

There are many people who work in transportation in Chicago. You see some of them when you take a bus. There are hundreds you do not see, who work in offices. They are part of the transportation system.

The transportation worker you probably see most frequently is the bus driver. Being a bus driver is a challenging job. The bus driver has to be very skillful and knowledgeable. The driver needs to know how to drive, of course. But the driver also needs to know how to make decisions. What if there is a snowstorm and the road is icy? What if there is a problem on the bus? The bus driver has to figure out how to keep the bus on time and the passengers safe. They need to communicate with passengers. They take classes on how to drive and how to communicate. In their classes, they have simulations of actual problems. A simulation is an activity that is like a real event.

Some of the people who work in transportation whom you don't see are coordinating all the buses. They are managers and communications workers who work at a center that coordinates all the buses. They use computers that tell them where all the buses are, and those computers give them updates every minute. They communicate with the drivers through computers and telephones. A driver may contact them about a problem. They can inform a driver about traffic. Sometimes there will be a change in a route. For example, there could be a fire on a street where the bus is supposed to go. The driver will have to change the route. Soon bus stops in Chicago will have signs or speakers that tell passengers who are waiting for a bus if there is a delay. Right now you can get that information on any computer.

There are workers who manage the trains, too. Chicago has many commuter trains that take thousands of people to work and back home every day. Those commuters need to be able to count on the trains to run on time. The managers have computer maps that show where all the trains are. Some trains are under the ground, but the managers can see where they are on the maps, and they can keep track of the schedule and locations. They also have ongoing communication with the train and can respond if there is a problem.

When there is a problem with a bus, the driver can solve it more easily than a train conductor. The bus driver can turn on another street. The train can't do that, of course, so there will be a delay while they fix the problem. Sometimes the problem is a big one, like a fire on the train tracks. Then people have to get off the trains. The transportation managers send buses to take them where they are going.

Transportation workers include many people. Some people who work in transportation are planners. Some direct traffic, and some keep the vehicles working. There are many jobs in transportation, and they are all connected. All the transportation workers are problem solvers.

Directions: Choose the best answer for each question

1. What is a skill a bus driver needs?

- a. How to measure.
- b. How to make decisions.
- c. How to make a map.
- d. How to direct traffic.

2. What is a skill a transportation manager needs?

- a. How to read a map.
- b. How to write a letter.
- c. How to drive a train.
- d. How to commute.

3. What would happen if there was a flood on a street?

- a. There would be a fire.
- b. They would change the train schedule.
- c. There would be a problem for commuters.
- d. There would be change in the weather.

4. What would happen if there was a flood on the train tracks?

- a. People would be late getting to work.
- b. Many people would get wet.
- c. The trains would be re-routed.
- d. The managers would send more trains.

5. *Write your own answer to this question.*

What is a problem that a bus driver might have? How would the driver solve it?

TEACHER NOTES: Develop Students' Skills: Exercise Thinking

These questions have not been validated, so decisions about student's achievement should not be made based on their responses. They are intended to exercise skills. Recommended activities include: students work in pairs to choose the best response; give students the questions without the responses so they generate their own answers; students make up additional questions; students make up questions like these for another passage.

Answers: *You can remove this answer key and then give it to students and ask them to figure out the basis for the correct response.*

Item	1	2	3	4
Answer	b	a	c	a

Question 5 is open-ended. Here is a suggested response.

5. There could be a car accident. The driver would ask for the manager to send another bus.

Skill: Infer Predictions 6th Grade Assessment

FICTION: The Technology Trip

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I was going downtown with my friends. We were going to the Museum of Science and Industry. We were going on the bus, and we would meet at the bus stop after I called my friends to tell them what time we should be at the bus stop. To figure out what bus we would take, I used a computer, so I used science to get to the museum—the science of computers. If you go on the Internet, you can find maps that show Chicago transportation systems. I found the map showing the route, and it even told me what times the buses came.

My friends and I went to the bus stop, and a few minutes later the bus arrived. It was a very rainy day, so we were glad we knew when the bus would come. We just stood outside a few minutes and there it was.

We rode along slowly--there must have been a traffic delay. People were driving slowly because of the rain, but didn't mind because we were inside nice and dry. Then it happened. There was a bump. It wasn't a big bump, but we all felt it. The driver stopped the bus. She got out and we waited anxiously. Then she came back in and announced, "A car has hit us. There is no damage to the bus. But there is a rule. When a car hits you, you need to make an accident report, and that means I need to notify the police. They will come and take the information, but that will take some time, so I have arranged for another bus to come. As soon as it arrives, you will get on that one. Don't worry. Please stay in your seats."

So we waited and were glad we were dry. We thought it would take a long time, and we weren't concerned because we did not have to get to the museum at a specific time. But in just about five minutes there was another bus. When we got off the bus, we saw the car, and the driver was looking very discouraged. A policeman was talking to the driver, and they were standing outside the car, both of them getting wet.

We got on the other bus, and one passenger said angrily to the new driver, "I am going to be late for work. Why can't we leave now, what is the reason for any further delay?" The new bus driver explained that we would leave as soon as everyone was on the bus. She said, "The driver of the car has to take a taxi to get to his office, but the bus company sent me to make sure you get to your destinations." In one more minute we were moving, the impatient passenger was calmer then.

The delay had only taken ten minutes, and we got to the museum safely. When we got off the bus, we asked the driver what time the buses would be coming to take us back—we asked if she had a schedule.

"Check the computer at the museum," she said. "You'll find out what the actual time is for your bus back. It is a very accurate system." The Museum is all about technology. But we had already been learning about technology.

Directions: Choose the best answer for each question

6. What would have happened if they did not check the computer to find out the bus schedule?

- a. They would have asked people.
- b. They would have gotten wetter.
- c. They would have taken a taxi.
- d. They would have stayed home.

7. Why did another bus come after the accident?

- a. The bus company learned about the accident.
- b. The bus driver got a ticket.
- c. There was a bus near-by.
- d. The passengers called for another bus.

8. Why do you think the driver of the car was looking sad?

- a. He was late for work.
- b. It was an accident.
- c. The police officer was giving him a ticket.
- d. It was raining.

9. What do you think the car driver did next?

- a. He went to work.
- b. He got on the bus with the passengers.
- c. He went home.
- d. He bought a newspaper.

10. Write your own answer to this question.

How do you make a prediction?

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Answers: You can remove this answer key and then give it to students and ask them to figure out the basis for the correct response.

Item	6	7	8	9
Answer	b	a	c	a

Question 10 is open-ended. Here is a suggested response.

10. You look at the information. You think what could happen.