

Issue 02

Traffic & Transportation



In modern societies, cars have become indispensable 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 congested⁺ 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.



- > **congested** : too full or crowded because of too many people or vehicles
- > **rush hour** : a period of heavy traffic
- > **commuter** : a person who travels regularly between a home in one community and work or school in another
- > **alternatives** : choices, more possibilities from which to choose
- > **internal combustion engines** : engines which produce energy by burning fuel within themselves

Comprehension



1. What does “rush hour” mean and why is the expression becoming meaningless?
2. Explain “demand pressure.”
3. Why haven't the problems associated⁺ with automobile usage been corrected?

Express Yourself



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 bribe⁺ 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?

→ **associated** : connected

→ **bribe** : pay money to (sb) in exchange for a favor, especially by doing something dishonest

Opinion Samples



1. Yesterday I got my first traffic ticket.† I was so angry that I drove away recklessly.‡ Even though I knew this was dangerous behavior, I couldn't help myself. But after nearly causing an accident, I stopped my car, drank a coffee, and relaxed for a few minutes. I realized that my bad driving was the reason I had received the ticket in the first place, and this helped calm me down. Then I was able to drive the way I know I should.

2. When I go downtown I never drive. For one thing, it is very dangerous. The roads are crowded with cars all the time, and an accident or some road construction can cause me to be delayed an hour or more. So driving never guarantees on-time arrival for appointments. And gas and parking are both expensive. On the other hand, the subway is safe, cheap, and timely.

†-**traffic ticket** : a notice given to a driver for a traffic violation
 ‡-**reckless** : lacking care or caution; careless

Useful Expressions



1. Fewer accidents are caused by traffic jams[↓] than by pickled[↓] drivers.
→ _____
2. Traffic tickets are like wives. No one complains about them until he gets one of his own.
→ _____
3. The way traffic is today, it's easier to star[↓] on Broadway than it is to cross it.
→ _____
4. Fast transportation has made us all neighbors—but, unfortunately, not brothers.
→ _____
5. People seem to have thought up every solution to the traffic problem except staying at home.
→ _____
6. Doctors tell us that people are living too fast. Traffic statistics show they are dying the same way.
→ _____
7. A traffic light is a device for trapping you in the middle of the intersection.
→ _____