

Carefully read the passage. Then complete the task that follows.

Public Transportation is the Way to Go

Taking public transportation makes sense and cents. When we limit our use of private cars, we have a big impact on the environment. If more people would ride buses or commuter trains to work instead of driving cars, it would translate into millions—or even billions—of gallons of gas being saved every year in the United States. That would go a long way toward reducing the amount of oil we buy from foreign countries. In addition, taking public transit reduces the amount of carbon dioxide that goes into the air.

Of course, buses also emit gases. Even so, more passengers riding the bus lowers the emissions per passenger-mile. A full bus using diesel fuel lowers emissions by as much as 83% compared with cars being driven with only one occupant. Where trains are available there is even less pollution. Most commuter trains are powered by electricity. When the source of this electricity is wind or solar power, the emissions drop to zero.

There are other reasons to take a bus or ride a train to work. Long commutes by car are tedious, particularly when traffic is an issue. High-speed public transit reduces the time spent getting to work. When commuters do take cars, they should consider joining a car pool. Many cities have highway lanes dedicated to high-occupancy vehicles. A car full of commuters traveling in this lane can quickly pass many cars occupied by lone drivers in slower lanes.

People who commute to work by bus or train can use the time to read, study, work or even take a nap. They may also save money, because it may be cheaper than driving a car and there are often no parking fees at the station. Some employers who have “gone green” even reimburse their workers for the cost of public transit passes to encourage the reduction of exhaust emissions.

Public transit makes it possible for people who do not own cars to take jobs far from where they live. With the high cost of buying and maintaining a car, public transportation saves money. It is estimated that a family could save thousands of dollars a year by reducing the use of, and maybe even eliminating, the family car.

By taking public transportation, commuters help save the planet and save money in the process.

The passage gives the writer’s opinion about the benefits of using public transportation. **Write an essay that acknowledges the benefits but also points out some challenges people face when using public transportation.** Use evidence from the passage to support your essay.

Use the Writer's Checklist to help you write your essay. You may reference the passage as often as you need.

Writer's Checklist

- _____ Does my essay have a clear idea that is connected to the writing prompt?
- _____ Does my essay show an understanding of the passage?
- _____ Do I stay focused on the writing prompt?
- _____ Do I support my ideas with strong evidence from the passage?
- _____ Do I need to take out evidence that DOES NOT support my ideas?
- _____ Is my response well-organized?
- _____ Have I used precise language and smooth transitions in my essay?
- _____ Have I spelled, punctuated, and capitalized my writing to help readers understand it?