

# UNIT 4 – Tech Companies

## Reading 1

Skills:

- Details
- Vocabulary in context

**Getting started:** Do you know who Elon Musk is?

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF TESLA MOTORS



Tesla, Inc. was **set up** in July 2003 by engineers Martin Eberhard and Marc Tarpenning as Tesla Motors. The company's name is a tribute to the well-known inventor and electrical engineer Nikola Tesla. Martin Eberhard said he wanted to build "a car manufacturer that is also a technology company", with its core technologies as the battery, the computer software, and the proprietary motor. In 2004, after founding SpaceX, businessman Elon Musk came to the company and provided much of the initial capital support to run it.

Tesla, Inc. was founded with the idea to create effective electric cars and sell them to the masses. From the beginning, Musk consistently maintained that Tesla's long-term strategic goal was to create affordable mass market electric vehicles. **Furthermore**, Tesla's goal was to start with a premium sports car and then move into more mainstream vehicles, including sedans and affordable compacts.

As often has happened with Elon Musk's companies, the timeline for these events was a bit off. The first phase began with the Tesla Roadster, a model they began planning in 2004. The prototype of Tesla's first car was officially revealed to the public in 2006, and then it was released in 2008. This car was slightly more expensive than it had been anticipated (\$6,700 in fact), and it was sold for about four years and has not been manufactured since. The Roadster was the first highway legal serial production all-electric car to use lithium-ion battery cells and the first production all-electric car to travel more than 320 kilometers (200 mi) per charge.

The Model S was the next car to be produced. It was originally released in 2012. There are a number of varieties to it like the battery size, power, built-in equipment, and other features. In general, it was the first practical electric vehicle mass marketed, although at a high price. Current prices for a Model S start at \$70,000. In this model, Tesla experimented with technology like autopilot, supercharging, and others. The car has been continually improved via hardware changes in the factory, as well as software changes.

The Model X was built to satisfy the SUV market. This car was developed based on the platform of the Model S and was released in 2015. The car also comes with Tesla's Autopilot driver assistance system. Model X is one of the safest SUVs ever. Built from the ground up as an electric vehicle, the body, chassis, and battery technology provide a very low probability of occupant injury. Model X has the most storage room of any SUV in its class, comfortable seating for up to seven adults and the capability to tow up to 5,000 pounds. **Falcon Wing doors** are equipped with sensors to monitor the proximity of surroundings and can open in even the tightest parking spaces.

The Tesla Model 3 is one of the latest creations of the American manufacturer. The production, as usual, is a bit slower than one would hope from Tesla, however, it is one of the most successful cars made in the US. In fact, in February 2019, the Model 3 passed the Chevrolet Volt to become the all-time best-

selling plug-in electric car in the U.S. Model 3 sales also surpassed the Nissan Leaf in early 2020 to become the world's all-time top selling plug-in electric car.

*\*Adapted from <https://www.whereisroadster.com/tesla/>*

**Answer the following questions:**

1. What is stated about Tesla in paragraph 1?
  - a. Elon Musk was one of the cofounders of the company.
  - b. It was initially established as an engineering business.
  - c. Tesla, Inc. was named after a famous person.
  - d. It started back in 2004.
2. The phrase **set up** in paragraph 1 is closest in meaning to
  - a. put
  - b. found
  - c. arrange
  - d. prepare
3. The word **furthermore** in paragraph 1 is closest in meaning to
  - a. additionally
  - b. because
  - c. thus
  - d. but
4. What is stated about the Tesla Roadster in paragraph 2?
  - a. It is still produced.
  - b. It was released in 2006.
  - c. It can travel 200 kilometers per charge.
  - d. It took longer to sell it to the public than it'd been planned.
5. What is stated about the Model S in paragraph 3?
  - a. The vehicle has a feature that allows it to drive itself.
  - b. It had some problems with its software and hardware.
  - c. It was massively produced and was inexpensive.
  - d. Model S was released before the Roadster.
6. What is stated about the Model X in paragraph 4?
  - a. It is smaller than the Model S.
  - b. It does not include the autopilot feature.
  - c. It is a very spacious car.
  - d. It's not a safe car in case of an accident.

7. What picture represents the **Falcon Wing doors** mentioned in paragraph 4?



8. What is stated about the Model 3 in paragraph 5?

- a. This is one of the first cars produced by Tesla.
- b. It has had a positive effect in the car market.
- c. Model 3 is a very slow car.
- d. It is faster than a Nissan Leaf.

### What do you think?

Which of the cars described above would you buy if you could?