Unit One addressed the big picture of labor market realities—which industries are growing, which are shrinking, and technology’s impact on the market. They learned about the different types of employers in Transportation and Warehousing and read about current issues that affect workers.

Unit Two addressed the inner workings of the job-seeker. What are her interests and passions? What kind of work environment will she enjoy? What careers should she consider based on what she knows about herself, and what factors might influence someone making a career change? Students also learned to navigate career database websites, assess their own interests and conduct a group research project about careers in the Transportation and Warehousing sector.

In Unit Three, students considered what it takes to prepare for a career in Transportation and Warehousing. They learned about common career pathways and considered how career movement happens in this sector. Students learned about different training and educational opportunities available for someone interested in this field.

In Unit Four, students heard from Transportation and Warehousing workers themselves, through firsthand accounts and interviews in text and video, and discussed what they learned. They also conducted further research on Transportation and Warehousing careers of interest.

In Unit Five, students learned how to leverage their existing and potential professional networks for job seeking, explore the job search process, including analyzing help wanted ads, learn about workplace expectations, and engage with a panel of Transportation and Warehousing professionals. They learned how to become entrepreneurs by reading about Transportation and Warehousing workers who have started their own businesses. They also practiced using online resources available to New Yorkers looking to become self-employed.
In **Unit 6**, students learn about their rights and options as transit consumers. They read about the history and present day reality for riders of trains, buses, paratransit for riders with mobility impairments, ferries, as well as motorists, cyclists and pedestrians. They learn about the rights of disabled riders through the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act), and the impact of technology on riders, with the rise of ride-hail apps such as Curb, Uber and Lyft.

### 1. **SENTENCE COMBINING: ELECTRIC BUSES HIT THE ROAD**

Students read about New York City’s electric buses. They discuss the article as a class and practice combining sentences from the article using FANBOYS (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) and dependent clauses.

### 2. **TRANSIT ACCESSIBILITY JIGSAW READING**

Students watch and summarize a video about accessibility on the New York City subways, then do a jigsaw reading activity evaluating the accessibility of four different modes of transportation—subways, buses, paratransit and street intersections.

### 3. **THE HISTORY OF TRANSIT ACCESSIBILITY**

Students read and annotate an article on the history of the Americans with Disabilities Act. They practice combining sentences from the article using FANBOYS (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) and dependent clauses.

### 4. **UNIVERSAL DESIGN**

Students learn about the principles of Universal Design—designing spaces and experiences for people of all abilities—by reading a short text and interpreting a chart. In groups, they brainstorm a scenario in which Universal Design can be used to increase accessibility. Then, individually, they write about their own ideas for a universal design.
5. **THE RISE OF RIDE-HAIL TRANSPORTATION**

Students read about the impact of ride-hail services on traffic congestion, public transportation, workers in the sector and consumers. They examine whether those effects are positive or negative and cite evidence to support their position.

6. **THE GIG ECONOMY**

Students read and discuss an article about the gig economy, people who are paid by the task and work as independent contractors, rather than employees of a company. Some people say this kind of work provides income to people who are otherwise unemployed. Critics say these workers are not compensated fairly. After reading, students activate critical thinking skills by applying the information to sample scenarios.
Sentence Combining: Electric Buses Hit the Road

Students read about and annotate an article about New York City’s electric buses. They discuss the article as a class and practice combining sentences from the article using FANBOYS and dependent clauses.

PREP

- Read and be prepared to discuss the article, Electric Buses Pick Up Speed.
- Be prepared to discuss the following vocabulary terms:
  - **Fossil fuels**, like gasoline and diesel, were formed over millions of years from fossils or the remains of animals and plants.
  - **Exhaust fumes** are the gases, such as carbon monoxide, that are created by the burning of fossil fuels, such as diesel, and released into the air.
  - **Zero-emission** vehicles do not use fossil fuels and do not release exhaust fumes into the air.
  - **Life cycle costs** are the total amount of money it costs to buy, fuel and maintain a vehicle over the course of its working life.
- Students should be already familiar with or the teacher should be prepared to introduce sentence combining techniques including using coordinating conjunctions (FANBOYS) and dependent clauses. (NOTE: Coordinating conjunctions are often called FANBOYS. This is an acronym that stands for “for,” “and,” “nor,” “but,” “or,” “yet,” and “so.”)

MATERIALS

- New York City Bus/How Fossil Fuels are Formed reading
- Electric Buses Pick Up Speed article
- Sentence Combining handout

EXPLAIN

1. Buses are a common part of our lives. You may have even taken one to get to this class. Think of the last time you were on a bus. Where were you going?
   - To school, to work, to take my child to school, to visit a friend or family member, to the doctor, etc.

2. Many of us take buses, but what do we know about how they work and what makes them run? Let’s combine our knowledge. Distribute New York City Bus/How Fossil Fuels are Formed reading.
How many parts of the bus can you name in the first image? How many more can you think of? If not already named, mention various parts of a bus, such as the engine, steering wheel, windshield, etc.

How do buses run? What kind of fuel do they use?
Buses usually run on diesel fuel. Diesel fuel, like gasoline, is a fossil fuel.
Review the infographic at the bottom of the New York City Bus/How Fossil Fuels are Formed reading.

According to this infographic, how are fossil fuels formed?

Fossil fuels were formed, over millions of years, from fossils, the hardened remains of animals or plants. As the heat and pressure of the earth acted on the fossils, they transformed into oil and gas, known as fossil fuels.

The use of fossil fuels, such as gasoline used in cars, has been associated with environmental and health problems. What are some of the problems? Student answers will vary, but should include things like:

Climate change, global warming, release of pollutants into the air, increased health problems, respiratory problems, etc.

One proposed solution has been to develop electric vehicles, such as cars and buses, which don’t need fossil fuels. When you think about electric vehicles, what words come to mind? Student answers will vary and may include:

Expensive, clean, complicated, future, quiet.

We’re going to read about the increased use of electric buses in public transportation. Distribute the Electric Buses Pick Up Speed article. Ask students to read and annotate the article. First, students should mark anything they think is interesting, important, confusing, or surprising. They should circle unfamiliar words and write any questions they have in the margins.

Divide students into groups of three. Ask students to discuss what they just read together and answer the following questions:

• What did you notice in the article? (write down as many things as you can.)

• What did you read that interests you?

• What do you want to know more about? Was anything confusing? What do you have questions about? (be specific)

Facilitate a discussion in which students share what they talked about in groups and also ultimately discuss:
DISCUSSION GUIDELINES

Content of the article

• What are some of the things that cities consider when deciding to purchase electric or diesel buses? Why might a city decide to buy electric buses? Why might a city decide to keep buying diesel ones?

• Electric buses cost more money to buy than buses that run on gasoline. Why do researchers say they are cheaper over the life-cycle of the bus?

• How does the change to electric buses affect people who do not ride buses but who live on bus routes or near bus depots?

Vocabulary

• Paragraph 3 talks about the exhaust fumes from diesel buses. What are exhaust fumes?

• Building on this, the article says that electric buses are zero-emission vehicles. What does this mean?

• The article talks about the life-cycle costs in paragraph 6. What does the phrase, “life-cycle cost” mean?

Purpose

• What is the purpose of the article? Do you think the article achieves its purpose successfully? Why or why not?

• The article quotes from university research groups at Carnegie Mellon University and Columbia University, advocacy groups such as the New York City Environmental Justice Alliance and a representative of Proterra, a company that manufactures electric buses. Why do you think the article includes all three groups?

Structure and organization of the article

• The article uses New York City as an example of cities that are switching to electric buses. What is the benefit of using a specific example instead of providing general information?

• The article uses a lot of words that are specific to air pollution and vehicles. What are some techniques the article uses to help readers understand these terms?
Personal experience

- Do you think it would affect you if your community switched to electric buses? Why or why not? How would it affect you?
- What was your opinion of electric buses before this article? Has it changed? Why or why not? How has it changed?

NOTE: Students should back up their thinking with evidence from the article. Ask follow-up questions that help students explain their thinking, delve more deeply into the questions, and cite evidence to support their responses. Some sample follow-up questions might include:

- How do you know that?
- Where in the article do you see that?
- Why do you think that?
- What else do you notice?
- Can you say more about that?
- What do you think that means?

EXPLAIN

8 Now we’re going to use the new information we learned about electric buses to practice sentence combining, a skill that is important on the TASC exam.

9 Distribute the *Sentence Combining* handout. Introduce or review sentence combining techniques if necessary.

10 Students can work independently or in pairs to complete the handout. When students are finished, review it as a class.
How Fossil Fuels are Formed

Image from http://www.ei.lehigh.edu/learners/energy/fossils5.html
Electric Buses Pick Up Speed

New York City's bus system is the largest bus system in the country, with 5,700 buses that travel over 330 routes, serving over two million passengers daily. The average NYC bus travels only 7.4 miles per hour, one of the slowest bus speeds in the US. It operates in a uniquely hostile environment of stop-and-go traffic.

New York City begins electric bus pilot program

If New York City can change from diesel fuel powered buses to all-electric ones, any place can. In 2018, the city began a three-year pilot with 10 buses from bus makers Proterra and New Flyer. If the buses prove themselves in the initial phase, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority plans to purchase 60 more in 2019.

These new buses are zero-emission vehicles—meaning they don’t release exhaust fumes—harmful pollutants like carbon monoxide, lead or soot—into the air. They are powered by an electric battery that gets recharged at midday and overnight. In addition to the bus depot charging stations, the city is testing three “en-route” high power charging stations, which allow the buses to quickly rejuice.
New York City is joining an expanding fleet of electric buses taking to urban streets across the United States. New York City says its 5,700 buses will be all-electric by 2040. Los Angeles, the second-largest bus fleet, will convert all 2,300 buses to electric by 2030. San Francisco, home to 1,100 municipal buses, just announced it will be all-electric by 2035.

**Cost considerations**
Cost is the biggest obstacle to converting to electric buses. A typical diesel bus costs about $450,000. Electric models can cost nearly twice as much. The difference can be substantial for cash-strapped transit agencies. So why are so many cities switching to electric buses?

Electric buses don’t burn fossil fuels such as diesel or gasoline. They cost less to operate. They help clean the air. The city of Chicago found that each electric bus saves $25,000 in annual fuel costs. Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) researchers calculated the lifecycle-cost, how much it costs to buy, fuel and maintain a bus throughout its 12-year life, for both electric buses and traditional buses that have an internal-combustion engine. They found that electric buses have life-cycle cost advantages over diesel ones. Electric buses convert energy into motion more efficiently and have far fewer moving parts. This makes them cheaper to power and maintain over time. Electric buses have higher initial sticker prices. However, the money saved by cheaper maintenance and energy costs makes them a less expensive purchase over the course of the bus’s life.

**Federal funding spurs the purchase of electric buses**
Federal funding plays a role in enabling cities to switch to electric buses. The CMU researchers found that local transit authorities receive most of their funding for bus purchases from the federal government, lowering the amount each authority must take out of its own budget to buy expensive, but ultimately cost-saving electric buses.

Even without federal funding, fast-falling electric battery prices could make electric buses the cheapest option within a decade. In the period from 2010–2015, Proterra’s sticker price for their electric bus has fallen from $1.2 million to $700,000. The cost has continued to decrease since then. According to Proterra’s chief commercial officer Matt Horton, “There has been a convergence—or coming together—of factors over the last four or five years that has made this a really good time for New York to jump in. The costs of batteries and manufacturing have fallen. The electric batteries themselves have improved. Electric buses can now survive longer operational hours and outperform diesel buses on energy efficiency.”
Health benefits of switching to electric buses
The biggest saving may be in the lowering of health costs associated with respiratory diseases for those living near bus depots or along bus routes. A report released in early 2018 by the New York City Environmental Justice Alliance found 75 percent of bus depots in New York City are located in communities of color. It noted that fossil-fuel-powered buses emit air pollution linked to respiratory distress, asthma and hospitalization for people of all ages. “These communities have been overburdened by noxious emissions for too long,” said Eddie Bautista, executive director of the New York City Environmental Justice Alliance.

A 2016 Columbia University study found that if New York shifted from diesel to electric buses, it could reduce health costs from respiratory and other illnesses by roughly $150,000 per bus. The study also showed that fuel and maintenance costs would drop by $39,000 per year and the city could cut carbon dioxide emissions across the fleet by 575,000 metric tons per year.

VOCABULARY

Pilot, or pilot program: A new project, done with one or a few sample cases, with the idea that if the project is successful, it will be expanded to serve more people.

Fleet: A group of vehicles, usually owned and operated by the same company or agency.

Internal-combustion engine: An engine that generates power by burning gasoline, oil, diesel or other fuel with air inside the engine, commonly used in cars, buses, trucks and other automotive vehicles.

Sticker price: The full price, before any discounts are applied.

Noxious: Polluting
Sentence Combining with the Internet of Things

Work independently or with a partner to combine the following sentences from the article. In each section, you will either use coordinating conjunctions/FANBOYS (“for,” “and,” “nor,” “but,” “or,” “yet,” and “so”) or dependent clauses (“because” or “although”) to combine the sentences.

Sentence Combining with Coordinating Clauses (FANBOYS)
Combine each set of sentences from the article into one sentence using “and”, “but” or “so.” The first set is done for you as an example.

SET 1
They cost less to operate. 
They help clean the air.  
They cost less to operate, and they help clean the air.

SET 2
A typical diesel bus costs about $450,000.  
Electric models can cost nearly twice as much.

SET 3
The difference can be substantial for cash-strapped transit agencies.  
Why are so many cities switching to electric buses?

SET 4
Electric buses don’t burn fossil fuels such as diesel or gasoline. 
They cost less to operate.

SET 5
In the period from 2010–2015, Proterra’s sticker price for their electric bus has fallen from $1.2 million to $700,000.  
The cost has continued to decrease since then.
Sentence Combining Using Dependent Clauses

Now combine the following sentences into one sentence using “although” or “because.” The first set is done for you as an example.

SET 1
The average NYC bus travels only 7.4 miles per hour, one of the slowest bus speeds in the US. It operates in a uniquely hostile environment of stop-and-go traffic.

The average NYC bus travels only 7.4 miles per hour, one of the slowest bus speeds in the US, because it operates in a uniquely hostile environment of stop-and-go traffic.

