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Main Idea and Summaries

RL.5.2, RI.5.2

● Lexile: 820L

● Science

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Test Yourself

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

Flying Cars: Here at Last

by Al Landsdown

Is it a flying car or a plane you can drive on the highway? Whatever you call it, it's no longer the stuff of science fiction. It's a road machine with wings that unfold for flying. You may see one zooming through traffic—or above it—by 2012.

The new vehicle is called the Transition. It's a product of a Massachusetts company called Terrafugia. That's an Italian word that means, "escape from the ground." It was designed by five former students from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology who are also pilots.

Flying cars have long been a dream of engineers—and technology fans. They were first proposed in 1909, when both cars and planes were new. In the 1950s and 1960s, some models were actually built and tested. They could not be built well or cheaply enough to sell. They did help to inspire an animated TV series, *The Jetsons*. It was about a suburban family in an imagined future that got around in flying cars. The 1982 film *Blade Runner* was a science-fiction thriller in which police of the future patrolled Los Angeles in flying squad cars. But in 1982, cell phones, too, were the stuff of science fiction. And in 1960, no one could have even imagined the Internet.

The Transition is not designed to take off from a street or highway. It needs about half a mile of runway to get airborne. Its builders see it as a private plane that you can drive to the airport. On the highway, it gets about 30 miles per gallon of gas. It takes about a minute to unfold the wings. In the air, it can fly about 400 miles on a tank of gas at a speed of 115 miles per hour. When the trip is over, you don't have to leave the Transition in a hangar. You just fold up the wings, drive home, and park in your garage.

In June 2010, the Transition passed government air and highway safety tests. By then, Terrafugia had already received 70 orders. Don't expect to see many of them around the neighborhood just yet, though. The price tag is \$194,000, and that's without a radio or a parachute. For the near future, flying cars will be luxuries for the wealthy, but back in 1909, so were cars.



transition
act of changing from
one place, form, or
activity to another

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

● Skill Strategy

Main Idea—see pages 17–18 of the teacher’s edition

● Vocabulary

animated, engineer, inspire, luxuries, suburban, transition

● Listening/Speaking

With a group, locate photos of the Transition and other flying cars on the Internet. Prepare a PowerPoint display on “Flying Cars in Fact and Fiction” and present it to the class.

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1 What is the main idea of this article?

- A Flying cars have long been a subject of science fiction.
- B The Transition has wings that fold up for highway use.
- C You can expect to see Transitions soon in your town or city.
- D The first practical flying car is almost ready for road and sky.

RI.5.2

2 What is the *most* important supporting idea of this article?

- A The Transition gets better gas mileage than most cars.
- B The Transition is too expensive ever to become popular.
- C Yesterday’s science fiction can become today’s technology.
- D The first flying cars were actually built more than 50 years ago.

RI.5.2

3 Which of these is the topic sentence of the first paragraph?

- A Is it a flying car or a plane you can drive on the highway?
- B Whatever you call it, it’s no longer the stuff of science fiction.
- C It’s a road machine with wings that unfold for flying.
- D And you may see one zooming through traffic—or above it—by 2012.

RI.5.2

4 Which of these would make the *best* heading for paragraph 4?

- A How a Flying Car Works
- B No Need for a Cab to the Airport
- C Your Transition: An Owner’s Manual
- D Facts and Figures About the Transition

RI.5.2

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UNIT 2
Key Ideas and Details

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EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

ELLs

Have students draw pictures of a unique invention. Then have students describe how the invention works, completing these sentence starters:

This is a _____.

The purpose of this invention is to _____.

The invention works by _____.

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- 5 Write a sentence that expresses the main idea of paragraph 3.

The idea of flying cars has long inspired both engineers and science-fiction writers. RI.5.2

- 6 Write a summary of the article.

The first flying car is expected to soon become a reality. It's called the Transition. People have imagined and tried to build flying cars for a long time, but the Transition is the first one that people will actually be able to buy. You can drive it to the airport, unfold its wings for your flight, and then fold them up again to drive home. The Transition is too expensive for most people to buy, but that once was true of cars, too. RI.5.2

Listening Practice

Listening has been called the forgotten skill, yet it is one of the most important. All aspects of language and cognitive development are based on listening, so it is a foundational skill. Listening plays a lifelong role in the processes of learning and communication that are essential to an active participation in life.

The following exercises give students practice in listening skills in a format similar to that used on some English Language Arts tests. The practice exercises are timed to simulate the test, but you may choose to allow students to work through the exercises at their own pace. Prepare copies of the reproducible answer sheets for each student before you begin each practice session.

