

READING ACTIVITY – WEEK 3

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Maglev, train of the future?

Have you ever been on a high-speed train (HST)?

The world has never had so many fast trains. France has the TGV, with a top speed of 350 kilometers an hour, as fast as the famous Japanese Shinkansen bullet trains. The TGV Lyria travels between France and Switzerland, and the Eurostar links the U.K. with France and Belgium. Russia has the Velaro RUS, Turkey has the HSR, Germany has the ICE, and Spain has the AVE. There are also plans for high-speed rail links in the U.S., Argentina, and Brazil.

But many people think that HSTs are yesterday's technology and that the future lies with Maglev trains. Maglev stands for magnetic levitation. Imagine a train with no engine, wheels, or brakes, which does over 500 km/h!

The idea behind Maglev trains is very simple. Have you ever played with two magnets? As you know, magnets have north and south poles. Opposite poles attract, so north and south poles stick together. But poles that are the same repel each other, so when you put two north or south poles together they push each other away. Powerful magnets in the Maglev track and on the trains lift them and move them forward—so the trains float on a cushion of air!

Maglev transportation has been a dream for over 100 years, but there has never been so much interest in it before. And now it is a reality: Shanghai in China has the first high-speed commercial Maglev train in the world. It takes people to the airport 30 kilometers away in seven minutes 20 seconds, at an average speed of 250 km/h, and has a top speed of over 500 km/h.



AFTER READING

Choose the best answer.

- The Japanese HST has a speed of
 A 350 km/h. B 500 km/h. C 431 km/h.
- Maglev trains have
 A engines. B brakes. C magnets.
- How many poles do magnets have?
 A One. B Two. C Three.
- "... they push each other away." What does *they* refer to?
 A Poles that are the same. B Opposite poles. C North and south poles.
- Maglev transportation uses magnets
 A only in the trains. B only in the track. C in both the trains and the track.
- The Shanghai Maglev train can
 A not go as fast as a TGV. B go faster than a TGV. C go as fast as a TGV.