SET 2
The new buses are known as zero-emission vehicles. They don’t emit exhaust fumes—harmful pollutants like carbon monoxide, lead or soot—into the air.

SET 3
They found that electric buses have life-cycle cost advantages over diesel buses. Electric buses convert energy into motion more efficiently and have far fewer moving parts.

SET 4
This makes them cheaper to power and maintain over time. Electric buses have higher initial sticker prices.
Transit Accessibility Jig Saw Reading

Students watch and summarize a video about accessibility on the New York City subways. They then do a jigsaw reading activity evaluating the accessibility of four different modes of transportation—subways, buses, paratransit and street intersections. In a jigsaw reading, groups read sections of a text, then the groups intermingle to pool their knowledge and collaboratively answer questions about all parts of the text.

NOTE: This activity uses New York City transit systems as a means for helping students practice summarizing, reading and sharing informational text and citing evidence from text. This activity can be adapted to local resources.

PREP

- Write the URL of the video on the board.
- Be prepared to define the following words:
  - **Accessibility**: Designing products, services or environments so that people with disabilities are able to use and benefit from them.
  - **Civil Rights**: The rights of individuals to political, social and economic freedom and equality.
  - **Americans with Disability Act (ADA)**: Law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public.
  - **Class Action Lawsuit**: A court case initiated by a group of people with the same or similar injuries or problem caused by the same product or action.
  - **Paratransit**: Transportation services to bridge gaps in accessibility on public transit, providing door-to-door service for people who are unable to use the buses and subways.
Decide which students will be in which of the four reading groups. Each group reads about accessibility on a different mode of transportation (subways, buses, paratransit and streets), then students from each group come together to pool their knowledge into an understanding of the whole. Like a jig-saw puzzle, the four groups will add their own piece of the puzzle to come to an understanding of the whole. In groups, they answer questions about the entire reading, relying on one another’s understanding.

**MATERIALS**

- This activity requires a computer with projector or student computers with headphones.
- *My Talking Points* handout
- *Accessibility in the Subway System: Video Response Questions* handout
- *Subway Accessibility in New York City* reading
- *Bus Accessibility in New York City* reading
- *What is Paratransit?* reading
- *Accessibility in the Streets* reading
- *Jig Saw Reading Questions: Accessibility in New York City Transit* handout

**EXPLAIN**

1. **Ask:** How did you get to class today? Write the answers on the board. Sample answers could include:
   - Walked, took the bus, took the subway, drove.

2. Besides getting to school, what are some other things in your life that require transportation? Sample answers could include:
   - Work, going to the doctor’s office, taking my children to school, going to the movies, visiting family and friends.

3. Write on the board:

   A disability is a physical or mental impairment that makes it difficult to accomplish daily tasks in the ways that fully able bodied people can. A disability can exist from birth or it can be the result of an illness or an accident. Many people with disabilities can accomplish all the tasks able bodied people can with adaptations such as wheelchairs, walking sticks, audio assisted street lights, medication or service dogs, for example.
4 Read the definition of “disability” on the board. People can have a variety of disabilities and they can affect people’s lives in different ways. It can affect how people do everyday things like travel to work or get to their child’s school.

Many basic transportation needs are difficult for people with disabilities. Let’s look at the subways (or buses) as an example. **What are some barriers to using public transportation that disabled people might face? What barriers exist for people with strollers, suitcases or transporting other large items? What barriers exist for people whose first language is not English?** List the answers on the board. Sample answers could include:

- Subway stairs/lack of elevators, lack of ramps, difficulty getting on and off trains, difficulty understanding announcements.

5 We’re going to watch a video where disabled riders discuss the daily problems they face using the subways. Disability rights advocates talk about increasing “accessibility.” **What do you think accessibility means in this context?**

- People can use transportation/the subways regardless of disabilities
- Being disabled does not make the subways difficult or impossible to use.

6 We’re going to watch the video twice. The first time you watch the video, listen for the main narrators, or people telling their stories.

- **Who are the two main narrators?**
- **What problems do they face?**

Write these questions on the board. Then, you are going to read questions about the video and watch it a second time with answering the questions in mind. You’ll work with a partner to write responses to the questions.

7 Play the video for the first time at [https://www.amny.com/news/subway-accessibility-daily-nyc-1.20113036](https://www.amny.com/news/subway-accessibility-daily-nyc-1.20113036). Have students discuss the questions on the board first in pairs, then as a whole class.

8 Distribute the *Accessibility in the Subway System: Video Response Questions* handout. Ask students to read the questions, but not write anything yet. Clarify any questions students have about the handout.

9 The video refers to the Americans with Disabilities Act, also called the ADA. **What do you think this law says?**

- The ADA is a law prohibits (or does not allow) discrimination against people with disabilities, including on public transportation like the subways.
Why do the people interviewed in the video feel that the subway system is violating the ADA?

- Due to the lack of elevators, audio information and other accommodations, they do not have equal access to subway use.

You're going to watch the same video again, listening now with the questions from the Accessibility in the Subway System: Video Response Questions handout in mind.

Play the video for a second time and then have the students work in pairs to complete the worksheet.

Discuss the answers as a class. Students should back up their thinking with evidence from the video. Ask follow-up questions that help students explain their thinking, delve more deeply into the questions, and cite evidence to support their responses. Some sample follow-up questions might include:

- How do you know that?
- Which part of the video says that?
- Why do you think that?
- What else do you notice?
- Can you say more about that?
- What do you think that means?

What are some things the people in the video can do if they feel that their civil rights have been violated?

- Contact the MTA
- Contact elected representatives
- Work with disability rights groups
- Sue the MTA for violating the ADA

When a group of people band together to file a lawsuit, this is called a class action lawsuit. This means the lawsuit is filed on behalf of all people in that situation. For example, has anyone seen ads on television for lawyers who sue on behalf of a group of people? What were the ads about?

- People whose children were harmed during birth, people with cancer, etc.

- NOTE: People suing for personal issues such as divorce or car accidents are examples of individual, not class action lawsuits.
Point to the modes of transportation listed on the board brainstormed from earlier in the lesson. We’re going to look at some of these modes of transportation in greater detail to consider the ways they have accommodated travelers with disabilities and the challenges that remain. The modes of transportation in the readings are:

- subways
- buses
- paratransit
- sidewalks and street intersections.

Paratransit refers to transportation services that fill gaps in accessibility on public transit, providing door-to-door service for people who are unable to use the buses and subways. Access-A-Ride is an example of paratransit in New York City.

Divide the class into four groups.

Say: Each group will read about the accessibility of subways, buses, paratransit or pedestrian traffic. After you read and discuss the text with your group, new groups will be formed that include at least one person who read each of the four articles, and you will discuss all the articles together in your new group.

Distribute the four readings—*Subway Accessibility in New York City, Bus Accessibility in New York City, What is Paratransit?* and *Accessibility in the Streets*—one to each group so that members in each group have the same reading.

Distribute the *My Talking Points* worksheet. On this handout, write the main ideas you will share with others who have not read this text. Talking points are usually written as key words, short phrases or a sentence that helps you remember an idea you want to talk about.

Give students time to read and take notes on the *My Talking Points* handout. Circulate and help as needed.

Write (or project on overhead) the following on the board:
• Describe the ways in which your mode of transportation (subways, buses, paratransit or street intersections) IS accessible.
• Describe the changes needed to make your mode of transportation MORE accessible.
• What, if any, plans are in place to make your mode of transportation more accessible?
• What actions have disabled travelers and disability advocates taken to demand more accessible transportation?
• What has been the result of their advocacy?

23 Review the questions on the board with the class. Explain that these questions evaluate the overall state (or level) of accessibility for a given mode of transportation. All of the articles address this issue.

24 Distribute Accessibility Evaluation handout. Work together as a group to fill out the table, citing evidence from the article wherever possible. Each group member should have a completed chart that they will use once new groups are formed.

25 You will soon be in a new group with people who did not read the article you read. As a group, practice how you will explain the main points of the article, citing evidence from the article.

26 Divide the class into new groups that include at least one member from each original group.

27 Distribute Jig Saw Reading Questions: Accessibility in New York City Transit and ask students to complete it collaboratively, with each group member contributing knowledge from the article s/he read.

28 Discuss the answers with the entire class. Discuss the evidence cited. Sample questions can include:

• Why did you choose this piece of evidence?
• Why do you think it is relevant to your answer?
Accessibility in the Subway System: Video Response Questions

1. Who is the first narrator?

2. What are two problems she faces in using the subways?

3. Who is Victor Andrews?

4. What are two problems he faces in using the subways?

5. What does Milagros Franco mean when she says at the beginning of the video, “I want the subways to work for me like they do for everyone else?”
6 Maia Goodell, a disability rights attorney (lawyer), refers to the difficulties that disabled people face using the subway as “a civil rights issue.” What does “civil rights” mean in this context?

7 In the video, two disabled subway riders, Milagros Franco and Victor Andrews, describe problems faced by disabled riders throughout the subway. Why do you think the video interviews two riders instead of presenting information on the problems faced by disabled riders without having personal interviews? What are the benefits of having two riders tell their personal stories?

8 Based on your own observations using the New York City subway system and the observations of Milagros Franco and Victor Andrews how would you respond to MTA spokesperson, Shams Tarek’s statement that, “New York City has never been more committed to an accessible transit system than it is right now?” What suggestions do you have?
Subway Accessibility in New York City

New York City's vast subway system stretches into more than 100 neighborhoods, but disabled riders in about half of them are left stranded, according to a 2018 city comptroller's report. The report found that 62 of the 122 neighborhoods with subway stops lack a single station accessible to people with disabilities, making it tougher for hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers to get around.

Twenty-eight years after the Americans with Disabilities Act, only about 24 percent of the MTA's 472 subway stations are wheelchair accessible—and the MTA struggles to keep even those station elevators in working order. Other century-old systems, albeit with fewer total stations, fare better. About 71 percent of Boston's subway stations and 69 percent of Chicago's rail stations have been made accessible.

“For every inaccessible station, there is a New Yorker who can't get to work, pick up their children from daycare, or visit their doctor,” Comptroller Scott Stringer said in a statement. “It's simple—a person's livelihood should not be dictated by their mobility status, and we must take action immediately to address this crisis.”

The accessibility deserts are most concentrated in the outer boroughs, the comptroller's report says. There's not a single accessible station in 68 percent of neighborhoods served by the subway in Brooklyn, 59 percent in the Bronx and 43 percent in Queens, while the figure for Manhattan is just 26 percent, according to the report.
First Senior Advisor for Subway Accessibility
Since joining the MTA in January, MTA Transit president, Andy Byford, has said that accessibility is one of his top priorities. Byford released his Fast Forward plan in the spring of 2018 outlining the agency’s still-unfunded blueprint for modernizing service. The plan commits to increasing ADA access at 50 additional stations within 5 years and would ensure that riders are never more than two stops from an accessible station. If funded, Byford said the MTA could reach a state of near full accessibility by 2034.

Byford also hired Alex Elegudin, an accessibility advocate and wheelchair user, as his agency’s first-ever senior adviser for systemwide accessibility. “I think the goal is one station at a time until we get them all done,” Elegudin said, when asked if he believes the MTA can achieve a completely accessible subway system. “For now, we’re going to tackle the stations that are most feasible, the ones that the community believes should go next.”

Planning for a Range of Abilities
“I think most people are already familiar with the elevator issues,” said Jessica Murray, an advocate from the Elevator Action Group of Rise and Resist. “Those issues require money to fix and we don’t know when that money is going to come. In the meantime, there are a lot of other accessibility issues that need to be highlighted...
and that includes other disabilities that we kind of forget about—people with hearing loss, blindness or low vision.”

Elegudin seems to be aware of those challenges. He’s looking into how to reduce subway platform gaps and is interested in redesigning subway maps for the disabled community, including braille maps, large-print maps and maps that are designed to highlight accessible stations. “For the hearing-impaired, it’s making sure that signage is right and that we have screens that can allow people to know what’s going on. For the visually impaired, it’s very important to have audible announcements,” Elegudin explained.

Part of Elegudin’s strategy is to identify relatively inexpensive and quick improvements that could be done while the agency tackles the larger, more complicated task of elevator installations. One project is the addition of signage to elevators at platforms in the busiest stations that direct wheelchair users on how to get above ground in the case of an outage—a daunting and sometimes scary task without any information, Elegudin acknowledged.

**Proposed Fast Forward plan and funding issues**

Questions remain over how to fund Byford’s sweeping multibillion-dollar Fast Forward plan. Congestion pricing, a proposal to toll cars entering central and lower Manhattan to fund the MTA, has been embraced by Gov. Andrew Cuomo, who controls the MTA, but not all state legislators are in favor of it.

Stringer’s report recommends the state legislature introduce and set a referendum for an $8 billion “Transit Bond Act” that would fund improvements including a “significant investment” in accessibility upgrades. Voters approved a similar measure in 2005 that generated $3.5 billion.

“With these dollars in place, the MTA can dramatically enhance the reach of the subway system and improve the lives of hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers,” the report reads. •

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**VOCABULARY**

**Vast:** Large and complex

**Legislature:** Government officials who propose and vote on new laws; New York State assemblypersons.
Bus Accessibility in New York City

New York City’s first wheelchair accessible buses hit the streets in the fall of 1981. The Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) piloted the new buses on just three routes, according to news reports at the time. The rollout was less than smooth: the first day saw a showdown between the transit authority and the drivers’ union over the change, and one disability rights activist sat on the steps of a bus for seven hours until she was allowed to board in her wheelchair.

Today, every city bus is wheelchair accessible, with either a lift or, on newer models, an easier-to-use ramp. For many disabled and mobility-impaired New Yorkers, buses are an important lifeline for getting around. Much of the MTA’s subway system is inaccessible to those who can’t use stairs, with just about 23 percent of its stations equipped with elevators.

The city’s other major accessible public transit option, Access-a-Ride, is less flexible since rides have to be booked in advance, advocates say.

In contrast, NYC Transit touts itself as the “first public agency in the world to have a bus fleet 100 percent accessible to customers who use wheelchairs.” A 2015 MTA study found that 11.2 percent of passengers who ride the city’s buses on an average weekday are senior citizens or disabled.

