



# The High Speed Rail

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High-speed rail has fundamentally transformed the way millions of people travel across continents. Capable of reaching speeds in excess of 300 kilometres per hour, these sleek trains have **revolutionized** intercity transport, turning journeys that once took an entire day into matters of mere hours. Japan pioneered the technology in 1964 with the launch of the Shinkansen, and since then, dozens of nations have followed suit.

The construction of a high-speed rail network is an immense undertaking that requires substantial financial **investment** and decades of careful planning. Engineers must design specialized tracks, viaducts, and tunnels capable of withstanding tremendous forces. Furthermore, governments must navigate complex negotiations with landowners, environmental groups, and local communities before a single rail can be laid.

Despite these challenges, the **benefits** are widely regarded as compelling. High-speed rail dramatically reduces carbon emissions compared to short-haul flights, eases congestion on overcrowded motorways, and stimulates regional economic growth. Cities connected by these networks frequently experience surges in tourism, business activity, and property values, transforming previously isolated regions into thriving commercial hubs.

However, critics argue that the staggering costs are not always **justified**. Some routes struggle to attract sufficient ridership, leaving taxpayers to subsidise enormous deficits. Maintenance expenses also escalate over time, and ticket prices can become prohibitively expensive for ordinary commuters. Critics in Britain, for example, have pointed to the spiralling budget of HS2 as a cautionary tale.

Looking ahead, emerging technologies such as magnetic levitation and hyperloop systems promise to push the boundaries even further. China is already operating commercial maglev services, while several start-ups are racing to **deploy** vacuum-tube transport. Whether these innovations will eventually replace conventional rail remains uncertain, but one thing is clear: the appetite for faster, greener, and more efficient travel shows no signs of slowing down.

## A. Vocabulary

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|------------------------|---|
| 1. revolutionized ____ | a. based on traditional or commonly accepted methods              |
| 2. investment ____     | b. in a way that is too expensive or restrictive to be practical  |
| 3. viaducts ____       | c. provide financial support to keep prices low or cover losses   |
| 4. benefits ____       | d. put into active use or service for a specific purpose          |
| 5. congestion ____     | e. state of being overcrowded or blocked, especially with traffic |
| 6. justified ____      | f. completely changed something in an important way               |
| 7. subsidise ____      | g. money spent on something expected to bring future returns      |
| 8. prohibitively ____  | h. long bridges that carry roads or railways across valleys       |
| 9. deploy ____         | i. advantages or positive results gained from something           |
| 10. conventional ____  | j. shown to be reasonable, fair, or necessary                     |

## B. True or False

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- |  |   |
|--|---|
| ___ 1. High-speed trains can travel faster than 300 kilometres per hour. | ___ 2. Japan launched the world's first high-speed rail line in 1964. |
|--|---|

- \_\_\_ 3. Building a high-speed rail network is a quick and inexpensive process.
- \_\_\_ 4. High-speed rail produces more carbon emissions than short-haul flights.
- \_\_\_ 5. Cities connected by high-speed rail often see increases in tourism and property values.
- \_\_\_ 6. All high-speed rail routes attract enough passengers to be profitable.
- \_\_\_ 7. Critics in Britain have raised concerns about the rising costs of HS2.
- \_\_\_ 8. China currently operates commercial magnetic levitation services.
- \_\_\_ 9. Hyperloop systems are already widely used around the world.
- \_\_\_ 10. Engineers building high-speed rail must design tracks that can handle tremendous forces.

### C. Fill in the Blanks

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**Word Bank:** revolutionized, investment, congestion, justified, deploy, viaducts, subsidise, conventional

1. The arrival of smartphones \_\_\_\_\_ the way people communicate worldwide.
2. Building a new airport requires a massive financial \_\_\_\_\_ from the government.
3. Traffic \_\_\_\_\_ in the city centre is much worse during the morning rush hour.
4. She felt her decision to quit her job was fully \_\_\_\_\_ by the better opportunity she received.
5. The company plans to \_\_\_\_\_ new software across all its offices next month.

### D. Comprehension Questions

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1. What are some of the main benefits that high-speed rail brings to cities and the environment?
2. Why do critics sometimes argue that high-speed rail projects are not worth the cost?
3. What emerging technologies might shape the future of high-speed travel?

### E. Discussion Questions

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1. Do you think governments should invest heavily in high-speed rail, or focus on improving existing transport instead? Why?
2. If a high-speed rail line were built between your hometown and another major city, how do you think it would change daily life there?

# Answer Key

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**A. Vocabulary:** 1-f, 2-g, 3-h, 4-i, 5-e, 6-j, 7-c, 8-b, 9-d, 10-a

**B. True/False:** 1-T, 2-T, 3-F, 4-F, 5-T, 6-F, 7-T, 8-T, 9-F, 10-T

**C. Fill Blanks:** 1-revolutionized, 2-investment, 3-congestion, 4-justified, 5-deploy

**D. Comprehension:**

1. It reduces carbon emissions, eases motorway congestion, and stimulates regional economic growth, tourism, and property values.
2. Some routes struggle to attract enough riders, forcing taxpayers to cover deficits, while maintenance costs rise and ticket prices can become unaffordable.
3. Magnetic levitation trains and hyperloop vacuum-tube systems are promising technologies that could push the boundaries of speed even further.

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