



## contents

- 01** • Car Noises  
• Vacation's Challenge

---

- 02** • Lost Languages?

---

- 03** • Safety First  
• Everybody's Talking About... The Food We Eat

---

- 04** • Fuel Economy Ratings Get Real  
• Follow-Up: Green Schools

## Car Noises:

### WHAT YOUR CAR IS TRYING TO TELL YOU.

Is that sound normal? Is it something to worry about? What's it going to cost? Some car owners revel in the sounds their cars make – the vroom of a powerful engine, the glory of a multi-channel symphony surrounding them. Then, there are the rest of us – baffled by mysterious buzzes, rattles and gurgles, afraid that clunk-clunk might signal a wheel about to fall off.

Taking note of car noises is an important part of keeping your vehicle safe and trouble-free. Bringing noises to the attention of your auto technician can make a problem easier to diagnose and help pinpoint a possibly dangerous condition. Here are some things the technician will want to know:

- From what area of the car is the noise coming?
- What does it sound like – a clunk, a whine, something scraping, a hiss?
- Under what conditions does the noise occur?
- Does it occur only when you drive at certain speeds?
- Does the noise increase in pitch, rate or volume as your road speed increases?
- Have you recently had any repair or routine service done?

Here are some common noises and their possible causes. It takes an expert to properly diagnose car noises, so if you're concerned by noise or vibration your car makes, take your car to a competent

continued on page 3



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SPRING 2007

*“He who would be a leader must be a bridge.”*

-WELSH PROVERB

## Vacation's Challenge.

### HEADING OFF SUMMER LEARNING LOSS.

It's almost time for the annual brain drain -- the loss of students' learning over the summer vacation. Teachers know the phenomenon; they have to deal with it every fall. So now, before the summer break, let's talk about summer learning loss. What are some of the strategies and programs designed to prevent or overcome it? And what can you do to help your students keep what you have both worked so hard for them to learn?

#### 2.6 MONTHS LOST

Dr. Harris Cooper, psychology professor and Director of Education at Duke University, found that all students experience "significant learning losses in procedural and factual knowledge ..." when they did not engage in educational activities over the summer. The losses vary by subject matter and grade level, with greatest setbacks in math computation skills.

#### LOSS PREVENTION

Seeking to plug the brain drain, school districts have tried a variety of strategies, from rewriting the school calendar so there is no extended summer vacation to out-of-school enrichment programs. The most common solution by far is summer school. However, only about 10 percent of the nation's students attend schools with non-traditional calendars or attend summer school. Surprisingly, 56 percent of students said they would be interested in a summer program that "helped kids keep up with schoolwork or prepare for the next grade," according to a report from Public Agenda, the opinion research organization.

#### SUMMER SCHOOL WORKS

Summer school programs generally produce good results in both remedial and accelerated learning, according to analysis by Dr. Cooper. What's more, programs designed to lessen or remove learning deficiencies have about the same positive impact on students' knowledge and skills as programs aimed at acceleration or other goals.

continued on page 2

# Lost languages?

## SCHOOLS LAG IN TEACHING CHINESE AND ARABIC.

America's focus in global trade, security and diplomacy has shifted dramatically in recent years, creating a pressing need for people who are fluent in "critical languages," particularly Chinese and Arabic. There has been rapid growth in education programs at all levels to meet the demand, but still only a small percentage of U.S. schools offer those languages. According to the most recent survey by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, in 2000 less than 1 percent of schools provided classes in Chinese, and even fewer offered Arabic, compared to 90 percent of U.S. secondary schools teaching Spanish. Today, even with the increase in schools offering critical languages, Education Week reported that "linguistic mismatch" persists.

### STUDENTS WANTED

Students continue to choose the traditionally most popular Spanish and French, with fewer opting for German or Russian. This could be due to the fact that Chinese and Arabic appear more challenging than European languages. Certainly, it's more difficult to learn a language that requires an entirely different form of writing and, for Chinese, vocal inflections that change the meaning of words.

