

Reading Passage: (201 words): Three Advantages of Hybrid Cars

The United States of America imports about 45% of the petroleum it consumes. Over the past decade, government focus has shifted toward green energy and set in place incentives such as tax bonuses for consumers who buy hybrid vehicles. For consumers thinking about making the shift to go green, they may be considering a hybrid car for three reasons.

The first reason is fuel economy. A gas powered 2012 Toyota Camry, for example, will get 25 mpg in the city and 35 on the highway while a hybrid Camry boasts 43 city and 39 highway mpg. Consumers will get the most miles for their money, and driving far distances at a much cheaper rate is an option that many consumers did not have in the past.

Secondly, buying a hybrid reduces emissions, and consumers feel that they are actively participating in the reduction of harmful gases that hurt the environment.

Finally, battery technology for hybrid vehicles has significantly improved. The hybrid battery-engine concept has been adopted by auto makers such as Honda, Ford, Chevrolet, and Nissan. Hybrid technology is now more dependable, and a shift in consumer demand has forced auto makers to continually improve their battery technology.

Writing Prompt: Summarize the information in the lecture explaining how it supplements the information in the reading passage.

Lecture (350 words): Are Hybrid Cars worth all the Hype?

Gas prices go up and down with each season and can sky rocket up to \$4.90 a gallon or more. Some governments and consumers will say to go green and purchase a hybrid because you will have better fuel economy, reduce emissions, and count on the improved dependability of the batteries. Let us take a moment to discuss some realities of hybrid vehicles, and clarify if a hybrid car is truly the best economic and environmental choice.

A hybrid vehicle gets more mpg in the city, but gas engines can also provide competitive mpg on the highway. Diesel engine cars in the 2013 Volkswagen TDI can get up to 43 mpg on the highway. Ford has designed EcoBoost engines that give approximately 20% better fuel efficiency. Plus, gas and diesel engine technology has been proven reliable since their inception over 100 years ago.

Well, how about emissions? Hybrids do reduce emissions because their gas engines do not burn as much fuel. However, there is still electricity that needs to be used in order to produce hybrids. According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) "The burning of coal, natural gas, and oil for electricity is the largest single source of global greenhouse gas emissions." Until electricity is renewable and industry stops burning fossil fuels to manufacture cars, car emissions are a small part of the bigger emissions problems.

Finally, there are two issues with battery technology that consumers may face. Firstly, a battery adds weight to any car. Because the car is heavier, the mpg posted on the sticker price may not be truly attainable. Secondly, the cost to replace the battery may outweigh the savings in gas money. The sticker prices of hybrid vehicles typically run 2,000 to 3,500 dollars more. Moreover, if a battery has to be replaced, the cost to replace the battery may erase all of dollars previously saved.

In conclusion, hybrid technologies is still a great option, but for consumers trying to save fuel, reduce emissions, and take less of a risk on battery technology, other gas powered cars can be an excellent alternative.