

# Cars: Then & Now



LEVEL B-3 • Written by Elfrieda H. Hiebert





**Early cars took  
the place of  
horses & buggies.**

# Car History

Over time, people have tried many ways to help them get from place to place. They have built vehicles run by horses, wind, clocks, and steam. Yet these vehicles did not work well enough. People still wanted better, faster vehicles that did not cost a lot.

In the 1800s, a vehicle was built that answered this wish—a car with a gas engine. Gas engines made cars easy to use and fast. By the early 1900s, cars also cost less, so many people could buy them. The age of cars had begun.

## Key Notes:

**How have cars changed over time?**

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**New cars are designed  
for safety.**

# Today's Cars

Like older cars, most of today's cars work well and run on gas. However, many changes have been made in car design. Two design areas - comfort and safety- have seen the most change.

Cars today have parts made for comfort. Some parts make cars warm on a cold day and cool on a hot day. Some parts make cars turn more smoothly and engines sound softer.

Cars today also place safety first. They are designed to stop more quickly. They also have air bags and seatbelts that keep people safe.

## Key Notes:

**How are cars today different from older cars?**

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**This car engine runs on  
a battery, not gas.**

# Energy-Saving Cars

Today, almost half a billion families around the world own cars. Most of these cars run on gas. This fact has caused problems. First, gas is getting harder to find and the price of gas keeps going up. Second, gas makes air bad for living things.

So, cars are being designed that use other kinds of energy. Some cars use energy from the Sun. Some use electricity. Electric cars get their energy from batteries. Some cars use both gas and electricity. When these cars travel at slower speeds, they save gas by running on their battery.

## Key Notes:

**What are energy-saving cars?**

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**Race cars are  
designed for racing  
on tracks.**



# Race Cars

People today race cars for fun and for money. They want to show that their car is the fastest one. Many people also like to watch others race cars.

Some race cars look like everyday cars. However, they were designed just for racing. Everything on them from their wheels to their engine has been changed.

Race cars run on closed roads called tracks. Tracks have special designs. Certain kinds of race cars do better on certain tracks. For example, a car with a big engine runs better on a shorter track.

## Key Notes:

**What are race cars?**

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