How cars can help or hurt bus accessibility

In spite of this, advocates for the disabled say wheelchair users and others with impairments still face challenges when it comes to taking the bus. One problem is not with the buses themselves, but the cars they share the road with—a need for greater enforcement of traffic rules prohibiting cars from blocking bus stops.

Image: Photo from http://web.mta.info/accessibility/images/access80.jpg
When cars stand in bus stops or double park and block bus lanes, bus drivers are unable to pull up to the curb so that disabled riders can board and exit safely.

Joseph Rappaport, executive director at Brooklyn Center for Independence of the Disabled, calls for the city to crack down on double-parked cars and other obstacles in bus lanes. “This is a huge problem. If the bus can’t pull up close enough to the curb and they’re using the ramp, it just doesn’t work. The person has to go onto the street to get to the ramp. Some people can go over a curb, and some people can’t.”

**Increased bus driver training needed, according to advocates**

Another challenge, according to disability advocates is the need for frequent and repeated staff training to ensure that bus drivers know how to operate their wheelchair equipment. The first time Jean Ryan tried to board a city bus in her wheelchair more than a decade ago, a bystander had to show the driver how to operate the vehicle’s wheelchair lift. It’s a lesson Ryan says she has had to repeat herself a number of times in the years since: showing a bus driver how to use the equipment needed to get her on and off the bus. Sometimes, if her 10-year-old grandson is in tow, he’ll be the one to offer the tutorial.

“If the drivers don’t know all the steps, then we can’t get a ride—unless we can tell them what they have to do,” says Ryan, a Bay Ridge resident and vice president of public affairs for the advocacy group Disabled in Action of Metropolitan New York. She relies heavily on the MTA’s express buses, since her local subway station does not have an elevator.

Ryan points out that making the system more efficient for disabled riders will make the bus system faster for everyone. “All of the other passengers on the bus, as well as the passengers who are waiting at the different stops are all impacted when it takes the bus driver 15 minutes to get me on. Until they solve this problem, the buses will continue to be slow.”

**The MTA’s proposed Fast Forward plan**

Better and more frequent training for bus operators is just one way the MTA can make its bus system more accessible for disabled users, advocates and activists say. Christina Curry, director of the Harlem Independent Living Center, says bus drivers should be more consistent in using recordings or announcements to let riders know what direction the bus is heading and to notify them of current and upcoming bus stops—an aid to passengers with impaired vision or cognitive delays. Some newer bus models also have captioning capability to let deaf and hearing-impaired riders know when the driver is making an announcement, a feature Curry says she’s seen just once and would like to see more.

Rappaport adds that the MTA should ensure that every bus stop has benches for passengers who are unable to stand for longer periods.

The MTA’s proposed Fast Forward plan seeks to address some of these issues including working with law enforcement and legislators to enforce dedicated bus lanes and installing bus shelters that are fully accessible for customers with disabilities and include 150 audio-capable signs. But as disability advocate, Jessica Murray, noted of the Fast Forward plan, “It ultimately comes down to funding. No matter the plan, the governor, the State and the MTA board have to provide the money to make it happen.”
What is Paratransit?


For many New Yorkers, public transit means the buses or subways. But for about 150,000 New York City residents with disabilities, public transit means paratransit. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires paratransit service to bridge gaps in accessibility on public transit, providing door-to-door service for people who are unable to use the buses and subways. The MTA spends more than $400 million a year on the Access-A-Ride program, which completes 20,000 trips each weekday and over 6 million trips per year.

To use the service, people must apply to the Access-A-Ride program. They may be required to answer questions about their daily travel activities and their ability to walk, climb stairs or use a lift to board a bus. The cost to the rider is the same as a one-way NYC bus or subway fare and the rider must have exact change.

City Controller’s office finds Access-A-Ride is missing pickups, stranding customers

Access-A-Ride has faced repeated, serious criticism from users and disability advocates. A 2015 City Controller’s audit reported that in a one-year period, 31,492 riders were stranded without rides and less than 50 percent of trips were on time. In many of the 31,492 cases where drivers did not show up, Access-A-Ride providers have reported driver no-shows as customer no-shows—a serious mistake, given

Access-A-Ride users have complained about extensive wait and ride times, but MTA has pledged major upgrades to help.

Photo Credit: Charles Eckert
https://www.amny.com/transport/mta-proposes-access-a-ride-improvements-amid-growing-complaints-1.13754246
that a customer who accumulates too many no-shows can be suspended from using the service altogether.

Michelle Caiola, Managing Attorney at Disability Rights Advocates’ New York office, said that for years, Access-A-Ride’s service has been one of the top complaints she hears from constituents. “This is a service that many people rely on for independence,” Caiola said. “Access-A-Ride is absolutely crucial for them to be able to hold down jobs or get to medical appointments or any sort of meeting—attending school events for their child, and so on. Too often, people are left stranded.”

When Access-A-Ride doesn’t show up, there often isn’t another option for someone with a disability: less than a quarter of the city’s subway stations and only a fraction of the city’s taxis are accessible. And the city’s buses, which are all wheelchair-accessible, aren’t always the best option.

“You have to think about different elements,” said Shakeya Britton, who lives in Clinton Hill and relies on Access-A-Ride to get to Manhattan for school and to other parts of Brooklyn for doctor’s appointments. “When it snows or rains, it’s hard for people who use wheelchairs to access bus stops.” Britton, who is in her mid-twenties and studying for her Master’s in disability studies, said Access-A-Ride is often excessively late, once so much so that she was two hours late to a final exam.

**Disabled riders present the MTA with a list of complaints**

At a MTA meeting in May 2017, 60 disabled Access-A-Ride users presented a list of problems, including indirect routes that loop through multiple boroughs before reaching the destination, excessively long wait times, drivers who strand them in the cold or rain, the three strikes system where you can get booted from the program if a driver says you didn’t show up, even if you were on the curb, and having to front money to taxis and wait months for reimbursement from the MTA if the Access-A-Ride driver is a no-show.

“We have heard what our customers are saying. They need greater flexibility, reliability and transparency,” said Steven LoPiano, vice president of paratransit at the MTA. “The bottom line is that the current system is simply not working for our customers.”

**MTA pilot program increases use of taxis to improve service**

In order to address these issues, the MTA launched a pilot program in November 2017, to provide the first-ever on-demand e-hail trip bookings, GPS-based vehicle tracking, and the development of a unified app for all Access-A-Ride services.

The e-hail app allows paratransit customers to electronically hail yellow or green taxicabs on demand, similar to popular on-demand ride services such as Uber, Lyft, and others. The e-hail app sends trip requests to approximately 13,500 Taxi & Limousine Commission-licensed cabs throughout New York City.

The app lets riders schedule their trips on demand instead of requiring 24 hours advance notice, and takes passengers directly to their locations, reducing wait and travel times. The service costs the MTA $35.91 per trip—still cheaper than Access-A-Ride’s $68.71 per-trip cost. Riders have loved the e-hails so much that the MTA widely underestimated how many trips would be completed during the pilot period. The
authority has had to allocate millions more to the program, which is expected to cost the agency more than $60 million in the first year.

“We want to get to a place where we’re utilizing taxis much more in general—not just as an on-demand flexibility option but making it part of the system. But right now, taxis don’t have the capacity,” says Andy Elegudin, the MTA’s first senior adviser for systemwide accessibility.

**Class action law suit to increase taxi accessibility**

Plans are also underway to increase the availability of wheelchair accessible taxicabs. In 2017, about 13% of the city’s yellow taxi cabs were wheelchair accessible. Disability advocates filed a class action lawsuit on behalf of disabled riders alleging violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The settlement of that lawsuit requires the percent of wheelchair accessible taxis to increase to 50% by 2020.

The New York State Legislature also mandated that 20% of the green cabs operating in the New York City boroughs be wheelchair accessible. Additionally, in December 2017, the Taxi and Limousine Commission approved new rules requiring that, by mid-2023, a quarter of all trips in for-hire vehicles, such as Uber or Lyft, take place in wheelchair-accessible vehicles.

**MTA’s proposed Fast Forward program**

The MTA’s proposed Fast Forward plan aims to revamp the Access-A-Ride system expanding the e-hail pilot, launching an all-in-one MyAAR app which will make it easier for customers to schedule rides, track vehicles, give feedback and update account information as well as proposing to allow Access-A-Ride vehicles to use bus lanes.

**VOCABULARY**

**Pilot program:** A program started on a small scale, with the idea of testing its effectiveness, with an eye toward expanding it to reach more people.
Accessibility in the Streets


Dustin Jones navigates an obstacle course every time he leaves his house. Mr. Jones, who uses a wheelchair, gets stuck at sidewalk corners where the curb cut (ramp) is too broken to roll over or missing altogether. He has to keep going around the block until he finds a usable ramp. The one time he tried to roll off a curb without a ramp, he almost tipped over into the street. He never did that again.

“I’m not able to move around like I want to on the sidewalk like most New Yorkers,” said Mr. Jones, 29, a disability rights advocate who lives in the Bronx. Mr. Jones is part of a long-running battle over New York City’s 162,000 sidewalk corners that has resulted in more than two decades of lawsuits and settlements. At the heart of this battle is the curb cut—the dip in the sidewalk at intersections from the top surface of the sidewalk to the surface of the street. Curb cuts (sometimes called curb ramps) allow for wheelchair access to the street from the sidewalk, and are also used for strollers, scooters, wheeled carts and suitcases.

Class action lawsuit leads to curb cuts across New York City

In 1994, the Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association, now known as the United Spinal Association, filed a class action lawsuit charging that New York City was violating the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) by failing to install curb ramps at unramped corners throughout the City. As a result of the 2002 settlement, approximately 97% of corners throughout New York City were ramped by 2016.

However, in 2014, the Center for Independence of the Disabled, conducted a survey of curb cuts in Manhattan’s downtown area. Out of 1,066 curb cuts surveyed south of 14th Street, 806 were inaccessible. These curbs were characterized by crumbling concrete, potholes, barriers, incorrect slopes, or no...
A 2015 survey of curb cuts along Broadway conducted by the Manhattan Borough President’s Office found that about 90% of 1,357 curbs along Broadway failed to meet ADA standards. Disability Rights Advocates filed a lawsuit against the city over the issue of installing and repairing curb cuts. This second lawsuit was settled in 2016.

**Agreement to repair curb cuts to improve access**

According to the 2016 Settlement, New York City must (1) complete curb ramp installations city-wide; (2) upgrade curb ramps that met ADA standards when they were installed but that are no longer ADA-compliant; (3) improve the City’s procedures for responding to complaints about unramped and/or non-ADA-compliant corners; and (4) improve accessibility training for inspectors and contractors.

The 2016 Settlement also requires the City to **enhance** its 311 system to help 311 operators better direct accessibility complaints to appropriate agencies and to modify the New York City Department of Transportation’s website by including specific links to the agency’s Accessibility Coordinator.

Polly Trottenberg, New York’s transportation commissioner, said that the city was committed to making every curb accessible and has made that a priority in its larger Vision Zero campaign to reduce pedestrian fatalities. But she added that it is a vast undertaking with 162,000 corners and more than 300,000 pedestrian ramps.

Susan Dooha, the executive director of the Center for Independence of the Disabled New York, said that while inaccessible curbs are a headache for many pedestrians—including parents with strollers and tourists with suitcases—they are particularly dangerous for those with disabilities.

**Increasing safety in street crossings for people with visual impairments**

In addition to curb cuts, the advocacy group has called on the City to add markers for the visually impaired. Michael Golfo and Christina Curry are aware of the need for Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APSs) at intersections. APSs convey street crossing information (such as WALK or DON’T WALK information) to people with low vision through noises and/or vibrations from pedestrian signal poles. Michael Golfo commutes into New York City every day for work. “There’s no substitute for walking in New York, but my service dog and I constantly have to worry about being hit by cars trying to cross streets that do not have APS’s. New York needs to do better.”

Christina Curry, Executive Director of the Harlem Independent Living Center, is deaf and visually impaired, and said that “because the City won’t provide APS’s, I have to strategize around crossing the street. I wait for other pedestrians to show up so I can cross in packs of people. If there’s a subway station, I walk downstairs and underground through it to
avoid the street traffic. I get out of buses a stop early or a stop late and walk farther to avoid intersections I can't use. I pay for taxis and car services even though it costs more money than walking. The City has been so careful to plan for sighted people to be safe crossing the streets, but they have ignored people like me.”

**Class action lawsuit filed to increase the number of accessible pedestrian signals at intersections**

Golfo and Curran are both part of a class action lawsuit filed by Disability Rights Advocates on behalf of the American Council of the Blind of New York against the New York City Department of Transportation. According to the suit, New York City violates federal law by failing to systematically implement accessible pedestrian signals that would make its pedestrian routes equally usable, and safer, for people who are blind, deaf-blind, and low-vision.

New York City has 13,000 intersections with pedestrian signals which notify people who can see when it is safe to walk, but only 317 intersections—2.4%—have APS's usable by the City's 200,000 residents with vision disabilities. New York City has replaced all of its pedestrian signals at least once since 2000, including installing countdown clocks in at least 7,500 intersections since 2006, yet is installing APS's in only 75 intersections per year.

The **plaintiffs** do not seek **money damages**. Their goal is to ensure that, with a comprehensive system of APS's, the city's sidewalks will be safer for pedestrians who are blind, deaf-blind, and low-vision.

The lawsuit comes months after the city's “Vision Zero” traffic safety program announced its fourth consecutive year of declining traffic-related deaths. The New York City Department of Transit has worked with the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities and other groups to identify potentially dangerous intersections and to learn about issues affecting those with visual disabilities. Its partnership with the University Transportation Research Center is aimed at developing new accessible pedestrian signal technologies, including textile maps and smartphone apps. Though many disability rights activists believe Vision Zero is a positive development, they insist that the pace must increase.

