



💡 Yesterday & Today

Grade 6

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 Carriages vs. Automobiles: A Journey Through Time



For centuries, the horse-drawn carriage was the primary mode of personal and public transportation. In bustling cities like London and New York during the 1800s, streets were filled with the clip-clop of horses pulling everything from elegant private coaches to public omnibuses and delivery wagons. These vehicles were powered by living animals, requiring stables, feed, and constant care. Travel was often slow, bumpy, and limited by the endurance of the horses. A journey of 50 miles could easily take an entire day, or even longer depending on road conditions and rest stops for the animals. **Both** private citizens and businesses relied heavily on this traditional form of transport.

The late 19th and early 20th centuries saw the rise of the automobile, a revolutionary invention that promised speed and independence. Karl Benz is often credited with inventing the first true automobile in 1886, and by the 1920s, cars like Henry Ford's Model T were becoming affordable for many families. These new machines ran on gasoline, offering far greater speeds and ranges than horses. Today, cars are ubiquitous, with billions on roads worldwide, enabling rapid travel across vast distances. A 50-mile journey that once took a day by carriage can now be completed in under an hour by car. **Unlike** carriages, automobiles require roads, fuel stations, and complex maintenance.

The impact of automobiles was profound. Cities had to redesign their infrastructure, replacing cobblestone streets with asphalt and building extensive road networks. The



average speed of travel increased dramatically, shrinking distances and connecting communities in new ways. In 1900, there were only about 8,000 cars in the United States; by 1930, that number had exploded to over 23 million. This shift also created entirely new industries, from oil refining to car manufacturing and repair shops. **However**, this progress came with new challenges, such as traffic congestion and air pollution.

On the other hand, horse-drawn carriages offered certain advantages that modern cars lack. They were quiet, produced no exhaust fumes, and their "fuel" (hay and oats) was renewable and readily available from local farms. Carriages also moved at a human-friendly pace, allowing passengers to better observe their surroundings and interact with others. For some, the connection to nature and the simpler mechanics of a carriage offered a charm that internal combustion engines could not replicate. Historian Dr. Eleanor Vance notes, "The carriage era, **while** slower, fostered a different kind of community, one less rushed and more attuned to its immediate environment."

The transition from horse to horsepower also brought significant ethical and societal implications. The widespread adoption of cars led to the decline of horse-related industries, but it also freed up vast amounts of urban land previously dedicated to stables and manure disposal. While cars offered individual freedom, they also introduced issues of safety, with early roads often dangerous for pedestrians and drivers alike. The environmental cost of fossil fuels and the infrastructure needed for cars continues to be a major global concern, prompting ongoing efforts to develop electric vehicles and sustainable transportation solutions. **Both** methods of transport have shaped human civilization in unique ways.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

(1) Which method required stables and feed for power?

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



(2) Which method is described as 'ubiquitous' today, with billions on roads worldwide?

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

(3) 'Both private citizens and businesses used them.' Is this a SIMILARITY or DIFFERENCE?

- (A) Similarity (B) Difference

(4) 'One produced exhaust fumes, the other did not.' Is this a SIMILARITY or DIFFERENCE?

- (A) Similarity (B) Difference

(5) Explain ONE way the past and present version 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.

