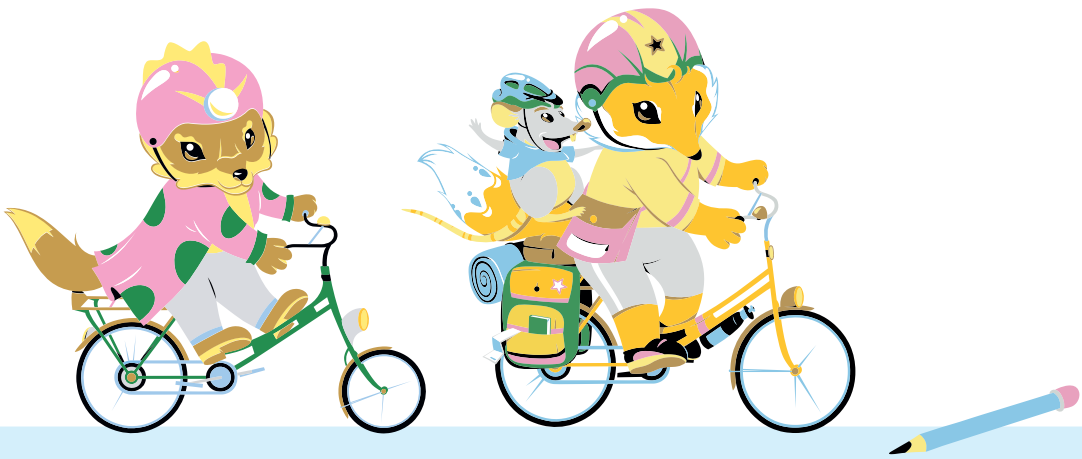
Story Fox and Rally Rat arrive in Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark. There are loads of bikes and cyclists in the city – even more than cars. There are various types of cargo bikes, such as box bikes and longtail bikes; there are city bikes, fast road bikes, clattering granny bikes and all sorts of beautifully decorated and painted bikes.

In Copenhagen, cycling is a common way of getting around – children, parents and grandparents alike cycle there. In Copenhagen, more than half of all journeys to school and work are made by bike. The city is, in fact, one of the world's cycling capitals. In Copenhagen, much like in Helsinki, cycling is usually a quicker way to cover short distances than driving.

Various types of cargo bikes are popular in Copenhagen and elsewhere in Denmark. A cargo bike can be used to transport children, groceries, bags of compost for the garden, even small pieces of furniture and much more. A cargo bike is a handy way to get around and a good alternative to a car. You can ride a cargo bike all year round, even in winter, as long as you have the right equipment. Electric assist on the bike makes it easier to carry loads.

Rally Rat would love to hop on a box bike straight away. A cargo bike pulls up alongside them at the traffic lights, and the rat is just about to jump on it from Story Fox's bike trailer next to it. At that moment, however, the traffic lights change and the electric cargo bike accelerates, leaving Rally Rat behind.

"Listen, it's a good thing you didn't jump – you'd have ended up face-first on the asphalt," Story Fox says to Rally Rat.



Idea for an additional task:
Discuss together ways in which cycling could be promoted in Helsinki.

Liepāja

Liepāja is a port city and Latvia's third-largest city. Although the town isn't very big, there's a tram that runs through it. So trams aren't just for big cities! The seaside location of the town also lends a distinctive character to getting around Liepāja. The town is famous for its strong winds.

"I heard from a Latvian writer friend of mine that a Latvian song goes: 'Liepāja, the city where the wind is born'. Now I understand where the songwriter got the idea from," Story Fox says, holding Rally Rat by the hand so that the wind won't carry their friend away.

The duo spot windsurfers and kitesurfers out at sea, whereas on the beach, city dwellers are enjoying the wind as they fly their huge kites. The wind also affects how fast you can travel: cyclists know that you can go incredibly fast with a tailwind, but a headwind can feel like an invisible wall. That is why many people choose to take the tram when the wind is particularly strong. On the way back, Story Fox is delighted by the tailwind; the bike seems to take flight.

