

Listening & Reading

The German Autobahn

- 1 Listen to the passage and write the missing words in the spaces.

The German Autobahn ('Autobahn' is the German word for 'motorway') is famous around the _____ (1) for having no speed limits. Actually, this is not completely true: about two-thirds of the Autobahn network has no permanent speed limit. In addition, _____ (2) is always a recommended limit of 130 km/h. If you go faster than 130 km/h and are involved in an accident, you _____ (3) be held responsible for any damage.

Although the Autobahn allows drivers to travel at _____ (4) speeds, the accident, injury and death rates are low. In fact, the Autobahn is safer than normal roads in Germany, and safer than _____ (5) motorway systems in other countries.

The majority of Germans are proud of their excellent cars and road network, but not everyone is _____ (6) with the lack of speed limits. The Green Party says that driving at high speeds consumes more petrol, so it causes more air _____ (7). The Greens want a 100 km/h speed limit on the Autobahn.

Some people are disappointed the first time they see the Autobahn because it looks like a _____ (8) motorway. However, driving on it is usually enjoyable because the roads are very well designed, built and maintained, and the Germans are polite and skilful drivers. Just try to avoid times when the traffic is _____ (9). Traffic jams are common during busy periods such as the start and end of weekends, and on holidays.

The Autobahn network has more than 700 service areas which are open 24 hours a day. They are found about every 50 kilometres or so. These service areas usually have a petrol _____ (10), restaurant, convenience store, telephones, and restrooms.

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2 True or False?

1. Some parts of the Autobahn have speed limits.
2. Because of the high speeds, the Autobahn is more dangerous than normal motorways.
3. The German Green Party wants a lower speed limit because of the problem of noise pollution.
4. Traffic is heavy on Friday evenings and Sunday afternoons.
5. The service areas are not open at night.

Antonyms and Synonyms

3 Find one word in the passage which means the OPPOSITE of:

temporary (paragraph 1)

more dangerous (paragraph 2)

rude (paragraph 4)

4 Find one word in the passage which means the SAME as:

suggested (paragraph 1)

times (paragraph 4)

system (paragraph 5)

5 Questions for Discussion

1. Would you like to drive on the German Autobahn?
2. Does your country have a good motorway system?
3. What are the speed limits in your country?