

NEWS BREAK

Sunday's News Break selects an article from Sunday, February 5, 2017 of The Seattle Times print replica for an in-depth reading of the news. Read the selected article and answer the attached study questions.

***Please remember to always preview the content of the article before sharing with your students.**

Article: LIFE IN THE TOLL LANE (MAIN, A1)

Pre-Reading & Vocabulary

- Do your parents have a long commute to work?
- What's their approximate time on the road each day?
- Do they ever complain about traffic?
- Does traffic add stress to people's lives? Why or why not?
- How do you feel about sitting in traffic?
- What is a toll?
- Do your parents have a WSDOT "Good to Go" toll pass in their car?
- Do you feel that paying a toll is worth it? Why or why not?

Vocabulary: Match the words to the numbered definitions in the chart below.

A. capacity	1. to introduce, as if by pouring; cause to penetrate; instill
B. flaw	2. the maximum amount something can contain
C. infuse	3. to revoke or annul (a law, tax, duty, etc.) by express legislative enactment; abrogate.
D. opposition	4. to undergo or feel pain or distress
E. repeal	5. a payment or fee exacted by the state, the local authorities, etc., for some right or privilege, as for passage along a road or over a bridge.
F. suffer	6. a feature that mars the perfection of something; defect; fault
G. toll	7. a person or group of people opposing, criticizing, or protesting something, someone, or another group.

Comprehension:

1. Each weekday morning, thousands of Eastside commuters have to decide what's more important. What are the two things they have to choose from?
2. What are peak hours for southbound and northbound traffic?
3. What is the max amount that is charged for a toll?
4. The toll lanes collected \$_____ million after operating expenses — triple the expected income. By law, where does that money need to be spent?
5. Peak-time drivers saved an average ____ minutes by choosing toll lanes from Lynnwood to Bellevue.
6. But for residents of Snohomish County passing through, the former chokepoint in Kirkland has merely shifted north to what city?
7. Why has congestion grown in Bothell?
8. What does WSDOT stand for?
9. Approximately how many drivers per day use the toll lanes, saving an average of 11 minutes southbound and 14 minutes northbound at peak times, end-to-end, compared with the general purpose lanes?
10. The state is striving to add capacity by springtime to alleviate Bothell traffic. What is WSDOT going to do?
11. The goal is an efficient ____-mph flow, the speed that moves the most cars per hour, like rice poured through a funnel. The state reports it's meeting that standard ____ percent of the time, just short of the 90 percent required by federal and state law to receive certain funding, but better than 59 percent in the old carpool-only lanes.
12. The opponents' deeper grievance is WSDOT's failure to carry out its 2002 master plan that called for what?
13. In Washington state, where highway construction costs are among the nation's highest, I-405 consultants learned tolls would pay only a fraction of the \$_____ million spent on the toll lanes and related projects. WSDOT changed its prime goal from financing more road capacity to managing congestion.

Discussion Questions or Extension Essay Questions:

That won't cure the chokepoint at the Highway 522 junction in Bothell. Nor would it defuse populist complaints that the wealthy can zoom by in "Lexus lanes" while others tap their brakes.

- Why would these lanes be called "Lexus lanes" by some commuters?

I-405 tolls routinely exceed the \$4 state managers said would be a normal weekday max. Commuters are thinking, "I can't do that every day," Pollet said.

- Tolls can hurt the pocketbooks of many drivers. Figure out what a \$4 toll to/from work would cost for a month (20 work days). What about \$10 tolls to/from work? How could this eat into a family's budget?
- Can people do this, realistically? What other things would have to be cut from their budget?
- What would be a fair toll amount?

David Hablewitz has written "Stop405tolls.org" in white shoe polish on the canopy of his old pickup, which slowed to a standstill leaving Lynnwood on a chilly Tuesday last month.

Hablewitz is outraged that the state kicked two-person carpools out of the formerly free left lane unless they pay tolls. He often combines a work trip to Bellevue with taking his

daughter to school in Issaquah. To help the lanes flow, WSDOT raised to three the number of people required for free entry.

- Why do you think WSDOT increased the carpool lane (for free entry) from 2 to 3 people riding in the car?

The I-405 toll-lane program is in the midst of a two-year experiment. So how is it working for drivers, and the state?

- What is your assessment of the experiment so far? What areas need to be changed? What areas can stay the same?

News Break is posted to the Web on Monday and Wednesday. Please share this NIE News Break program with other teachers. To sign-up for the print replica for your class, please [register on-line](#) or call 206/652-6290 or toll-free 1-888/775-2655.

Copyright © 2017 The Seattle Times Company

Newsbreak Answer Key: February 5, 2017

Vocabulary

- A. 2
- B. 6
- C. 1
- D. 7
- E. 3
- F. 4
- G. 5

Comprehension Questions

1. Time or money
2. Peak hours are 5-9 a.m. southbound, 3-7 p.m. northbound
3. \$10
4. \$15.6 million, the money must be reinvested in I-405.
5. 14 minutes
6. Bothell
7. That's mainly because the state settled for having only one toll lane and two general lanes in each direction between Bothell and Lynnwood — a flaw that caught legislators and the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) by surprise, when jobs and traffic growth roared back sooner than expected after the recession.

The \$462 million project changed the free carpool lane into a toll lane, while creating a second toll lane from Bellevue to Bothell. New ramps to reduce weaving also were added. The total cost includes lane and ramp improvements in Kirkland that were completed earlier.

But lawmakers didn't allocate money to widen the tight sections over the Sammamish River at Highway 522 in Bothell.

8. Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)
9. 51,000 drivers
10. By turning the northbound right shoulder into a traffic lane from the Canyon Park area to Lynnwood for the afternoon commute.
11. 45-mph flow; 88%
12. Two additional general lanes each way on I-405.
13. \$462 million