



Worksheet 1. Reading: *Electric Cars*



Read the passage about electric cars. Then review the glossary and complete the exercises that follow it.

- 1 Major automobile companies worldwide predict electric cars in their future. Today a lot of
2 motorists are driving electric cars, but they are mostly gas-electric hybrids.
- 3 Hybrid cars are cars that are powered by both a gasoline engine and an electric battery. The
4 battery gets its charge (its power) from being run while the car is moving on its gasoline
5 power. This hybrid car is different from the purely electric car, which runs only on a battery.
- 6 Few people know that a type of electric car actually preceded cars powered by engines using
7 gasoline. During the 1800s, in both Europe and the United States, there were several kinds
8 of "electric carriages," powered by an electric fuel cell. For a while, these were quite popular
9 in large cities. It was only after the mass production of cars with gasoline engines began in
10 the early 1900s that the use of these electric vehicles declined and finally fell away. People
11 liked the newer gasoline-powered cars that were not only cheaper but faster. In these
12 longer-range vehicles, they could drive from city to city on the new highways.
- 13 In the 1990s, there was a revival of the electric car that lasted only a few years. Neither the
14 consumers nor the automobile manufacturers gave it enough support, so it all but
15 disappeared from the market.
- 16 Now, however, there is a new desire for the electric car, mainly because of environmental
17 concerns. An electric car is much more environmentally friendly than a gasoline-powered
18 car because it doesn't pollute the atmosphere with harmful emissions. At the same time,
19 though, environmentalists worry that the increased demand for electricity from plug-in
20 electric cars will mean that more coal is burned in power plants until either wind power or
21 solar power is sufficiently developed.
- 22 The biggest problem with the electric car is the battery, which supplies the electric power to
23 the cars. Electric cars have neither a long driving range nor a quick way to recharge. The
24 cars can't travel more than about 50 miles (80 kilometers) on one charge, and it takes
25 6-12 hours to recharge. Currently, most electric cars carry an auxiliary battery. Consumers
26 are wary not only of the inconvenience of having to recharge the battery so often, but also



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- 27 of the cost of battery replacement, which runs into the thousands of dollars.
28 With a choice of driving either an electric car or a gasoline-powered car, it may be that
29 consumers will be choosing more electric cars in the near future. The automobile companies
30 say they are working hard to develop an electric vehicle that is not only friendly to the
31 environment, but also convenient and economical for the consumer.

Glossary

- Line 3 *battery* — an object that provides a supply of electricity for cars, radios, toys, etc.
Line 8 *fuel cells* — pieces of equipment that combine two different elements, such as oxygen and hydrogen, to produce electricity for a car or a machine
Line 9 *mass production* — the manufacture of goods in large quantities, often using standardized designs and assembly-line techniques
Line 10 *fell away* — gradually disappeared
Line 14 *all but* — almost completely
Line 19 *plug in* — something that needs to be connected to an electrical outlet to get electricity

Comprehension questions

Check all the statements that are true, according to the reading.

1. The majority of electric cars today are hybrids.
2. Hybrid cars are cars that are run 100% by electricity.
3. There were electric cars in the 1800s.
4. Electric cars produce a lot of pollution in the air.
5. The more electric cars there are, the more energy is needed from power plants.
6. The biggest problem with electric cars is the engine itself.
7. The battery in electric cars is expensive to replace.
8. The automobile manufacturers will never develop a pure electric car.