

Planes, Trains and Automobiles

by Nadia Moores

This half-term I am going to London and I want to find the best way to travel. The main things I want to compare are the travel time, the cost and the environmental impact of travel by aeroplane, by train and by car.

Aeroplane: First of all I looked on the internet and found out that a flight from Liverpool to London takes 1 hour and 5 minutes, and the cheapest ticket is £69. Then I looked at a website called www.chooseclimate.org/flying/mf.html which can calculate the environmental impact of flights if you enter the coordinates. So I looked at a map and found the coordinates of the two airports, and then entered them into the website. It calculated that this journey would produce about 265 kilogrammes of carbon dioxide per passenger.

Train: I contacted National Rail Enquiries and found out that a journey from Liverpool to London takes 2 hours and 34 minutes, and costs £26.50. Then I looked at a website called www.rail-reg.gov.uk/upload/pdf/aea_enviro_rep.pdf and found out that passenger trains produce about 48.6 grammes of carbon dioxide per passenger per kilometre. I looked at a map and estimated that the journey by rail from Liverpool to London is 325 kilometres. This gives a total of 15.8 kilogrammes of carbon dioxide per passenger.

Car: I used the satellite navigation on my dad's car to find out that it would take about 3 hours and 36 minutes to travel to central London which is around 338 km by road. The car does 15.8 kilometres per litre of petrol, and petrol is 95 pence per litre, which gives a total cost of about £20.32. The guide to the car says that it produces 139 grammes of carbon dioxide per kilometre, which is a total of 46.98 kilogrammes of carbon dioxide for this journey.

	Time Taken	Cost	CO ₂ Emissions
Aeroplane	1 hr. 5 min.	£69.00	265 kg
Train	2 hr. 34 min.	£26.50	15.8 kg
Car	3 hr. 36 min.	£20.32	46.98 kg

What I found out was that the quickest route is by aeroplane, although this doesn't take account of travel to and from the airport, or check-in time. The best route for the environment is by train, although I would still have to get to and from the station. The cheapest route is by car and this is even cheaper per person if the car is full, also cars go straight to where you want to go.

I wonder what you think is the best route to take? Quickest, cheapest or greenest?