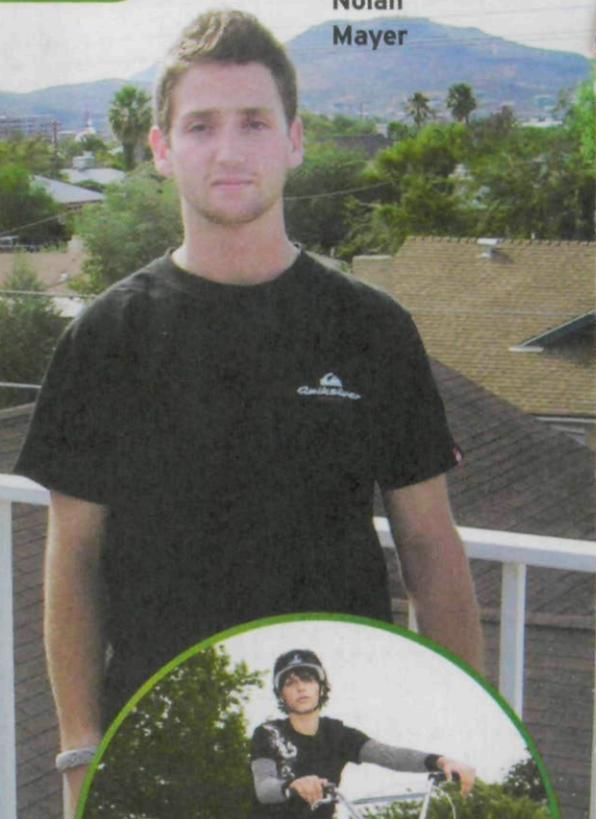


Nolan Mayer

# Use Your Head



A Scholastic intern's brother learned the hard way: When you're on wheels, wear a helmet.

**W**hile working as an intern with Scholastic magazines last summer, I got a phone call from my mom. She told me my 20-year-old brother had been in a terrible accident. He was skateboarding and doing tricks like he usually does. But he slipped, and hit his head. And he wasn't wearing his helmet.

My brother Nolan fractured his skull and had to get four staples in his head. He had temporary, partial hearing loss in one ear. He nearly broke his neck. But

Make sure your helmet fits.



Nolan was alive—something his doctors say is a miracle.

"I'd been landing the trick all day," Nolan said, explaining why he didn't wear his helmet. "I was doing it perfectly."

In 2007, there were 11,661 head injuries as a result of skateboarding, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. There were also 63,641 head injuries from biking and 24,588 from in-line skating. Many of these injuries could be prevented, or made less serious, by simply wearing a helmet. So why are so many kids and teens not taking that simple step?

"Kids think they're all-powerful and it can't possibly happen to them—only to someone else," said Dr. Norman Rosin, a pediatrician in Massachusetts.

My brother Nolan knows that it *can* happen. Doctors have warned him to wait a long time before skateboarding or biking



Always wear a helmet when riding a bike.

