BBC LEARNING ENGLISH
Take Away English 随身英语
Driverless cars
无人驾驶汽车

- *請注意：中文文字內容只提供簡體版*

Vocabulary: driverless cars 词汇：无人驾驶汽车

As the **relentless pace** of technology continues to advance, companies must **adapt** or get left behind. One of the key areas of **contention** these days is the driverless car. **Autonomous** cars have long been featured in science fiction movies and books, but in recent years they have moved from a **pipe dream** to a reality.

The development of the autonomous car actually started in the 1920s, but it wasn't until the 1980s that the first **prototypes** were successfully created, one of which was designed by Mercedes-Benz.

Since then the technology has **gone from strength to strength** and these days many companies are **jumping on the bandwagon**. Uber is the latest to announce its plan to **unroll a fleet of** driverless **cars**. It follows Apple and Ford, who have announced similar plans, and Google and Tesla, who already have autonomous cars on the road.

Two questions arise: Do we really need them? And are they really safe? **Advocates** of driverless cars would argue 'yes' to both. **Vehicular autonomy**, if perfected, could lead to much safer road conditions for all, lower insurance costs and enhance **mobility** for the elderly, the sick and those with disabilities. They would also allow roads to increase their **capacity** between 200 – 400%.

Perfection, though, seems to be just **out of reach** at the moment. To date Google's self-driving car, launched in 2012, has had 14 minor accidents. Even worse, Tesla's Autopilot has caused one **fatality** in 2015, where the vehicle simply did not see the obstacle.

While the technology exists, driverless cars and full vehicular autonomy is still **embryonic**. That said, you can rest assured that further development in the field is **inevitable**. And what's the future? Well, George Marcus, co-founder of Geometric Intelligence – Uber's autonomous development department – imagines a world of flying cars taking us to work. He says "They're going to allow people to take long commutes at 75 or 150 mph where you'd otherwise get stuck in traffic. It's really, in a not-too-distant future, going to be something that is practical." Wouldn't that be fine?

词汇表

relentless	持续不断的
pace	步伐
adapt	适应，改变
contention	争议，争论
autonomous	无人驾驶的，自动的
pipe dream	幻想，不现实的计划
prototype	（机器、工业产品等）原型
go from strength to strength	日益强大，蒸蒸日上
jumping on the bandwagon	跟风，紧跟潮流
unroll	公开展示，发布
a fleet of cars	一组车队
advocates	拥护者，提倡者
vehicular autonomy	车辆自动驾驶（技术）
mobility	行动能力
capacity	负荷
out of reach	遥不可及的
fatality	死亡事故
embryonic	未成熟的，初期的
inevitable	必然会发生的

测验与练习

1. 阅读课文并回答问题。

1. Which two car companies already have driverless cars on the road?

2. True or False: *Mercedes-Benz created the first driverless car prototype.*

3. What advantages will driverless cars bring to society?

4. Are driverless cars 100% safe?

5. Which expression in the text means *not maintain progress with*?

2. 请你在不参考课文的情况下完成下列练习。选择一个意思合适的单词填入句子的空格处。

1. I'll never make enough money to go to the moon. It's just a _____.

prototype	fleet	bandwagon	pipe dream

2. I can't get around like I used to. I just don't have the _____ anymore.

autonomy	mobility	contention	fatality

3. The tiger was _____ in its pursuit of the deer. It followed it over miles of country.

pace	inevitable	relentless	embryonic

4. It is believed that there has been at least one _____ in last night's train crash.

fatality	out of reach	adapt	advocate

5. I am a feminist so of course I'm an _____ of equal pay for women!

contention	mobility	autonomy	advocate

答案

1. 阅读课文并回答问题。

1. Which two car companies already have driverless cars on the road?
Google and Tesla, who already have autonomous cars on the road.

2. True or False: *Mercedes-Benz created the first driverless car prototype.*
False. ONE was designed by Mercedes-Benz.

3. What advantages will driverless cars bring to society?
Much safer road conditions for all, lower insurance costs and enhance mobility for the elderly, the sick and those with disabilities. They would also allow roads to increase their capacity between 200 – 400%.

4. Are driverless cars 100% safe?
No. Google's self-driving car, launched in 2012, has had 14 minor accidents. Tesla's Autopilot has caused one fatality in 2015.

5. Which expression in the text means 'not maintain progress with'?
'Get left behind'.

2. 请你在不参考课文的情况下完成下列练习。选择一个意思合适的单词填入句子的空格处。

1. I'll never make enough money to go to the moon. It's just a **pipe dream.**

2. I can't get around like I used to. I just don't have the **mobility** anymore.

3. The tiger was **relentless** in its pursuit of the deer. It followed it over miles of country.

4. It is believed that there has been at least one **fatality** in last night's train crash.

5. I am a feminist so of course I'm an **advocate** of equal pay for women!