### TEACHERS NEEDED

Teachers of Chinese and Arabic are in short supply. Colleges and universities have launched or expanded centers for training teachers. Middlebury College's well-known Language School, for example, now offers full scholarships for students in a summer immersion in language study of Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Portuguese or Russian.

In addition, other educational, government and private organizations are actively promoting teaching of critical languages and their associated cultures. A good example is the National Capital

Language Resource Center based at Georgetown University, which hosts the Arabic K-12 Network, a resource with teaching materials, cultural information, an eNewsletter and a professional development section for educators.

Although authoritative national data is scarce, students seem to be considering the study of critical languages as schools from K-12 to graduate level offer the classes. It shouldn't be too long until the demand reaches critical mass within the institutions, matching the demand from the outside world.

### SOURCES AND RESOURCES:

Education Week ran a number of articles on this subject in the March 29, 2006 issue. **Note:** very long web addresses have been condensed into TinyURLs for your convenience. Simply enter the Tiny URL into your browser as you would any other web address.

Data Scarce for Gauging Scope of Language Study – Education Week, March 29, 2006. Online at [www.edweek.org](http://www.edweek.org). Tiny URL for this article: <http://preview.tinyurl.com/y4375x>

Scarcity of Language Teachers Retards Growth – Education Week, March 29, 2006. Online at [www.edweek.org](http://www.edweek.org). Tiny URL for this article: <http://tinyurl.com/t9s8a>

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## Vacation's Challenge.

continued  
from page 1

### HEADING OFF SUMMER LEARNING LOSS.

#### THINK SUMMER NOW

Include your students in your summer plans. You can provide the materials and motivation for hitting the books over the summer by selecting from the almost unlimited array of reading lists, then coupling them to contracts, competitions, self-scoring quizzes or summer book clubs.

Talk to the teachers your students will have next term. You may be able to create a learning bridge between spring and fall that will help give your kids a head start.

#### REACH OUT TO PARENTS

Parent involvement helps improve summer learning and retention, although many parents are unsure what they can do. So help them with a packet of suggested activities and resources to help parents make this an exciting and educational summer for their kids. Dr. Cooper suggests:

- Keep lots of books around and go to the library regularly.
- Try to include next term's studies in your summer's vacation plans, such as visits to historical places, interactive museums, and places where kids can see government in action.
- Add math. That's the skill that shrinks the most, so look for activities that exercise it.

#### SOURCES AND RESOURCES:

Center for Summer Learning at Johns Hopkins University. A great source for information, teaching materials, research reports, news, and program descriptions and evaluations. <http://www.jhu.edu/teachbaltimore/research/index.html>

The Out-of-School Time Learning and Development Project at the Harvard Family Research Project. Includes evaluation of several programs. <http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/afterschool/about.html>

Education World-Barnes & Noble Summer Reading resources. Includes book lists, as well as articles and references in Summer BOOK-TIVITYs. [http://www.educationworld.com/summer\\_reading/](http://www.educationworld.com/summer_reading/)

Where in the World Are We Vacationing? Grades 3-5, 6-8. Subjects: Measurement, Geography. Students use, maps, longitude and latitude coordinates to locate vacation destinations. [http://www.education-world.com/a\\_lesson/00-2/lp2025.shtml](http://www.education-world.com/a_lesson/00-2/lp2025.shtml)



# Safety First.

WWW.TEACHERS.COM/SAFETY

Teachers' Insurance Plan™ has launched a new section on their website that can be an invaluable resource to you, your family, and your classroom throughout the year.

Called the Safety Information Center, it offers one-stop shopping for information and advice on driving and homeowner safety issues, as well as money saving tips. Teachers' Insurance Plan, which offers highly discounted car insurance for members of the educational community, is pleased to provide this free resource.

When you go to [www.teachers.com/safety](http://www.teachers.com/safety) you have a myriad of car,

home and personal safety topics that cover you year round -- what to do if you have a car accident, driving tips for hot weather, the ins and outs of car insurance lingo, road rage, digging out from snow, Halloween safety, protecting your home from lightning strikes, how to deal with frozen pipes, explaining ice dams, and water conservation, among others.

