

Could the Futuristic Traveling Tube Become a Reality?



It sounds like something straight out of a science fiction movie or a silly cartoon: a futuristic traveling tube that can quickly shoot people wherever they want to go, inside a tiny pod. But this may be just around the corner for people looking for a faster, easier, and cheaper-than-ever way to travel.

South African-American inventor and billionaire Elon Musk, who, in the past, has worked on both private space flight and electric cars, recently announced he has been working on the design of this traveling tube, which could forever change the way we travel the world.

In an interview, Musk described the new tube as a fifth kind of transportation.

“We have planes, trains, automobiles, and boats,” he explained. “What if there was a fifth mode? I have a name for it, [it’s] called the Hyperloop.”

The Hyperloop would have the power to cut back on travel time between major cities like Los Angeles and San Francisco, which is what inspired Musk to design the Hyperloop in the first place.

Musk stated in an interview that he actually came up with the idea for the Hyperloop while thinking about the train that takes people between Los Angeles and San Francisco—it is known for being one of the slowest in the country.

“This system I have in mind...can never crash, is immune to weather, it goes three or four times faster than the bullet train...it goes an average speed of twice what an aircraft would do,” explained Musk.

“You would go from downtown L. A. to downtown San Francisco in under 30 minutes,” he added. “It would cost you much less than an air ticket [and less] than any other mode of transport.”

People using the Hyperloop would shoot around in pods, which are each just over six-and-a-half feet across, and the pods would travel through tubes located either above ground or under water, though Musk has not yet released his final design drawings.

Additionally, Musk believes the Hyperloop could be completely powered by the sun—making it more environmentally friendly than cars, airplanes, or train systems. Someday it could possibly move people between the East and West Coasts of the United States in less than an hour, which is faster than any other mode of transportation that exists. Eventually, the Hyperloop would be able to move people around the world.

The Hyperloop could even run 24/7, be cheap, and allow people to travel on their own schedule. People could show up at the Hyperloop station whenever they want and be quickly sent on their way.

Musk is not the first person outside of science fiction novelists to dream up vacuum tube technology for moving people. The idea has been around for some time, and inventors in other countries, including China, are reportedly working on similar technology.

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

1. What is the Hyperloop?

- A) an electric car that Elon Musk is designing
- B) a private spaceship that Elon Musk is designing
- C) a traveling tube that Elon Musk is designing
- D) a bullet train that Elon Musk is designing

2. What does this passage describe?

- A) This passage describes a traveling tube that could help people get around in the future.
- B) This passage describes the costs of building traveling tubes around the world.
- C) This passage describes the damage that cars, planes, and trains do to the environment.
- D) This passage describes the reasons that people are looking for a cheaper-than-ever way to travel.

3. If built, the Hyperloop would be faster than any other type of transportation.

What evidence from the passage supports this statement?

- A) People using the Hyperloop would travel in pods that are about six-and-a-half feet across.
- B) The Hyperloop is being designed to travel at twice the speed of an airplane.
- C) Right now people can fly, drive, or take a train to get from Los Angeles to San Francisco.
- D) Inventors in other countries are working on technology similar to the Hyperloop.

4. Based on information in the passage, what is one reason that people might want to use the Hyperloop instead of other kinds of transportation?

- A) People with motion sickness might not be able to handle the Hyperloop.
- B) People are tired of using the same four kinds of transportation over and over.
- C) The Hyperloop could take people to places where planes and trains do not go.
- D) People would not have to pay as much to use the Hyperloop.

5. What is this passage mainly about?

- A) science fiction movies and cartoons featuring futuristic traveling tubes with tiny pods
- B) the interest that inventor Elon Musk has in private space flight and electric cars
- C) why the train between Los Angeles and San Francisco is one of the slowest in the country
- D) a tube that could make travel in the future easier, faster, and cheaper

6. Read the following sentences: “Additionally, Musk believes the Hyperloop could be completely powered by the sun—making it more environmentally friendly than cars, airplanes, or train systems. Someday it could possibly move people between the East and West Coasts of the United States in less than an hour, which is faster than any other **mode** of transportation that exists.”

What does the word **mode** mean in the sentence above?

- A) ticket
- B) type
- C) train
- D) travel

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

The Hyperloop would offer travelers many benefits, _____ fast trips and low prices.

- A) meanwhile
- B) finally
- C) including
- D) otherwise

8. According to the passage, what are some of the questions that remain unanswered about the Hyperloop?

9. Is anyone besides Elon Musk working on technology similar to the Hyperloop? If so, who?

10. Based on information in the passage, is a traveling tube such as the Hyperloop likely to become a reality or not? Explain your answer with evidence from the passage.
