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## **Toyota - world's number one car seller**

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**26<sup>th</sup> April, 2007**

## THE ARTICLE

### **Toyota - world's number one car seller**

For the first time in history, a non-US car firm is the world's number one carmaker. Japan's Toyota Motor Corporation knocked the USA's General Motors from the top spot in the first three months of the year to claim the world sales leadership position. This ends GM's 76-year reign as the top dog in the international auto industry. Analysts expected this to happen following Toyota's nonstop push for pole position. Industry experts predict Toyota will probably stay number one in the world for quite some time due to its efficient production methods and outstanding marketing. Excellent reliability, unbeatable prices and world class after-sales service will also help the Japanese company retain its grasp as the industry leader. The company's Corolla car continues to be the top selling vehicle worldwide and a new model planned for launch in 2008 should keep things that way.

Unlike its American rivals, Toyota is enjoying bumper profits. Whereas the likes of Ford, Chrysler and GM are doing their best to cut costs to survive and stay in the market, their Japanese rival expects its profits to continue to grow from the \$11.7 billion last year. Industry insider Jim Hossack believes Japan's skilled and motivated workforce also greatly helps Toyota. "A job in the auto industry is still a prestige position in Japan," he said. He also puts Toyota's success down to its unbeatable image, saying: "They have to keep their quality up, though they've had such a good reputation people forgive them when they have problems." Hossack added "People don't forgive GM when they have problems." Toyota executives were modest in recognizing their achievement. They insisted that the goal was to be number one in quality, not sales volume.

## WARM-UPS

**1. I'M A CAR:** Imagine you are a car. Decide which one. Walk around the class and talk to the other "cars" in the class. What do you think of German, Italian, American and Japanese cars? What do you hate most about drivers.... Change partners often.

**2. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

*history / carmakers / cars / Toyota / General Motors / leadership / experts / rivals / cutting costs / profits / prestige / reputations / achievements / goals*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

**3. CARS:** With your partner(s), match the cars on the left with the people on the right. Explain your reasons. Change partners and explain again.

- |                             |                                |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • 4-wheel drive Jeep        | • George W. Bush               |
| • Italian sports car        | • Madonna                      |
| • Rolls Royce               | • Tiger Woods                  |
| • Mini Cooper               | • Nelson Mandela               |
| • Toyota Corolla            | • Bill Gates                   |
| • Antique 1930's family car | • Britain's Queen Elizabeth II |

**4. CAR OPINIONS:** Talk about these opinions on cars:

- Japanese cars are the best in the world.
- There are too many cars in the world.
- Carmakers shouldn't make cars that can exceed speed limits.
- I would absolutely love to have a Porsche or Ferrari one day.
- Cars kill people and the Earth and should be banned.
- The world is car crazy.
- The car someone drives is an extension of his or her own personality.
- Men are better drivers than women.

**5. QUICK DEBATE:** Have this quick debate with your partner(s). Students A think cars are a waste of time and money; students B think cars are a necessary part of society. Change partners and topics every two minutes.

**6. TOYOTA:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with Toyota. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

## BEFORE READING / LISTENING

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- a. Toyota is the world's number one car seller for the third time. T / F
- b. General Motors spent 76 years as the world's top carmaker. T / F
- c. Experts predict Toyota's time at the top will be very short. T / F
- d. Toyota produces the world's best-selling car. T / F
- e. Ford and Chrysler have made bumper profits this year. T / F
- f. The Japanese think working in the auto industry is prestigious. T / F
- g. Consumers easily forgive General Motors if they have problems. T / F
- h. Toyota's goal is to be the maker selling the largest number of cars. T / F

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article:

- |                |              |
|----------------|--------------|
| a. firm        | humble       |
| b. reign       | grip         |
| c. outstanding | competitor   |
| d. retain      | record       |
| e. grasp       | good name    |
| f. bumper      | leadership   |
| g. rival       | company      |
| h. prestige    | exceptional  |
| i. reputation  | status       |
| j. modest      | keep hold of |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- |   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| a. GM's 76-year reign                   | reputation                    |
| b. stay number one in the world for     | as the top dog                |
| c. efficient                            | recognizing their achievement |
| d. help the Japanese company retain its | that way                      |
| e. ...should keep things                | profits                       |
| f. Toyota is enjoying bumper            | motivated workforce           |
| g. doing their best to cut              | production methods            |
| h. skilled and                          | costs to survive              |
| i. such a good                          | quite some time               |
| j. Toyota executives were modest in     | grasp as the industry leader  |