**VOCABULARY**

- **Curb cut**: Small ramp connecting the sidewalk curb and the street
- **Enhance**: Improve
- **Visually impaired**: Significant difficulty seeing
- **Plaintiffs**: People who initiate a court case
- **Money damages**: A fee paid to plaintiffs for suffering due to illegal wrongdoing
### Accessibility Evaluation

How accessible is the mode of transportation that you read about? Fill out the table for your assigned mode of transportation (subways, buses, paratransit or street intersections). Give evidence to support your assessment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Describe the ways in which your mode of transportation IS accessible.</th>
<th>Cite evidence from the text to support your claim.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Describe the changes your mode of transportation needs to become MORE accessible.</th>
<th>Cite evidence from the text to support your claim.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Evidence from the text to support your claim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What, if any, plans are in place to make your mode of transportation more accessible?</td>
<td>Cite evidence from the text to support your claim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What actions have disabled travelers and disability advocates taken to demand more accessible transportation?</td>
<td>Cite evidence from the text to support your claim.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Jig Saw Reading Questions:
Accessibility in New York City Transit

Answer the following questions as a group, drawing on the knowledge of all four articles. Give specific examples from the reading to support your answer.

1. Disabled riders have filed class actions suits for various transportation problems. What have been the outcome of these lawsuits? What roles have they played in increasing accessibility?
   **Answer:**
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   Evidence #1: ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   Evidence #2: ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   Evidence #3: ____________________________________________________________

2. What is the Fast Forward plan and how does the Fast Forward Plan affect subways, buses and paratransit?
   **Answer:**
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   Evidence #1: ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
Evidence #2: ____________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

Evidence #3: ____________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

What are two concerns that disabled riders and disability advocates have about the Fast Forward Plan?

Concern: ____________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

Evidence: ____________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

Concern: ____________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

Evidence: ____________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________
The History of Transit Accessibility

Students read and annotate an article on the history of the Americans with Disabilities Act. They discuss the article, then practice combining sentences from the article using FANBOYS (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) and dependent clauses.

PREP

• Write the following on the board:

  The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public.

MATERIALS

• Two Milestones in the Disabled Rights Movement reading
• Sentence Combining handout

EXPLAIN

1. Ask for a volunteer to read the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) definition from the board.

   Ask: What do you know about the ADA? Based on this definition, what do you think that the ADA does?

   - Makes it illegal to fire someone because of their disability.
   - Requires that schools serve all students, including those with special services and accommodations.
   - Requires that trains and buses accommodate people with disabilities.

2. When people talk about the ADA, they commonly talk about making places, tools or services more accessible, or more easily used by people with disabilities. What are some examples of places and things that are accessible to people with disabilities? Write sample answers on the board. Some sample answers may include:
Subway elevators, closed captioning on television, bus ramps, curb cuts, doorways wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs, braille on ATMs (automatic teller machines)

3 We’re going to read about two major milestones that increased accessibility for people with disabilities. Distribute Two Milestones in the Disabled Rights Movement reading.

4 Before we read the article, we’re going to practice two skills that are used on the TASC test: skimming and scanning. You skim material by reading it quickly to get the general idea of what it is about. You scan material by reading it quickly, looking for key words or ideas.

First let’s look at the title: Two Milestones in the Disabled Rights Movement. Based on the title, what would you expect the article to be about?

Two important events in the struggle for equal rights for people with disabilities.

5 Now let’s look at the body of the story. How are important points highlighted?

Sections are highlighted with headings that are in bold and larger than the rest of the story.

6 The words in bold and larger typeface are called “subheadings” or “section headings.” What do you think is the purpose of subheadings?

Gives the reader information about what they will be reading in the next section.

Makes the story easier to read by breaking the writing into smaller sections.

Makes it easier to find information when scanning or re-reading.

Draws attention to the different sections.

7 Based on the subheadings, what do you think the two important milestones will be about?

The 1977 protests by people with disabilities

The 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act

The passage of Section 504

8 Ask students to read and annotate the article. First, students should mark anything they think is interesting, important, confusing, or surprising. They should circle unfamiliar words and write any questions they have in the margins.

NOTE
For guidance on teaching annotation, see “How to Teach Annotation” in the User’s Guide, found at www.tinyurl.com/cunycareerkits
Divide the class into groups of four. Ask students to discuss what they read and answer the following questions:

- What did you notice in the article? (write down as many things as you can.)
- What did you read that interests you?
- What do you want to know more about? Was anything confusing?
  What do you have questions about? (Be specific.)

Facilitate a discussion in which students share what they talked about in groups and also ultimately discuss:

**DISCUSSION GUIDELINES**

**Content of the article**

Section 504

- Where would you expect to find information on Section 504? What subheading would help you find it?
- What was Section 504?
- Who needed to sign it?
- Why did it need to be signed?

Black Panthers’ Involvement

- The Black Panthers supported San Francisco’s 504 Sit-In protesters. What subhead would help you locate this information?
- What did the Black Panther Party do to help San Francisco’s 504 Sit-In?
- What was the significance of their actions?

**Strategies for Success**

- What subheading would help you locate information on the specific ways in which disability advocates fought for greater accessibility?
- Which strategies did disabled advocates use to ensure that laws protecting the disabled were passed?

**Vocabulary**

The section, “The struggle for equal access to public places, employment and education continues,” outlines the discrimination faced by people with disabilities in education, transportation, employment and access to public places and government offices. In this section, one of the authors of the ADA says that it, “was a response to an appalling problem: widespread, systemic discrimination against people with disabilities.”
• What do you think the word “systemic” means in this context?
  What word is it similar to?

The section, “Using Multiple Strategies to Secure Equal Rights and Access,” notes that during the struggle to pass the ADA, disability advocates “developed the lobbying skills needed to educate and persuade lawmakers about disability rights and formed partnerships that helped them support the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990.”

• What is lobbying?
• What are some examples of lobbying skills?
• Who were disability rights advocates and who were they lobbying?

Purpose
• What do you think is the purpose of the article? Do you think the article achieves its purpose successfully? Why or why not?
• Why does the article link these two events—the protest leading up to the signing in 1977 of Section 504 and the passage and signing of the ADA in 1990? What does this say about the struggle for civil rights?

Structure and organization of the article
• Why did the author begin the piece with an account of the 1977 San Francisco Sit-In? How does this help introduce the topic?

Review the three photographs in the article.
• Using only the photographs, what story do these three pictures tell about the fight for the rights of the disabled?
• Why do you think these photographs were included?

Personal experience
The ADA brought in a wide range of changes in our environment, including curb cuts, elevators in subways, buses that can be boarded by people with physical disabilities. It also led to changes in our educational system, guaranteeing the rights of children with disabilities to attend schools and prohibited discrimination in employment and housing.

• How have these changes affected you? What impact have they had?
• What lessons we can learn from studying the struggle for the passage of the ADA?

NOTE: Students should back up their thinking with evidence from the article. Ask follow-up questions that help students explain their thinking, delve more deeply into the questions, and cite evidence to support their responses. Some sample follow-up questions might include:
• How do you know that?
• Where in the article do you see that?
• Why do you think that?
• What else do you notice?
• Can you say more about that?
• What do you think that means?

**EXPLAIN**

11. Now we’re going to use the new information we learned about the history of the ADA to practice sentence combining, a skill that is important on the TASC exam.

12. Distribute *Sentence Combining* handout. Introduce or review sentence combining techniques if necessary.

13. Students can work independently or in pairs to complete the handout. When students are finished, review it as a class.
Two Milestones in the Disabled Rights Movement


Before 1977, there were many more obstacles than there are now for people with disabilities in the United States. “At that time in history, there was simply no access—no right to an education, no public transit. You couldn’t get into a library or city hall, much less a courtroom,” says Corbett Joan O’Toole. She is a disability rights activist who fought for fairer treatment of people with disabilities. Curbs were often blocked, so wheelchairs could not get into them. Hardly any buildings had ramps or bathroom stalls that fit wheelchairs.

The 1977 disability rights protest that broke records and changed laws

On April 5, 1977, adults, teenagers, and parents of all backgrounds were ready to protest in San Francisco. Most of the people in the crowd had disabilities. They were deaf, blind, using wheelchairs, or living with impaired arms or legs.

Similar groups protested in other cities across the United States that morning. Each group was gathering at a Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) office in their city. HEW was a part of the government that was supposed to protect the safety and well-being of Americans.

Enforcing Section 504

In 1973, a law had been passed called the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. One part of it was Section 504. This section said that no one with a disability could be excluded from

Weary demonstrators during their occupation of the offices of the Health, Education and Welfare Department in San Francisco, California, on April 9, 1977, where they vowed to continue their sit-in until civil rights rules for the disabled were signed. The woman standing at left center is using sign language. Photo: JP/AP
“any program or activity” paid for by the government. It was supposed to give more rights to people with disabilities. This law was not being followed fully however. It needed a signature from HEW leader Joseph Califano in order to take effect. Disability rights activists decided to push Califano to sign.

Protesters Stage Sit-In at Federal Agency's Office
In San Francisco, protesters marched past security guards at the HEW office. More than 100 protesters began what became known as the 504 Sit-In. They stayed and slept there for 26 days, despite the discomfort and physical strain. Some protestors needed space for wheelchairs to turn and move. Deaf protestors needed to receive messages in sign language. Others needed helpers to lift and turn them when sleeping and sitting. These courageous protesters risked their health to achieve their goals, explains Dr. Catherine Kudlick, a professor of history at San Francisco State University.

Group Members Support Each Other
120 protesters moved into the building. They covered a window air-conditioning unit with a plastic sheet. This worked as a refrigerator for the medicines they needed. They used pay phones to communicate with loved ones and news reporters outside. They had meetings each day. This resourcefulness and organization was key to the protest's success, O'Toole said. Protesters played cards to pass the time. They took turns washing each other's hair in bathroom sinks.

Oakland's Black Panther Party Helps
Local groups donated food and beds. Oakland's Black Panther Party was a big help. They cooked and carried hot meals for protesters across the bay to San Francisco every day. The Panthers had fought for civil rights of African-Americans and understood that solidarity between groups helps everyone secure their rights. Their support showed how important the protest was to many different groups.

Protesters Hold Their Ground In San Francisco
Of 120 protesters, 22 were selected to go to Washington, D.C. to meet with Califano. Meanwhile in San Francisco, government agents were guarding the HEW building. They hoped to push out the protesters. They said there was a bomb in the building. There wasn't. The protestors remained focused on occupying the building. Every day they stayed, the news reported more about them. This increased the pressure on Califano to sign the law.

Protestors Push Lawmakers in D.C.
In Washington D.C., the protesters spoke to lawmakers in Congress. The group followed President Jimmy Carter to his church. They also followed Califano. He finally signed Section 504.
on April 28, 1977. Under 504, nondiscrimination became a legal right. For the first time, the exclusion and segregation of people with disabilities was considered illegal discrimination. Within months, changes took place.

**New Law Changes Realities for People with Disabilities**
Cities created curb cuts from street to sidewalk, so wheelchairs could access them. Government buildings installed ramps and wider restroom stalls. As a result of 504, a new era of accessibility began. It led to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990. This law gave even more rights and protections to people with disabilities.

Protests do not always end in victory. However, every person involved in the 504 occupation was united in a common goal. This unity helped guarantee their success. “We took on the federal government and won. After that, nothing felt like an obstacle,” O’Toole said.

**Inequities Persist Despite Section 504**
The signing of Section 504 was an advance in the fight for the rights of people with disabilities. Even after the signing of Section 504, many problems remained. The Office of the General Counsel of the Civil Rights Commission issued a report in 1982. A key finding was that discrimination based on disability was “a serious and pervasive, or widespread, social problem.”

**The Struggle for Equal Access to Public Places, Employment and Education Continues**
Robert L. Burgdorf Jr., one of the authors of the Americans with Disabilities Act notes that, “The ADA was a response to an appalling problem: widespread, systemic discrimination against people with disabilities. Large numbers of children with disabilities were excluded from American public schools. Most public transportation systems made few, if any, accommodations for persons with disabilities, resulting in systems that were almost totally unusable by people with mobility or visual impairments. Government buildings and public parks had generally been designed and built without taking into account the possibility that people with disabilities might want or need to use them. Flat or ramped entrances into stores and businesses were the exception rather than the rule. People who used wheelchairs were forced to make their way on streets, where they faced the peril of being hit by motor vehicles. Curb cuts or ramps on sidewalks were still extremely rare.”

Burgdorf, who had only limited use of his right shoulder and upper arm after contracting polio as a baby, had faced discrimination, himself. “As a result of my disability, I have experienced discrimination, including being thrown off a construction job site by a contractor who said he didn’t “want any cripples on the job.”

**Using Multiple Strategies to Secure Equal Rights and Access**
Throughout the 1980s, disability rights advocates worked to fight against attempts to repeal the 1977 regulations. In addition to protests, they worked with lawyers to oppose court challenges to the new regulations and brought lawsuits of their own to enforce them. During this struggle, they developed the lobbying skills needed to educate and persuade lawmakers about disability rights and formed partnerships that helped them support the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990.
Americans with Disabilities Act Brings Big Changes

Not surprisingly, in the first few years after the law took effect, businesses, schools, and other public entities scrambled to figure out what had to be done to fix existing environments and build new ones. There was a lot of discussion and many lawsuits around building ramps, replacing hi-pile carpeting, adding accessible door handles and flashing alarm lights, changing the way job descriptions were written, installing Braille signage, providing captions on TV shows, and making elevators talk. Working out the meaning of “reasonable accommodation” reshaped urban landscapes and relationships among people.

Some of the areas of American life that changed as a result of the ADA included:

- **Buildings, facilities and thoroughfares:** Flat or ramped entrances into buildings have become the rule rather than the exception. Curb cuts and ramps on sidewalks are now common. Designated disability parking spaces have become a standard feature of parking lots and garages.

- **Mass transportation:** The ADA imposed detailed requirements for operators of bus, rail and other public transportation systems. Transportation accessibility has improved, but still has a long way to go to accommodate blind and mobility impaired riders.

- **Government services and public accommodations:** The ADA has had a profound effect in reducing discrimination in state and local government services.

- **Hiring Practices:** The ADA prevents employers from asking about disabilities during job interviews or requiring physical exams. Job accommodations for workers with disabilities have become more common too.

President George H.W. Bush signs the Americans with Disabilities Act at the White House in Washington, D.C., on July 26, 1990. Photo from public domain.
Sentence Combining

Work independently or with a partner to combine the following sentences from the article. According to each section, you will either use coordinating conjunctions/FANBOYS (“for,” “and,” “nor,” “but,” “or,” “yet,” and “so”) or dependent clauses (“because” or “although”) to combine the sentences.

