

2. Traffic & Transportation

In modern societies, cars have become important for most people. They are needed for commuting to work, for shopping, and for leisure purposes. However, this widespread use also poses many traffic-related problems. For example, since the roads are filled most of the day, the meaning of "rush hour" is fast disappearing. A lot of drivers complain that the police are more interested in "collecting money" from law-breaking commuters than in facilitating the traffic flow. In addition, as more and more "demand pressure" is put on gasoline supplies, and as more taxes are added by the government to regulate usage, prices are rising dramatically.

Worldwide, the automobile is probably the number-one contributor to air pollution, and policies designed to protect the environment are expensive. So far, mass transportation systems such as subways and buses-and electric or other alternatives to internal combustion engines -have proved inadequate for solving the needs of conveniently moving large numbers of people from place to place.

Comprehension

1. What does "rush hour" mean and why is the expression becoming meaningless?
2. Explain "demand pressure."
3. Why is the problem associated with automobile usage been corrected?

Your opinion

1. If you were late for an appointment, would you violate the traffic rules?
2. What traffic rules do you often break?
3. If you were stopped by a police officer for a traffic violation, what would you do?
4. Have you ever tried to payoff a police officer?
5. How do you feel when you get a ticket?
6. If you knew you were only going to be someplace for 10 minutes, would you pay for half an hour of parking or just park illegally?
7. When do you take the subway?
8. When do you take a taxi?
9. When do you take a bus?