## WHILE READING / LISTENING

**GAP FILL:** Put the words into the gaps in the text.

### Toyota - world's number one car seller

For the first time in \_\_\_\_\_, a non-US car firm is the world's number one carmaker. Japan's Toyota Motor Corporation \_\_\_\_\_ the USA's General Motors from the top spot in the first three months of the year to \_\_\_\_\_ the world sales leadership position. This ends GM's 76-year reign as the top \_\_\_\_\_ in the international auto industry. Analysts expected this to happen following Toyota's nonstop push for \_\_\_\_\_ position. Industry experts predict Toyota will probably stay number one in the world for quite some time due to its \_\_\_\_\_ production methods and outstanding marketing. Excellent reliability, unbeatable prices and world class after-sales service will also help the Japanese company \_\_\_\_\_ its grasp as the industry leader. The company's Corolla car continues to be the top selling vehicle worldwide and a new model planned for \_\_\_\_\_ in 2008 should keep things that way.

*dog*

*retain*

*claim*

*efficient*

*history*

*launch*

*pole*

*knocked*

\_\_\_\_\_ its American rivals, Toyota is enjoying bumper profits. \_\_\_\_\_ the likes of Ford, Chrysler and GM are doing their best to cut costs to survive and stay in the market, their Japanese rival \_\_\_\_\_ its profits to continue to grow from the \$11.7 billion last year. Industry \_\_\_\_\_ Jim Hossack believes Japan's skilled and motivated workforce also greatly helps Toyota. "A job in the auto industry is still a \_\_\_\_\_ position in Japan," he said. He also puts Toyota's success down to its unbeatable \_\_\_\_\_, saying: "They have to keep their quality up, though they've had such a good \_\_\_\_\_ people forgive them when they have problems." Hossack added "People don't forgive GM when they have problems." Toyota executives were modest in recognizing their achievement. They \_\_\_\_\_ that the goal was to be number one in quality, not sales volume.

*prestige*

*insisted*

*whereas*

*expects*

*image*

*unlike*

*reputation*

*insider*

## LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

### Toyota - world's number one car seller

\_\_\_\_\_ history, a non-US car firm is the world's number one carmaker. Japan's Toyota Motor Corporation knocked the USA's General Motors \_\_\_\_\_ the first three months of the year to claim the world sales leadership position. This ends GM's 76-year \_\_\_\_\_ dog in the international auto industry. Analysts expected this to happen following Toyota's nonstop \_\_\_\_\_. Industry experts predict Toyota will probably stay number one in the world \_\_\_\_\_ to its efficient production methods and outstanding marketing. Excellent reliability, unbeatable prices and world class after-sales service will also help the Japanese company \_\_\_\_\_ industry leader. The company's Corolla car continues to be the top selling vehicle worldwide and a new model planned for launch in 2008 \_\_\_\_\_.

Unlike its American rivals, Toyota \_\_\_\_\_. Whereas the likes of Ford, Chrysler and GM are doing their best to cut costs to survive and stay in the market, their Japanese rival expects \_\_\_\_\_ grow from the \$11.7 billion last year. Industry insider Jim Hossack believes Japan's skilled and motivated workforce \_\_\_\_\_ Toyota. "A job in the auto industry is \_\_\_\_\_ in Japan," he said. He also puts Toyota's success down to its unbeatable image, saying: "They have to keep their quality up, \_\_\_\_\_ a good reputation people forgive them when they have problems." Hossack added "People don't forgive GM when they have problems." Toyota executives were modest in recognizing their achievement. They \_\_\_\_\_ was to be number one in quality, not sales volume.