PART I: Sentence Combining with Coordinating Clauses (FANBOYS)

Combine each set of sentences from the article into one sentence using “and”, “but” or “so.” The first set is done for you as an example.

SET 1

The Black Panthers had fought for civil rights of African-Americans.
Their support showed how important the protest was to many different groups.

The Panthers had fought for civil rights of African-Americans and their support showed how important the protest was to many different groups.

SET 2

It was supposed to give more rights to people with disabilities.
This law was not being followed fully.

SET 3

It needed a signature from HEW leader Joseph Califano.
Disability rights activists decided to push Califano to sign.

SET 4

They hoped to push out the protesters.
They said there was a bomb in the building.
SET 5
In D.C., the protesters spoke to lawmakers in Congress.
The group followed President Jimmy Carter to his church.

SET 6
The signing of Section 504 was an advance in the fight for the rights of people with disabilities.
Even after the signing of Section 504, many problems remained.

SET 7
Flat or ramped entrances into buildings have become the rule rather than the exception.
Curb cuts and ramps on sidewalks are now commonplace.
PART II: Sentence Combining Using Dependent Clauses

Combine the following sentences into one sentence using “although” or “because.” The first set is done for you as an example.

SET 1
They stayed and slept there for about 26 days.
Protesting can be uncomfortable and long.

They stayed and slept there for about 26 days although protesting can be uncomfortable.

SET 2
They said there was a bomb in the building.
There wasn’t.

SET 3
The protestors remained focused on holding the building.
With every day they stayed, the news reported more about them.

SET 4
People who used wheelchairs were forced to make their way on streets, where they faced the peril of being hit by motor vehicles.
Curb cuts or ramps on sidewalks were still extremely rare.

SET 5
Transportation accessibility has improved.
Implementation has been far from perfect.
Universal Design

Students learn about the principles of Universal Design by reading a short text and interpreting a chart. In groups, they brainstorm a scenario in which Universal Design can be used to increase accessibility. Then, individually, they write about their own ideas for a universal design.

PREP

- Write the following on two separate sides of the board:

  | Accessibility | Universal Design |

MATERIALS

- Accessibility Photographs handout
- Universal Design reading
- Universal Design Writing Prompt handout

EXPLAIN

1. When you hear the word “accessibility,” what comes to mind? Write student responses under Accessibility on the board.
   - Making it easier for people with disabilities to get from place to place.
   - The degree to which a person with disabilities can use a space.

2. Can you think of places, or features of places, that are accessible to people with disabilities? One example is elevators at a train station that allow wheelchair users to use the subway. In pairs, brainstorm as many other examples as you can.

   After a few minutes, ask students to share some answers and write them on the board. Possible responses might include:
   - Bus ramps, curb cuts on sidewalks, bathrooms with support bars, automatic doors, etc.

3. Distribute Accessibility Photographs handout to the class. Ask students to review and discuss the photographs in pairs.
   - What are the photographs about?
   - What do these four photographs have in common?
When the group is finished discussing the photographs, ask:

What do these four pictures have in common?

- They are all examples of spaces that are accessible to people with disabilities.

What do the symbols on the bathroom sign represent? Is the bathroom only for people who are disabled?

- The symbols mean that the bathroom can be used by men, women, disabled and non-disabled people of all genders and to change the diaper on a baby.

The first two pictures are of ramps and curb cuts. In addition to people in wheelchairs, who else might find a ramp easier to use?

- People with strollers, wheeled walkers, wheeled suitcases or carts, people with temporary injuries such as broken legs or sprained ankles.

In each picture, the structure shown—such as the ramp or bathroom—can be used by a variety or people, including but not limited to people who are disabled. These pictures are examples of “universal design.”

Under Universal design on the board, write the following definitions for each word:

- **Accessibility**: Universal: applies everywhere and in all cases.
- **Universal Design**: Design: A plan or sketch.

Ask for a student to read the definitions of universal and design off the board. Based on the photographs you just discussed, together with these definitions, what do you think universal design is, in relation to buildings, outdoor spaces, transportation and disabilities?

- Buildings (or spaces) that are designed so that they can be used by many different groups of people, including people with disabilities.

Distribute *Universal Design* reading. Ask students to read and annotate the two paragraphs above the chart, noting anything you find interesting or confusing.

Based on these paragraphs, what do you think are some key points about universal design? Instructor writes student responses on the board.
Lesson Guide

Section 4

- It involves making buildings and tools that are accessible to as many people as possible, including those with disabilities.
- There are many examples of universal design in the things we use or spaces we inhabit in our daily lives.
- Universal design has seven basic principles that guide the creation of new buildings and tools.

Next, let’s review how the material is organized on the two pages. How does the reading present information on universal design?
- Through a chart or table.

What are the column headings on the table?
- Principle
- Description
- Example

What does the Description column do?
- Provides definitions or explanations of each principle.

What is the benefit of having an Example column?
- Reading an example makes it easier to understand the principle.
- Having a mental image helps me connect the idea to something I’ve seen before.

Give students time to read through the chart. Explain that they will be doing an activity that uses these principles, so they should pay close attention as they read. While students are reading, write the following questions on the board:

1) In daily life, is there something you or someone you know has difficulty doing?
2) What adaptation—tool, computer app or change in building or transportation would make it easier?
3) Based on the reading, name at least two principles of universal design that your idea incorporates.

Take out a clean sheet of paper. Consider the questions on the board and write down as many ideas as you can.
After students have had ample time to brainstorm, divide the class into groups of four. Explain that students will share their brainstorm with the other members of their group. Members can provide feedback and offer ideas in response to their classmate’s brainstorm.

When groups are done sharing their brainstorms, ask for one or two volunteers per group to share a brainstorm. This should include a specific challenge, a proposed solution, and two principles from universal design that are used in the solution.

Distribute the *Universal Design Writing Prompt* handout. Now that everyone has had a chance to brainstorm ideas and hear ideas from their classmates, you are going to write about one idea in particular. You can use your own original idea or borrow an idea a classmate came up with to write a paragraph about an idea for a universal design. Your paragraph should include the following:

- What is the problem your solution addresses?
- What is your universal design? What does it do?
- How does it make daily life easier?
- What principles of universal design does it include?

Refer to the handouts as you write the paragraph. This activity should be completed individually.
Accessibility Photographs

Ramp to an entrance of a building.

Curb cut on a sidewalk.
Photo: Alta Planning + Design. https://tinyurl.com/yazkg777

Pedestrian Signal push button that alerts pedestrians to street crossing information through beeps and auditory instructions such as “WALK” or “WAIT.”
Photo: Creative Commons CCO 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication. By Raysonho @ https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:PedestrianSignalPushButton.jpg

Bathroom sign with various symbols.
Photo: “Evolution” by Istolethetv is licensed through Creative Commons @ https://www.flickr.com/photos/istolethetv/7232615896/in/album-7215762980786516/
Universal Design

Adapted from https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/udl/cresource/q1/p01/udl_01_link_ud/

In 1990 Congress passed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a law that prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities in employment, transportation, public accommodations, and telecommunications. The ADA guarantees people with disabilities greater access to the everyday activities enjoyed by those without disabilities. In response, architects developed the principles of universal design to guide the creation of new buildings and tools so that they are accessible to as many people as possible, including those with disabilities. Whether we realize it or not, we encounter many examples of universally designed features and products in our daily lives. The seven basic principles of universal design are described in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equitable Use</td>
<td>The design is easily useable by people with diverse or different abilities.</td>
<td>Curb cuts can be used by a variety of people, animals and objects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility of Use</td>
<td>The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.</td>
<td>Tools that can be used by both left-handed and right-handed people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple and Intuitive</td>
<td>The design is easy to understand, regardless of the user’s experience, knowledge, language skills, or concentration abilities.</td>
<td>Image symbols</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Principles of Universal Design
Adapted from: https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/udl/cresource/q1/p01/udl_01_link_ud/

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceptible Information</td>
<td>Users with different sight, hearing and other sensory abilities are able to easily understand the information. The design also works in a variety of lighting, weather or other conditions.</td>
<td>Crosswalk signal with auditory—or sound—indicator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolerance for Error</td>
<td>The feature helps to prevent the user from accidentally making mistakes while using it. The design also has a safety system to minimize the results of a user’s mistake.</td>
<td>“Are you sure you want to delete this file?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Physical Effort</td>
<td>The feature can be used efficiently and comfortably, with a minimum of physical effort.</td>
<td>Motion-activated doors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size and Space for Approach and Use</td>
<td>Objects are designed so that the user—regardless of their body size, posture, or mobility—can easily approach, manipulate and use them.</td>
<td>Wide doorways, low thresholds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Universal Design Writing Prompt

Based on our discussions, or on additional thoughts of your own, write a paragraph about an idea for a universal design. Your paragraph should include the following:

- What is the problem your solution addresses?
- What is your universal design? What does it do?
- How does it make daily life easier?
- What principles of universal design does it include?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
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________________________________________________________________________
The Rise of Ride-Hail Transportation

Students read about how ride-hail services are impacting traffic congestion, public transportation, workers in the sector and consumers. They examine whether those effects are positive or negative and cite evidence to support their position.

PREP

- Be prepared to define the following words or phrases:
  
  **Traffic congestion**: Heavy, slow traffic.
  
  **Regulate**: To control or supervise by making rules about operation or conduct; to set standards for an industry. Example: U.S. flight regulations prohibit bringing more than 3.4 ounces of a liquid or gel in carry-on luggage.
  
  **Ride-Hail services**: Car service where customers use apps on their phones or computers to reserve a ride to a particular destination, pay for the ride, and rate the driver.
  
  **Taxi Medallion**: A permit allowing drivers to pick up passengers from the street in the five boroughs of New York. Drivers without taxi medallions are not permitted to pick up riders on the streets of New York City.
  
  **Wait times**: The amount of time that passengers wait for their driver to arrive after arranging for a ride.

VOCABULARY

- Traffic congestion
- Regulate
- Ride-Hail services
- Taxi Medallion
- Wait times

MATERIALS

- Uber Drivers on Manhattan Streets photograph
- Four Different Types of For-Hire Vehicles handout
- Ride-Hail Vocabulary handout
- The Rapid Rise of Ride-Hail Companies: Effect on Traffic Congestion reading
- The Rapid Rise of Ride-Hail Companies: Effect on Public Transportation reading
- The Rapid Rise of Ride-Hail Companies: Effect on Ride-Hail and Taxi Workers reading
- The Rapid Rise of Ride-Hail Companies: Effect on Consumers reading
- Effect of Ride-Hail Companies Talking Points handout
Lesson Guide

Section 5

EXPLAIN

1. Think of the places that you have gone in the past week—whether the trip was to get to school or work, to visit the doctor or relatives or friends. **How did you get there?** Student answers will vary. Sample answers could include:
   - By public transportation—subways, buses.
   - By car.
   - By walking.
   - By Uber, Lyft or a similar ride-hail service, taxi or car service.

2. Transportation companies such as Uber or Lyft are ride-hail companies. Riders use an app to arrange a ride to a particular location, pay for the ride and rate the driver.

   Have you used ride-hail services provided by Uber or Lyft or a similar company? **How did you access this service?** NOTE: prompt the class to outline all the steps to hailing a ride. Write their responses on the board. They may include:
   - I request a ride on my phone using the app.
   - I may note details of my ride requirements, such as the number of riders in my group, if I want to join a ride pool—a ride shared with other passengers I may not know, or if I want a child car seat, for example.
   - The driver accepts the request for a ride.
   - I go outside at the agreed upon time and look for the car.
   - The driver confirms my name, and I confirm the driver by their license plate, noted on the app.
   - Once the ride is over, I pay for the ride through the app using my credit or debit card, selecting the tip amount.
   - I rate the driver on the app.

   Why did you decide to use a ride-hail service? Answers will vary. Some answers could include:
   - I live far from a subway/public transportation.
   - It’s easier or more convenient than public transportation.
   - It takes me places that would be hard to access otherwise.
   - I don’t have to wait on street for the bus, avoids long wait times.
   - It’s reasonably priced if you share rides or use at non-peak times.
   - I use it when I go out with friends, go to clubs, parties, etc.
   - The ride arrives more quickly than a taxi.
How has the introduction of ride-hail services changed the way you get around? Student answers will vary. Some sample answers may include:

› **Makes it easier to get around.**
› **I go out late at night.**
› **I spend less time waiting for the bus and get to my destinations more quickly.**

3 Distribute or project *Uber Drivers on Manhattan Streets* photograph. **What do you see when you look at the photograph?** Student answers will vary. Sample answers can include:

› **A crowded New York City street.**
› **A typical New York City street.**
› **A lot of traffic.**
› **There are a lot of Uber drivers in the picture.**

4 **Why do you think the photograph identifies which cars are Ubers?**

› **It shows how many cars on the road are for-hire Uber cars.**
› **It shows how much Uber adds to the traffic on the road.**

5 The picture comes from an article about the effect that Uber has on traffic congestion. **Based on the picture, what do you think the words “traffic congestion” mean?**

› **There are so many cars on the road that everyone moves very slowly.**
› **Traffic jams; stop-and-go traffic.**

6 Ride-hail companies like Uber or Lyft are one kind of “for-hire” vehicles. For-hire vehicles pick customers up at and drive them to their destinations. Ride-hail companies are the newest addition to for-hire transit options. **What are some other types of for-hire car services where customers pay for a driver to take them places?** If you needed to hire a car and driver to take you places, what are some other kinds of car services, besides ride-hail services like Uber and Lyft that you could use? Student answers may vary. Sample answers may include:

› **Taxis. In New York City, yellow taxis operate largely in mid- and lower Manhattan, and green taxis operate in upper Manhattan, the Bronx, Queens, Brooklyn and Staten Island.**
› **Livery car services** which arrange pick-ups over the phone. Some car services have apps, where riders can track when their ride will arrive.
Lesson Guide

Limousine rides. *Large vehicles that often include comfortable seating, and refreshments such as drinks and snacks.*


Let’s look at some of the different types of for-hire vehicles. Distribute *Four Different Types of For-Hire Vehicles* handout and ask students to read it.

In the opening paragraph, the reading says that in New York City, all for-hire vehicle companies are regulated by the Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC), which set standards for employment, vehicle conditions and costs. 