Listening Practice 1

Allow about 30 minutes for this listening activity, plus an additional 20 minutes for preparation and the reading aloud of the passage. Pass out the answer sheets for Listening Practice 1 found on pages 129–130 of the teacher's edition. All answers for Practice 1 should be written on these answer sheets. Also make sure each student has writing utensils and extra paper for taking notes.

SAY Now we're going to do a listening practice activity. I'm going to make this exercise seem as much as possible like the real test you will be taking. First, write your name at the top of your answer sheets. Turn your answer sheets over when you are finished, and place a blank sheet of paper on top of them.

Wait a few minutes until students have followed these directions.

SAY I'm going to read an article. Just listen as I read the article the first time. Then I will read the article again. As I read it the second time, you may make notes on your blank sheet of paper. After I finish reading the article the second time, you will answer some questions about it. Before I begin, here are three words you will need to know as you listen to the article.

metropolitan	large city
logo	symbol
dribbling	bouncing a ball

Are there any questions?

Address any questions before students hear the listening selection. Then read the following article twice to the class. Be sure to read at a volume that everyone can hear but which still lets you keep a natural tone to your voice.

Venn Diagram

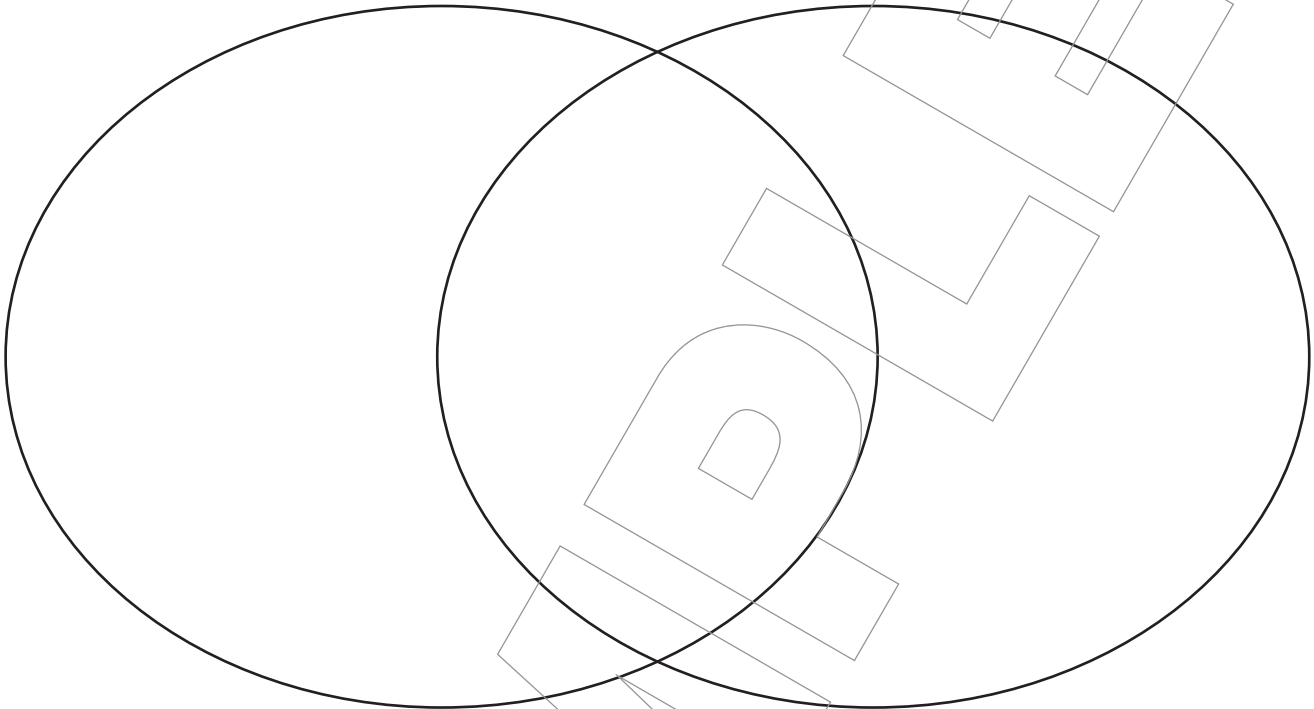
Name _____ Date _____

Title _____

Differences

Similarities

Differences



Differences

Similarities

Differences