## AFTER READING / LISTENING

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'top' and 'dog'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. GAP FILL:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. STUDENT "CAR" SURVEY:** In pairs / groups, write down questions about cars and carmakers from around the world.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

**6. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• non</li><li>• knocked</li><li>• reign</li><li>• predict</li><li>• reliability</li><li>• launch</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• bumper</li><li>• rival</li><li>• motivated</li><li>• image</li><li>• problems</li><li>• volume</li></ul>
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## DISCUSSION

### STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What do you know about General Motors and Toyota?
- c) Are you interested in cars?
- d) Do you think it's interesting to know who the world's top carmaker is?
- e) How do you think GM stayed at the top for so long?
- f) Do you think an American carmaker will be number one ever again?
- g) What are the differences between Japanese and American cars?
- h) Why are Japanese cars more reliable than American cars?
- i) Do you think Japanese and American car workers are different?
- j) What after sales service do you think car makers should give?



### STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) What are the most popular cars in your country and why?
- c) Would you like to work in the auto industry?
- d) What do you think of Toyota's image?
- e) Toyota also produces Formula 1 cars. Do you think GM should do likewise?
- f) Why do you think there are so few American cars on the roads outside of the USA?
- g) Would you buy a Toyota or a General Motors car?
- h) What do you think of Toyota's hybrid energy cars that are more environmentally friendly?
- i) Are you a family car person or a four-wheel drive person?
- j) Did you like this discussion?

**AFTER DISCUSSION:** Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a) What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b) Was there a question you didn't like?
- c) Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d) What did you like talking about?
- e) Which was the most difficult question?



## SPEAKING

**DRIVING:** Your job is to make recommendations on how to improve cars. In pairs / groups, identify the major problems with cars in the categories below. Decide on three suggestions for their improvement. Agree on and circle the extent of the “present problem” (1 = very serious, 5 = no problem).

CATEGORY	PRESENT PROBLEM	RECOMMENDATIONS
Fuel efficiency	1 2 3 4 5	1. 2. 3.
Safety	1 2 3 4 5	1. 2. 3.
The interior (seats, dashboard, luggage space, etc.)	1 2 3 4 5	1. 2. 3.
Handling	1 2 3 4 5	1. 2. 3.
After sales service	1 2 3 4 5	1. 2. 3.
Looks	1 2 3 4 5	1. 2. 3.

Change partners and explain what you discussed with your previous partner(s). Give each other feedback on your ideas. Combine your ideas to make your recommendations even better (you have to agree on the three best recommendations).

Return to your original partners and discuss any revisions you made.

## LANGUAGE

**CORRECT WORD:** Put the correct words from a-d below in the article.

### Toyota - world's number one car seller

For the first time in history, a (1) \_\_\_-US car firm is the world's number one carmaker. Japan's Toyota Motor Corporation knocked the USA's General Motors from the top spot in the first three months of the year to (2) \_\_\_ the world sales leadership position. This ends GM's 76-year (3) \_\_\_ as the top dog in the international auto industry. Analysts expected this to happen following Toyota's nonstop push for (4) \_\_\_ position. Industry experts predict Toyota will probably stay number one in the world for quite some time due to its efficient production methods and outstanding marketing. Excellent reliability, unbeatable prices and world class after-sales service will also help the Japanese company retain its (5) \_\_\_ as the industry leader. The company's Corolla car continues to be the top selling vehicle worldwide and a new model planned for launch in 2008 should keep (6) \_\_\_ that way.

Unlike its American (7) \_\_\_, Toyota is enjoying bumper profits. Whereas the likes of Ford, Chrysler and GM are doing their best to cut costs to survive and stay in the market, their Japanese rival (8) \_\_\_ its profits to continue to grow from the \$11.7 billion last year. Industry insider Jim Hossack believes Japan's skilled and motivated workforce also (9) \_\_\_ helps Toyota. "A job in the auto industry is still a prestige position in Japan," he said. He also puts Toyota's success (10) \_\_\_ to its unbeatable image, saying: "They have to keep their quality up, (11) \_\_\_ they've had such a good reputation people forgive them when they have problems." Hossack added "People don't forgive GM when they have problems." Toyota executives were modest (12) \_\_\_ recognizing their achievement. They insisted that the goal was to be number one in quality, not sales volume.

