

A living room on a skateboard: how electric vehicles are redefining the car

Level: Intermediate – Teacher’s notes

Article summary: Car design has seen many changes in the past few years. What can we expect to drive and travel around in next?

Time: 90 minutes

Skills: Reading, speaking, writing

Language focus: Vocabulary, speaking, writing

Materials needed: One copy of the worksheet per student

1. Warmer

- a. Students briefly discuss the question to introduce the topic of the article.

2. Key words

- a. Students find words in the article that match the definitions and write them on the lines provided. Note: the words relating specifically to parts of vehicles will be looked at more closely in exercise 5.

Key:

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| 1. bulky | 6. switches |
| 2. replace | 7. swivelling |
| 3. manufacturers | 8. interiors |
| 4. no-frills | 9. nevertheless |
| 5. footprint | 10. pipe dream |

- b. Before reading the article carefully, students use some of the key words to fill the gaps in the sentences to ensure that they understand and know how the words are used in other contexts.

Key:

- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| 1. replace | 4. switches |
| 2. pipe dream | 5. swivelling |
| 3. no-frills | 6. footprint |

3. Understanding the article

- a. Students read the statements and decide whether they are True or False according to the article. They should correct any that are false.

Key:

1. False. A mechanic from a century ago would likely still know how today’s petrol cars work. They’d unlikely be able to understand an electric car.
2. True
3. True
4. True
5. True
6. False. Although digitization already allows a car to become more like a living room, making it into a bedroom is trickier but is something that could be available in the future.

4. Key language

- a. Students use the words in the box to create two-, three-, or four-word phrases that fit with the meanings and write them on the lines provided. Then they find them in the article to check their answers before using them to talk about the article.

Key:

1. all at once
2. one thing is clear
3. retro futurism
4. tend to be
5. end of life
6. on the move

5. Car and vehicle vocabulary

- a. Students work in pairs and follow the instructions on the worksheet, adding all car-related vocabulary they can find in the article to the mind map and then adding other words that they know. Make sure they know there are quite a few differences between the language used in the US and in Britain when talking about cars.

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Then, using the images as prompts, they should use the vocabulary to talk about cars, where each item, feature, section or part is found, what it looks like, how it has changed over the years, etc..

6. Discussion

- a. Students discuss the questions related to the article, and give their reasons and justifications for each answer, referring to their own experiences wherever possible. Encourage them to use words from the article and lesson plan in their answers, such as *retro futuristic*. If your students are young or have never owned a car, ask them to think about cars that their parents or grandparents have owned or driven.

7. In your own words

- a. Students work in pairs or small groups and do the task using information and language from the lesson. Encourage them to be creative and to share their results with the class. This task can be tweaked depending on the age and focus of your students, making it more technical, creative, emotional, sales-orientated, etc., as fits the group's interests.