

New York's new generation of yellow taxis

New York's famous yellow taxis are set to change. New York City has picked the Nissan minivan to be its next cab. The Japanese car company Nissan Motors has won the contract to provide the next generation of New York taxis. The deal was announced recently by New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg. It is estimated to be worth US\$1bn (€692m). The design will be based on Nissan's NV200 minivan model. Nissan beat US carmaker Ford Motor and Turkish manufacturer Karsan Otomotiv for the 10 year contract, which will be phased in starting in 2013. Mayor Michael Bloomberg acknowledged the Nissan NV200's boxy form evokes suburbia, but said the yellow paint would give it the iconic New York touch. The vehicle features an overhead window to offer views of city skyscrapers, and charging stations for mobile phones and laptops. The car will also feature satellite navigation, so passengers leaving the main Manhattan corridors will not have to contend with drivers who do not know their way around.

Mayor of New York Michael Bloomberg: "For the first time, New York taxis will include rear passenger airbags. The van also passed its crash tests, not just as the NV200 street model, but as the taxi model which includes the partition wall and other taxi components." The Nissan was the most fuel-efficient and the cheapest of the three finalists, at about US\$29,000 (€20,073) per vehicle. By 2017, Nissan will be able to manufacture the cars to run solely on electricity, New York City Hall said in a statement. Nissan will install charging stations for easy accessibility for owners to charge their vehicles. The bulk of the current fleet are Ford Crown Victorias, a car which only does about 12 miles per gallon, compared with 25 miles per gallon for the Nissan NV200. New York's 13,000 yellow cabs carry about 600,000 passengers a day, and are the only vehicles permitted to pick up passengers off the street. The NV200, which will be built in Nissan plants in Mexico, is the first to be designed specifically for use as a New York City taxi.

Taxi and Limousine Commissioner David Yassky: "People are going to fall in love with this taxi once they ride in it. It is going to represent New York City well." The taxis seem to have been designed with both tourists and locals in mind. All taxis currently on the road will be phased out by 2018.

Category: New York / Transport / Yellow taxis

Level: Intermediate / Upper intermediate

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EXERCISES

1. **New York taxis:** Think of three things you know about New York taxis? Go round the room swapping details with others.

2. **Geography: New York:** Where is New York? What river runs through New York? Draw a map on the board then **look on Google maps** to help you.

3. **Dictation:** The teacher will read four to six lines of the article slowly and clearly. Students will write down what they hear. The teacher will repeat the passage slowly again. Self-correct your work from page one - filling in spaces and correcting mistakes. Be honest with yourself on the number of errors. Advise the teacher of your total number of errors. Less than five is very good. Ten is acceptable. Any more is room for improvement! More than twenty - you need to do some work!

4. **Reading:** The students should now read the article aloud, swapping readers every paragraph.

5. **Vocabulary:** Students should now look through the article and underline any vocabulary they do not know. Look in dictionaries. Discuss and help each other out. The teacher will go through and explain any unknown words or phrases.

6. **The article:** Students should look through the article with the teacher.

- a) What is the article about?
- b) What do you think about the article?
- c) What do you think about the new taxis?

7. **Taxis:** In pairs think of five words associated with taxis. Add five things you will see in a taxi. Write them below. Discuss together. What are your conclusions?

Taxi words	Inside a taxi
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5

The teacher will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

8. **New York: The Big Apple:** In pairs think of five famous places in New York and five general things about New York. Write them below. Discuss together.

Famous places in New York	New York in general
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5

New York's new generation of yellow taxis – 30th May 2011

9. **Let's think!** In pairs. On the board write as many words as you can to do with **New York taxis**. *One-two minutes*. Compare with other teams. Using your words compile a short dialogue together.

10. **Let's roleplay 1: WRNY:** In pairs/groups. One of you is the interviewer. The others are one of the following people. You are in the *WRNY (Wireless Radio New York!)* studio. Today's interview is about: *New York's new generation of yellow taxis*.

1	A tourist	3	Mayor of New York
2	A New York taxi driver	4	Nissan boss

The teacher will choose some pairs to roleplay their interview in front of the class.

11. **Let's roleplay 2:** In pairs. You are in one of the new generation of New York taxis. (Imagine!) One of you is the taxi driver. The other is a tourist. Between you - you get talking. Discuss the new features. Then focus on great places to go in New York. (Make it up!) *5-minutes*.

12. **Let's do 'The Article Quiz':** Have the students quiz each other in pairs. They score a point for each correct answer and half a point each time they have to look at the article for help. See who can get the highest score!

Student A

- 1) Name the city.
- 2) Name the mayor.
- 3) Name the make and model of the new taxi.
- 4) Name the make and model of the current taxi.
- 5) What colour is a New York taxi?

Student B

- 1) What will happen in 2018?
- 2) How much will a new taxi cost?
- 3) Name three things in the new taxi.
- 4) Who didn't win the contract?
- 5) When will we see the new taxi on the streets of New York?

13. **Let's think!** Think of two songs about New York and another two about taxis. Then think of two TV shows about them both. Write them below. Discuss together with your partner. Which is the most famous?