Idea for an additional task:
Come up with a title for the song by completing the sentence: 'Helsinki, a city...'

Malmö

Rally Rat is brimming with excitement as their friends arrive in Malmö, because there's a rather special link between Malmö in Sweden and Copenhagen in Denmark – it's not just a bridge or just a tunnel between the two countries, but both, one after the other!

Rally Rat is interested in how people travel through the bridge tunnel. Story Fox says that they have read about the route from Malmö to Copenhagen: trains and cars travel across the Øresund Bridge, which is about eight kilometres long. Cars travel on the upper deck of the bridge and trains on the lower deck. On the artificial island of Peberholm, the bridge turns into a tunnel that runs for around four kilometres along the seabed before reaching Copenhagen. The tunnel also runs beneath Copenhagen Airport before rising back to the surface.

The journey from Malmö to Copenhagen is about 18 kilometres long and takes around 35 minutes by train.

Idea for an additional task:
Look for a picture of the tunnel bridge between Malmö and Copenhagen.

Narvik

Narvik is the northernmost railway station in Norway and in the whole of Europe. Narvik station can only be reached by train via Sweden, as Norway no longer has its own railway lines that far north. Story Fox dreams of cycling south along the narrow, winding roads of northern Norway, which are perfect for exploring the scenic routes. The roads often run along the shores of fjords and through rugged mountains.

“Are you serious? It’s 900 kilometres to Trondheim from here, and it is an entirely impossible route to cycle!” Rally Rat exclaims. “You’ll get to admire the fjords and mountains from the ferry, because we’re taking the sea route this time.”

Quiz question 5:

Which of the following reasons best explains why building railway lines this far north along the Norwegian coast would be particularly challenging?

- **a** The area has many steep mountains and difficult terrain,
- **b** There aren’t enough trees in the north for building,
- **c** Trains can’t run near the sea

If you answer correctly, you’ll get golden wood-sorrel leaves.

Oslo

Story Fox and Rally Rat are admiring the city centre of Oslo, the capital of Norway. How peaceful and cosy! City officials in Oslo have sought to make the city centre cleaner and quieter. That is why parking spaces have been removed from the area, freeing up space for walking, cycling, green spaces and leisure activities. As the number of cars decreases, people have more space.

Story Fox has read that in Norway, the proportion of new cars that are electric is the highest in the world, at 96 per cent in 2025. Of all cars in Norway, around a third are fully electric, and there are more of them than petrol cars. In Norway, buses, trams and ferries are, of course, also powered by electricity.

Idea for an additional task: Make a list of modes of transport that run on electricity

Oulu

Story Fox is excited as their friends arrive in Oulu, a city internationally renowned for winter cycling. In Oulu, people cycle to school and work, even when there's snow and freezing temperatures. Cycle paths are often cleared of snow before roads to make cycling easy and safe. Winter maintenance of cycle routes is, in fact, extremely important for winter cycling.

The friends learn from a local cyclist that a new invention from Oulu involves projecting traffic signs onto the snow in winter. This way, cyclists and pedestrians know which side of the road they are supposed to use, even in winter when the ground is covered in snow. Story Fox immediately starts planning another trip to Oulu for next winter – on their own bike, of course.

Idea for an additional task:

Make a table comparing cycling in summer and winter: include equipment and accessories, clothing, routes, visibility and weather conditions, bike maintenance.

Pärnu

Pärnu is a popular holiday resort in Estonia. The town is located by the sea and has plenty of beautiful sandy beaches.

You can't get to Pärnu by train yet, so Story Fox and Rally Rat travelled to the city by bus. They managed to fit their bike neatly into the bus's luggage compartment. A new high-speed railway line, known as Rail Baltica, is currently under construction in the Baltic states. The train will run from Tallinn to Pärnu and from there through Latvia and Lithuania all the way to Poland. The new railway line will integrate the Baltic states closely into the European rail network. The first phase is due to be completed in 2030, and work on it is underway in all three countries.

