

Axles of Evil

Level 1 | Elementary

1 Pre-reading | Key Vocabulary

Complete the sentences using these key words from the text:

| | | | |
|------------------|-------|--------|----------|
| environmentalist | truck | fake | military |
| vehicle | proud | gallon | gasoline |

1. A _____ is a machine that you travel in.
2. A _____ is the same as 3.8 litres.
3. The word _____ means 'relating to armies or armed forces'.
4. A _____ is a large road vehicle used for carrying goods.
5. If you feel _____, you feel happy about something you have done.
6. If something is _____, it is a copy of something real.
7. An _____ is someone who wants to protect the environment.
8. In the UK it is called 'petrol'. In the USA they call it _____.

2 Find the Information

Look in the text and find the following information as quickly as possible:

1. What are SUVs?
2. What does Adam Weinstock do?
3. What is a Hummer?
4. Who is Ron DeFore?
5. How much petrol do SUVs use?
6. How much does petrol cost in the USA?

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Arnold Schwarzenegger has five sports utility vehicles (SUVs). Mike Tyson has four. 30% of the cars sold in the USA are now SUVs. But now environmentalists are going to war against the SUV.

It's Tuesday night on the Upper West Side in New York and environmentalist Adam Weinstock has a lot of work to do. We turn the corner on 68th and Lexington and we see a whole street full of sports utility vehicles. SUVs are half car, half truck and they have names like Navigators, Excursions, Expeditions and Pathfinders - names that give us a picture of nature and outdoor life. But they are parked in the rich centre of Manhattan. Weinstock puts a fake parking ticket on them. "Open your eyes," it says. "Take a few deep breaths, and be honest with yourself... Why do you need such a huge car? This is not a war zone."

SUVs, and their military version, the Hummer, are very popular and they are making a lot of money for the US car industry. But they also use a lot of petrol. This is why environmentalists hate SUVs.

In Pennsylvania protesters set SUVs on fire; in Washington state they smashed their windscreens; in Massachusetts they painted the words "No Blood for Oil" on them.

Ron DeFore, the communications director of SUV Owners of America (SUVOA), says he is tired of environmentalists criticising Americans for their choice of vehicle. He thinks their arguments about the environment and safety are wrong. His message to them is: "Get on with your life and stop complaining."

On the SUVOA website you can read the words: "Is this a Great Country or What? Yes it is." Why? "Because we have the freedom to buy what cars we want and we must not lose that freedom because some people don't like SUVs." During the war in Iraq, Hummer drivers were proud of their vehicles. "When I turn on the TV, I see Humvees everywhere, and I'm proud," Sam Bernstein told the New York Times. "American soldiers in Iraq are not driving Audis!"

The environmentalists say that SUV drivers do not care about the environment. Once

again, it is a question of oil. Statistics show that four-wheel-drive SUVs use a gallon of petrol every 17.3 miles and some larger models need a gallon every 12 miles. Hummers use even more petrol. In comparison, the average petrol-fuelled saloon car does 30 miles to the gallon. Each person in the USA consumes about 4.5 times more energy than people in other countries of the world. "You could say that the American way is to do what you want when you want," says Weinstock. "But there's another American way where people work together for the good of everyone and we try to be an example for the rest of the world."

But the protests have not been very successful. Sales of SUVs are still growing faster than any other type of car. One of the reasons is that while the amount of petrol used by SUVs has a big effect on the environment, the cost of this petrol has a very small effect on people's pockets. Gasoline (petrol) in America costs just \$1.67 a gallon (3.8 litres), so people would save only \$135 a year by buying a car that used less petrol than the SUV.

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3 Comprehension Check

Match the beginnings with the endings:

1. SUVs have names like Excursions and Pathfinders ...
 2. Environmentalists dislike SUVs ...
 3. SUV drivers are proud of their vehicles ...
 4. SUVs use ...
 5. Americans use ...
 6. The communications director of SUVOA thinks that ...
 7. Sales of SUVs are ...
 8. The protests have not been very successful ...
-
- a. ... more than 40% more fuel than normal cars.
 - b. ... growing faster than any other type of car.
 - c. ... because their names give us a picture of nature and outdoor life.
 - d. ... because the US army used Hummers in Iraq.
 - e. ... because petrol is so cheap in the USA.
 - f. ... environmentalists should stop complaining.
 - g. ... 4.5 times more energy than people in other countries of the world.
 - h. ... because they use a lot of petrol and damage the environment.

4 Vocabulary | Opposites

Find the words in the text that are the opposites of these words:

1. tiny _____
2. unpopular _____
3. love _____
4. dishonest _____
5. right _____
6. unsuccessful _____
7. real _____
8. poor _____

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5 Vocabulary | Prepositions

Complete the sentences using a preposition:

1. The whole street was full _____ SUVs.
2. Protesters set SUVs _____ fire.
3. Be honest _____ yourself.
4. During the Iraq war, many drivers were proud _____ their vehicles.
5. Protesters say SUV drivers do not care _____ the environment.
6. The amount of petrol used has a big effect _____ the environment.
7. SUVs make a lot of money _____ the car industry.
8. 30% _____ the cars sold in the US are SUVs.

6 Puzzle

Rearrange the letters to make words from the text:

1. leivche
2. rolpupa
3. sonpicramo
4. nevnrenimot
5. gransmute

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Key

1 Key Vocabulary

1. vehicle
2. gallon
3. military
4. truck
5. proud
6. fake
7. environmentalist
8. gasoline

2 Find the Information

1. Sports utility vehicles
2. He's an environmentalist
3. A military SUV
4. The Communications Director of SUVOA
5. 17.3 miles to the gallon
6. \$1.67 a gallon

3 Comprehension Check

1. c
2. h
3. d
4. a
5. g
6. f
7. b
8. e

4 Opposites

1. huge
2. popular
3. hate
4. honest
5. wrong
6. successful
7. fake
8. rich

5 Prepositions

1. of
2. on
3. with
4. of
5. about
6. on
7. for
8. of

6 Puzzle

1. vehicle
2. popular
3. comparison
4. environment
5. arguments