

The Need for Speed

Evan looked at the block of wood. He was supposed to turn it into a car that could speed fast down a track. He wanted to win the Pinewood Derby race, but he wasn't sure how. He would have to work hard to solve this problem.

Evan got some advice from his older brother. Dave won the derby last year, so he knew what he was talking about. He told Evan to bake his wood block.

"Bake it?" asked Evan. "This isn't a cooking competition."

"Baking it will take out all the moisture," Dave explained. "Then you can add more weight later. Having extra weight in the right places really helps."

Evan baked his wood block in the oven at 250 degrees for two hours. Then he painted it to look like a shark. He attached the wheels.

He set up a ramp using two cookie sheets, a chair, and a pillow. He pushed the car down the ramp as a test. It rolled down the cookie sheet. But he thought it could go faster.

Evan remembered what Dave said about putting weight in the right place. He got some pennies and taped them on in the front. Would that be the best place for the weight?

The car sped down the cookie sheet ramp. Evan used a stopwatch to see how fast it was going. He moved the pennies around and timed it again.

The car went really fast when the pennies were in the back. But when they were all the way in the back, the front popped up and the car fell off the track. After lots of trial and error, Evan found the best place for the pennies. He glued them on inch in front of the rear wheels.

Evan added a few more details with paint. His shark looked amazing. And the car was super fast. He was ready for the derby!



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NAME: _____ DATE: _____

1. What was Evan's goal?
 - a. To beat his brother
 - b. To win the Pinewood Derby
 - c. To paint a cool looking car
 - d. To bake his wood block

2. What happened when the weight was all the way in the back?
 - a. The front popped up
 - b. The car went more slowly
 - c. The car fell off the track
 - d. A and C

3. What does the author mean by "trial and error"?
 - a. Trying, failing, and trying again
 - b. Doing an experiment with no mistakes
 - c. Making a perfect plan
 - d. Getting advice from other people

4. Did Evan win the derby?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Not Enough Information
 - d. Maybe

Instructions for teachers:

These questions can be used to assess understanding of the reading passage.

The item in bold is the correct answer for each question.

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