**What do you think the word “regulate” means in this sentence?**

To make rules or set standards for how companies can operate.

What are the four different types of for-hire vehicles identified in the reading?

Ride-hail, yellow cabs, green cabs and livery cars.

What are the different ways that customers contact the different types of for-hire vehicles?

Ride-hail customers use an app on their smartphones or computers.

Yellow and green cabs pick up passengers on the street.

Customers call a livery service arrange for a car to pick them up and drive them.

How do the different types of for-hire vehicle set rates or prices for customers to pay?

Ride-hail and livery cars companies set the rates based on distance.

Yellow and green cab rates are set by the TLC based on distance and time in the car. You also pay a flat fee when you get in the cab.

Write on the board:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Uber opens in New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>63,000 ride-hail vehicles on the streets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Over 100,000 ride-hail vehicles in New York City.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Uber first came to New York in 2011. By 2015, there were more Uber drivers than yellow cabs on the roads in New York City. The rapid rise of for-hire vehicle services has had a wide-ranging effect on transportation including how people access rides, accessibility for people with disabilities and employment. Some of these changes have been positive, but not all.
In 2018, New York City became one of the first cities in the country to pass legislation (laws) that regulate ride-hail companies. These rules have included having a one year ban on adding more drivers and requiring companies to pay drivers a minimum wage. During the one year ban, the city studied how ride-hail companies have affected the city.

We are going to read about the effect ride-hail companies have had on four areas. Write on the board:

- Effect on traffic congestion
- Effect on public transit
- Effect on ride-hail and taxi workers
- Effect on consumers

First, let’s look at some of the vocabulary that will be used in the reading. Divide the class into pairs and distribute Ride-Hail Vocabulary handout.

Read each sentence. Work in pairs to determine what you think each word or phrase means based on how it is used in the sample sentence. Then write your definition in the third column.

Review the definitions with the class. The definitions should be phrased in the students’ own words.

Divide the class into four groups, one group for each of the four readings: Effect on Traffic Congestion, Effect on Public Transit, Effect on For-Hire Drivers and Effect on Consumers. Once in their groups, explain that each group will read about one area that ride hail services have affected. For example, students in Group 1 will read about the effect of ride-hail services on traffic congestion, students in Group 2 will read about the effect ride-hail services have on public transit like subways and buses.

There are two sides to every issue. Each reading focuses on both effects of ride-hail companies that have been positive or helpful as well as the effects of ride-hail companies that have been negative or harmful. Each group will read about both the positive and negative effects of ride-hail services and present that information to the class.

Distribute the readings so that each group has a different reading. Ask students to read and annotate the article. First, students should mark anything they think is interesting, important, confusing, or surprising. They should circle unfamiliar words and write any questions they have in the margins.
22 Write the following questions on the board:

- What did you notice in the article?
- What did you read that interests you?
- What do you want to know more about? Was anything confusing?
- What do you have questions about? (be specific)

23 When the groups have finished their readings, have them discuss the questions on the board.

24 Distribute Effect of Ride Hail Companies Talking Points handout. In your groups, discuss the positive and negative effects and write your arguments for each position on the handout. Cite evidence to support both the positive and negative positions. In your groups, ask who benefits and who doesn’t, and use that insight in framing your answers. Each group member should complete a handout for use in their presentation.

25 After completing the handout, each group will present the positive and negative effects to the class. In your groups, decide which members will present information on the positive effects and which members will present information on the negative effects. First, some group members will present information on the positive events, citing evidence from the reading, and then the remaining group members will present information on the negative effects. Finally, the group will present information on how this issue is being addressed by the City Council or the Taxi and Limousine Commission.

26 After each group has completed their presentations, facilitate a class discussion. Sample discussion questions can include:

- Which groups have benefited from the rise of ride-hail services? Which groups have not benefited?
- Has city or state legislation addressed this issue? What did they do? What do you think the effect will be?
- How else can this issue be addressed?
  - What are some potential solutions?
  - What are some possible compromises?
- What decisions would you make about ride-hail companies in this area? Would you be in favor of more regulations or laws? If so, what regulations?

Repeat this process for the remaining groups.
Uber Drivers on Manhattan Streets

Four Different Types of For-Hire Vehicles*
Adapted from: https://www.wnyc.org/story/284518-just-how-do-livery-cabs-make-money/
https://www1.nyc.gov/nyc-resources/service/1271/yellow-taxi-fares

Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC)
All for-hire vehicles in New York City, including yellow cabs, green cabs, livery services and ride-hail companies are licensed and regulated by the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC). The TLC sets standards for employment, creates procedures for licensing including fingerprinting, vehicle conditions and costs. The TLC also implements laws passed by the City Council about the conduct, charges and work conditions in the for-hire vehicle industry.

1 • RIDE-HAIL COMPANIES
Ride-hail customers use phone or computer apps to arrange and pay for car services to take them to their destinations. Drivers in ride-hail companies use their own vehicles to pick up and drive customers. Prices are set by the ride-hail company and are based on a variety of factors including time of day, distance and type of ride.

2 • YELLOW CABS
Yellow cabs are licensed to pick up customers on the street throughout New York City. Yellow cabs are also called medallion cabs because they have a medallion on the hood or side of the cab displaying their license number and certification to pick up passengers who hail or signal to them from the street. Cab rates include a flat fee upon entering the cab, as well as fees based on the amount of time spent in the cab and the distance traveled. Yellow cab rates are set by the Taxi and Limousine Commission, an agency of the New York City government.
3 • GREEN CABS

Green cabs were created to provide additional taxi service to upper Manhattan, the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens and Staten Island. Green cabs are licensed to pick up customers on the streets everywhere in New York City except Manhattan’s business districts and the airports. They may drop people off anywhere but must return to their pick-up zones for new rides, also called fares. Green cab rates, as with yellow cabs, include a flat fee upon entering the cab, as well as fees based on the amount of time spent in the cab and the distance traveled. Rates are set by the Taxi and Limousine Commission.

4 • LIVERY CARS OR CAR SERVICE

Customers wanting to take a livery car to their destination call the livery car company and arrange in advance for a ride. The livery company will dispatch or send a driver to the customer’s location to pick them up. Rates for livery car rides are set by the livery company based on location of pick-up and destination.

Photo credits:
1. Andrew Caballero-Reynolds/AFP/Getty Images, Licensed by Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC BY 2.0). https://www.flickr.com/photos/senatormarkwarner/19588717540
2. Yellow taxi on street of Manhattan in New York. © palinchak / Bigstock
## Ride-Hail Vocabulary

Work with your partner to decide what you think each vocabulary word means based on how it is used in the sample sentence and write your responses in the chart below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocabulary Word</th>
<th>Word in Context</th>
<th>What do you think the word means?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ride-Hail Services</td>
<td>When Uber first moved to New York, few people had heard of getting a ride through a ride-hail service.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow taxi cabs</td>
<td>The number of trips made in yellow taxi cabs has declined, due to the rise in ride-hail services.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wait times</td>
<td>Ride-hail companies’ success is due, in part, to having short wait times for passengers requesting rides.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clogged</td>
<td>Clogged streets slow everyone down, including private vehicles, for-hire cars, city buses and delivery trucks.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum hourly rate</td>
<td>The City Council voted to establish a minimum hourly rate for ride-hail drivers of $17.22 per hour.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ridership</td>
<td>Weekday bus ridership fell in 2017 as people chose other methods of transportation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Ride-hailing companies serve the people who live in areas long ignored by yellow taxis and where access to public transit is limited.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screening procedures</td>
<td>In New York City, all for-hire vehicle services, including ride-hail companies, must use the same screening procedures for people applying to be drivers, including background checks and fingerprint testing.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### ANSWER KEY: Ride-Hail Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocabulary Word</th>
<th>Word in Context</th>
<th>What do you think the word means?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ride-Hail Services</td>
<td>When Uber first moved to New York, few people had heard of getting a ride through a <strong>ride-hail service</strong>.</td>
<td>Car service arranged through apps on customers' phones or computers to reserve a ride to a particular destination, pay for the ride after the trip, and rate the driver.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow taxi cabs</td>
<td>The number of trips made in <strong>yellow taxi cabs</strong> has declined, due to the rise in ride-hail services.</td>
<td>Yellow cabs are licensed to pick up customers on the street throughout New York City. They have a medallion on the hood or side of the cab displaying their license number and certification to pick up passengers who hail (signal) to them from the street.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wait times</td>
<td>Ride-hail companies' success is due, in part, to having short <strong>wait times</strong> for passengers requesting rides.</td>
<td>The amount of time that passengers wait for their driver to arrive for a pick-up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clogged</td>
<td><strong>Clogged</strong> streets slow everyone down, including private vehicles, for-hire cars, city buses and delivery trucks.</td>
<td>Congested streets that are so crowded that traffic isn't flowing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum hourly rate</td>
<td>The City Council voted to establish a <strong>minimum hourly rate</strong> for ride-hail drivers of $17.22 per hour.</td>
<td>The minimum amount, per hour, that someone can be paid for performing a job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ridership</td>
<td>Weekday bus <strong>ridership</strong> fell in 2017 as people chose other methods of transportation.</td>
<td>The amount of subway or bus customers or passengers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Ride-hailing companies serve the people who live in areas long ignored by yellow taxis and where <strong>access</strong> to public transit is limited.</td>
<td>Ability to enter or use a service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screening procedures</td>
<td>In New York City, all for-hire vehicle services, including ride-hail companies, must use the same <strong>screening procedures</strong> for people applying to be drivers, including background checks and fingerprint testing.</td>
<td>Investigating the background of people applying for employment. This can include contacting references, fingerprint testing and other background checks.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Rapid Rise of Ride-Hail Companies: Effect on Traffic Congestion


In 2011, when Uber first moved to New York, few people had heard of ride-hail services, where customers use apps on their phones or computers to arrange and pay for car services to take them to their destinations. But Uber and its fellow ride-hail companies have quickly become an important part of how people travel. It’s affected how people get to and from work, go to appointments, and socialize. It’s changed how people in the transportation industry work and increased employment in some areas while reducing it in others. In a few short years, for-hire vehicle companies like Uber and Lyft have changed the communities they operate in.

Effect on traffic congestion

It’s no secret that traffic is getting worse in New York City—particularly in downtown Manhattan. Average speeds during business hours in Manhattan dropped to a crawl in 2017—about six miles per hour. NYC
Department of Transit official, Bruce Schaller conducted a study of taxi and ride-hail traffic in Manhattan from 2015–2017. The study concluded that while the number of trips made in medallion (yellow) taxi cabs, who have a license allowing them to pick up passengers on the streets, declined, the number of miles traveled by ride-hail vehicles like Uber and Lyft increased by a whopping 36%. That adds up to more than 600 million miles of motor vehicle traffic in the past 3 years alone. The increase was caused by the growth in the number of rides offered by companies like Uber and Lyft, by a trend toward lengthier trips, and more “deadheading,” or ride-hail cars traveling without passengers.

Ride-hail services are popular because customers do not have to wait long for a ride. To make sure that customers get rides quickly, ride-hail companies maintain a large supply of available drivers and vehicles. Roughly 35% of the miles logged by Uber and Lyft drivers in New York City are without passengers. Since drivers are only paid for the time that they spend transporting passengers, this policy of having more drivers available than are needed increases traffic on the roads while lowering driver wages.

Clogged streets are also slowing down city buses, packages, and freight—as well as police, fire, ambulance drivers, repairmen, teachers, and nursing aides. What this all amounts to, according to Jon Orcutt, the Director of Communications and Advocacy of the pro-transit group TransitCenter, is “our worst transportation crisis in decades.”

**Reasons for using ride-hail apps**

There is some evidence however that, especially outside of business districts like downtown Manhattan, ride-hail vehicles create less congestion. University of California Davis (U.C. Davis) transportation researchers studied vehicle ride-hail use in seven major metropolitan areas, including New York. According in their study, while the number of ride-hail trips has increased, in some cases people were using ride-hail services instead of driving in their own cars, rental cars, or using car-sharing services such as Zipcar, where customers can pick up a car locally, rent it for a period of time, and then return it to a nearby drop-off spot. Forty percent (40%) of ride-hail users surveyed said that they would drive their own cars, use ride share or carpool services, or taxis, if Uber and other companies were unavailable. At 37%, not wanting to drive around looking for a parking space was the top reason customers gave for using a ride-hail service, followed closely by drinking/alcohol intake, which was listed as a reason by 33% of customers, indicating that ride-share services might have public health benefits by lowering drunk driving.
New York City Council limits the number of ride-hail drivers

The New York City Council voted in April 2018 to put a one year cap, or ban, on increasing the number of ride-hail drivers while it studies the effect these companies have had on the city. The City Council also voted to establish a minimum hourly rate for ride-hail drivers of $17.22 per hour, whether they have riders or not, a move designed to increase driver pay while reducing the amount of time cars spend driving around the city without passengers. •

“More than 100,000 workers and their families will see an immediate benefit from this legislation,” Mr. de Blasio said, referring to the city’s army of for-hire drivers. “And this action will stop the influx of cars contributing to the congestion grinding our streets to a halt.”
The Rapid Rise of Ride-Hail Companies: 
**Effect on Public Transportation**


In 2011, when Uber first moved to New York, few people had heard of ride-hail services, where customers use apps on their phones or computers to arrange to get driven to their destination. But Uber and its fellow ride-hail companies have quickly become an important part of how people travel. It’s affected how people get to and from work, go to appointments, and visit friends and families. It’s changed how people in the transportation industry work and increased employment in some areas while drastically reducing it in others. In a few short years, for-hire vehicle companies like Uber and Lyft have changed the communities they operate in.

**Effect on public transportation**
The number of people riding New York city’s buses has dropped in recent years. Weekday bus ridership fell about 1.6% in 2017 to just under 2 million riders. Weekend bus ridership fell about 4% to under 2.2 million riders. Now, the subways—the very backbone of the city’s economy—are losing passengers, too. According to the MTA’s acting chairman, Fernando Ferrer, possible causes of declining ridership, or the lower number of subway riders, include increasingly common subway delays, weekend maintenance work that disrupts service—and the popularity of Uber and other apps.

