

Making Car Connections

Lesson at a glance:

Students will discover how our society has evolved to be a car society and discover the important role that cars play in how we live our lives.

Skills:

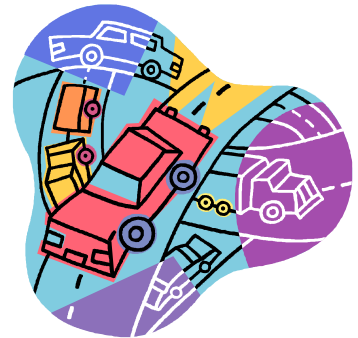
Questioning, Discussing, Writing, Understanding the Role of Technology in our Society

Grades:

3-5

Materials:

- Discussion questions
- Books or internet access for follow up research



Background:

The evolution of a car society:

- **People Travel:** why people travel, the vehicles they drove, the roads they drove on, and transportation alternatives that have existed over time.
- **How People Live:** the influence of the automobile on residential community development and lifestyle changes.
- **How People Consume:** the growth of car-related businesses such as gas stations and dealerships, and the influence of the automobile on advertising, restaurants, markets, and other consumer-based businesses.
- **How People Have Fun With Cars:** racing, touring, and the customized car as a means of individual expression.
- **The Public Cost of Private Transportation:** new institutional structures, such as freeways, to accommodate the automobile and the pros and cons of the evolving automobile-based transportation systems.

Activity:

1. Lead the students in a discussion about the role that cars play in their lives.

Sample leading questions:

- Would people survive without cars?
- Where do you go every day?
- How do you get there?
- How did people get places before there were cars, buses or even bicycles?
- How did this make their lives different from our lives now?
- How did people get their food or visit their friends and family before cars?



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- Did people live closer to each other then?
 - Do you need cars to travel?
2. Have students write a paragraph (or more) that begins with “If we didn’t have cars...”
 3. After the students have written their paragraph, have them share some of their ideas about how their lives would be different.

Extensions:

1. Have students complete the “Family Cars” activity
2. Have students research the history of wheeled vehicles throughout the world.



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