



## How I Learnt to Use a Motorbike Clutch

*by Michael*

When I was 15, my Dad went to buy a push bike for himself and came home with a 50cc automatic scooter. Later that year I got my motorbike licence on this scooter. About a year later I was longing for more power and speed, so I needed a motorbike. Before I could ride a motorbike I needed to know how to change gears and use a clutch. This was going to be amusing for those who were going to watch me learn to ride.

To get started I needed a friend with a bike with gears and clutch and some open space. I went just outside of town to a good friend's farm. On the farm was an old 100cc farm bike, perfect. We got the bike started. My friend told me how to get started using the clutch and gears. I rode down their long drive to the milk shed, turned around in front of the shed, all in first gear. Then I rode back up the driveway.

All was going too well for me. As I got to the top where I started from, either my friend didn't tell me how to stop or I wasn't listening or he thought I would work it out for myself that I needed to use the clutch to stop. So I tried to stop without using the clutch, just closing the throttle. The bike bunny-hopped and before I could use the brakes I crashed in to the side of the wood shed where there was chopped firewood stacked. This wood came crashing down. After getting the wood off me and the bike, we stacked the wood back up. The bike and I were ok. I then thanked my friend very much and went home.

Later that week, I was at a meeting at the Scout Hall. My mates were swapping bikes with each other and riding around the yard. At first, no-one wanted to swap with me because I only had a 50cc scooter. Then one of my mates agreed I could ride his bike and asked if I had ridden a bike like this before. I said just the other day I was riding on another friend's bike on their farm. I did not tell him about the crash in to the shed.

There were two truckloads of cut up firewood in the yard. I got on to the 175cc bike, kick-started the motor and it fired into life. I put the bike into first gear. As I let the clutch out I stalled the motor. I had to start the motor up again, another eight times. I think I was a bit nervous about this bike having more power than the last bike and I wasn't giving it enough throttle as I was letting the clutch out, hence my stalling.



My mate said I didn't know how to ride and to get off the bike; he started to walk over to stop me trying again. I really wanted to ride this bike, so I quickly started the motor again and before he could stop me I fully revved up the motor and dropped the clutch. The bike and I took off, literally. The front wheel went straight into the air with me hanging on to the handle bars for grim death and my feet dangling off the pegs.

The bike wheeled towards the wood heap, up and over then down the other side, still with the front wheel in the air and me hanging on. To the amazement of my mates I hadn't crashed yet. Still out of control and heading towards the fence, only just in time did I gain control of the motorcycle without hitting it. This was pure luck, not skill that saved me.

I rode down the driveway as if I knew what I was doing, stopping where my mates were gathered. My mate that owned the bike punched me in my arm and said never ask him for a ride on his bike again. My other mates were asking me at the same time for a repeat performance.



*This story happened in 1985.  
If it wasn't for Read Write Now!,  
which I've been with for four years,  
I would never have started writing  
this story or others.*

*Now I enjoy writing. Before the  
tutoring, I wouldn't have even  
written a phone message.*

## Discussion & Activities



What do you think of this story?  
*Discuss with your tutor.*

Can you re-tell the gist of the story in your own words, without looking at the text?

Do you get a sense of what kind of person Michael was, as a young man? What leads you to feel this way? What do you think Michael might have learned from these events?  
*Discuss this.*

After putting the story in your own words, check back with the text to find the answers to these questions.

- Three sizes of bike engine are mentioned in this story. What are they? .....cc .....cc .....cc
- How old was Michael when this event happened? Michael was .....
- When Michael wrote the text, how long had he been with Read Write Now? Michael had been with Read Write Now for .....

When Michael first rode the 100cc bike, he said: "All was going too well for me!" At this point in his bike-riding experience, **what did Michael mean by that?** Write one or more full sentences, stating your opinion about this.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

List some emotions Michael may feel when he re-tells this story?

.....

.....

# Apostrophes (')

Words can end in the letter 's' for all sorts of reasons.

Sometimes, it is to indicate that there are more than one of something (ie, the word is **plural**). Examples are: bikes, pegs, mates, brakes. In this case (plurals), NO apostrophes are used.

An apostrophe followed by an 's' indicates one of two things.

## EITHER:

1. It shows that something **belongs** to ..... (the word with the apostrophe and the letter 's')

*Examples:*

<b>friend's farm</b>	shows that	the farm belongs to the friend
a mate's bike	would show that	the bike belongs to a mate
the shed's roof	would show that	the roof belongs to the shed
Joe's woodpile	would show that	the woodpile belongs to Joe

## OR

2. It shows that something has been omitted (left out).

*Here are some examples:*

In <b>didn't</b>	the apostrophe shows a shortening of	did <b>not</b>
In <b>wasn't</b>	the apostrophe shows a shortening of	was <b>not</b>
In <b>hadn't</b>	the apostrophe shows a shortening of	had <b>not</b>

Can you work out what these words are shortened versions of?

don't	is short for	.....
doesn't	is short for	.....
weren't	is short for	.....
isn't	is short for	.....
aren't	is short for	.....
hasn't	is short for	.....
hadn't	is short for	.....

In this text, Michael writes about how he learned to use a motorbike clutch. Written instructions are sometimes referred to as a **procedure**.

## Writing a Procedure (a clear set of instructions, in order)

*Here is an example.*

The title of this procedure is:

### How to make a sandwich

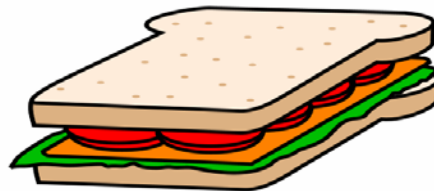
Step 1: Butter 2 slices of bread.

Step 2: Put something (a filling) on top of the butter, on 1 slice.

Step 3: Carefully place the other slice onto the top of the filling, with the butter side facing down.

Step 4: Cut through all layers with a sharp knife, corner to corner (diagonally) or from side to side, slicing the sandwich in half.

Step 5: Eat and enjoy!



Notice that the **steps** are carefully thought through, in advance.

They are presented in **sequential order** – the order they are to happen.

They are written as **clearly** as the writer can manage.

*Now it's your turn to write a procedure.*

If you know how to use a motorbike clutch, you might try telling your tutor how to do it, then writing down the steps as a procedure. *If not*, think of something else you know how to do. **Talk and write about that.**

What activity are YOUR instructions for? Make that your title.

Title: .....

Step 1: .....

Step 2: .....

Step 3: .....

Step 4: .....

Step 5: .....

Step 6: .....

*This space is to jot down any unfamiliar words that you need.*