



The big debate

Are driverless taxis a good idea?

Some say they're the future of travel, but others think we should hit the brakes.

What you need to know

- Driverless vehicles use technology to understand their surroundings and drive themselves. They don't need a person to control them, and there is no one at the steering wheel.
- In 2018, the first "robotaxis" in the US, made by Waymo, hit the road in Phoenix, Arizona.
- Waymo has since launched the cars in other cities and has plans for further expansion in the US and the UK.
- China, the United Arab Emirates, and other countries already use robotaxis.



Would you ride in a taxi with no one in the driver's seat? Self-driving cars use cameras, sensors, and computers to see the road, stop at red lights, and avoid pedestrians and other vehicles. They use artificial intelligence (AI, when computers learn like humans do) to determine the quickest and safest route. Despite these high-tech tools, not everyone wants to try them. In a recent poll, 74% of Americans said they don't trust driverless cars. The companies that make the cars insist they're safe, and some studies show that cars controlled by computers can be safer than those with human drivers. What do you think? Are driverless taxis a good idea?

Yes—the future is here

Driving long distances can be hard on people because they get tired and need to take breaks, which makes the trip longer. Conditions like rain or snow can make it stressful to be behind the wheel. But driverless taxis never get tired or anxious and are programmed to handle all kinds of weather. Road trips with a robotaxi are also more fun because passengers can sing, laugh, and play games as loudly as they want. Computers don't get distracted or annoyed—they just focus on the road. And robotaxis are great for the automotive and tech industries and will create thousands of jobs. That helps people and the economy.

No—humans matter more

Instead of filling the roads with fleets of robotaxis, we should invest in eco-friendly transportation options, like buses and trains, and safer bike lanes. Computer-operated cars might be efficient for getting around, but we should think about humans too. If robotaxis take over, an entire industry of taxi drivers will lose their livelihoods. And there are passengers who like talking to their drivers, especially if they're visiting a new city. Besides, computers aren't perfect. Driverless cars have already crashed into things, and one passenger even got trapped inside a robotaxi as it drove in circles around a parking lot. That's scary!

YES

Three reasons driverless taxis are a good idea

- 1 Computers don't get tired or stressed, so they don't need to stop for rest breaks and can handle bad weather.
- 2 Passengers can be as noisy as they want. Robotaxis don't get distracted or annoyed.
- 3 Self-driving vehicles would be beneficial for the economy and for the people who could get jobs in the industry.

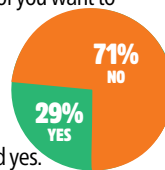
NO

Three reasons driverless taxis are not a good idea

- 1 Instead of clogging up the roads with more cars, we should invest in eco-friendly transportation options.
- 2 Replacing humans with computers would put cab drivers out of a job.
- 3 Even robotaxis can mess up and get in accidents, and there's no way for a passenger to stop them.

LAST WEEK'S POLL

Last week, we asked you if we should stop using wrapping paper. Most of you want to stick with tradition for gift giving: 71% said no, and 29% said yes.



What do you think?

Now that you've read a bit more about this issue, visit kids.theweekjunior.com/polls so you can vote in our debate. Vote **YES** if you think driverless taxis are a good idea or **NO** if you don't. We'll publish the results next week.

The goal of the big debate is to present two sides of an issue fairly in order to stimulate discussion and allow our readers to make up their minds. The views on this page do not reflect those of *The Week Junior*, and the page is not funded by third parties.