Hybrid Cars
Source: www.care2.com/channels/ecoinfo/hybrid

Pre-reading

Questions:
• What do you know about hybrid cars?
• What would you like to know about them?

Definitions:
• Carbon monoxide – a colorless, odorless, deadly gas
• Emissions – chemicals that are released into the air
• SUV – Sport Utility Vehicle

Reading

Have you heard the term, “hybrid car”? People have been talking about hybrid cars on the radio and TV a lot lately. What are they? Hybrids are cars that are powered by both a battery and gasoline. Non-hybrid cars use only gasoline.

Why get a hybrid? What makes them good? Hybrid cars are good for the environment and good for the consumer. Hybrid batteries help to reduce fuel emissions because the hybrid engine draws on the battery when accelerating. It does not draw on the gasoline. Hybrid gasoline motors can shut off when the car is stopped and run off their electricity.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, the single most polluting activity most of us do is drive a gasoline powered car. Cars are the largest contributor to ground-level ozone, a major component of smog. In urban areas, 90% of carbon monoxide is contributed by non-hybrid cars. Hybrid cars can reduce smog by 90% and use much less gas.

Hybrid cars are economical. They can get up to 55 to 60 miles per gallon in city driving. An SUV might get 15 to 20 miles per gallon, or use three times as much gas for the same distance!

How about all-electric cars? Would they be even better than hybrids? Hybrids are better than all-electric cars because hybrid car batteries recharge as you drive. There is no need to plug them in. Also, most electric cars cannot go faster than 50 to 60 miles per hour, while hybrids can.

Hybrid cars sound great, but what if you can’t afford one? If you’re not driving a hybrid, how you drive and how well you maintain your vehicle can help both the earth and your wallet. Here are two great tips for reducing emissions from your car and increasing fuel economy:

1. Obey the speed limit. – Your fuel economy is lowered by about 10 percent when you drive 75 miles per hour instead of 65 miles per hour. Driving over the speed limit can also increase tailpipe pollution in many vehicles.

2. Unload. – Even 100 pounds of extra weight in your car can reduce fuel economy by 1 percent. Take a minute to unload your trunk or back seat.
Understanding

1. What does the word **economical** mean? _____________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________________

2. What is a hybrid car? ______________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________________

3. How is a hybrid good for the consumer? _____________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________________

4. How are hybrids good for the environment? __________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________________

5. What does the word **maintain** mean? ______________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________________

6. Why are hybrid cars better than electric cars? (List at least two reasons.) ______________
   __________________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________________

7. What is the single most polluting activity most of us do? _____________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________________

Writing

**Option A:** Summarize the reading in your own words.

**Option B:** Do you think hybrid cars are a good idea? Why or why not? If you could own one, would you?

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