	Songs	TV shows
New York	_____	_____
Taxis	_____	_____

The teacher will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

14. **Let's write an e-mail:** Write and send a 200 word e-mail to your teacher about: *New York taxis*. Your e-mail can be read out in class.

15. **Sentence starters:** Finish these sentence starters. Correct your mistakes. Compare what other people have written.

- a) I love New York _____
- b) New York _____

DISCUSSION

Student A questions

- 1) What colour are taxis in your city/town?
- 2) How do New York taxis compare to the taxis in your town/city?
- 3) Are taxis safe to ride in your town/city?
- 4) Are taxi fares expensive or cheap in your town/city?
- 5) Are foreigners/tourists ripped off by taxi drivers in your town/city?
- 6) Think of three reasons why you might need to take a taxi?
- 7) Why do you think Nissan Motors won the contract?
- 8) Think of three things about the mayor of New York Michael Bloomberg.
- 9) How does the traffic in New York compare to your town/city?
- 10) Think of three things you like about New York.

Student B questions

- 1) Have you ever been to New York? If yes, explain.
- 2) Would you like to visit New York (again)? Why? Why not?
- 3) What do you think of New York's taxis? Explain.
- 4) What do you think of the next generation of New York's taxis? Explain.
- 5) What is the most expensive taxi ride you undertook?
- 6) What is the worst city in the world for taxis?
- 7) Have you ever had a bad experience in a taxi? If yes, explain.
- 8) Have you ever been ripped off by a taxi driver?
- 9) Would you like to be a taxi driver? Explain.
- 10) Did you like this discussion?

SPEAKING

Let's discuss! New York

Allow 10-15 minutes – As a class / small groups / pairs / 1 to 1

20 things you love about New York
--

The teacher can moderate the session.

GAP FILL: READING:

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

New York's new generation of yellow taxis

New York's famous yellow (1)_____ are set to change. New York City has picked the Nissan minivan to be its next (2)_____. The Japanese car company Nissan Motors has won the (3)_____ to provide the next generation of New York taxis. The deal was announced recently by New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg. It is estimated to be worth US\$1bn (€692m). The (4)_____ will be based on Nissan's NV200 minivan model. Nissan beat US carmaker Ford Motor and Turkish manufacturer Karsan Otomotiv for the 10 year contract, which will be phased in starting in 2013. Mayor Michael Bloomberg acknowledged the Nissan NV200's boxy form evokes (5)_____, but said the (6)_____ paint would give it the iconic New York touch. The vehicle features an overhead window to offer views of city skyscrapers, and charging stations for mobile phones and (7)_____. The car will also feature satellite navigation, so (8)_____ leaving the main Manhattan corridors will not have to contend with drivers who do not know their way around.

laptops

design

suburbia

cab

yellow

passengers

contract

taxis

(1)_____ of New York Michael Bloomberg: "For the first time, New York taxis will include rear passenger (2)_____. The (3)_____ also passed its crash tests, not just as the NV200 street model, but as the taxi model which includes the partition wall and other taxi components." The Nissan was the most fuel-efficient and the cheapest of the three finalists, at about US\$29,000 (€20,073) per vehicle. By 2017, Nissan will be able to manufacture the cars to run solely on electricity, New York City Hall said in a statement. Nissan will (4)_____ charging stations for easy accessibility for owners to charge their vehicles. The (5)_____ of the current (6)_____ are Ford Crown Victorias, a car which only does about 12 miles per gallon, compared with 25 miles per gallon for the Nissan NV200. New York's 13,000 yellow cabs carry about 600,000 passengers a day, and are the only (7)_____ permitted to pick up passengers off the street. The NV200, which will be built in Nissan plants in Mexico, is the first to be designed (8)_____ for use as a New York City taxi.

bulk

install

van

specifically

Mayor

vehicles

fleet

airbags

GAP FILL: LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

New York's new generation of yellow taxis

New York's famous _____ to change. New York City has picked the Nissan minivan to be its next cab. The Japanese car company Nissan Motors has won the contract to provide _____ of New York taxis. The deal was announced recently by New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg. It is estimated to be worth US\$1bn (€692m). The design will be based on Nissan's NV200 minivan model. Nissan beat US carmaker Ford Motor and Turkish manufacturer Karsan Otomotiv for the 10 year contract, _____ in starting in 2013. Mayor Michael Bloomberg acknowledged the Nissan NV200's boxy form evokes suburbia, but said the yellow paint would give it the _____. The vehicle features an overhead window to offer views _____, and charging stations for mobile phones and laptops. The car will also feature _____, so passengers leaving the main Manhattan corridors will not have to contend with drivers who do not know their way around.

Mayor of New York Michael Bloomberg: "_____, New York taxis will include rear passenger airbags. The van also passed its crash tests, not just as the NV200 street model, but as the taxi model which includes the partition wall and _____." The Nissan was the most fuel-efficient and the cheapest of the three finalists, at about US\$29,000 (€20,073) per vehicle. By 2017, Nissan will be able to manufacture the cars to run _____, New York City Hall said in a statement. Nissan will install charging stations for easy accessibility for owners to charge their vehicles. The bulk of the current fleet are _____, a car which only does about 12 miles per gallon, compared with 25 miles per gallon for the Nissan NV200. New York's 13,000 yellow cabs carry about 600,000 passengers a day, and are the only vehicles permitted to pick up passengers off the street. The NV200, which will be built in _____, is the first to be designed specifically for use as _____.

