Summary Writing- 3

The spectre of our cities choking with unhealthy air has prompted numerous governments to mandate a transition to electric cars. Their concerns are well founded, even if their proposals fall short of what is needed. Over the past four decades, cars have become far less polluting. Their fuel efficiency has practically doubled and their tailpipe emissions have been reduced by more than 95%. Yet cities such as London and Paris are still battling smog and pollution. California has for decades demanded the toughest emission standards in the US, and yet Los Angeles heads the list of US cities for bad air quality. Moving to all-electric car fleets will be a positive step, albeit an inadequate measure. [...]

Even considering the far greater efficiency of an electric vehicle, zero tailpipe emissions does not mean zero carbon emissions for the travel.

Today over 50% of the electricity generated in the UK and over 65% of electricity generated in the US comes from fossil fuels. Our carbon footprint will improve by barely a quarter if we all switch to electric vehicles.

And there are other aspects to be concerned about. We currently demand considerable amounts of valuable urban land for roads.

London allocates almost 24% of its land area to roads and supporting infrastructure. In many US cities this can be as high as 40%.

In order to get people out of cars, cities also need to make it easier for people to connect between different transport modes. Behavioural studies have shown that commuters will switch routes and modes if better options are available.

Above all, city administrators are recognising the importance of governance for improving mobility efficiency. Regulations that manage parking capacity or city centre driving restrictions [...] are increasingly used to motivate commuters to gravitate towards modes.

The World Health Organization has estimated that a city needs to allocate at least nine square metres of green space for each resident. Yet many fast-growing cities around the world are making do with less than two square metres after allocation of ever more precious land to feed the insatiable appetite for roads and parking. L...J

Los Angeles, which offers more road capacity per capita than any other large US city, has discovered [that] adding roads and highways merely encourages more people to use private transport modes. The average Los Angeles commuter wastes almost 5.5 days each year paralysed in gridlock. Traffic congestion is also a growing economic burden for most cities. A study in India has determined that traffic congestion can account for erosion of almost 3% of GDP for the sprawling New Delhi metropolitan region.

In other words, the rush to cleaner cars alone will not solve the problems cities are grappling with. Rather, cities need far fewer cars and should support a wide variety of modes favouring pedestrians, cyclists and mass transit or shared mobility. New York City, where, per capita, car ownership is half the US average, has half the overall carbon footprint per person of Los Angeles. [. . .]

of travel aligned to societal goals. These range from incentives for higher occupancy vehicles, [to providing] favourable access to roads and parking spaces for low environmental impact vehicles. [. . .]

We all want our cities to be faster, smarter and greener - and the car is not the only answer.

We must use technology and entrepreneurship to ensure that our urban future is fair, inclusive and aligned with the common good.

(a) Summarise the problems caused by heavy traffic in our cities and what measures should be taken to reduce it, according to Text B.
You must use continuous writing (not note form).
Use your own words where appropriate.
Write 150 words.
Up to 10 marks are available for the content of your answer and up to 10 marks for the quality of your writing.

(b) Imagine you are Taylor Swift, the city planner in LA.
You are interviewed by a news reporter investigating the impact of electric vehicles on pollution and congestion in your city.
Interviewer's question: Some city residents think increasing ownership of electric cars will solve all our problems with pollution and congestion on our roads. What is your opinion and why?
Swift's Answer: