

Load and behold: should you opt for an electric cargo bike over a second car?

Level 2: Intermediate

1 Warmer

a. Discuss the following questions in pairs.

- Do you cycle to work or school? Why or why not?
- What do you think stops people from cycling in city centres?

2 Key words

a. Find the words in the wordpool in the article. Then match them to the definitions.

paths
go-to
inspired

opt for
willing to
routes

steered
storage
Sydneyiders

navigate
transporting
urban

1. people who live in or come from Sydney, Australia _____
2. moving people or goods over distances _____
3. to choose or select something from different options _____
4. the preferred or best choice for a particular purpose _____
5. ready to do something without being forced _____
6. areas or boxes to keep things in when they aren't being used _____
7. describing towns and cities rather than the countryside _____
8. gave someone new ideas or motivation to do something _____
9. moved a vehicle in a particular direction _____
10. ways or tracks that people or vehicles can travel along _____
11. find your way through a place, especially when it's difficult _____
12. plans that you use to get from one place to another _____

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b. Complete the sentences with words from the previous activity in the correct form.

1. I _____ the car carefully into the parking space so as not to hit the wall.
2. Many families are _____ try cycling instead of driving for short journeys.
3. The company specialises in _____ fresh food from farms to supermarkets across the country.
4. Most _____ enjoy spending weekends at the beach during summer.
5. This café has become my _____ place for meeting clients.
6. We need to find some _____ for all the camping equipment in the garage.
7. A documentary about climate change _____ Carla to study Environmental Science at university.
8. More people now _____ public transport rather than buying cars.
9. The park has several walking _____ that lead through the forest to the lake.
10. My satnav suggested two different _____ to avoid the traffic on the motorway.
11. It can be difficult to _____ the Underground when you first arrive in London.
12. Many young professionals are moving to _____ areas because of better job opportunities.

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Cargo ebikes are ideal for the millions of short-distance car trips Australians take every day. Here's how to make one work for you

Clare Watson

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- 1 On a trip to Vienna, we watched parents cycle along the city's bike paths on electric cargo bikes, with bags, groceries and kids. It inspired us to buy one of our own – but when it arrived, I was worried about its size and how we'd navigate the streets of the Australian city where we live, especially during school times.
- 2 However, I was surprised how quickly our car trips became bike rides. Like learning to drive, it took some time to learn how the bike steered, but it soon became our go-to ride for short trips.
- 3 Can we make our streets safer so that more people are willing to use cargo ebikes? I spoke to a few people to find out.
- 4 **A Replacing short car trips**
Driving less is a top reason people choose ebikes, whether to save money, be more environmentally-friendly or exercise more. E-cargo bikes, with storage or seats at the front or back, are ideal for short trips between 2 and 6 kilometres, says Elliot Fishman of the Institute for Sensible Transport. In many urban areas, ebikes "will be the fastest way that you can get from point A to point B", he says.
- 5 Sydneysiders take about 4 million car trips under 4 kilometres every day. In cities such as Orange, Grafton, Wollongong or Albury, the number of daily car trips under 6 kilometres is even higher than in capital cities, Fishman says. E-cargo bikes, therefore, have an important role to play.
- 6 **B Scout your route**
If you're not sure whether a cargo ebike is right for you, Fishman suggests looking at the type of trips you take each week in the 2 to 6 kilometre range. Then, find routes you could safely ride.

- 7 Jon Lindley, my neighbour, suggests building confidence by starting with short trips on a weekend when there's less traffic. Check if places have somewhere you can park and lock up your bike. You'll also need somewhere safe to store the bike at home, where you can easily get it in and out.

8 **C Try before you buy**

Ebikes can be expensive, so you'll want to find the right one for you. Bikes that carry things at the front are good for transporting young kids, Fishman says, because the rider can more easily see and talk to their little passengers. Older children are fine riding at the back. Fishman suggests asking a bike shop if you can test a bike for at least half an hour.

9 **D Making streets safer**

A fear of riding in traffic is "the number one reason why people don't cycle", says Fishman, but e-cargo bikes are quite easy to move, he says.

- 10 Creating bike-friendly paths is the cheapest, fastest and simplest way a city can make cycling safer, says Fishman. It slows and reduces traffic and encourages people who don't feel comfortable riding on busy roads to travel by bike.
- 11 Lindley says reducing speed limits to 30 kilometres per hour is the best way to make streets safer for all road users. This lowers the chance of accidents.
- 12 Lindley has carried his three kids around on a cargo ebike for more than 10 years and enjoys it because they are cheaper, greener and, most importantly, it meant he could keep riding with his children and help them build healthy habits.
- 13 "You see the joy that the kids get out of it, the time you get to spend with them ... [and] it encourages you to use it more."

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3 Comprehension check

- a. Read the article and circle the letter of the section in the article (A, B, C or D) where you can find the following information.

Which section...

1. ... mentions the environmental benefits of switching from cars to bicycles?

A B C D

2. ... discusses the worries that many riders experience?

A B C D

3. ... suggests ways to build up your cycling confidence gradually?

A B C D

4. ... provides data about brief car journeys in Australian cities?

A B C D

5. ... recommends finding somewhere to store your bike at home?

A B C D

6. ... suggests practising with an ebike to see if it's suitable for you?

A B C D

4 Key language

- a. A demonym is a word that describes a person who comes from a city, country, place or region, e.g. *Sydneysiders* (a person who comes from Sydney, Australia). Complete the endings for these demonyms.

-ites

-ers

-ians

Group 1:

1. Mancun_____ (Manchester, England)

2. Melburn_____ (Melbourne, Australia)

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3. Paris_____ (Paris, France)

4. Boston_____ (Boston, USA)

Group 2:

5. London_____ (London, England)

6. New York_____ (New York, USA)

7. Berlin_____ (Berlin, Germany)

8. Auckland_____ (Auckland, New Zealand)

Group 3:

9. Muscov_____ (Moscow, Russia)

10. Tokyo_____ (Tokyo, Japan)

b. Work in pairs to add any other demonyms you know with the same endings to each group.

5 Discussion

a. Discuss these questions.

- What are the advantages and disadvantages of replacing cars with cargo ebikes?
- Would cargo ebikes work in your town or city? Why or why not?

6 In your own words

a. You are going to prepare arguments for or against the following issue: 'Cars should be banned from city centres and councils should encourage people to use bikes, ebikes and public transport.'

Team A – you are 'for' banning cars from city centres

Team B – you are 'against' banning cars from city centres

Your teacher will divide you into two teams. Work with your team to prepare your arguments. Use the article, your own knowledge and the ideas below. Prepare notes with your ideas that you can refer to during the debate.

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Team A (For) You may like to consider:

- environmental benefits
- health and safety improvements
- quality of life in city centres
- successful examples from other cities
- economic benefits (tourism, local businesses)

Team B (Against) You may like to consider:

- accessibility issues (elderly, disabled, families)
- economic impact on businesses requiring deliveries
- public transport limitations
- individual freedom and choice
- costs and challenges of implementing the scheme

- b. **Hold your class debate. Then reflect as a class on whose arguments were more persuasive and why.**