

Price war over taxi apps

25th November, 2014



A price war has broken out across the world among taxi companies. There is increasing competition for passengers because of the different apps that can order

taxis. Some taxi companies are cutting their fares by more than half to beat competitor companies. The world's biggest taxi-booking app is called Uber. It was founded in 2009 and now operates in over 200 cities across the globe. Many drivers of London's traditional black taxis are unhappy with taxi apps. They argue that drivers of app cabs are too inexperienced to drive taxis in London. Black cab drivers must pass a difficult test on their knowledge of London's streets to get their taxi-driving license. They have slashed some of their fares from \$45 to \$7.50.

The U.K. boss of Uber said the price war would benefit his company and result in higher profits, saying: "There's a lot of competition over the app makers and, to a certain degree, you need to think of things that you can do to stand out from the crowd." London black cab driver Anthony Street says business remains good despite the app companies. He said: "There are lots of technologies that are changing things for us, but it's up to drivers." One of New York's biggest taxi companies has called for Uber to have its license suspended. It says Uber is illegally using data collected from passengers. In Singapore, the government has just announced that it would start regulating taxi app companies.

Sources: klfm967.co.uk / thedrum.com / fortune.com

Writing

Taxis are the best way to get around a city. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

price war / increasing competition / passengers / booking / traditional / inexperienced / benefit / profits / to a certain degree / stand out / crowd / license / data / regulating

True / False

- The taxi price war has broken out worldwide. T / F
- Some taxi companies have reduced fares by up to 50 per cent. T / F
- The world's biggest taxi app company operates in over 200 countries. T / F
- All taxi drivers in London must pass a test of their street knowledge. T / F
- The boss of the Uber app is worried about falling profits. T / F
- The boss said drivers look for people standing out in a crowd. T / F
- A big New York taxi company got its license suspended. T / F
- Singapore will soon start regulating taxi app companies. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|---------------|----------------------|
| 1. broken out | a. point |
| 2. beat | b. world |
| 3. globe | c. cut |
| 4. argue | d. information |
| 5. slashed | e. started |
| 6. benefit | f. stays |
| 7. degree | g. claim |
| 8. remains | h. begin |
| 9. data | i. get the better of |
| 10. start | j. be of help to |

Discussion – Student A

- What can taxis do to stand out from the crowd?
- What do you think of the quality of taxis (inside and outside)?
- Are taxis good value for money?
- How can technology change taxis?
- What's your best and worst taxi ride ever?
- What extra services would you like taxis to offer?
- What controls do governments need to put on taxis?
- What questions would you like to ask a taxi driver?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. A price war has broken | a. drive taxis in London |
| 2. increasing competition | b. suspended |
| 3. It was founded | c. of their fares |
| 4. too inexperienced to | d. degree |
| 5. They have slashed some | e. for passengers |
| 6. the price war would | f. out from the crowd |
| 7. to a certain | g. in 2009 |
| 8. things that you can do to stand | h. benefit his company |
| 9. have its license | i. taxi app companies |
| 10. it would start regulating | j. out |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think of taxi fares?
- How important are taxis to you?
- What are the good and bad things about taxis?
- What do you think about the price war?
- What problems are there in running a taxi company?
- What do you think of the taxi-ordering apps?
- Should taxi drivers take a test of their knowledge of streets?
- Who do you think will win the price war?

Spelling

- competition for searpngss
- It was dfednuo in 2009
- sreoeapt in over 200 cities
- too nexcdrpiniee to drive taxis
- their gwoleden of London's streets
- edahsls some of their fares from \$45 to \$7.50
- the price war would tbfenie his company
- result in higher rfopits
- business inrmaes good
- have its cenilse suspended
- glilyaell using data
- ... has just nnncaudoe that it would start

Answers – Synonym Match

1. e	2. i	3. b	4. g	5. c
6. j	7. a	8. f	9. d	10. h

Role Play

Role A – Being well dressed

You think it is most important for a taxi driver to be well dressed. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't so important. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): drive safely, being on time or be chatty.

Role B – Driving safely

You think it is most important for a taxi driver to drive safely. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't so important. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): well dressed, being on time or be chatty.

Role C – Being on time

You think it is most important for a taxi driver to be on time. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't so important. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): drive safely, well dressed or be chatty.

Role D – Being chatty

You think it is most important for a taxi driver to be chatty. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't so important. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): drive safely, being on time or well dressed.

Speaking – Taxi Driver

Rank these with your partner. Put the most important thing about a taxi driver at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| • gives advice | • uniform |
| • well groomed | • friendly |
| • safe driver | • chooses shortest route |
| • on time | • chats a lot |

Answers – True False

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

Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.