Idea for an additional task:

Draw some new train routes on the map. Which routes would be important, and why?

Riga

Riga is the capital of Latvia, and there are lots of colourful trams running there. In Riga, trams are one of the main ways of getting around, and they have been in service for over a hundred years. The first trams were horse-drawn, and later they became electric.

“Let’s park the bike and go and explore Riga’s Old Town,” Story Fox suggests.

“Sounds good; my bum’s already gone completely numb from sitting down – a bit of a walk does you good now and then,” Rally Rat says. “Let’s take the tram to see the famous Cat House.”

“What, do you have cat friends here?” Story Fox asks, perplexed.

“Yes, yes. Two angry black cats who live in the Old Town,” Rally Rat reveals with a chuckle.

“The Old Town here is completely car-free, so it’s safe even for cats to get about. This part of town dates back to the Middle Ages, so it is several hundred years old.”

“I wonder if it was just as bustling here back then as it is now?” Rally Rat asks, whilst trying to keep up with Story Fox amidst the hustle and bustle of tourists.

“This was already an important town and trading centre on the shores of the Baltic Sea back then, so it was certainly a bustling place even in the Middle Ages,” Story Fox says.

Idea for an additional task:
Find out what Riga’s famous Cat House is and why the cats were angry.

Tallinn

Tallinn is the capital of Estonia and is situated about a two-hour ferry journey from Helsinki.

“I didn’t even manage to finish the first comic because the boat trip was so short,” Rally Rat complains.

“You spent most of the journey on deck watching the seagulls and the scenery, so I suppose you didn’t get much reading done,” Story Fox says. “But the journey between Helsinki and Tallinn is actually so short that, in clear weather and with a pair of binoculars, you can see Tallinn from Helsinki.”

“Really? Let’s head straight to the beach to wave to the rats at Katajanokka Terminal!”

“Let’s carry on with our journey. Our destination is Tallinna Bussijaam. Can you guess what it is?”

Tallinn was the first major city to offer free public transport to its residents. In other words, residents of Tallinn can travel by bus and local train for free. A city can decide that public transport is for everyone!

Quiz question 6:

An undersea tunnel is planned between Helsinki and Tallinn. If built, the tunnel would be the world’s longest undersea railway tunnel. How long would the tunnel be?

- **a** about 25 km
- **b** about 85 km
- **c** about 150 km

If you answer correctly, you’ll get golden wood-sorrel leaves.

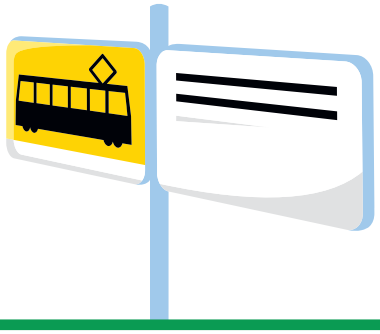
Tampere

Story Fox and Rally Rat are coming to Tampere. Rally Rat knows that Tampere is the second city in Finland to have its own tram, as Rally Rat's aunt works there as a tram driver.

"After all, the whole tram system here is named after our family – RAT-ikka," Rally Rat boasts.

"Now you're joking," Story Fox says.

Tram services in Tampere began in 2021. The trams in Tampere are brick-red in colour. The colour was chosen because it is reminiscent of Tampere's old red-brick factory buildings. The colour of the tram is important to the city's residents.

