

# A3-VA-Reading Comprehension

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The end of the age of the internal combustion engine is in sight. There are small signs everywhere: the shift to hybrid vehicles is already under way among manufacturers. Volvo has announced it will make no purely petrol-engined cars after 2019...and Tesla has just started selling its first electric car aimed squarely at the middle classes: the Tesla 3 sells for \$35,000 in the US, and 400,000 people have put down a small, refundable deposit towards one. Several thousand have already taken delivery, and the company hopes to sell half a million more next year. This is a remarkable figure for a machine with a fairly short range and a very limited number of specialized charging stations. Some of it reflects the remarkable abilities of Elon Musk, the company's founder, as a salesman, engineer, and a man able to get the most out of his factory workers and the governments he deals with...Mr. Musk is selling a dream that the world wants to believe in. This last may be the most important factor in the story. The private car is...a device of immense practical help and economic significance, but at the same time a theater for myths of unattainable self-fulfillment. The one thing you will never see in a car advertisement is traffic, even though that is the element in which drivers spend their lives. Every single driver in a traffic jam is trying to escape from it, yet it is the inevitable consequence of mass car ownership. The sleek and swift electric car is at one level merely the most contemporary fantasy of autonomy and power. But it might also disrupt our exterior landscapes nearly as much as the fossil fuel-engined car did in the last century. Electrical cars would of course pollute far less than fossil fuel-driven ones; instead of oil reserves, the rarest materials for batteries would make undeserving despots and their dynasties fantastically rich. Petrol stations would disappear. The air in cities would once more be breathable and their streets as quiet as those of Venice. This isn't an unmixed good. Cars that were as silent as bicycles would still be as dangerous as they are now to anyone they hit without audible warning. The dream goes further than that. The electric cars of the future will be so thoroughly equipped with sensors and reaction mechanisms that they will never hit anyone. Just as brakes don't let you skid today, the steering wheel of tomorrow will serve you away from danger before you have even noticed it...This is where the fantasy of autonomy comes full circle. The logical outcome of cars which need no driver is that they will become cars which need no owner either. Instead, they will work as taxis do, summoned at will but only for the journeys we actually need. This the future towards which Uber...is working. The ultimate development of the private car will be to reinvent public transport. Traffic jams will be abolished only when the private car becomes a public utility. What then will happen to our fantasies of independence? We'll all have to take to electrically powered bicycles.

Which of the following statements best reflects the author's argument?

1 point

- ☐ Hybrid and electric vehicles signal the end of the age of internal combustion engines.
- ☐ Elon Musk is a remarkably gifted salesman.
- ☒ The private car represents an unattainable myth of independence.
- ☐ The future Uber car will be environmentally friendlier than even the Tesla.

Clear selection

In paragraphs 5 and 6, the author provides the example of Uber to argue that---

1 point

- ☐ In the future, electric cars will be equipped with mechanisms that prevent collisions.
- ☐ In the future, traffic jams will not exist.
- ☒ In the future, the private car will be transformed into a form of public transport.
- ☐ In the future, Uber rides will outstrip Tesla sales.

Clear selection

The author comes to the conclusion that---

1 point

- ☐ Car drivers will no longer own cars but will have to use public transport.
- ☐ Cars will be controlled by technology that is more efficient than car drivers.
- ☒ Car driver's dream of autonomy but the future may be public transport.
- ☐ electrically powered bicycles are the only way to achieve autonomy in transportation

Clear selection

According to the author, the main reason for Tesla's remarkable sales is that--

1 point

- ☐ In the long run, the Tesla is more cost effective than fossil fuel-driven cars.
- ☐ The US government has announced a tax subsidy for Tesla buyers.
- ☐ The company is rapidly upscaling the number of specialised charging stations for customer convenience.
- ☒ People believe in the autonomy represented by private cars.

Clear selection

The author points out all of the following about electric cars EXCEPT---

1 point

- ☐ Their reliance on rare materials for batteries will support despotic rule.
- ☐ They will reduce air and noise pollution.
- ☐ They will not decrease the number of traffic jams.
- ☒ They will ultimately undermine rather than further driver autonomy.

Clear selection

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