

Listen to a radio show host talking to a guest about a hybrid car she test-drove.

Presenter: Welcome to the programme, Linda.

Linda: Thanks.

Presenter: Now you've been test-driving a hybrid car, the Honda Civic Hybrid.

Linda: That's right. I spent three days last week trying it out.

Presenter: Now I know that you were very interested in test-driving a hybrid. Why is that?

Linda: I've been thinking of buying one for some time now. Ideally I would prefer to use public transport all the time, but my job means I have to have a car. I do a lot of driving around town, and I'd like to feel I was doing something to reduce air pollution.

Presenter: Yes, hybrid cars produce fewer emissions than conventional cars, as well as using less fuel. Now at the moment only two major car manufacturers produce hybrid cars, Toyota and Honda. You chose the Honda Civic hybrid. Why is that?

Linda: I used to drive a conventional Honda Civic, so I was interested in seeing if the hybrid car is similar.

Presenter: And is it?

Linda: Yes. From the outside it looks almost the same. And inside it's very similar, until you look at the instrument panel. Then you notice a gauge showing fuel consumption, and a display that shows when the electric motor is being used to boost the engine power, and when the battery is being recharged.

Presenter: When you drove the car, how did it compare to the conventional Honda Civic?

Linda: It felt very similar. Sometimes it felt like it had a little less power, but that's not really a problem when driving round town. The main difference was that it's quieter, and when you stop at traffic lights the petrol engine shuts down, so it's completely silent.

Presenter: Does that cause a problem when you start moving again?

Linda: Not at all. As soon as you start putting it into gear the engine instantly starts up again. You don't notice anything. And imagine how nice it would be if all car engines stopped running at traffic lights – there would be so much less pollution in town.

Presenter: So all in all, driving the hybrid car was a positive experience.

Linda: Yes, and I will certainly consider buying one.

Presenter: Were there any downsides?

Linda: Well, the boot is smaller than a conventional Civic, and it is more expensive. But then you save money on fuel costs.

Presenter: So you would recommend a hybrid.

Linda: Based on this experience, yes. For someone like me, who doesn't need a really powerful car, it's ideal.

Presenter: Thanks very much.