

Humans vs. self-driving cars?

Level: Intermediate (B1-B2)

Time: Approximately 90 minutes

Overview: This article discusses some of the problems with automated vehicles and the author's opinion of self-driving cars at the current level of technology.

Business topics: Technology, social science

Business language: Useful vocabulary, business-related collocations

Activities: Key words, understanding the text, business language, discussion, presentation on the pros and cons of automation

Groups: Whole class, one-to-one, small groups

1. Warmer

- a. Students discuss the questions in small groups. Then ask students to share their experiences and opinions with the rest of the group. You may want to write some useful words and phrases on the board before they begin to help them express their ideas (e.g. *In my opinion ... I think ... From my point of view ... I am convinced that ...*)

2. Key words

- a. Have students match the key words to the definitions individually and then compare their answers in pairs. Elicit answers from the whole class.

Key:

- | | |
|------------------|----------------|
| 1. deal with | 7. disengage |
| 2. halfway-house | 8. complacency |
| 3. bully | 9. wander |
| 4. leapfrog | 10. background |
| 5. gaze | 11. encounter |
| 6. sector | 12. zone out |

3. Understanding the article

- a. After students read the article, ask them to identify key words in the statements. Then ask them to scan the article again to find the relevant information and decide if each statement matches the information in the article. Have them compare answers in pairs before checking answers with the whole class. When checking the answers, ask students to find the information in the article that indicates whether the statement is true or false.

Key:

1. False. Many new cars are partially automated. (Paragraph 3)
2. True (Paragraphs 3-5)
3. True (Paragraphs 4-6)
4. False. Mikael Ljung Aust's study found that distraction alerts did successfully make people keep their eyes on the road and their hands on the wheel. (Paragraph 9)
5. False. The drivers said they saw the object coming, but they trusted the car to deal with it, at least until it was too late. (Paragraph 10)
6. True (Paragraph 12)

4. Business language – collocations

- a. Ask students to work in pairs to complete the activity. Then regroup them, so they compare their answers in small groups before checking answers with the whole class.

Key:

1. follow-up interviews
2. worth noting
3. prove troublesome
4. edge back
5. manufacturing processes
6. run studies
7. embrace the concept
8. safety bodies

- b. Ask students to complete the task in small groups.

Key:

1. *edge back*
2. *run, studies*
3. *manufacturing processes*
4. *follow-up interviews*
5. *worth noting*
6. *prove troublesome*
7. *safety bodies*
8. *embrace the concept*

5. Discussion

- a. Put students in pairs or small groups and ask them to discuss the writer's opinions. When they have covered all the points, bring the whole class back together so that they can share their answers.
- b. Have students discuss their personal opinions on the topic. Encourage them to use the phrases provided and add their own. You can also follow up by asking the students whether the article has changed their minds about the things they discussed in the Warmer.

6. Wider business theme – The pros and cons of automation

- a. Note that giving a presentation to support one's opinion is good practice in the area of communication, which involves defending ideas.

First, ask students to read the pros and cons of automation and check that they understand the vocabulary and the general meaning of each point.

Now have students prepare a short presentation to give their opinions on whether they are mostly for or against automation in business and industry.

Give students time to research and prepare their ideas. When they are ready, ask early finishers to practice their presentations in pairs.

Depending on the time available for the final task, divide students into smaller or larger groups for them to present their opinions, or have them present to the whole class. Alternatively, students can record their presentations for homework.