More than 30 topics in all, with more being added regularly. So, check out the site and come back often. As the seasons change, so do the precautions you need to take.

## Everybody's Talking About... The food we eat.



Now, here's a newsworthy topic that students at all levels can sink their teeth into. Food -- where it comes from, how to eat well and love it, what's new in school lunches, what people eat around the world, forbidden foods, and, of course, recipes -- down-home and exotic. You'll also find sources concerned with the big food-related health problem, childhood obesity,

including tips on how to calculate Body Mass Index, an estimate of a person's body fat. So dish it to your kids, and let them dig in!

**Lunch Lessons** -- Chef Ann Cooper is the self-described "renegade lunch lady" who works to transform school cafeterias into culinary classrooms for students. Her web site and blog are rich in fact-filled but fun articles, activities, planners, a good eating report card, and, of course, recipes. <http://www.lunchlessons.org/>

**Where Did Foods Originate?** -- Lesson plans for all grades available from Education World explore how foods from the New World and the East changed the eating habits of the Old World. [http://www.educationworld.com/a\\_lesson/03/lp325-03.shtml](http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/03/lp325-03.shtml)

**We Are What We Eat: Ethnic Food and the Making of Americans** -- by Donna R. Gabaccia. Harvard University Press, 1998, ISBN 0-674-94860-2. This fascinating and scholarly book focuses on "how ethnicity has influenced American eating habits--and thus, the make-up and direction of the American cultural mainstream." Detailed information and excerpts at <http://www.hup.harvard.edu/features/gabwea/index.html>

**Lunch Lessons at Epicurious.com** -- What's in your lunchbox? Epicurious, the fine cooking web site, offers recipes that go way beyond PB&J, yet keep their kid-appeal. [http://www.epicurious.com/cooking/holiday/back\\_to\\_school/lunchbox](http://www.epicurious.com/cooking/holiday/back_to_school/lunchbox)

**Cooking with Kids** -- a web site based on the Cooking with Kids for Dummies books by Kate Heyhoe. <http://www.cookingwithkids.com/>

**My Pyramid** -- U.S. Department of Agriculture interactive site with activities and lessons about nutrition. [www.mypyramid.gov/kids](http://www.mypyramid.gov/kids)

**Taste History! Heritage Cooking for Kids** -- What did they eat during the Revolutionary War...on the Oregon Trail...or exploring with Lewis and Clark? This site serves up history flavored with recipes of the time. [http://theoldentimes.com/kids\\_heritage\\_cooking.html](http://theoldentimes.com/kids_heritage_cooking.html)

**Summer Food Safety** -- Lesson plans for grades 6-8, 9-12 let kids learn and check their knowledge about warm weather food safety. [http://www.educationworld.com/a\\_lesson/00-2/lp2031.shtml](http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/00-2/lp2031.shtml)

**Sizing Up Obesity** -- Since the 1970s, the percentage of overweight kids and adolescents in the United States has more than doubled. Kids Health has an informative, but not dense presentation of the problem with suggested solutions and instructions students can use to calculate their Body Mass Index. [http://www.kidshealth.org/parent/general/body/overweight\\_obesity.html](http://www.kidshealth.org/parent/general/body/overweight_obesity.html)

## Car Noises: WHAT YOUR CAR IS TRYING TO TELL YOU. continued from page 1

technician for an expert assessment as soon as possible. The symbol "!" indicates noises that may signal a dangerous condition, and require immediate attention.

| NOISE   | POSSIBLE CAUSE   |
|---|--|
| Buzz or rattle from under car at certain engine speeds.                                   | • Loose or broken exhaust system or heat shield.   |
| Clicking noise from front end when making a turn (front-wheel or 4-wheel drive vehicles). | • <b>!</b> Worn constant velocity joint(s) in axle(s) -- <i>May fail causing loss of control. Service immediately.</i><br>• Loose brake pads or calipers -- Service.         |
| Gurgling sound coming from dashboard area.  | • Air bubbles in coolant passing through heater core -- Bleed air from cooling system.   |
| Thump-thump that increases with road speed.   | • <b>!</b> Tire tread separation -- <i>Tire may fail. Inspect/replace immediately.</i><br>• Wheel damaged or out of balance -- Check, replace or rebalance wheels as needed. |
| Tick-tick sound after engine is turned off.   | • Normal sound due to heat dissipating.  |
| Squealing noise from under hood when turning the steering wheel.                          | • Loose, worn or glazed power steering belt -- Inspect/adjust or replace.  |
| Squealing from under hood while accelerating or turning.                                  | • Drive belt(s) for air conditioning compressor, alternator or power steering slipping.  |
| Whining noise from corner of the car, increases with road speed.                          | • Worn or defective wheel bearing.<br>• Worn or defective universal joint.   |

