

# Read. Think. Explain.

In trying to understand an article, it's important to read through it carefully and thoughtfully, focusing on the words the author chose *and* thinking about the article's big ideas. In this activity, you'll answer a series of questions about America's first roller coaster and the thrill rides of today to understand how they are alike and how they are different.

**Directions:** Answer the questions below, using information and details from the article to back up your ideas.

**1. What traits did Thompson have that made him a good roller coaster inventor? Would you be a good roller coaster designer? Why or why not?**

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**2. What are some ways in which the Switchback Railway in Coney Island was different from roller coasters of today?**

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**3. According to this article, what makes a roller coaster thrilling today?**

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**4. What can you conclude from the ongoing construction of ever-scarier roller coasters?**

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**5. Why do you think that through the ages, from the Switchback Railway to the X2, people like scary rides? How do you feel about roller coasters?**

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