

'Prevention is better than cure' is a saying that I fully believe in. Similarly, using the correct tools for a job, or wearing the correct protection, is just as smart. I've been thinking about this recently because my little girl has been learning how to ride her bicycle without the training wheels. If it were up to me, I wouldn't teach her yet. However, my husband is confident that she is ready to take this big step. Each afternoon for about a week, they have been practicing on our driveway and around the cul-de-sac. He has given her plenty of coaching about all the things that you need to bear in mind: watch for traffic, get your balance, put the pedals in the right position, don't go too fast, give yourself time to make a turn etc etc. And, you know, she is doing very well. She is completely safe because from head to toe she is protected with pads of all kinds, and then, of course, she has the crowning glory of the all important helmet. Not wearing a helmet is looked upon as being seriously unintelligent in this house. My husband is a serious bike rider, and even some of his veteran riding buddies have had serious accidents. In some of their accidents, if they hadn't worn their helmets, they wouldn't be here today. So, our kids know that you cannot get on the bike without putting your head protection on first. But once that is taken care of, it's time to have fun. I love watching my daughter's sense of achievement show on her face; she's such a tiny little thing, but now has freedom on wheels. I suppose being five is actually a big thing; you learn to read, you learn to ride your bike, and you start school. Gosh, those are big steps!

Grammar notes.

Hypothesis and speculation using the subjunctive + related expressions: to bear in mind, from head to toe, veteran, the crowning glory.

1. If he doesn't bear everyone's efforts in mind, he could become quite unpopular.
2. If you had been protected from head to toe, you wouldn't have got hurt.
3. If the war veterans received a decent pension, there wouldn't be a need for their charities.
4. If the architect's plans for the new park were approved, it would be the crowning glory of the whole city.