

3. Consumer goods:
 - a) Have become so addictive that they are evil
 - b) Have their pluses and minuses

4. The author suggests:
 - a) CD players are too expensive
 - b) CD players have fallen in price since they first appeared
 - c) CD players are underpriced

5. Overall, the author:
 - a) Sees technology and consumerism as a positive force in the world
 - b) Is sceptical about consumer society
 - c) Believes that a technological utopia awaits us some day

Lesson 4. The future for cars



In this lesson you will hear a lecture about the possible future for cars and the car industry. Listen carefully, but first listen to the words and phrases that appear in this recording.

a decline - *spadek*

comfort - *wygoda*

isolation - *izolacja, odizolowanie*

life style - *styl życia*

to have little in common with - *mieć niewiele wspólnego*

to be accustomed to - *być przyzwyczajonym*

to be perceived - *być postrzeganym*

a challenge - *wyzwanie*

first and foremost - *przede wszystkim*

common - *powszechny*

exhaust pollution - *zanieczyszczenie spalinami*

engine - *silnik*

prohibitively expensive - *na zbyt drogi*

mass market - *masowy rynek*

aesthetic - *estetyczny*

landscape - *krajobraz*

incompatible - *nie do pogodzenia*

a scar - *blizna*

obesity - *otyłość*

indirectly - *pośrednio*

convenient - *dogodny*

to affect - *oddziaływać*

habits - *przyzwyczajenia, nawyki*

car industry - *przemysł samochodowy*

streamlined design - *opływowy kształt*

robust - *solidny*

body - *tu: karoseria samochodu*

to keep a watchful eye - *uważnie się przyglądać, kontrolować*

to hover - *unosić się, wisieć nad*

supranational - *ponadnarodowy*



And now listen to the recording:

What, people often ask, is the future of cars. There are many points of view and many ideas floated in answer to this question. One thing seems certain, however, that there will be no decline in their popularity.

We might begin with asking why the car is so popular. The car offers us freedom; we can go where we want when we want. It saves us time. It offers us safety; for example late at night. It offers us comfort; keeping us dry when public transport users are getting wet for example. It allows us to control our environment more; in terms of noise and temperature, for example. We can also add to this the car's offer of isolation; the lifestyle trend nowadays being for people to be less social than they once were. People prefer a car in which they don't have to mix with others, to a bus where they might come into contact with people they have little in common with.

Are these things which we can really expect people to give up, now they've become accustomed to them? It seems unlikely. If then the car is so popular and useful, why is it perceived as one of the major challenges of our time?

First and foremost we have the issue of pollution. Cars produce pollution. The most common form is exhaust pollution. Engines get bigger to power cars that go faster and are larger. Engines become cleaner. Advertisers suggest to us that we need bigger cars. Alternatives to petrol are still seen as prohibitively expensive to the mass market. What are we to do with this problem?

Pollution also has an aesthetic element. It takes the form of roads criss-crossing our landscapes. We want more roads and we want green open endless spaces. The two are incompatible. Our cities, where cars are permitted to go, are becoming more and more ugly year by year. A car on a billboard may look like a beautiful object to some, but a street full of crawling cars is a scar on the beauty of any city.

We might also add to this, problems such as obesity, which are indirectly related to car use. Cars are convenient so we don't walk so much. When this starts to affect children we are creating problems for future generations. Habits, quite simply, are easy to form and very difficult to break.

Thus we can see that the reasons why cars are so convenient are also the reasons why they are so bad for us. The challenge for the car industry is not to produce better performing engines, more streamlined designs, or more robust bodies [usque] ad nauseam*, but to stay one step ahead of governments and supranational bodies who keep a watchful eye on their excesses and hover close by with the threat of legislation if things become too unpalatable.



After listening to the recording, answer the following questions.

Choose the most appropriate answer according to what you've heard.

1. The author believes cars fulfil many of the needs of civilised people. True or false?
2. People like to spend more time with friends than they did in the past. True or false?
3. We've become so used to cars that:
 - a) It'd be hard to break the habit if we had to give them up
 - b) We are oblivious to their bad sides
4. The problem of pollution:
 - a) Is a simple one: cars are dirty and they destroy our lungs
 - b) Can be solved by cleaner engines
 - c) Has a strong visual element to it
5. The author gives the suggestion that:
 - a) Cars suffer from the 'too much of a good thing can be bad for you' syndrome
 - b) The overall problems with cars are something of a myth

* usque ad nauseam – lac. aż do obrzydzenia