The Guardian

Parisians vote to ban rental e-scooters from French capital by huge margin

Level 3: Advanced

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1 Warmer

a. Discuss these questions.

1. Have you ever ridden an e-bike or e-scooter? What was it like? Would you recommend it?

2. What are some advantages and disadvantages of travelling by bike or scooter instead of by car?

3. Would you like to have more e-scooters available to rent where you live? Why? Why not?

2 Key words

a. Write the correct words from the wordpool next to the definitions below. Then find and highlight them in the article to read them in context.

anarchy	ballot box	binding	cast a vote	consultation
disrespect	eligible	overwhelming	pioneer	polling station
promote	reform	the authorities	turnout	vow

1. something much larger, stronger, more important, etc., than anything else in a situation

    _____

2. formally express an opinion by choosing between two or more issues, people, etc.

    _____

3. one of the first people to do something important that is later continued and developed by other people _____

4. the police or people in other official organisations with the legal power to make people obey laws or rules _____

5. a discussion between people or groups before they make a decision

    _____

6. a building where people go to vote in an election _____

7. allowed by rules or laws to do something or to receive something _____

8. the number of people who vote in a particular election _____

9. the place where you put the piece of paper with your vote _____

10. If an agreement, contract, decision, etc., is _____, you must do what it says.

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11. promise that you will do something _____

12. support or encourage something _____

13. treat someone without respect, i.e., in an unkind or impolite way _____

14. a situation in which people ignore standard rules and laws and are unable to be controlled, or one in which there is no government or social control in a country _____

15. a change that is intended to correct a situation that is wrong or unfair, or make a system work more effectively _____

b. **Use some of the key words from task A to complete these sentences.**

1. Are you planning to _____ in the election tomorrow?

2. Her invention uses brand-new technology. She is a true _____ in her field.

3. When they saw the accident, they called _____.

4. If you sign that contract, it is _____.

5. The teenagers _____ their parents when they came home past their curfew.

6. There is _____ evidence that exercising at least three times a week is good for your physical and mental health.

7. There wasn't enough security at the music festival, so when the crowd went wild, it felt like _____.

8. The European Commission is proposing _____ to reduce government spending.

9. The couple _____ to love each other forever.

10. The doctor sent him to a specialist for a _____.

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Results show 90% support for ridding Paris of 'self-service scooters' whose riders are accused of flouting rules of the road

Angela Giuffrida and agencies

02 April, 2023

1 Parisians have voted to rid the streets of the French capital of rental electric scooters, with an overwhelming 90% of cast votes supporting a ban, official results show.

2 Paris was a pioneer when it introduced e-scooters, or trottinettes, in 2018 as the city's authorities sought to promote non-polluting forms of urban transport.

3 But as the two-wheeled vehicles grew in popularity, especially among young people, so did the number of accidents: in 2022, three people died, and 459 were injured in e-scooter accidents in Paris.

4 In what was called a "public consultation", voters were asked: "For or against self-service scooters?"

5 Twenty-one polling stations were set up across the city and were open until 7 pm local time. Although 1.6 million people are eligible to vote, turnout was expected to be low.

6 The ban won between 85.77% and 91.77% of the votes in the 20 Paris districts that published results, according to the City of Paris website on what was billed as a rare "public consultation" and prompted long queues at ballot boxes around the city. The vote was non-binding, but city authorities have vowed to follow the result.

7 Paris's socialist mayor, Anne Hidalgo, has promoted cycling and bike-sharing but supported a ban on e-scooters.

8 In a recent interview, Hidalgo said "self-service scooters are the source of tension and worry" for Parisians and that a ban would "reduce nuisance" in public spaces.

9 Paris has almost 15,000 e-scooters on its streets, operated by companies including Lime, Dott and Tier. Opponents argue that e-scooter users disrespect the rules of the road and regularly ignore a ban on riding on pavements. The vehicles are also often parked in a disorganised way or even thrown into the River Seine.

10 In June 2021, a 31-year-old Italian woman was killed after being hit by an e-scooter with two passengers onboard while walking along the Seine.

