



BRANCHE	SECTIONS	ÉPREUVE ÉCRITE
Anglais	B, C, D, E, F, G	<i>Durée de l'épreuve : 2 heures</i> <i>Date de l'épreuve : 30 mai 2018</i>

Owning a car will soon be a thing of the past

After a century in which the car has sat at the heart of industrial civilisation, the age of mass vehicle ownership, and the idea that life is not complete without your own set of wheels, looks to be drawing to a close. And in our cities, the use of cars is being overtaken by altogether greener, more liberating possibilities.

The sale of diesel and petrol cars is to be outlawed in the UK from 2040. Oxford has announced its intention to be the first British city to ban all petrol and diesel cars and vans – from a handful of central streets by 2020, extending to the entire urban centre 10 years later. Paris will ban all non-electric cars by 2030, and is now in the habit of announcing car-free days on which drivers have to stay out of its historic heart.

Earlier this year, forecasters at Bank of America tentatively claimed that the US may have reached 'peak car', acknowledging that 'transportation is costly and inefficient, making the sector ripe for change'. Their focus was on ride-sharing services, car-pool apps and collective use of bikes: what they were predicting had the sense of a reality that is already plain to see.

There are caveats to all this. Although cities in the world's rising economies are just as fond of car-sharing and bike use as anywhere in the west, car ownership in India and China is rising vertiginously. And as one of the 25,000 residents of a West Country town that is expanding fast and now prone to gridlock, I can confirm that in swaths of this country, the idea that we will soon surrender our vehicles can easily look rather far-fetched.

But deep social trends do point in another direction. In 1994 48% of 17- to 20-year-olds and 75% of 21- to 29-year-olds had driving licences. According to the National Travel Survey, by 2016 these figures had dropped, respectively, to 31% and 66%. If you buy most of your stuff online, the need to drive to a supermarket or shopping centre dwindles to nothing; if you are in daily touch with distant friends and family online, might a time-consuming visit to see them feel less urgent? Meanwhile, at the other end of the demographic spectrum, an ageing population will soon have equally profound consequences – for levels of car ownership, and the demand for alternatives.

I am from a generation for whom the promise of your own car was culturally powerful. Now the rising global emergency focused on fatal levels of air pollution confirms the motor industry's dire environmental impacts; and concerns about the sub-prime loans that now define a huge swath of the car market suggest that the supposed joys of driving might be unsustainable in plenty of other ways.

The birth pangs of something better are inevitably messy, as evidenced by the stink currently surrounding Uber. Whatever Uber's failings, its innovations are hardly going to be put back in their box. As and when Uber and Lyft go driverless in cities and suburbs across the planet, the financial maths will become unanswerable.

At a time of all-pervading gloom, make no mistake: this is good news. At the heart of it all are liberating prospects; mobility no longer dependent on a huge cash outlay and on the organised extortion of motor insurance; everybody, regardless of age or disability, able to access much the same transport. With the requisite political will, dwindling numbers of cars will bring opportunities

to radically redesign urban areas. The environmental benefits will be self-evident. With any luck, the mundane term 'public transport' will take on a new vitality.

Adapted from an article by John Harris, published in The Guardian Weekly, 27.10.2017 edition 600 words

Glossary:

caveat: warning that something may or may not be completely true

gridlock: situation in which streets in a city are so full of cars that they cannot move

swath: a long thin area of something, especially land

sub-prime loan: an amount of money that is lent to someone who may not be able to pay it back, usually at a higher than normal interest rate

Uber, Lyft: companies that provide (shared) transport via apps in cities worldwide, like a taxi service but using private cars and drivers

outlay: amount of money you need to spend in order to start a new business, a new activity

extortion: act of overcharging money for a service

Comprehension (20 marks)

Answer the following questions on the text in your own words.

1. What indications does the author give to show that the automobile may be coming to an end? (6 marks)
2. Which features and trends of contemporary society support this idea? (8 marks)
3. What is the author's attitude to the prospect that 'owning a car will soon be a thing of the past'? Explain with reference to the text. (6 marks)

Personal Opinion (10 marks)

Write a structured personal opinion using between 100 and 150 words on the topic below. Indicate the word count.

Could you imagine living your adult life without a driving licence?

Essay (30 marks)

Write a well-structured essay of between 300 and 400 words on one of the topics below. Do not forget to copy the title and to indicate the word count.

1. In the aftermath of the New York truck attack that killed 8 people and badly injured 12 in October 2017, President Trump tweeted that the suspect 'should get the death penalty'. What is your view on the death penalty?
2. 'Waste not, want not.' Western consumer society is wasteful. How can western consumers be encouraged to waste less?
3. The list of Nobel Peace Prize laureates includes people like (former) US President Barack Obama and Malala Yousafzai, or institutions, such as the EU and, most recently, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN). In your view, how effective is this prize in actually bringing about a positive change in society at large?