

Lesson D Reading



When my grandmother was a kid, streets were places where people could walk and bike and where children could play. They didn't even need **road markings**. She says it was wonderful. Then the age of private cars started: sidewalks were built to move **pedestrians** off the street, playing became dangerous, the noise changed from voices and birds to engines and **horns**, and the air became poisonous. In 2018, researchers in the UK showed the connection between the rise of air pollution and the 25 percent increase in **asthma** deaths since 2008.

Some say that new technologies will soon solve the problems that technology has created. I don't think we can wait for that: the planet is being fried, and we need to stop it now. And we already have the technology we need: the bicycle. Many local authorities, tired of waiting for government laws, have taken action and are encouraging cycling. In my view, not a minute too early.

Since 1976, Bogotá has had an official city government program called *Ciclovía* (Bicycleway): Every Sunday, and on public holidays from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m., some of the main roads in the city are closed to cars and taken over by pedestrians, skaters, cyclists, runners, and entertainers. That must be a lot of fun. As more and more people started biking, the city built a very large **network** of bike lanes

connected with a bus system. Many other cities have followed Bogotá's example, even if, sadly, in many of them a Ciclovía is only an annual event.

Between 2007 and 2013, almost 400 miles of bicycle lanes and more than 60 car-free squares were built in New York.

Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark, has a special bike path for cyclists, used by around 5,900 people per hour, every day. Cyclists always get a green light when they ride in and out of the city during rush hour. Also, because biking in some weather conditions can be difficult, there are weather sensors on the traffic lights that detect rain or snow and keep the green light on longer for cyclists. A **countdown** clock also shows cyclists when the light will turn green for them, so they can speed up or slow down to avoid having to stop. How great is that?

Studies show that where car traffic is reduced in favor of bicycles, air quality has improved greatly. Everybody must be in a better mood. Of course, some vehicles, like those used by emergency services, are still needed, and public transport needs a bigger **role** in cities built over steep hills. In my opinion, if you have a good public transport system, school buses for every school, and safe bike lanes, not many people would want to use their car and get stuck in traffic.

A Skim the blog post and circle the best title.

1. My Grandmother's Memories
2. Special Lanes
3. An Old-Fashioned Solution

B Read the blog post. Write the words in bold next to their definitions.

1. _____: someone's or something's purpose in an organization
2. _____: a person who is walking in the street
3. _____: a medical condition that makes breathing difficult
4. _____: paint on the road that identifies lanes, crosswalks, parking spaces, etc.
5. _____: a system of connected parts that communicate with each other
6. _____: the act of counting backward to zero
7. _____: the part of a car that makes a loud noise if you press it

C Read the blog post again and write *T* (true) or *F* (false).

- _____ 1. When the writer's grandmother was a child, people did things in the streets they can't do now.
- _____ 2. The expression "the planet is being fried" refers to global warming.
- _____ 3. On Sunday mornings in Bogotá, you can see shows in some of the main roads.
- _____ 4. In Bogotá, buses use the network of cycle lanes.
- _____ 5. In New York, the space for cars has been reduced and more has been given to bicycles and pedestrians.
- _____ 6. In Copenhagen, "weather sensors" are special officials who stop cyclists when riding is dangerous.
- _____ 7. In Copenhagen, a cyclist knows when traffic lights will turn green before they change.
- _____ 8. The writer thinks that the ideas discussed in the text should be used in the same way in every city.