11 "Scooters have become my biggest enemy. I'm scared of them," said Suzon Lambert, a 50-year-old teacher from Paris. "Paris has become a place of anarchy. There's no space any more for pedestrians."

12 Another Parisian said, "It's dangerous, and people use them badly. I'm fed up."

13 Julian Sezgin, aged 15, said he often saw groups of two or three teenagers on e-scooters zooming past cars on busy roads. "I avoid going on e-scooters and prefer e-bikes as, in my opinion, they are safer and more efficient," he told the *Guardian*.

14 Bianca Sclavi, an Italian who has lived in Paris for years, said the scooters go "too fast" and should have their engines limited so they go slower. "They are dangerous because they zip in and out of traffic," she said. "However, it is not as bad as when they first arrived … The most dangerous are the drunk tourists!"

15 She is not planning to cast a vote. "There are more serious matters right now – what about the rubbish? Pension reforms? Immigration? I don't think it was such a good idea for Hidalgo to make such a big deal out of this. I really like what she is doing with the bike lanes, but she should not spend so much energy on the scooters."

16 Linda Joèlle, 35, spoke out against a ban. "Now that I have found an excellent way to get to work, and one that is better for the environment, they are trying to ban it," she said. "They keep changing the rules."

17 One student supporting e-scooters said, "I don't live that close to the Métro, and so it's better to go to school on the e-scooter." Another said, "Where I live, it's better than going on foot."

18 The French Transport Minister, Clement Beaune, told Europe 1 radio recently that he expected the vote to result in a ban, adding that "the important consultation will be watched by a lot of other towns in France and abroad."

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19 "I find it a shame that we have dumbed down the debate," he said, arguing that e-scooters are a valuable transport solution that has replaced up to one in five journeys in Paris that would previously have been made using pollution-emitting vehicles.

20 Meanwhile, operators of e-scooters fear a ban would encourage other cities to follow suit. "Paris is going against the current," said Hadi Karam, General Manager for France at California-based Lime, citing decisions to increase the number of e-scooters or extend contracts in Washington, Madrid and London.

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3 Comprehension check

a. Answer the questions using information from the article.

1. What percentage of Parisian voters support the e-scooter ban?

2. When did Paris introduce e-scooters?

3. Why have they become a problem?

4. How many people were injured in e-scooter accidents in 2022?

5. How many people can vote on the ban?

6. How many scooters are there in Paris?

7. In Bianca Sclavi's opinion, which e-scooter drivers are the most dangerous?

8. Why do people dislike e-scooters?

9. What does the French Transport Minister predict will happen?

10. Why does Lime's General Manager feel Paris is "going against the current"?

4 Key language

a. Match each phrase from the article to its meaning.

1.	follow suit	a.	do the same thing as others
2.	go against the current	b.	pass by someone or something very quickly
3.	fed up	c.	make something less complicated or challenging on purpose
4.	dumb down	d.	do the opposite of what is popular or expected
5.	zoom past	e.	be annoyed, bored or unhappy with someone or about something

b. Complete each sentence with one of the phrases from task A.

1. Unfortunately, that documentary _____ the issues of climate change.

2. After the first e-scooter company launched and became popular, many other companies _____.

3. I'm so _____ with this traffic. It's been 45 minutes, and we've barely moved.

4. Many people are trying to eat less meat right now, but he's _____ and ordering a big steak.

5. That e-scooter just _____ all of those pedestrians. They look shocked!

c. Write personalised sentences using the phrases above.

5 Discussion

a. Discuss these statements.

• "Something that is better for the environment is better for everyone."

• "E-scooters are an important part of eco-friendly transportation solutions."

• "It is important always to cast your vote in elections and government polls."

6 In your own words

a. Use an internet search engine to find more information about self-service e-scooters in different cities worldwide.

• Where are they available?

• Where are they banned?

• What are some of the rules and regulations?

• How much does a ride cost?

• How popular are they?

b. Report your findings to the class and share your opinion.