

# Urban Public Transportation: Moving the City Together

COMPREHENSION • VOCABULARY • DISCUSSION

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## Reading Passage

Read the passage carefully. Each paragraph is labelled with a letter for easy reference.

**A** Many big cities around the world could not function without public transportation. Every morning, millions of people step onto buses, trams, and trains to reach school, work, or the market. These vehicles travel on fixed routes and timetables, so passengers can plan their day without worrying about parking or heavy traffic. For city governments, running a strong transport system is as important as providing clean water or electricity. Buses are usually the most common form because they are flexible. A city can easily add a new bus line when a neighborhood grows. Trams, also called streetcars, run on metal tracks and are popular in parts of Europe. They are quiet and quick, especially in streets where only trams and cyclists are allowed. Underground railways, often called the metro or subway, move the greatest number of people. During rush hour a train may arrive every two minutes, carrying hundreds of passengers each time. In some places, bike-share stations stand next to metro exits, making the “last kilometre” from the station to home simple and cheap. Public transportation brings many benefits. First, it reduces air pollution because one full bus produces far less exhaust than forty cars. Second, it saves money. Tickets are usually cheaper than the cost of fuel, tolls, and car repairs. Third, it saves time. On a busy road, a bus lane or an underground line can move faster than cars stuck in traffic. Finally, it builds community. People who ride together often feel that the city belongs to everyone, not just to drivers. Of course, there are challenges. Some systems are old and need repair. When trains break down, passengers become frustrated and late. Crowding is another problem; at peak times, finding a free seat can feel impossible. Modern technology offers solutions. Electric buses are quieter and cleaner than diesel ones. Smartphone apps show real-time arrival information, so travelers wait less at the stop. Cities are also testing contactless payment cards that work on buses, trams, and bikes, making transfers smooth. Good planning and investment can keep public transportation reliable, comfortable, and green. In the future, more people may choose to leave their cars at home, helping cities become healthier places for all.

## Vocabulary Glossary

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Key words and phrases from the passage. Study them before attempting the exercise below.

WORD / PHRASE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
<b>function</b>	to work or operate in a proper or particular way	<i>Without electricity, many machines cannot function.</i>
<b>route</b>	a way or path that buses, trains, or other vehicles regularly travel	<i>The bus route goes through the city center.</i>
<b>flexible</b>	able to change easily to fit new conditions	<i>His schedule is flexible, so he can meet you any time.</i>
<b>exhaust</b>	the gas from a vehicle's engine that is released into the air	<i>Exhaust from cars can cause air pollution.</i>
<b>crowding</b>	a situation where too many people are in one place	<i>There is a lot of crowding on the train during rush hour.</i>
<b>reliable</b>	able to be trusted to do what is needed	<i>My watch is very reliable; it always shows the correct time.</i>
<b>investment</b>	the act of putting money or effort into something to make it better or more successful	<i>The school made a big investment in new computers.</i>
<b>contactless</b>	able to be used without needing to touch something	<i>Many people like using contactless cards to pay for things quickly.</i>

### Vocabulary Exercise — Fill in the Blank

Use one word or phrase from the glossary above to complete each sentence. Each item is used only once. Answers are on the final page.

1. The city's new bus line will follow a different \_\_\_\_\_ to reach more neighborhoods.
2. The old train system had many problems, but now it is much more \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Using \_\_\_\_\_ payment makes it easier to pay for the bus without cash.
4. When too many people use the metro at the same time, there is a lot of \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The city wants to make a big \_\_\_\_\_ in electric buses to reduce pollution.
6. Buses are \_\_\_\_\_ because they can change routes easily.

## Comprehension Questions

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*These questions are different from the online practice test. Choose the best answer (A, B, C, or D). Answers and explanations are on the final page.*

### Question 1

**What is one main reason city governments prioritize public transportation?**

- A. It is as essential as clean water or electricity.
- B. It makes the city more attractive to tourists.
- C. It helps reduce the population.
- D. It generates more income than other services.

### Question 2

**How do bike-share stations benefit public transportation users?**

- A. They provide a way to exercise after taking the bus.
- B. They make the last part of the journey easy and affordable.
- C. They are cheaper than taking a taxi.
- D. They reduce the cost of public transportation tickets.