“People don’t feel that they’ll be able to use mass transit (New York City’s subway and bus system) to get where they need to be going,” says Brad Lander, a city council member representing parts of Brooklyn.

That’s a lose-lose situation: Fewer transit riders means less money and lower demand for improved transit. This affects low-income New Yorkers who have no

Photo credit: “New York City Subway” by Clemens v. Vogelsang is distributed with Creative Commons CC BY 2.0. https://www.flickr.com/photos/vauvau/3009858289/
choice but to remain aboard increasingly slow and poorly run trains and buses, as wealthier customers chose other options, including ride-hail services. A study of San Francisco ride-hail customers found that one third of those surveyed would have used public transit for their most recent trip if ride-hail services had not been available. And the U.C. Davis study found that bus ridership dropped by 6% among people who had installed ride-hail apps on their phones.

**Use of ride-hail apps in neighborhoods with limited public transportation**

Ride-hail apps have become a crucial backup option for New Yorkers caught by delays on the city’s subway system or trying to figure how to get around when subway stations are closed for repairs and train lines are rerouted.

Ride-hail services have also grown in neighborhoods outside Manhattan where the subway does not reach. About 1 in 4 (25%) apartments or houses in the five boroughs of New York City are more than ½ mile away from a subway station; in some of the outer boroughs, like Queens, that number rises to over 50%. Alix Anfang, a spokeswoman for Uber, argued that the company, “helps New Yorkers get to bus, subway and ferry lines.”

**New York State Legislature action**

In 2018, New York State lawmakers passed a law that added a new fee on taxis and ride-hailing services operating in Manhattan’s business and tourist districts south of 96th Streets. The fee is expected to raise an estimated $415 million for subway repairs.

Another idea to raise funds is to increase fees in high use areas such as downtown Manhattan, known as congestion pricing. Uber supported the move, saying congestion pricing works if it’s applied evenly and fairly to all vehicles so that all vehicles pay the same fees, and is “the best way to fully fund mass transit and reduce traffic in the central business district.”
The Rapid Rise of Ride-Hail Companies:  
**Effect on For-Hire Drivers**


In 2011, when Uber first moved to New York, few people had heard of ride-hail services, where customers use apps on their phones or computers to arrange to get driven to their destination. But Uber and its fellow ride-hail companies have quickly become an important part of how people travel. It’s affected how people get to and from work, go to appointments, and visit friends and families. It’s changed how people in the transportation industry work and increased employment in some areas while drastically reducing it in others. In a few short years, for-hire vehicle companies like Uber and Lyft have changed the communities they operate in.

**Effect on ride-hail and taxi drivers**

Uber portrays itself as the place for college students, artists and musicians looking to make a few extra bucks to pick up some part time work by driving the

cars that they already own. Drivers choose their hours. When they want to work, they “log onto” the system, indicating that they are available to drive. But while Uber promotes itself as a way for part-time drivers to earn extra money to fund their dreams, in truth, most drivers in New York City work full-time.

**Who are Uber drivers?**

A 2018 study from the New School Center for New York City Affairs indicated that in New York City, nearly two thirds of ride-hail drivers worked full time. Approximately half of the drivers support children and provide the bulk of their family’s income. Five out of six Uber drivers do not have a Bachelor’s degree. Nine out of 10 drivers are immigrants. Workers are drawn into ride-hail driving by the promise of better pay.

However, many ride-hail drivers end up working long hours at less than minimum wage while trying to pay off loans for the cars they bought to enter the business. Forty percent of drivers have incomes so low they qualify for Medicaid and another 16% have no health insurance; 18% qualify for federal supplemental nutrition assistance (Food Stamps)—nearly twice the rate for New York City workers overall. Approximately 80% bought cars for the purpose of making a living by driving them. Many are in debt and at risk of losing their investment if they fail to make car payments.

**Cab and livery drivers also face economic hardship**

The profile of a ride-hail driver is remarkably similar to the yellow or medallion cab drivers that ride-hail services are driving out of business. A taxi medallion or license allows drivers to pick up passengers on the street. Driving a yellow (medallion) cab was once seen as a pathway to the middle class. Since New York City only licenses 13,587 medallions, prices skyrocketed to $1,000,000 by 2013. As a result, many drivers today are paying high fees to lease medallions or the permits that allow them to pick up passengers on the street. These drivers must then work long hours to earn enough money to both pay their lease fees and support a family.

That job became more difficult when Uber and Lyft rolled into town. Many people preferred the convenience of using their phones to hail a cab rather than waiting on the street, forcing yellow cab drivers to work longer hours trying to find fewer customers, cutting their income. The price of medallions fell drastically to approximately $200,000, costing many medallion owners their life savings. Livery drivers were also affected since many people would rather use a ride-hail app than call a livery company to arrange for a ride in advance. As a result, livery drivers are also seeing fewer riders and less money. Six cab and livery
drivers, faced with financial ruin, committed suicide between December 2017 and October 2018.

Both yellow taxi and ride-hail drivers supported the New York City Council decision to freeze the number of ride-hail licenses, so that ride-hail companies cannot increase the number of drivers working for them. Drivers like Elizabeth Cassarino, a yellow taxi driver, hope that limiting the number of drivers on the streets who are competing for customers will mean more business and more money. Her credit cards are maxed out and she has trouble making enough money to pay for food. “We’re starving to death,” she said.

**New York City Council sets minimum hourly pay rate for ride-hail drivers**

One of the main reasons people use ride-hail services is convenience. They use their phones to arrange for a ride and the driver shows up quickly to pick them up. A key selling point for ride-hail services is the low wait times, or the short amount of time passengers spend waiting for their driver to arrive. However, the way that ride-hail companies keep the wait times low by having a large pool of drivers who are logged in and ready to work but who do not have customers. This keeps driver wages low, since ride-hail companies only pay drivers for time spent with passengers, and do not pay for the time spent waiting for a customer or driving to pick up their passengers. As a result, most drivers spend many hours logged in to work that they are not paid for.

The New York City Council recently addressed this issue, setting a minimum hourly rate of $17.22 for drivers. If drivers earn under this amount for the time they are logged on and available, the ride-hail company is required to pay the driver the difference. Over half of ride-hail drivers would qualify. This law would increase their income $6,345 per year.
The Rapid Rise of Ride-Hail Companies: Effect on Consumers


In 2011, when Uber first moved to New York, few people had heard of ride-hail services, where customers use apps on their phones or computers to arrange to get driven to their destination. But Uber and its fellow ride-hail companies have quickly become an important part of how people travel. It’s affected how people get to and from work, go to appointments, and visit friends and families. It’s changed how people in the transportation industry work and increased employment in some areas while drastically reducing it in others. In a few short years, for-hire vehicle companies like Uber and Lyft have changed the communities they operate in.

Effect on consumers
Some argue that ride-hail services do a better job serving people who live in areas that have been ignored by yellow taxis and where access to public transit is limited. “We are growing fastest in the outer rings of the outer boroughs because we are serving communities that have been ignored by yellow taxis and taken for granted by the M.T.A.,” said Josh Gold, a spokesman for Uber.

Serving the under-served
Uber’s internal data shows that ridership in neighborhoods such as East New York in Brooklyn and Kingsbridge in the Bronx have more than doubled between 2017 and 2018. Black and Latino New Yorkers—and those who live in the boroughs outside Manhattan—have long said that many yellow cabs refuse to serve them.
“There’s nothing more degrading than that feeling of being left at the corner,” said Donovan Richards, New York City Councilmember from Queens, speaking of the experience of many African-Americans: standing on the curb with their hand in the air as they watch empty cabs go by, refusing to pick them up.

“Some yellow cabs won’t even go to uptown Manhattan or to parts of Brooklyn,” said Rev. Al Sharpton. “If you are downtown, they won’t stop. I’m trying to get to work, I’m trying to get to school—I want somebody that’s going to pick me up.” the Rev. Al Sharpton told an audience at the Harlem headquarters of his organization, the National Action Network.

For many New Yorkers of color and residents of the outer boroughs, that someone is Uber.

Disability advocates protest the lack of wheelchair accessible vehicles

However, disabled riders are often left behind in the growth of ride-hail services. According to a New York Lawyers for the Public Interest report, only 5% of Uber and Lyft vehicles are wheelchair accessible, and almost 75% of passenger requests for accessible rides are not filled. The report concludes that, “A private automobile that fails to show up 74% of the time is useless for people with disabilities who are already hurt by the increased traffic congestion from ride-hail drivers, which slows down buses and paratransit vehicles.”

In December 2017, the Taxi and Limousine Commission approved new rules requiring that, by mid-2023, a quarter of all trips in ride-hail vehicles, such as Uber or Lyft, take place in wheelchair-accessible vehicles. The New York City Council prohibits adding new licenses for ride-hail companies but made an exception for adding new wheelchair accessible cars.

Safety concerns

Uber is facing a lawsuit charging that their poor screening procedures, including insufficient background checks and lack of fingerprint testing, before adding drivers have left passengers at risk of sexual assault. Until 2018, when passengers used the Uber or Lyft apps, they were automatically agreeing to give up their right to sue and to accept an internal company process to address all issues including sexual assault claims. Both companies recently dropped this provision, and now allow customers to sue.

A CNN investigation has found that at least 103 Uber drivers in the U.S. have been accused of sexually assaulting or abusing their passengers in the past four years and at least 31 drivers have been convicted for crimes ranging from forcible touching and false imprisonment, or stopping passengers from leaving the car, to rape. New York City is the only city in the country to require fingerprint screening for ride-hail drivers.
Effect of Ride Hail Companies Talking Points

The effect of ride-hail companies on ______________________ has been POSITIVE.

Based on the reading, list two reasons that support your position.

1. __________________________________________________________

2. __________________________________________________________

Give or create an example or a situation that supports your position.

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________
The effect of ride-hail companies on _______________ has been NEGATIVE.

Based on the reading, list two reasons that support your position.

1. __________________________________________

2. __________________________________________

Give or create an example or a situation that supports your position.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

What actions have been taken by either the New York City Council, New York State Legislature or the Taxi and Limousine Commission in response to this issue? Which governmental group or groups addressed this issue? What did they do? What effect do you think their actions will have? Cite examples as evidence to support your conclusions.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
The Gig Economy

Students read and discuss an article about the gig economy. They activate critical thinking skills by applying the information to sample scenarios.

PREP

- Write the following chart on the board:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have you or someone you know ever done any of the following?</th>
<th>Have you or someone you know ever worked doing any of the following?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Used a ride-hail company like Uber or Lyft to get a ride somewhere?</td>
<td>- As a ride-hail driver?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Ordered food on an app like Grubhub or Seamless?</td>
<td>- As a delivery person where you were paid by the delivery?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Hired someone to babysit or take care of a relative?</td>
<td>- As a childcare worker or home care worker where you were hired directly by the client?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Hired someone to fix something?</td>
<td>- As a handyperson or repairperson where you worked directly for the client?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Hired someone to walk your dog?</td>
<td>- As a dogwalker for an individual or family?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MATERIALS

- Ride-Hail Companies and the Gig Economy reading
- Calculating Earnings in the Gig Economy reading
- Summarizing Gig Economy Earnings handout

EXPLAIN

1. Read the questions in the left-hand column on the board. Students who answer yes to any of the questions should move to one side of the room. Students who answer no should move to the other side of the room.

2. Ask students who answered yes to describe when they or someone they know used the applicable services. Sample answers could include:
My kids have Uber on their phones and use it when they go out.
I hire a neighbor to babysit on Saturday nights.
I hired someone recommended by a friend to fix the sink in my apartment.

3 Ask students who answered no to explain why they don’t use any of these services.

4 Read the statements in the column on the right side of the board. Students who answer yes to any of the questions should move to one side of the room. Students who answer no should move to the other side of the room.

5 Ask students who answered yes to describe when they or someone they know worked at any of the following. Sample answers could include:

- I drive for Lyft.
- My cousin watches children. She got the job through an ad on Craigslist.
- My son shovels snow for neighbors.

6 Ask students to sit down and explain: These jobs—where workers are contacted directly by people who want a short-term job done—are part of what’s called the “gig economy.” Based on this, what do you think a “gig” is?

- A short term or temporary job.
- Work in the arts, such as performing a concert or acting in a play.

7 People who work at temporary jobs in the gig economy are often called freelancers or independent contractors.

8 Based on your own experience, what are some reasons why people take temporary jobs in the gig economy rather than a permanent job for an employer? Student answers will vary and might include:

- Sometimes people work in the gig economy while looking for a permanent job.
- Some gig economy jobs pay better and are easier to get.
- You can work when you want/flexible scheduling.
- You can work more when you need and less if you have other things going on.
- You can work off-the-books.
No one is sure how many workers are in the gig economy. A recent Gallup poll said that over 1 in 3 workers take freelance jobs either as a way of making a living, to make ends meet while they look for a permanent job, or on a part-time basis to make extra money.

Based on your own experience or things you’ve heard or read, what are some ways that customers find workers to do temporary or short term jobs?
Student answers will vary and might include:

- By word of mouth from friends and relatives.
- Flyers, bulletin boards.
- The internet: Craigslist, Facebook, etc.
- Apps on their smartphones like Uber, Handy, etc.

Increasingly, one way that people find out about jobs is through their smartphones. We’re going to take a closer look at the gig economy, and how technology has impacted workers and companies.

Distribute Ride-Hail Companies and the Gig Economy reading. Ask students to read and annotate it, marking anything they find interesting, important, surprising or confusing. They should circle any unfamiliar words and write any questions they have in the margins.

Write the following on the board while the class is reading.

- What did you notice in the article?
  Write down as many things as you can.
- What did you read that interests you?
- What do you want to know more about? Was anything confusing?
  What do you have questions about? (be specific)

Divide the class into groups of four. Groups should discuss the questions on the board, using their annotations as needed.

Facilitate a discussion in which students share what they talked about in groups, and also ultimately discuss:
DISCUSSION GUIDELINES

Content of the article

- How has technology changed the way workers in the gig economy get and receive jobs?
  
  Smartphones and the use of technology has made it easier for potential customers to find workers and for workers to learn about and get temporary jobs.

- What is the difference between an independent contractor and an employee?
  
  Independent contractors provide services to a company for a price. They set their own hours. Employees work for a company and are entitled or have a right to employee benefits such as health and retirement benefits and are eligible for unemployment insurance.