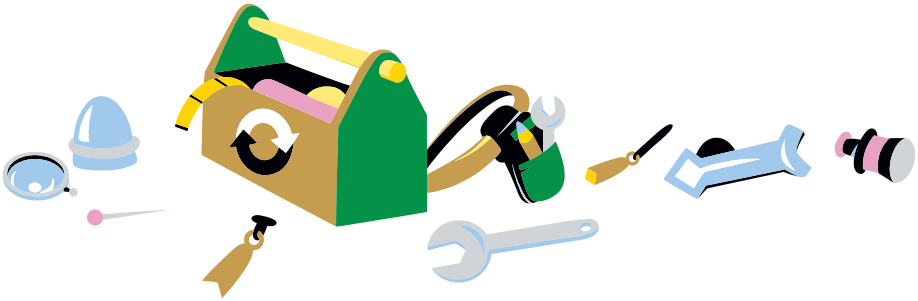


Quiz question 7:

What is the name of the public transport system in the Tampere region?

(a) Onnikka (b) Föli (c) Nysse

If you answer correctly, you'll get golden wood-sorrel leaves.



Travemünde

Travemünde is a seaside district on Germany's north coast. It is known for its long sandy beaches and its bustling harbour, from which ferries sail to many countries around the Baltic Sea. Fishing and maritime transport have been important in Travemünde for centuries.

In the summer, Travemünde is filled with cyclists. Cycling is an easy way to get to places such as the island of Priwall, which is just a short ferry ride away and has peaceful nature trails. The climate in the area is mild, so you can cycle for most of the year, and the sea breeze makes for a pleasant ride.

"This is a place where the sea, history and cycling come together in a unique way," Story Fox says. "You could imagine some interesting stories happening here. I think I'll make some notes for my crime novel."

"Put your pen down and get your repair kit out," Rally Rat barks. "Have a look at the rear tyre – it's flat. You must have ridden straight into a fishbone."

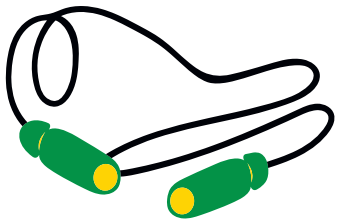
Story Fox pulls the tyre levers and repair kit out of their pannier bag and sets about changing the tyre. Luckily, Story Fox knows how to patch or replace a bicycle tyre, as the school held a bicycle maintenance workshop in the spring. It takes a while to get the bike roadworthy, and the duo soon realise that the local train to Hamburg is due to leave in a moment. Just a bit more air in the tyre, and off they go to the station.

"Phew, we made it just in time!" Rally Rat sighs.

"Fortunately, local trains run frequently, and you don't need to book a seat. There's always another train if you miss one. It's not that serious," Story Fox says.

Idea for an additional task:

Draw up written bicycle maintenance instructions and organise a bicycle maintenance workshop.



Trondheim

Trondheim is home to the world-famous 'bike lift', which helps cyclists reach the top of the steep Brubakken hill. The name of the bike lift is Trampe. It's safe and slow, so even Rally Rat and Story Fox can easily get on the lift with their bike. You don't need a lift to go down – not even your own muscle power!

"Story Fox, you must be really strong to pedal on behalf of both of us," Rally Rat says.

"That's true, but what about your muscle strength, seeing as you've spent the whole trip in the cart?"

"All my energy goes on messing about; it keeps me in good shape," Rally Rat laughs.

There are many benefits to moving around using your own muscles: your fitness and muscle strength improve, and physical activity aids learning by stimulating brain activity and improving memory. When people choose to cycle instead of driving, there is less pollution and the air stays cleaner, noise levels are reduced and the natural environment benefits, whilst at the same time people's health improves.

Quiz question 8:

How much daily vigorous and strenuous physical activity do school-age children need at minimum?

- **a** 10 minutes
- **b** 60 minutes
- **c** 180 minutes

If you answer correctly, you'll get golden wood-sorrel leaves.

Stockholm

“Stockhooolm! Here we come, the capital of Sweden!” Rally Rat shouts from the ship’s deck.

“How do we get from the ship to the town and the railway station?” Story Fox wonders.

“I know, because the ship’s rats told me: the answer is T, which stands for tunnelbana.”