### Question 3

**Why might cities choose electric buses over diesel buses?**

- A. Electric buses are more expensive.
- B. Electric buses are quieter and cleaner.
- C. Diesel buses are faster.
- D. Diesel buses are more modern.

### Question 4

**What is one benefit of using smartphone apps for public transport?**

- A. They help users find the cheapest ticket prices.
- B. They provide real-time arrival information.
- C. They offer discounts on multiple rides.
- D. They suggest alternative routes to avoid crowds.

### Question 5

**What does the author suggest is crucial for the future of public transportation?**

- A. Raising ticket prices to fund new projects.
- B. Building more roads for buses.
- C. Good planning and investment.
- D. Stopping the use of trains.

## Discussion & Writing Prompts

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*Each prompt references a specific detail from the passage above. Use for classroom discussion or a short written response (150–200 words).*

1. Paragraph 2 explains that trams are popular in parts of Europe because they are quiet and quick. Do you think trams would be successful in your city? Why or why not?

2. The passage mentions that electric buses are cleaner and quieter than diesel ones. What other technologies could improve public transportation in your area?

3. The passage states that public transportation can save money for individuals. How do you think public transportation could save money for a city government?

# Answer Key

## COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

Q1 A

Q2 B

Q3 B

Q4 B

Q5 C

## VOCABULARY EXERCISE

FIB1 route

FIB2 reliable

FIB3 contactless

FIB4 crowding

FIB5 investment

FIB6 flexible

## Comprehension Question Explanations

Why the correct answer is right — and why each wrong option is incorrect.

### 1. What is one main reason city governments prioritize public transportation?

✓ A — It is as essential as clean water or electricity.

The passage states that running a strong transport system is as important as providing clean water or electricity.

✗ B — It makes the city more attractive to tourists.

The passage does not mention attracting tourists as a reason.

✗ C — It helps reduce the population.

Reducing the population is not discussed in the passage.

✗ D — It generates more income than other services.

The passage does not mention income generation from public transportation.

### 2. How do bike-share stations benefit public transportation users?

✓ B — They make the last part of the journey easy and affordable.

The passage mentions bike-share stations making the 'last kilometre' from the station to home simple and cheap.

✗ A — They provide a way to exercise after taking the bus.

Exercise is not mentioned in the passage.

✗ C — They are cheaper than taking a taxi.

The passage does not compare bike-share to taxis.

✗ D — They reduce the cost of public transportation tickets.

The cost of tickets is not reduced by bike-share stations.

### 3. Why might cities choose electric buses over diesel buses?

✓ B — Electric buses are quieter and cleaner.

The passage states that electric buses are quieter and cleaner than diesel ones.

✗ A — Electric buses are more expensive.

The passage does not say electric buses are more expensive.

✗ C — Diesel buses are faster.

The passage does not claim diesel buses are faster.

✗ D — Diesel buses are more modern.

The passage does not suggest diesel buses are more modern.

#### 4. What is one benefit of using smartphone apps for public transport?

✓ B — They provide real-time arrival information.

The passage mentions that smartphone apps show real-time arrival information.

✗ A — They help users find the cheapest ticket prices.

*The passage does not discuss finding the cheapest ticket prices.*

✗ C — They offer discounts on multiple rides.

*The passage does not mention discounts on rides.*

✗ D — They suggest alternative routes to avoid crowds.

*The passage does not say apps suggest alternative routes.*

#### 5. What does the author suggest is crucial for the future of public transportation?

✓ C — Good planning and investment.

The passage highlights that good planning and investment can keep public transportation reliable, comfortable, and green.

✗ A — Raising ticket prices to fund new projects.

*Raising ticket prices is not mentioned as crucial.*

✗ B — Building more roads for buses.

*Building more roads is not discussed in the passage.*

✗ D — Stopping the use of trains.

*Stopping the use of trains is not suggested.*

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#### MORE B1 LEVEL READING PRACTICE

Understanding Climate Change — <https://www.esl-tests.com/reading/b1/understanding-climate-change>

Exploring Health Fitness Trends — <https://www.esl-tests.com/reading/b1/exploring-health-fitness-trends>

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