- |     |              |              |               |             |
|-----|--------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1.  | (a) non      | (b) ex       | (c) auto      | (d) pro     |
| 2.  | (a) calamity | (b) calm     | (c) claim     | (d) clam    |
| 3.  | (a) rein     | (b) reign    | (c) rain      | (d) rant    |
| 4.  | (a) polar    | (b) pole     | (c) poll      | (d) Pole    |
| 5.  | (a) grabs    | (b) clasp    | (c) gasp      | (d) grasp   |
| 6.  | (a) anything | (b) thingy   | (c) thing     | (d) things  |
| 7.  | (a) rivals   | (b) rivalry  | (c) rivaled   | (d) rivets  |
| 8.  | (a) excels   | (b) excerpts | (c) expects   | (d) except  |
| 9.  | (a) greatly  | (b) greatest | (c) greatness | (d) great   |
| 10. | (a) on       | (b) in       | (c) down      | (d) up      |
| 11. | (a) thought  | (b) though   | (c) thou      | (d) through |
| 12. | (a) for      | (b) as       | (c) on        | (d) in      |

## **HOMEWORK**

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find more information about the Toyota Motor Corporation. Talk about what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

**3. CARS POSTER:** Make a poster about different car-producing countries around the world. How are they different? Show your poster to your class in the next lesson. Vote on the best one(s).

**4. MAGAZINE ARTICLE:** Write a magazine article about Japanese carmakers and how they are taking over the motor industry. In particular, write about Japanese workers and quality. Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Which article was best and why?

**5. LETTER:** Write a letter to the CEO of General Motors. Ask him/her three questions about why his/her company is falling behind Toyota. Give him/her three pieces of advice about how to get back to being the number one carmaker. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

## ANSWERS

### TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F      b. T      c. F      d. T      e. F      f. T      g. F      h. F

### SYNONYM MATCH:

- |                |              |
|----------------|--------------|
| a. firm        | company      |
| b. reign       | leadership   |
| c. outstanding | exceptional  |
| d. retain      | keep hold of |
| e. grasp       | grip         |
| f. bumper      | record       |
| g. rival       | competitor   |
| h. prestige    | status       |
| i. reputation  | good name    |
| j. modest      | humble       |

### PHRASE MATCH:

- |   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| a. GM's 76-year reign                   | as the top dog                |
| b. stay number one in the world for     | quite some time               |
| c. efficient                            | production methods            |
| d. help the Japanese company retain its | grasp as the industry leader  |
| e. ...should keep things                | that way                      |
| f. Toyota is enjoying bumper            | profits                       |
| g. doing their best to cut              | costs to survive              |
| h. skilled and                          | motivated workforce           |
| i. such a good                          | reputation                    |
| j. Toyota executives were modest in     | recognizing their achievement |

### GAP FILL:

#### Toyota - world's number one car seller

For the first time in **history**, a non-US car firm is the world's number one carmaker. Japan's Toyota Motor Corporation **knocked** the USA's General Motors from the top spot in the first three months of the year to **claim** the world sales leadership position. This ends GM's 76-year reign as the top **dog** in the international auto industry. Analysts expected this to happen following Toyota's nonstop push for **pole** position. Industry experts predict Toyota will probably stay number one in the world for quite some time due to its **efficient** production methods and outstanding marketing. Excellent reliability, unbeatable prices and world class after-sales service will also help the Japanese company **retain** its grasp as the industry leader. The company's Corolla car continues to be the top selling vehicle worldwide and a new model planned for **launch** in 2008 should keep things that way.

**Unlike** its American rivals, Toyota is enjoying bumper profits. **Whereas** the likes of Ford, Chrysler and GM are doing their best to cut costs to survive and stay in the market, their Japanese rival **expects** its profits to continue to grow from the \$11.7 billion last year. Industry **insider** Jim Hossack believes Japan's skilled and motivated workforce also greatly helps Toyota. "A job in the auto industry is still a **prestige** position in Japan," he said. He also puts Toyota's success down to its unbeatable **image**, saying: "They have to keep their quality up, though they've had such a good **reputation** people forgive them when they have problems." Hossack added "People don't forgive GM when they have problems." Toyota executives were modest in recognizing their achievement. They **insisted** that the goal was to be number one in quality, not sales volume.

### LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - a    2 - c    3 - b    4 - b    5 - d    6 - d    7 - a    8 - c    9 - a    10 - c    11 - b    12 - d