Lessons 5-6 Technology in transport – driverless cars

Reading

Something new is coming to our roads, and we'll soon be seeing them in action. People have been developing the technology for driverless cars over the last few years, and they are now ready to start trialling the vehicles on the roads in cities around the world in places such as Dubai, London and California.

Why is driverless technology such a key area? For one thing, people feel it can be safer. A high percentage of road accidents are caused by human error, so if the process is completely automatic, this risk is removed.

Another advantage is that it lets older people, or people who have certain disabilities, stay mobile and independent.

There is also the idea that journeys by car could become a different experience altogether. If we don't have to actually drive the vehicle, we can use the time spent travelling for different purposes — watching a film, working, making phone calls or surfing the Internet. There are many possibilities.

Of course, some people don't think this is a good idea. They argue that just as humans can cause accidents when they are tired, distracted, or driving too quickly, driverless cars could have problems if the technology stops working properly. We've all had moments when phones or computers don't work as well as they should, but the consequences for a car would be worse.

Also, it removes an element of fun from driving. Many people enjoy the experience of travelling around on highways independently, and the automated process stops this.

Whatever the pros and cons, it looks like driverless cars will soon be hitting our streets, so what will they be like? There are basically two kinds: 'guardian angels' and 'chauffeurs'. The guardian angel approach has safety features which override the human driver in dangerous situations — for example the car will brake for you if you don't stop in time. In a 'chauffeur', the person doesn't drive at all. The whole journey is done by a self-driving 'pod'. Soon, these pods will be taking people on journeys all over the city.

So, what do you think? Are you for the driverless car revolution, or against it?



2 Read the text again. Match the sentence halves.

1	There will sOOn be trials Of driverless cars	*	a Older and less mObile people tO travel arOund.
2	Many rOad accidents are caused	*	b the experience of driving.
3	Driverless cars will help	*	c by mistakes made by people.
4	Driverless cars cOuld be dangerOus if	*	d in places such as Dubai, LOndOn and CalifOrnia.
5	Many people enjoy	*	e the technOlOgy dOesn't wOrk prOperly.

LIVEWORKSHEETS