

## Global semiconductor shortage hurts car industry

6th September, 2021



The automotive and other industries around the globe are facing production challenges due to a shortage of semiconductors. A global semiconductor shortage has caused car giant General Motors to halt production at all but four of its plants in North

America. GM owns a number of popular car brands, including Cadillac, Chevrolet and GMC. A GM spokesperson told the Detroit Free Press news agency that the company is focused on trying to resolve its supply-chain difficulties. He said: "Although the situation remains complex and very fluid, we remain confident in our team's ability to continue finding creative solutions to minimize the impact on our highest-demand and capacity-constrained vehicles."

Semiconductors are an indispensable part of many of the gadgets and electrical products we use in our everyday lives. Sony, Toyota, Ford and other multinational companies are reporting production hitches due to the current dearth in supply. One reason for the shortage is the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff shortages in factories that manufacture the chips in China, South Korea and Taiwan have negatively hit production. The website engadget.com said companies would experience challenges for the foreseeable future. It reported: "With the shortages expected to continue until at least 2023, and no immediate solutions forthcoming, GM likely won't be the last company to change its production schedule."

Sources: [engageadget.com](https://www.engageadget.com) / [sky.com](https://www.sky.com) / [thehill.com](https://www.thehill.com)

### Writing

The car industry is one of the world's most important. Discuss.

### Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

industries / production / challenges / solutions / brands / supply chain / vehicles / gadgets / everyday lives / hitches / shortages / continue / change / schedule

### True / False

- 1) Only industries in the USA are experiencing semiconductor shortages. T / F
- 2) General Motors has closed four of its plants in North America. T / F
- 3) GM is trying to sort out its supply-chain problems. T / F
- 4) GM is confident it can minimize the impact of the shortages. T / F
- 5) Sony and Toyota have more semiconductors than they need. T / F
- 6) The article says COVID-19 is partly responsible for the shortages. T / F
- 7) A website said shortages would continue through to 2023. T / F
- 8) GM is the last company to change its production schedule. T / F

### Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                         |                 |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. <b>facing</b>        | a. deal with    |
| 2. <b>shortage</b>      | b. produce      |
| 3. <b>halt</b>          | c. essential    |
| 4. <b>resolve</b>       | d. cease        |
| 5. <b>impact</b>        | e. lack         |
| 6. <b>indispensable</b> | f. experiencing |
| 7. <b>dearth</b>        | g. plan         |
| 8. <b>manufacture</b>   | h. consequences |
| 9. <b>immediate</b>     | i. scarcity     |
| 10. <b>schedule</b>     | j. current      |

### Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) What things are indispensable to you?
- c) What gadgets do you absolutely need in your life?
- d) What kinds of technologies will replace semiconductors?
- e) What advice do you have for the car companies?
- f) How might a chip shortage affect your life?
- g) Are we too reliant on technology?
- h) What questions would you like to ask GM?

## Phrase Match

- |   |                                |
|---|--------------------------------|
| 1. The automotive and other                 | a. at least 2023               |
| 2. halt production at all but               | b. minimize the impact         |
| 3. the situation remains complex            | c. forthcoming                 |
| 4. we remain confident in our               | d. in supply                   |
| 5. continue finding creative solutions to   | e. four of its plants          |
| 6. Semiconductors are an indispensable part | f. foreseeable future          |
| 7. hitches due to the current dearth        | g. team's ability              |
| 8. experience challenges for the            | h. industries around the globe |
| 9. shortages expected to continue until     | i. and very fluid              |
| 10. no immediate solutions                  | j. of many of the gadgets      |

## Discussion – Student B

- What do you know about semiconductors?
- What was in tech before semiconductors?
- What are semiconductors needed for in cars?
- How important is the automotive industry?
- What problems will a shortage of semiconductors create?
- What would happen if the supply of semiconductors dried up?
- Are you good at finding creative solutions?
- Should there be fewer vehicles on the road?

## Spelling

- The toetouimva and other industries
- ltha production
- trying to resvlo its supply-chain difficulties
- the situation remains xcoplem
- creative solutions to iniimz the impact
- capacity-desnnirocta vehicles
- Semiconductors are an sdnpiabislnee part
- many of the adesggt
- the current edhart in supply
- the COVID-19 dcnmepia
- for the eebeeao future
- no immediate solutions ohctgfnmrio

### Answers – Synonym Match

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

## Role Play

### Role A – Microwave Oven

You think a microwave oven is the best gadget. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their fadgets. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): smartphone, hair-drier or games console.

### Role B – Smartphone

You think a smartphone is the best gadget. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their fadgets. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): microwave oven, hair-drier or games console.

### Role C – Hair-drier

You think a hair-drier is the best gadget. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their fadgets. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): smartphone, microwave oven or games console.

### Role D – Games Console

You think a games console is the best gadget. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their fadgets. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): smartphone, hair-drier or microwave oven.

## Speaking – Gadgets

Rank these with your partner. Put the best important at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |               |                  |
|---------------|------------------|
| • Smart watch | • Microwave oven |
| • Computer    | • Smartphone     |
| • TV          | • Printer        |
| • Hair-drier  | • Game console   |

### Answers – True False

1 F	2 F	3 T	4 T	5 F	6 T	7 T	8 F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.