



Yesterday & Today

Grade 5

Name: _____

Read the passage comparing how something was done in the past and how it is done today. Then answer the questions using evidence.

Think about: What changed? What stayed the same? Why did it change? Who benefited?

Horse-Drawn Carriage vs Automobile: Getting Around



For centuries, the horse-drawn carriage was the primary mode of personal transport in towns and cities. Imagine bustling streets in the late 1800s, filled with the clip-clop of hooves and the rumble of wooden wheels.

Carriages, ranging from simple carts to elegant coaches, were essential for everything from daily errands to long-distance travel. They offered a direct connection to nature, but their speed was limited by the horse's endurance, typically averaging 5-10 miles per hour. Caring for horses also required significant time, space, and resources, including stabling, feeding, and veterinary attention. In many ways, the horse and carriage were a partnership, with the animal providing the power and the human providing the direction.

The invention of the automobile in the late 19th century began a revolution. Karl Benz built the first true gasoline-powered car in 1886, but it wasn't until the early 1900s that cars started to become more common, especially with Henry Ford's Model T in 1908. These early automobiles were noisy, sometimes unreliable, and expensive, but they promised a new kind of freedom. They didn't need to be fed, could travel much faster, and didn't leave manure on the streets. This new form of transport quickly changed how people lived, worked, and socialized, allowing them to travel further and faster than ever before.

The differences between these two modes of transport are striking. A horse-drawn carriage might take several hours to cover 20 miles, **while** a modern car can do the same



journey in under 30 minutes, depending on traffic. The initial cost of a car was often higher than a carriage, **however**, the ongoing costs of fuel and maintenance replaced the need for hay, stables, and blacksmiths. **Both** methods allowed people to move goods and themselves from one place to another, but the automobile offered a significant leap in efficiency and range. A fun historical fact: in 1900, New York City had over 100,000 horses, each producing about 20 pounds of manure daily!

Today, there are over 1.4 billion cars globally, a stark contrast to the millions of horses that once powered society. This shift has had profound environmental and social impacts. **Unlike** horse-drawn transport, which produced organic waste, automobiles release exhaust fumes that contribute to air pollution and climate change. On the social side, cars have enabled the growth of suburbs and long-distance commuting, fundamentally reshaping urban landscapes and daily routines. The average American drives about 13,500 miles per year, a distance unimaginable in the era of horse-drawn travel.

From different perspectives, the automobile brought immense benefits to many, offering unparalleled personal mobility and convenience. Manufacturers, oil companies, and road builders all thrived. **On the other hand**, those who made a living from horses – stable owners, carriage makers, and farriers – saw their livelihoods disappear. While cars offered speed and independence, they also introduced new problems like traffic congestion, accidents, and the need for vast road networks. For some, the slower pace and connection to animals offered by carriages might even be seen as a lost charm in today's fast-paced world.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

(1) Which method was the primary personal transport in the late 1800s?

- (A) Horse-drawn carriage (B) Automobile (C) Both (D) Neither



(2) Which method releases exhaust fumes that contribute to air pollution?

- A Horse-drawn carriage B Automobile C Both D Neither

(3) "One takes hours to cover 20 miles; the other takes under 30 minutes." Is this a SIMILARITY or DIFFERENCE?

- A Similarity B Difference

(4) "Both methods allowed people to move goods and themselves from one place to another." Is this a SIMILARITY or DIFFERENCE?

- A Similarity B Difference

(5) Explain ONE way the horse-drawn carriage and the automobile are similar. Quote a detail from the passage.

(6) Do you think the modern version is always better? Use TWO details from the passage to support your view.