In Stockholm, the best way to get around is by metro, or the tunnelbana. Many metro stations are decorated with works of art by various artists, which you can admire as you travel on the metro. In fact, the Stockholm metro network is sometimes referred to as the world’s longest art exhibition!

Stockholm’s first proper metro line opened in 1950. At that time, there were only 11 stations on the line, whereas today there are a hundred. The Helsinki Metro began operating in 1982. However, the world’s oldest underground railway is in London; its first line opened back in 1863.

There are other rail services available in Stockholm: from there, you can travel comfortably by train to various parts of Sweden, as well as to Norway and Denmark.

Idea for an additional task:

The underground has many different names and is labelled differently in different countries. Find out the names of the underground railways in various European cities, and which letter is used to mark them on the street.

Turku

The oldest road in Finland is Hämeen härkätie, which ran between Turku and Hämeenlinna. In the 9th century, when trade took place between Turku and Hämeenlinna and people travelled between the two with their goods, Hämeen härkätie was more of a path than a road. The path, cleared of vegetation, consisted of boardwalks and stone-paved sections at watercourses and marshes. Goods such as furs were brought from inland to the coast, whereas weapons, jewellery, metal and salt were transported from Turku to Hämeenlinna.

Turku had a tram service between 1890 and 1972. Plans are currently being drawn up to reintroduce tram services in Turku in the 2030s. Turku has always been an important port city and a route from Finland to Sweden.

“There’s a whiff of adventure in the air here in Turku,” Rally Rat says.

“What does an adventure smell like, then?” Story Fox asks.

“The railway, the sea, the wind, salt and sweaty cyclists,” Rally Rat clarifies.

“Right then, let’s pop over to Ruissalo. It’s time to take a dip in the sea,” Story Fox says.

Quiz question 9:

In which cities across Finland would you have been able to travel by tram in 1891? What about 2016? What about in the future, in 2035?

If you complete this task, you will receive golden wood-sorrel leaves.

Umeå

Umeå is a port city in Sweden. The town has its own river harbour as well as a deep-water harbour (Holmsund). You can travel between Vaasa and Umeå by ferry across the Gulf of Bothnia; the journey takes around 3.5 to 4 hours. From Umeå, you can continue your journey by train to various parts of Sweden.

“I wonder if there are many huts in Umeå because the Finnish name Uumaja contains the word maja for hut?” Rally Rat wonders.

“Umeå takes its name from Ume River, where the word ume means a roaring river,” Story Fox reads in the travel guide.

“But we could certainly build a little hut while we wait for the train!”

Idea for an additional task:
Choose a city and design a hut inspired by the city you have chosen.
Make scale models of the huts.

Vaasa

Rally Rat’s scarf flutters in the wind as the pair step off the train in yet another new city.

“Where are we now? Why is it as windy here as on a rollercoaster?” Rally Rat asks.

“We’re now in Vaasa on the west coast of Finland, and this city is known for its windy weather. Look towards the horizon,” Story Fox says, “you can see wind turbines there; it makes sense to build them in windy places.”

“If we carry on from here by bike into the headwind, I’d be quite happy to sit in the trailer whilst you pedal,” Rally Rat suggests.

Wind power is an important part of the region’s energy production. Energy generated by wind can be used to power electric vehicles, making travel more environmentally friendly.

You can travel by ferry from Vaasa to Umeå in Sweden. The journey takes around 3.5 to 4 hours, and you can take your car or bike on board, or simply travel on foot. From Umeå, you can continue your journey by train to various parts of Sweden – this makes Vaasa an important hub between Finland and Sweden.

Idea for an additional task:
Design a means of transport that is environmentally friendly. Where does the vehicle get its power from? Make scale models of the vehicles.

Vilnius

Vilnius is the capital of Lithuania. The old town centre is a completely car-free zone, so it's easy to get here by bike, and it's lovely to explore the colourful houses and narrow alleyways without having to dodge traffic. Story Fox locks up their bike and the pair set off for a walk, until they spot a rather unusual vehicle.

