

Starting up

- Have you ever bought something that disappointed you, for example something electronic that stopped working or a car that had a lot of problems? What did you do?
- What do manufacturers do if a product they make has a serious problem – for example when a certain model of smartphone exploded?

Vocabulary 1 – A Mercedes-Benz recall

Read the summary. Match the bold words (1–5) with the correct definition (a–f).

There is a problem with the ¹**sunroof** on some Mercedes-Benz cars. The sunroofs are made of glass ²**bonded** to a metal frame. They can ³**slide** to open and close. However, because of a problem with the bonding, the glass may ⁴**detach** from the sliding roof, which could be very dangerous. The company has ⁵**recalled** the cars that have the problem. People who have already paid for the repair may receive ⁶**compensation**, while others will receive the repair free of charge.

- a) move smoothly back and forth
- b) a window in the top of a car
- c) disconnect, come away from
- d) connected, strongly attached
- e) money paid because of a problem or mistake
- f) asked customers to return a product that has a problem

Reading 1

Which two statements are true, according to the article?

- [] The sunroof problem affects only one model of Mercedes-Benz.
- [] The company says it will spend about \$30 million on repairs.
- [] There have been other Mercedes-Benz recalls in the US in the past five years.
- [] Many carmakers including Daimler are facing serious financial challenges right now.

Daimler to recall 745,000 Mercedes-Benz vehicles in the US

Mercedes-Benz owner Daimler will recall nearly 745,000 of its 2001–11 vehicles in the US because of concerns that their sunroofs may be unsafe.

The German carmaker said Mercedes-Benz cars from its C-Class, CLK-Class, CLS-Class and E-Class lines would be recalled because the bonding between the glass panel and the sliding roof frame might not meet requirements and could mean roofs detach.

Owners who have paid for repairs may be entitled to compensation, and Mercedes-Benz dealers will inspect and replace the sliding roof, if necessary, free of charge. The recall is expected to begin on February 14.

Daimler first began an ¹**internal** investigation into the safety of the sliding sunroofs in December 2017, based on reports from outside the US that the glass panel was detaching from the vehicle.

The carmaker did not give a figure for the total number of worldwide recalls, nor the estimated cost of compensating customers.

The news comes only weeks after Mercedes-Benz USA agreed a \$20m settlement over the way it handled vehicle recalls in America, after a government investigation into the recall of 1.4m cars.

According to the US National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, which signed the ²**settlement**, the company reported 101 safety-related ³**defects** that required recalls in America between 2016 and 2018. However, it said Mercedes-Benz USA had not notified all the affected customers quickly enough.

The company must pay a \$13m fine and ⁴**fork out** up to \$7m more if certain conditions in the agreement, relating to how vehicle ⁵**deficiencies** are handled, are not met.

In 2018, Germany also ordered Daimler to recall 238,000 vehicles on concerns that they contained illegal software that tricked ⁶**emissions** tests. The company ⁷**complied with** the recall but denied using any cheat software.

Faulty or incorrect parts have not been the only ⁸**thorn in Daimler's side** in the past year. Carmakers have come under pressure in recent months from the joint pressures of falling sales and the cost of investing in electric vehicles. Daimler announced towards the end of 2019 that it planned to cut more than 10,000 jobs in the next two years in an effort to save more than \$1bn in personnel costs.



Reading 2

Choose the best answer to each question.

- 1 How old are the cars with the sunroof problem?
 - a) 1 or 2 years old
 - b) 10–20 years old
 - c) about 5 years old
- 2 When did Daimler start looking closely at the problem?
 - a) last month
 - b) last year
 - c) about two years ago
- 3 Why did Daimler have to pay \$20 million?
 - a) For being too slow dealing with safety problems
 - b) For not reporting safety problems
 - c) For recalling 1.4 million cars
- 4 Why did Daimler recall cars in 2018 in Germany?
 - a) because the cars were not safe
 - b) because the cars failed important tests
 - c) to fix a computer problem
- 5 How is Daimler dealing with its financial problems?
 - a) by getting rid of workers
 - b) reducing workers' pay
 - c) by producing electric cars

Vocabulary 2 – vocabulary in context

Choose the best meaning of the words in bold.

- 1 a) inside the company b) across many countries
- 2 a) news report b) decision, agreement
- 3 a) solutions b) problems
- 4 a) pay b) earn
- 5 a) problems b) prices
- 6 a) speed b) pollution
- 7 a) agreed to do b) refused to do
- 8 a) big success b) challenging problem

Grammar – (not) enough and too

Complete the sentences with *enough* or *too* and the word in brackets.

- 1 The sunroof problem was (serious) to cause the recall.
- 2 The recall will make sure that cars are (safe) to continue driving.
- 3 Apparently, the bond is (weak) to hold the glass in place in some cases.
- 4 The US government said that in one case, Daimler didn't notify customers (quickly).
- 5 Daimler may have to pay more if they are (slow) again, or don't meet the conditions of the agreement in some other way.
- 6 The software in most cars is (complicated) for most drivers to understand.
- 7 Investment in electric vehicles is (important) for carmakers to ignore.
- 8 There isn't (money) for Daimler to pay all of its employees.

Further discussion

The article ends by saying that car sales are falling. One negative effect is that people are losing jobs. Are there any other negative effects? What about positive effects?

Group work

Work together to answer these questions.

- 1 Daimler denied using software to trick emissions tests, but other companies have definitely done it. Do you think it's OK for companies to try to beat the system in this way? Why or why not?
- 2 In most countries, there are a lot of government regulations that affect cars and driving. Do you think there are too many regulations, just enough, or too few? Explain your answer.

ANSWER KEY**Starting up**

- 1 Students' own answers
- 2 The company tries to contact everyone who owns the product and makes arrangements to repair or replace it. This is called a product recall.

Vocabulary 1

- | | |
|-----|-----|
| 1 b | 4 c |
| 2 d | 5 f |
| 3 a | 6 e |

Reading 1

There have been other Mercedes-Benz recalls in the US in the past five years. Many carmakers including Daimler are facing serious financial challenges right now.

Reading 2

- | | |
|-----|-----|
| 1 b | 4 c |
| 2 c | 5 a |
| 3 a | |

Vocabulary 2

- | | |
|-----|-----|
| 1 a | 5 a |
| 2 b | 6 b |
| 3 b | 7 a |
| 4 a | 8 b |

Grammar

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| 1 serious enough | 5 too slow |
| 2 safe enough | 6 too complicated |
| 3 too weak | 7 too important |
| 4 quickly enough | 8 enough money |

Further discussion (possible answers)

Negative effects: People losing jobs, and therefore maybe not putting money into the economy; Car companies may struggle, which may make the development of electric vehicles more difficult.

A possible positive effect might potentially be a reduction in the use of resources, and possibly a reduction in traffic and in pollution.

Group work (possible answers)

- 1 Students' own answers
- 2 Students' own answers

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