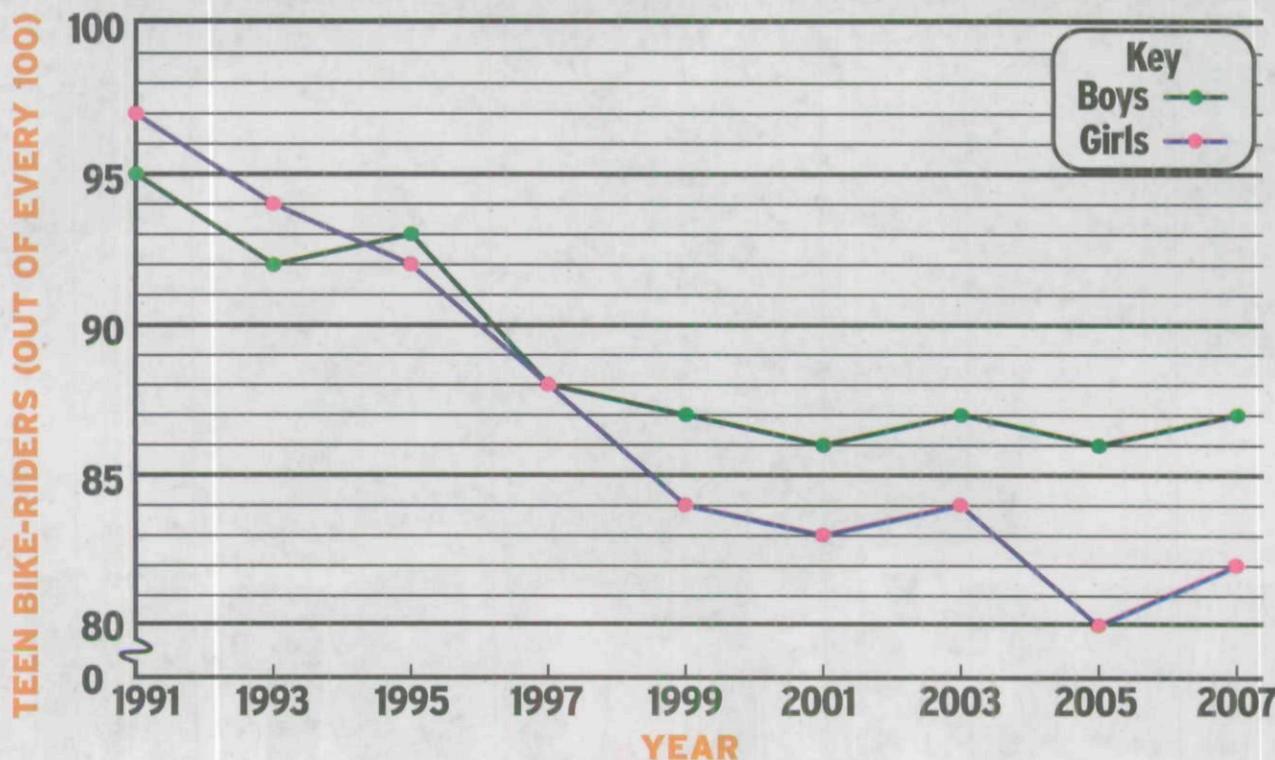
again. "When I see kids skating and biking I get all choked up," Nolan says. "That's my love and my passion, and I can't do it anymore."

—by Heather Mayer

## WHAT TO DO

Because the greatest number of head injuries result from bike riding, we decided to look at helmet statistics from that activity. The double-line graph on page 7 shows the number of boy and girl bike-riders out of every 100 who said they rarely or never wore bike helmets. Use the graph to answer the questions.

AMONG TEENS WHO RODE A BICYCLE IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS, THE NUMBER OUT OF EVERY 100 WHO RARELY OR NEVER WORE A BIKE HELMET, 1991-2007



Source: Youth Risk Behavior Survey of 9th-12th graders, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Data rounded to nearest whole number.

**1** Look at the vertical axis. What does the ↗ at the bottom mean?

- (A) Data not available for those years.
- (B) There is a larger gap in numbers between those two hash marks on the axis than between the other hash marks.
- (C) There is a smaller gap in numbers between those two hash marks than between the others.

**2** In which year did 92 out of every 100 girl bike-riders say they rarely or never wore a helmet?

**3** How many boy bike-riders out of every 100 said they

rarely or never wore helmets in 1991?

**4** In which year did the same number of boy and girl bike-riders out of every 100 say they rarely or never wore a helmet?

**5** In which year was there the greatest difference between the number of boy and girl bike-riders out of every 100 who said they rarely or never wore a helmet?

**6** Which conclusion can you draw from the graph?

- (A) Girls have more bike accidents than boys.
- (B) Teens are more likely to wear a helmet while skateboarding than while bike riding.
- (C) Teens are slowly getting the message that helmets are important, but girls are listening more than boys.

## WEB WISE

For more information about helmets and other sports safety basics, visit:

[http://kidshealth.org/teen/food\\_fitness/sports/sport\\_safety.html](http://kidshealth.org/teen/food_fitness/sports/sport_safety.html)

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