**BUSES GO ELECTRIC**

Yellow school buses are going green, thanks to a $2.5 billion plan by the United States government.

**LEXILE:** 990L (830L alternate reading level)

**SOCIAL STUDIES (NCSS) STANDARD:** Science, Technology, and Society

**COMMON CORE (CCSS) STANDARDS:** RI.6-8.1, RI.6-8.4, RI.6-8.8, W.6-8.2

**QUESTIONS FOR CLOSE READING AND DISCUSSION**

- Why has Congress included money for electric school buses in the infrastructure law? Whom will the law benefit, and how? Why would health and climate issues be central concerns in an infrastructure law?
- Why would bus factories be interested in making electric buses? In what ways, other than reducing pollution, might building electric buses benefit a community?
- Do you think the government should spend even more money on electric vehicles? Why or why not?

**EXTEND LEARNING**

Have students explore the ways that the infrastructure law will affect their community. First, here is a summary of what the law includes: [ti.me/33yvrp](http://ti.me/33yvrp). In addition, encourage students to find local news articles about the law, and to check city and state government sites for news on how the federal money will be spent in their area. Students might also consider how their family will be impacted by these projects, either through work (including their commute) or in daily life. Then, have students in small groups create a map of their community, whether it’s a neighborhood, town, or state. The map should show the infrastructure that students and their family use every day, or that otherwise affects their lives. It should also show ways in which infrastructure improvements will impact people in the community. Students should use a combination of illustrations (drawing or photographs) and text.

**ENGAGE THE READER**

Write the word *infrastructure* on the board and ask students if they can define it. (*relating to the basic structures, like roads and electrical systems, needed for a society*) Tell them that Congress recently passed a $1.2 trillion infrastructure bill. Ask: What other things might be part of our society’s infrastructure? In what ways would building new infrastructure projects help communities? What infrastructure projects would benefit your community, and why?

**COVER STORY QUIZ + ANSWER KEY**

The cover quiz can be found on page 3 of this guide.

For the Google Forms quiz, click [here](http://example.com).

TIME PERSON OF THE YEAR
Billionaire inventor Elon Musk has been named TIME’s 2021 Person of the Year.
LEXILE: 1000L (850L alternate reading level)
SOCIAL STUDIES (NCSS) STANDARD: Time, Continuity, and Change
COMMON CORE (CCSS) STANDARDS: RI.6-8.1, RI.6-8.4, RI.6-8.6, RI.6-8.8

BEFORE READING
Tell students they will read about TIME magazine’s choices for 2021’s most important people in the news. Then have students look at the images at the top of the article. Ask: Who do you recognize among the individuals chosen as TIME’s people of the year? Ask students to share what they know. Then ask: Why do you think TIME chose these people? How do they represent the time in which we are living? Who would be your choice for Person of the Year, and why? As students read the article, have them note details that confirm or challenge their initial ideas.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
• TIME’s editor in chief, Edward Felsenthal, says, “Few individuals have had more influence than Musk on life on Earth, and potentially life off Earth too.” What does he mean? In which ways could Musk’s innovations affect your life?
• Why do you think TIME showcases an athlete and an entertainer? What makes these fields important?
• Person of the Year is chosen because he or she is a marker of influence, not always for the good. Do you agree with this?

8 QUESTIONS FOR SYLVIA EARLE
The marine biologist talks about how to protect the ocean and her dream of access to submersibles for all.
LEXILE: 1040L (840L alternate reading level)
SOCIAL STUDIES (NCSS) STANDARD: Science, Technology, and Society
COMMON CORE (CCSS) STANDARDS: RI.6-8.4, RI.6-8.6, RI.6-8.7, SL.6-8.1

BEFORE READING
Tell students that Sylvia Earle is a biologist, an author, and a defender of the ocean. Ask: Why is it important for scientists like Earle to speak out in defense of the natural world?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
• Earle says, “Earth functions like a big computer system.” How does this analogy help Earle make her point?
• Earle says 10-year-olds have access to more knowledge than even the smartest people of the past. What does she mean?
• “Our existence is on the line,” Earle says. Do you agree with this statement? Explain.

CLOSING ACTIVITY
Pair this interview with “An Open Letter to the Global Media by Greta Thunberg and Vanessa Nakate,” at the bottom of the article. As students read the letter, have them compare and contrast its persuasive strategies with the ones Earle uses in the interview. How are their tones similar or different? What kinds of details do they provide? Then, start a discussion by asking: Which argument do you find more convincing, and why? Do you share these views on the environment? Explain.
Use this week’s cover story, “Buses Go Electric,” to answer the questions below. For questions 1–6, circle the letter next to the best answer. If you need more space to write your response to question 7, you may use the back of this page.

1. What two benefits of electric school buses are established in the article's first section?
   A. less pollution and jobs
   B. less pollution and higher profits for bus companies
   C. jobs and higher school attendance
   D. better roads and Internet access

2. What makes Chris Pratt a reliable source for a story about electric school buses?
   A. He is a welder at the Blue Bird bus company.
   B. He is president of an autoworkers’ union in North Carolina.
   C. He is trying to rid school-bus rides of diesel fumes.
   D. He voted for the infrastructure bill.

3. How many school buses currently run on diesel fuel?
   A. 2.5 billion
   B. 26 million
   C. 500,000
   D. about 95% of them

4. In the photo of the Blue Bird electric bus, EV likely stands for
   A. “energy volume.”
   B. “every variety.”
   C. “electric vehicle.”
   D. “efficiency voltage.”

5. Thomas Built Buses’ Kevin Bangston says the company will soon hire a “pretty significant” number of workers. What detail from the article best supports his claim?
   A. School buses create millions of tons of greenhouse-gas pollution a year.
   B. Electric school buses usually travel short distances during the day.
   C. Electric school buses require charging stations.
   D. Government funding is likely to significantly boost the number of electric school buses in the U.S.

6. Which sentence best states the main idea of the section “A Clean and Green Future”?
   A. The U.S. government is reluctant to spend more money on clean-energy projects.
   B. The U.S. government may go further in its commitment to building electric school buses.
   C. California generates more school-bus pollution than any other state.
   D. Half of the school buses in the U.S. will still run on diesel fuel after passage of the Clean Commute act.

7. What can this article tell us about the role of the U.S. government in our everyday lives?