### SOURCES AND RESOURCES:

Car Noises -- An extensive list of noises and their possible causes, arranged by type of sound. Each entry is linked to further information. [http://ca.autos.yahoo.com/maintain/trouble\\_hear.html#trouble\\_hear\\_15](http://ca.autos.yahoo.com/maintain/trouble_hear.html#trouble_hear_15)

Car Noise Library -- Actual car noises with a technician's explanation of the source. <http://www.econofix.com/noiselib.html>

# Fuel economy ratings get real.

YOUR MILEAGE STILL MAY VARY – BUT LESS SO.



New federal fuel economy ratings that go into effect with 2008 models should provide a more realistic estimate of a vehicle's fuel mileage – and a jolt to consumers' perceptions.

Under the Environmental Protection Agency's new method for calculating mileage, the city miles per gallon rating for all vehicles will drop by about 12 percent. If you're looking for a hybrid, you may be shocked to see a city mpg number about 30 percent lower than under the old rating system. Not to worry. All it means is that when you shop for a new car or truck, the economy figures you see on the window sticker will be closer to those you'll actually experience in driving.

In creating the new method for calculating fuel economy, the Environmental Protection Agency took into account external factors such as cold weather operation and the way most Americans drive these days. We tend to accelerate and drive faster, and use air conditioning regularly compared to when the old standards went into effect.

There's bound to be some confusion this fall as the 2008 models start to appear in dealers' showrooms. During this transition year, you may

see two nearly identical cars, a 2007 model and a 2008, next to each other displaying window stickers with different mileage figures.

If you're comparing one make or model to another, say a Toyota Camry vs. a Chevy Impala, be sure they are both of the same year, otherwise the mileage comparison won't be meaningful.

#### SOURCES AND RESOURCES:

New Fuel Economy Standards – Learn what's behind the new fuel economy estimates. <http://www.epa.gov/fueleconomy/>

New EPA Fuel Economy Sticker – Get a preview of the new mileage sticker you'll see on 2008 vehicles with explanatory notes. <http://www.fueleconomy.gov/feg/ratingsNewSticker.shtml>

2007 Fuel Economy Guide – Research and compare the EPA mileage ratings by vehicle class, make and model. Guides are also available online for earlier years. (The 2008 guide will be available later this year or in early 2008.) <http://www.fueleconomy.gov/feg/feg2000.htm>

## Follow-up: “Green schools” report confirms reduced costs and student absences.

In the fall 2004 issue of Chalk Talk, we reported on green schools that are “built or renovated to use energy and other resources as efficiently as possible, and to use only durable, low maintenance materials that do not have adverse health effects.”

Last fall, a report, “Greening America’s Schools: Costs and Benefits”, by energy consulting firm Capital E and the American Institute of Architects, concluded that green schools “cost less than two percent more than conventional schools...but provide financial benefits that are 20 times as large.” The report lists benefits ranging from reduced energy and water costs to improved teacher retention, and fewer student absences due to illness. However, the study surveyed only a small sample, 30 schools.

Source: “Greening America’s Schools: Costs and Benefits”, a Capital E report available from [www.cap-e.com](http://www.cap-e.com)

### Pop Quiz

*A: Only 14 states have foreign language requirements, and three of those require language study only of college-bound students, according to a 2004 study by the Council of Chief State School Officers. (As cited in Education Week article “Students Taking Spanish, French; Leaders Pushing Chinese, Arabic”)*



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