Better Gas Mileage

Pre-reading

Questions: What do you know about this topic? What questions do you have?

Definitions: Mileage – the number of miles a vehicle can travel per unit of fuel
Hybrid car – a car than operates using both gas and electricity
Diligent – careful and hard-working
High octane fuel – fuel that requires a high amount of energy to ignite

Reading

Frank is a thrifty person. He keeps detailed records of his income and expenses. He only buys things he really needs and uses coupons when he shops. He tries not to overspend. Despite Frank’s best efforts, his cash flow is less this year than last year. The high gas prices have forced him to spend more than he had planned.

Frank would like to improve his gas mileage. Buying a hybrid or electric car is one option, but not for Frank. He does not have enough money for a down payment, nor does he want to make car payments. Besides, his car is still in good shape.

What are some other gas saving options? Frank decides to check online. He goes to Google and types in “better gas mileage.” There are some helpful tips at the Federal Trade Commission’s (FTC) Consumer Alerts’ webpage. Frank reads their “Good, Better, Best: How to Improve Gas Mileage” resource.

There are a variety of suggestions on improving gas mileage while driving and maintaining your car. Frank learns that gas mileage decreases rapidly at speeds above 60 miles per hour, so he begins to stay within the posted speed limits.

When Frank waits for a long train, he now turns off his car instead of idling. Idling wastes fuel, which costs money, and pollutes the air. He also removes things promptly from his trunk. An extra 100 pounds in the trunk can reduce a car’s fuel economy by up to two percent.

Frank is diligent about car maintenance. The engine, tires and air filters are checked regularly. Tuning a car engine according to the owner’s manual can increase gas mileage by an average of four percent. Properly inflated and aligned tires can increase gas mileage up to three percent. Replacing clogged air filters can increase mileage up to ten percent.

How about at the pump? Frank has often wondered about the high octane fuel. Would it be better for his car? Would it give him better gas mileage? The FTC claims that a higher octane gas offers no benefit. In fact, they say, “Unless your engine is knocking, buying higher octane gasoline is a waste of money.”

Level 5.5
Understanding

1. Why did Frank’s cash flow decrease? ___________________________________________ 
   __________________________________________________________________________

2. What does the word idle mean in this reading? ________________________________ 
   __________________________________________________________________________

3. What Internet search engine did Frank use? ________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

4. Which mileage tip appeared to have the greatest benefit? ______________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

5. What gas mileage improvement option did Frank not use? Why? ________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

6. List one driving tip and one maintenance tip for better gas mileage.______________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

7. Where did Frank find the helpful tips? ______________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

Writing

Option A: Summarize the reading in your own words.

Option B: How do you save money on gas? Compare and contrast what you do with the tips that were recommended in the reading.

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Better Gas Mileage – Level 5.5