"Look, the bus over there has got its suspenders caught in the power lines!" Rally Rat says excitedly.

"Hey, I've read about them in the paper; they're trolleybuses that run on electricity. They get their electricity from the power lines running above those cables. There aren't any vehicles like this in Finland, but they've been in use here for over 70 years," Story Fox says.

"They're pretty quiet buses, and there're no exhaust fumes either," Rally Rat muses.

"Different cities are reducing emissions from transport in various ways; electric buses are one good option for this."

Next, the pair continue on their bike along the banks of the Neris River, where one of Vilnius's most popular green routes runs, designed for both pedestrians and cyclists. The route follows the river's bends through the town and links several parks. The route is an important part of promoting sustainable transport in Vilnius, as it offers an easy way to get around without a car – and at the same time acts as a green 'corridor' that brings nature closer to the city.

Idea for an additional task:

Take a look at a map of Helsinki. Where on the map are the green corridors along which animals can move from one area to another?
Where do you think there could be more green spaces?

End of the game

The ferry arrives at the Port of Helsinki. The rat and the fox still have the last few kilometres to go before they reach their front door. The pair look a bit worn out; their clothes are already starting to get dirty, and fatigue is written all over their faces, but at the same time the friends look content. They feel tired, but happy. Rally Rat is a seasoned traveller and knows that these are the hallmarks of a successful adventure.

“Phew, what a trip!” Story Fox sighs.

“When are we setting off again? I’ve already planned a new trip around the world along the surface,” Rally Rat says excitedly, leafing through their notebook, in which Rally Rat has drawn a new map. The map shows a jumble of routes by train across continents and by ship across oceans.

“Around the world?! I wonder how long it would take – will the school summer holidays even be long enough for the journey?” Story Fox asks.

Rally Rat shows the book they had along for the journey and says:

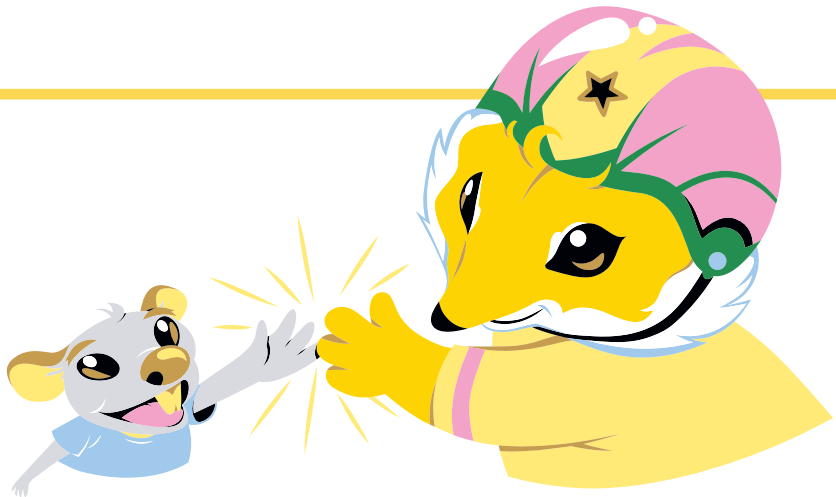
“According to this book, 80 days but I’d bet we can do it in 70 if we take the bullet train.”

“Well, before the next trip, I’ll at least have the bike, this fox and this rat serviced first. Right, let’s head home and heat up the sauna,” Story Fox says decisively.

The pair set off towards the cycle path, leaving behind a flock of seagulls marvelling at the cycling fox with a rat sketching maps in the back.

The correct answers to the quiz questions:

1:**c** 2:**b** 3:**b** 4:**a** 5:**a** 6:**b** 7:**c** 8:**b**

9: 1891 - **Turku** and **Helsinki** 2016 - **Helsinki**

2035 - Presumably **Helsinki**, **Espoo**,**Tampere**, **Turku** and **Vantaa**