GRAMMAR

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

New York's new generation of yellow taxis

New York's famous yellow taxis are set to change. New York City has picked the Nissan minivan to be (1)___ next cab. The Japanese car company Nissan Motors has won the contract to provide the next generation (2)___ New York taxis. The deal was announced recently by New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg. It is estimated to be worth US\$1bn (€692m). (3)___ design will be based on Nissan's NV200 minivan model. Nissan beat US carmaker Ford Motor and Turkish manufacturer Karsan Otomotiv for the 10 year contract, which will be phased in starting in 2013. Mayor Michael Bloomberg acknowledged the Nissan NV200's boxy form evokes suburbia, (4)___ said the yellow paint would give it the iconic New York touch. The vehicle features an overhead window to offer views of city skyscrapers, (5)___ charging stations (6)___ mobile phones and laptops. The car will also feature satellite navigation, (7)___ passengers leaving the main Manhattan corridors will not have to contend with drivers (8)___ do not know their way around.

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Mayor of New York Michael Bloomberg: "For the first time, New York taxis will include rear passenger airbags. The van (1)___ passed its crash tests, not (2)___ as the NV200 street model, but as the taxi model (3)___ includes the partition wall and (4)___ taxi components." The Nissan was the most fuel-efficient and the cheapest of the three finalists, at (5)___ US\$29,000 (€20,073) per vehicle. By 2017, Nissan will be able to manufacture the cars to run solely on electricity, New York City Hall said in a statement. Nissan (6)___ install charging stations for easy accessibility for owners to charge (7)___ vehicles. The bulk of the current fleet are Ford Crown Victorias, a car which only does about 12 miles per gallon, compared (8)___ 25 miles per gallon for the Nissan NV200. New York's 13,000 yellow cabs carry about 600,000 passengers a day, and are the only vehicles permitted to pick up passengers off the street. The NV200, which will be built in Nissan plants in Mexico, is the first to be designed specifically for use as a New York City taxi.

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SPELLING TEST

The teacher will ask the class individually to spell the following words that are in the article. Afterwards, check your answers with your teacher, using the following ratings: **Pass = 12, Good = 15, Very good = 18, Excellent = 20**

1	corridors	11	satellite
2	iconic	12	laptops
3	manufacturer	13	specifically
4	suburbia	14	navigation
5	vehicle	15	estimated
6	limousine	16	announced
7	phased	17	yellow
8	skyscrapers	18	generation
9	partition	19	passenger
10	accessibility	20	electricity

LINKS

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/05/03/us-newyork-taxi-idUSTRE74259I20110503>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-13276404>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/travel/article-1383773/New-York-taxis-Nissan-supply-Big-Apple-new-cabs.html>

<http://blogs.wsj.com/metropolis/2011/05/03/new-yorks-next-taxi-will-be-a-nissan/>

ANSWERS

GAP FILL: New York's new generation of yellow taxis: New York's famous yellow **taxis** are set to change. New York City has picked the Nissan minivan to be its next cab. The Japanese car company Nissan Motors has won the **contract** to provide the next **generation** of New York taxis. The deal was announced recently by New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg. It is estimated to be worth US\$1bn (€692m). The **design** will be based on Nissan's NV200 minivan model. Nissan beat US carmaker Ford Motor and Turkish manufacturer Karsan Otomotiv for the 10 year contract, which will be phased in starting in 2013. Mayor Michael Bloomberg acknowledged the Nissan NV200's boxy form evokes **suburbia**, but said the **yellow** paint would give it the iconic New York touch. The vehicle features an overhead window to offer views of city skyscrapers, and charging stations for mobile phones and **laptops**. The car will also feature satellite navigation, so **passengers** leaving the main Manhattan corridors will not have to contend with drivers who do not know their way around.

Mayor of New York Michael Bloomberg: "For the first time, New York taxis will include rear passenger **airbags**. The **van** also passed its crash tests, not just as the NV200 street model, but as the taxi model which includes the partition wall and other taxi components." The Nissan was the most fuel-efficient and the cheapest of the three finalists, at about US\$29,000 (€20,073) per vehicle. By 2017, Nissan will be able to manufacture the cars to run solely on electricity, New York City Hall said in a statement. Nissan will **install** charging stations for easy accessibility for owners to charge their vehicles. The **bulk** of the current **fleet** are Ford Crown Victorias, a car which only does about 12 miles per gallon, compared with 25 miles per gallon for the Nissan NV200. New York's 13,000 yellow cabs carry about 600,000 passengers a day, and are the only **vehicles** permitted to pick up passengers off the street. The NV200, which will be built in Nissan plants in Mexico, is the first to be designed **specifically** for use as a New York City taxi. (V1)

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