Vocabulary

- The section, “How Uber Works,” says that worker penalties include “profile deactivation.” What is “profile deactivation?” How do you think it affects the worker being penalized?
  
  Profile deactivation means that the driver is removed from the list of divers available for rides. Profile deactivation stops a driver from getting customers through the ride-hail app.

- The reading talks about employee benefits. What do you think the word “benefits” means in this context?
  
  Something of value the employee receives in addition to their salary, for example, health insurance, retirement plans, unemployment insurance, paid sick time and annual leave, etc.

Purpose

- What do you think is the purpose of the article? Do you think the article achieves its purpose successfully? Why or why not?

- Do you think that the article is in favor of ride-hail companies or against them? Or do you think it is neutral? Why? Provide evidence to support your answer.

Structure and organization of the article

- The reading presents some information in a table. Why do you think the author put information in table format? Do you think it made it easier or harder to read the article? Why?

- Why do you think the article used real companies like Uber as an example?
NOTE: Students should back up their thinking with evidence from the article. Ask follow-up questions that help students explain their thinking, delve more deeply into the questions, and cite evidence to support their responses. Some sample follow-up questions might include:

- How do you know that?
- Where in the article do you see that?
- Why do you think that?
- What else do you notice?
- Can you say more about that?
- What do you think that means?

**Personal experience**

- Have you or someone you know ever taken a temporary job? What did you/they like about it? What did you/they dislike about it?

**EXPLAIN**

16 According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, gig economy jobs in Transportation have increased over the past ten years, fueled by the rise of smartphone apps as a way of doing business and finding customers.

In addition to ride-hail companies, delivery services such as Instacart and Doordash, where independent contractors do your grocery shopping and deliver your products to your door, have also become popular.

These companies advertise that they can make your life easier at a reasonable cost. But increasingly, workers say that they are the ones paying for customers’ convenience.

17 Divide the class into pairs. Distribute *Calculating Earnings in the Gig Economy* reading. Ask students to read and annotate it, marking anything they find interesting, important, surprising or confusing. They should circle any unfamiliar words and write any questions they have in the margins.

When you are done reading, turn to your partner and identify the important parts in the reading.

18 Read *Calculating Earnings in the Gig Economy* a second time. When you are finished reading, you will write a 3-4 sentence summary of each section of the article.
Ask students to explain what a summary is and discuss any confusions.

- A summary is a short explanation of the text’s important points in the summarizer’s own words. A summary does not include minor details.

19 Distribute Summarizing Gig Economy Earnings handout. Ask a student to read and explain the instructions. Students should then complete the handout.

20 Ask for a few volunteers to read their summaries aloud.

21 Ask questions to ensure student understanding. Sample questions can include:
   - Why did Instacart say that they changed how they decide how much a job costs?
   - What do shoppers say about this change?
   - Describe the tensions involving the payment policies between some independent contractors at the companies they work for.
   - What are some of the costs deducted from a ride-hail charge before the worker gets the money?
   - What costs does a ride-hail driver have to pay?

22 There are differences between what some gig economy workers think is fair and what companies think is fair. What do you think? What role can consumers play? Facilitate a discussion around these issues. Students should refer to the readings to support their opinions. Sample questions can include:
   - Many full time gig economy workers argue that they are employees and should have employee benefits. Companies point to flexibility, worker’s choice in deciding when they want to work, and the option to turn down jobs. Do you think gig economy workers such as ride-hail drivers or shopping or delivery workers should be considered employees or independent contractors? Explain your reasons.
   - Some companies, like Instacart have been involved in lawsuits over worker rights. Would these lawsuits affect whether or not you used their services? Why or why not?
   - If the cost of ride-hail or other services increased 25%—for example, if a $10 ride cost $12.50 or a $20 shopping charge increased to $25, would you use the service and pay the extra cost to make sure workers were paid fairly and adequately? Why or why not?
Ask follow-up questions such as:

- Why do you think this? Where in the reading did you find evidence to support your position?
- What would be the effects of this decision? Who would it benefit? Who would be disadvantaged?
- How do you think this decision would affect the gig economy? Why? Explain your answer.
Ride-Hail Companies and the Gig Economy


What is the gig economy?
A “gig” is a short term or temporary job. The gig economy refers to people who work at temporary or freelance jobs instead of having permanent jobs. These workers are independent contractors who enter into an agreement to provide services for a company; this is in contrast to employees who work for a company and are entitled to (have a right to) employee benefits from that company.

What is the difference between an independent contractor and an employee?
Employees work for a company that sets work hours, assigns and supervises work tasks. The company, or employer, is also responsible for paying social security, worker’s compensation insurance—which provides health benefits and an income for workers who are injured on the job—and other employee related taxes. If an employee is laid off by the company, they can apply for unemployment insurance. Companies are often required to provide paid sick time and annual leave or vacation time for their employees.

In contrast, independent contractors set their own hours and decide when they want to work and how often they want to work. However, companies who hire independent contractors do not pay social security or other employee taxes, and independent contractors are not eligible for unemployment or other benefits. Independent contractors pay their own social security taxes, since they don’t have an employer covering that cost.

Role of technology in the gig economy
The gig economy has been around for years, even before it went by that name. People have taken temporary jobs in driving, cleaning, fixing or repairing things and as caretakers for decades. So, what is new about today’s situation? Smartphones. In 2008, Apple introduced its App Store. Suddenly, it was easy to find someone who wanted to work.

One of the first big companies in the gig economy was also founded that year. TaskRabbit connects people looking for work with others looking for help. The task could be moving heavy furniture, removing a window air conditioner for the winter, cleaning, or other tasks that someone might not have the expertise, tools or time to do on their own.

Today, the gig economy is powered by companies like Uber and other ride-hail services where customers use apps on their phones.

1 eligible: be entitled to a particular benefit.
to book rides and pay for them. For example, Uber connects customers who need a ride with people willing to pick them up in their own cars. Companies, like Uber, say that the gig economy allows people to make money when they might have otherwise been unemployed. People can now make some extra cash with their car. Customers can get rides cheaply and easily.

### How Uber Works

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How do workers get jobs?</th>
<th>Workers are “on-call” when logged into the app. They receive one service request at a time, for example, for a ride, which they can accept or reject.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How are workers' performances measured by platforms?</td>
<td>Performance is measured by customer ratings and reviews, as well as by how many rides a driver accepts or cancels. Some ride-hail companies collect data on what routes a driver takes, how many miles they travel, how fast they go and traffic data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are workers penalized?</td>
<td>Worker penalties include temporary suspension of their account and profile deactivation which stops them from getting customers through the company app. Driver profiles can be deactivated for low ratings, a high rate of cancelled rides or for breaking the Terms of Use agreement with the company.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are pay rates determined?</td>
<td>Rates are set by ride-hail companies. Typically, fares are priced based on various factors such as the demand for rides, the time of day or the type of ride being requested.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do workers communicate with customers?</td>
<td>Workers typically can text or call passengers using anonymous phone numbers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Physical Effort</td>
<td>The feature can be used efficiently and comfortably, with a minimum of physical effort.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size and Space for Approach and Use</td>
<td>Objects are designed so that the user—regardless of their body size, posture, or mobility—can easily approach, manipulate and use them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pros and cons of the gig economy
There are many views on the gig economy. Some say it weakens workers’ rights and forces people to work for less money and with fewer protections. Workers can lose their jobs at any time. They do not get benefits like sick pay or paid vacations. The prices charged to customers is often lower than for the same service provided by more traditional companies. Consequently, sometimes gig economy workers are paid less than workers at traditional companies. However, it can be a way to have some income when they might otherwise be unemployed.

Fans of the gig economy say it brings neighbors together and narrows the gap between rich and poor by making it easier for people to make a little extra money. Gigs like ride-hail driving also offers an escape from fixed working hours and sedentary office work. Supporters point out that over time, these app-based companies will become more like other businesses, with business practices that look out for workers. For example, in New York City, there are new laws regulating and setting standards and rules for Uber, including a minimum hourly wage for drivers.

Are ride-hail drivers independent contractors or employees?
Ride-hail companies and their supporters argue that these companies are not car services. They see themselves as technology companies who provide an app that helps drivers and passengers connect. They also stress that drivers set their own hours and decide when and how often they want to work.

Many drivers, however, feel that they work full time and should have employee benefits like health insurance, paid leave and retirement benefits as well as the right to collect unemployment.

Currently the question of whether ride-hail drivers should be considered employees or independent contractors is being debated in city and state governments as well as in the court system. In New York, for example, ride-hail companies along with limousine companies and livery services are required to pay into a Black Car Fund, which provides worker’s compensation benefits to injured drivers. However, in other states, ride-hail workers are not entitled to worker’s compensation. In New York City, three ride-hail drivers won the right to file for unemployment insurance and the New York City Council required ride-hail companies to pay drivers at least $17.22 for each hour that they are logged in. However, in the same year, six states (Kentucky, Iowa, Tennessee, Indiana, Utah and Florida) passed laws saying that gig economy workers were not entitled to employment benefits.
Calculating Earnings in the Gig Economy


The main selling point for gig economy companies from ride-hail companies like Lyft, to shopping and delivery services like DoorDash or Instacart, is that they provide convenience at a low price. Ride-hail companies advertise short wait times and relatively low costs. Food and delivery services advertise products ordered through your phone or computer that are then delivered to your door, for only a few dollars more than it would cost you to pick up your order yourself.

Increasingly, however, workers in these industries are saying that they’re the ones paying the bill so that companies can offer services at low prices.

How do gig economy companies decide what to charge?
Companies like Instacart use algorithms, or mathematical formulas, to determine how much each shopper who works for them gets paid per order. These formulas often change as a company grows. Instacart says that the changes in these formulas, such as charging more for jobs involving lifting heavy items, make shoppers’ jobs easier and were put in place only after talking with shoppers. Shoppers say that each time Instacart changes their formula, they end up earning less money. Instacart maintains that shopper’s average hourly earnings have remained about the same before and after these changes.

“The gig companies need to be held accountable to the people who built their businesses,” said Matthew Telles, a shopper in Des Plaines, Illinois. Mr. Telles, 35, became an Instacart shopper in 2015 after he took a golf ball to the head and suffered a brain injury, making it difficult to return to his job in sales. He said he earned $30 an hour in those early days of Instacart, when customers would regularly tip 18 percent and the company paid by a
predictable formula: A base fee per order plus 40 cents per item and bonuses for long trips or large orders.

Mr. Telles said he saw his pay decline as the years went by and Instacart reduced the base fee, added service charges that confused customers and changed the tipping function on the app. He was a named plaintiff in a class-action lawsuit, settled by Instacart in 2017 for $4.6 million, alleging misclassification of shoppers as independent contractors as well as other labor violations. The company did not admit wrongdoing in the settlement.

**Tip expectations**

Many service workers, such as food delivery workers depend on tips as part of their salary. However workers for both Instacart and Doordash have filed lawsuits against those companies charging that the companies have withheld tips.

Instacart promises its shoppers that they will receive at least $10 for every order they fill, even if their own formula indicates the job is worth less. When customers tip, both they and the shoppers assume that the tip will be added to the base amount and that the shopper will get the additional money. If the base payment, or amount of money the shopper will receive for filling the order is $10, and the customer adds a $2 tip, both customers and shoppers assumed that the shopper would get $12 for completing the order.

Instead, shoppers charge that Instacart has been reducing the company’s payment to the shopper to $8, adding the $2 tip to give the shopper a total of $10 for the job, the same base pay they would have gotten without the tip. The company argues that they do this when the actual value of the job is below the $10 minimum and that the money the shopper receives still meets the minimum $10 base pay.

**How much of the ride-hail bill does a driver keep?**

Ride-hail companies charge passengers fees that are based on distance, the amount of time the trip is expected to take, the time of day the ride is requested and other factors like how many people want rides (often called surge pricing). If a customer is charged $15 for a ride, how much does a typical ride-hail driver get to keep?

First the company takes a service charge for connecting the passenger with the rider. Service charges are usually about $1.20.

\[
\text{What actually happens} \\
$15.00 - $1.20 = $13.80
\]
Then the ride-hail company generally takes 20% of the remaining payment.

20% of $13.80 = $2.76

When you subtract that from the remaining pay, the driver gets to keep $11.04 for the ride.

$13.80 – $2.76 = $11.04

But we’re not done! Since the driver is an independent contractor, they have to make car payments as well as pay for insurance, gas and maintenance to keep the car in good shape. Although these costs can vary, they are estimated at an additional 20% of the money a driver earns.

20% of $11.04 = $2.21

After you subtract this final fee, you can see about how much a drive gets to keep for their non-car expenses from a $15 ride. In this example, the driver keeps $8.83 of a $15 ride for their non-car expenses.

$11.04 – $2.21 = $8.83

**Are ride-hail drivers independent contractors or employees?**

Uber sees and portrays itself in its ads as a way for college students, artists and musicians looking to make a few extra bucks by driving the cars that they already own on a part-time basis. In many parts of the country, ride-hail drivers are primarily or mostly part time workers, driving an average of 17 hours per week, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

However, a 2018 study from the New School Center for New York City Affairs revealed that in New York City, nearly two thirds of ride-hail drivers worked full time. Approximately half of the drivers support children and provide the bulk of their family’s income. About 80 percent bought cars for the purpose of making a living by driving them. Many ride-hail drivers end up working long hours at less than minimum wage while trying to pay off loans for the cars they bought to enter the business. Forty percent of drivers have incomes so low they qualify for Medicaid and another sixteen percent have no health insurance; 18 percent qualify for federal supplemental nutrition assistance (commonly referred to as Food Stamps)—nearly twice the rate for New York City workers overall.

Companies that use independent contractors have pointed out that if independent contractors were considered employees instead and entitled to benefits, their labor costs would increase by about 20% – 30%. These increased costs would either need to be passed on the consumer who would pay higher prices for deliveries and rides, or would result in layoffs.

Summarizing Gig Economy Earnings

Write a 3-4 sentence summary, in your own words, responding to each of the questions below.

What do gig economy workers, such as those at Uber or Instacart, expect to be tipped?

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

How much of the bill does a ride-hail driver keep? Explain how you arrived at this number.

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

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____________________________________________________________________________________