



## Pre-Reading Activities

### A: Discussion

Work in small groups or pairs and discuss the questions below.

1. Is parking a car a problem in cities in your country?
2. What happens if you park in the wrong place?
3. Is it expensive to park in cities in your country?
4. Where do you park when you drive to the city?



### B: Vocabulary

Match the words with their correct meanings.

**save money, solar-powered, parking meters, city council officials, motorists, councilor, council**

1. people who drive cars
2. you put money in this machine when you want to park your car somewhere
3. people who work for the city council
4. something that works because of the power of the sun
5. a phrase which means the **opposite of to spend money**
6. a group of people chosen to make rules and manage things
7. a member of a council

## Reading Activities

### A: Reading for the Main Idea

Read today's article quickly (without using your dictionaries) and answer the question below.

*Why didn't the motorists have to pay for their parking?*

### Cloudy Weather is Good for Motorists

LONDON September 6 (Reuters) - Hundreds of motorists didn't have to pay for parking when new solar-powered parking meters stopped working because of Britain's bad weather, the Daily Telegraph newspaper reported on Thursday.

City council officials in Nottingham spent 1 million pounds on 215 meters this year after studies showed councils in sunny Mediterranean countries have saved a lot of money in **maintenance costs**.

Despite better than average sunshine last month, more than a quarter of the parking meters have stopped working. Local motorists were very happy about the free parking periods.

"This is an ill-thought scheme," Nottingham city councilor Sally McNamara told the paper. The council has called in the meters' **suppliers** to **adjust** the machines before winter.

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**maintenance costs** - the money that is paid to keep something working by checking or repairing it  
**adjust** - make changes to something    **suppliers** - a business selling the meters

### B: Questions

Read the article carefully and answer the questions below.

1. Why did the solar-powered parking meters stop working?
2. How much did city officials spend on the new parking meters?
3. How many solar-powered parking meters did they buy?
4. What happened in Mediterranean countries when solar-powered meters were used?
5. What are the suppliers of the meters going to do?

## C: What Do You Think?

Answer these questions using your own ideas.

1. Do you think buying solar-powered parking meters for a British city is a good idea? Why/ why not?
2. Do you think solar-powered parking meters are a good idea for your country? Why/why not?

## D: Sequencing

Look at the sentences below and put them into the correct order using today's article.

- \_\_\_ a. City council officials in Nottingham decided to use solar-powered parking meters too.
- \_\_\_ b. City council officials spent 1 million pounds on 215 meters.
- \_\_\_ c. Nottingham city council officials learned that councils in Mediterranean countries save a lot of money by using solar-powered parking meters.
- \_\_\_ d. Motorists in Nottingham were very happy about the free parking periods.
- \_\_\_ e. The solar-powered parking meters failed because of Britain's bad weather.

## E: True or False

Decide whether the sentences are true or false using the article. (You may use your dictionary if you need to.)

1. The weather in Nottingham in August 2001 was sunnier than it usually is.
2. Councils in some Mediterranean countries use solar-powered meters.
3. After the council bought the meters, a hundred of the machines failed.
4. Motorists were unhappy because the meters had stopped working.
5. Sally McNamara thought that the solar-powered meters were a good idea.

## Post-Reading Activities

You may do one or more of these.

### A: Language

In today's article there were these words: *Hundreds of motorists **didn't have to** pay for their parking.*

**Have to** is used to say that **it is necessary** to do something. For example, *I have to go to work.*

When we want to say that **it isn't necessary** to do something, we use **don't have to**. For example, *I don't have to go to work today because it's Saturday.* **Didn't have to** is the **past simple form**.

Complete the sentences using **didn't have to** + one of the following verbs: **get up, hurry, go, pay, shave**

1. The new parking meters failed so the motorists \_\_\_\_\_ for their parking.
2. For 20 years Roger had a beard so he \_\_\_\_\_ .
3. Michael won the tickets so we \_\_\_\_\_ .
4. Today is a holiday so I \_\_\_\_\_ early for work this morning.
5. We arrived early at the theater so we \_\_\_\_\_ .

Now write three more sentences of your own using **didn't have to**.

### B: Vocabulary

Work in pairs and discuss the questions below.

1. Are you a **motorist**? If yes, how many times a week do you drive? If no, why don't you drive?
2. Have you used a **parking meter** this week? If yes, where?
3. Can you think of any other machines that are **solar-powered**?
4. How can a student **save money**?

### C: Group Work

1. Work together in small groups. Imagine you are city council officials for your area. You are at a meeting to try and solve some of your city's traffic problems.
2. Make a list of some of the traffic problems for the area you live in and then discuss possible solutions.
3. Present your ideas to the rest of the class.

# TEACHERS' NOTES AND ANSWER KEY

## Pre-Reading Activities

### A: Discussion - Notes

You could do this exercise as either a class discussion or group discussions.

### B: Vocabulary - Answers

1. motorists
2. parking meters
3. city council officials
4. solar-powered
5. to save money
6. council
7. councilor

## Reading Activities

### A: Reading for the Main Idea - Answer

Because the new solar-powered parking meters stopped working.

### B: Questions - Answers

1. Because of Britain's bad weather (i.e. not enough sunshine)
2. 1 million pounds
3. 215
4. A lot of money normally spent on maintenance was saved
5. To adjust the meters

### C: What Do You Think? - Answers

1. Answers will vary. (Students will probably point out that Britain is known for having bad weather with lots of rain. The meters are therefore less likely to be effective.)
2. Answers will vary.

### D: Sequencing - Answers

1.c, 2.a, 3.b, 4.e, 5.d

### E: True or False - Answers

1. True, 2. True, 3. False (a quarter of them failed), 4. False, 5. False

## Post Reading Activities

You may like to point out to students that **don't have to** is NOT the same as **mustn't**. i.e. Whereas you **have to...** means that you must do something, **don't have to** means it isn't necessary for you to do something, but you can if you want. You are not forbidden from doing it.

Students are sometimes confused by this use of **don't have to** as in the following example. *You **don't have to** take the bus tomorrow. I'll drive you, if you like.* (Here, the person isn't told that they are not allowed to catch the bus but they are offered an alternative means of transport. They can use the bus if they want to, but may prefer to go in their friend's car.)

### A: Language - Answers

1. didn't have to pay
2. didn't have to shave
3. didn't have to pay
4. didn't have to get up
5. didn't have to hurry

### B: Vocabulary - Notes

This gives students a chance to practice some of the words they were presented with in Pre-Reading Activity A.

