

Four hours of daily traffic jams for Dubai students

Listen to the article. How many questions can you hear? With your partner(s), write down the questions you hear. Discuss them.

What is the longest you would spend going to work or school? Spare a thought for school students in Dubai, who spend four hours a day commuting. Most pupils in the city of Dubai are stuck in traffic for almost as long as they spend in school. How can the local government let this crazy situation continue? In fact, it will only get worse as more and more people move to Dubai and roads become more congested.

How do the children feel about missing the first lesson because of gridlocked roads? The UAE's Gulf News describes students who have to get up at the crack of dawn to get the school bus: "It's been crazy since the beginning of the academic year," said Haya Shaikh, a grade 9 student. She has to wake up at 5am to get her 5.45am bus in order to reach school at 7.30. How would you feel about waking up at five every morning to go to school? How would you spend your time on the bus?

Exactly what can parents, schools and governments do to help these students? One mother, Sobia Saheeb, described her routine combat with traffic as a horrific experience. She said: "I bought a car [just] to take my child to school because the bus started arriving much earlier in the morning". She added it still took her over an hour to cover a few kilometres. Wouldn't children be better off cycling?

Are city planners, schools or parents to blame for this situation? Many Dubai residents blame the local government. They want school children to ride a school bus instead of taking up road space in their parent's car. Isn't this better than the current situation? Another idea is to change school hours to enable students to travel after the rush hour finishes. Whatever the solution, the fact is Dubai's kids are in for a long and tiring school year. Do children in your town experience any problems getting to and from school?

The questions

1. What is the longest you would spend going to work or school?
2. How can the local governments let this crazy situation continue?
3. How do the children feel about missing the first lesson because of gridlocked roads?
4. How would you about waking up at five every morning to go to school?
5. How would you spend your time on the bus?
6. Exactly what can parents, schools and governments do to help these students?
7. Wouldn't children be better off cycling?
8. Are city planners, schools or parents to blame for this situation?
9. Isn't this better than the current situation?
10. Do children in your town experience any problems getting to and from school?