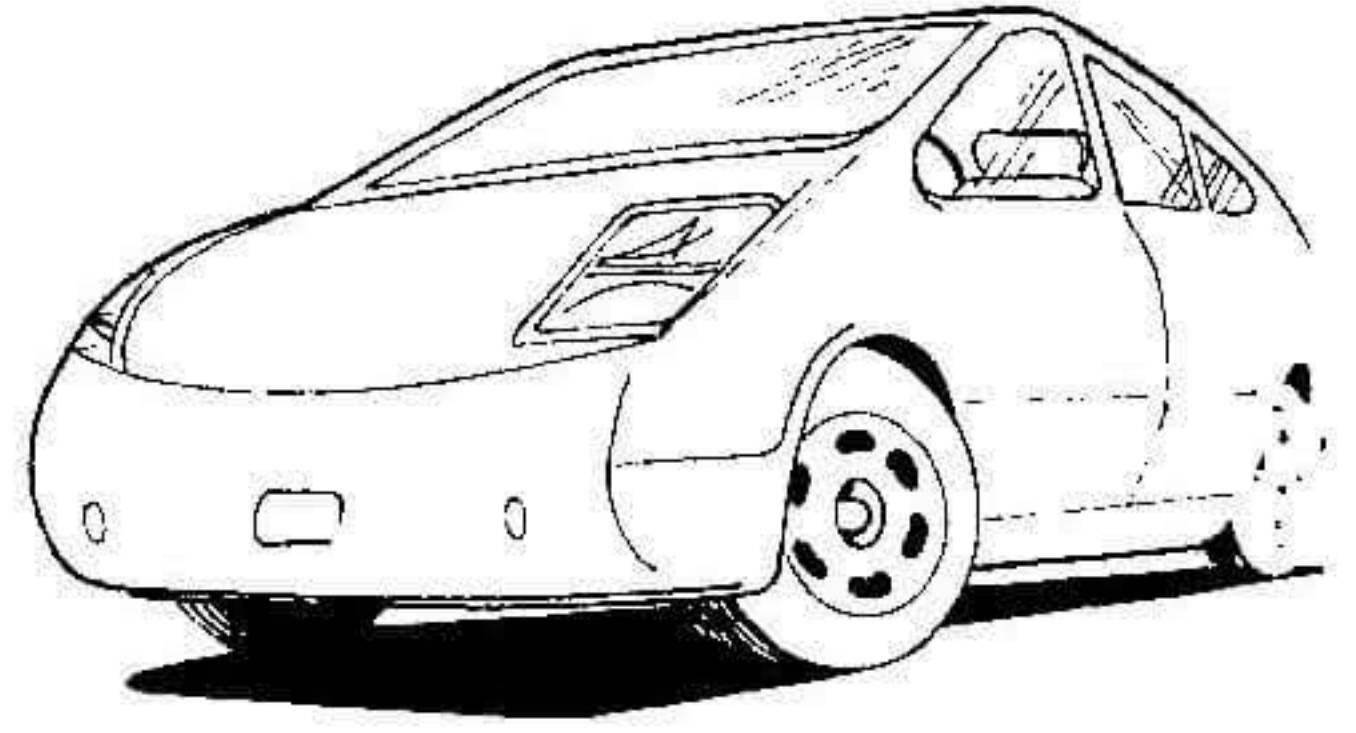




What Is a Hybrid?



A *hybrid* is made by putting two things together. A **hybrid car** takes the gas engine of a regular car and combines it with an electric motor that runs on a battery. That way, it can get its power from more than one place.

There are different ways of making hybrid cars. In one kind of hybrid, the gas engine does not drive the car at all. Sometimes, it makes the spark that starts the electric motor. In other cases, it charges the battery. Then, the battery runs the car.

There is another way to make a hybrid. In this car, the gas engine and the electric motor switch back and forth. Sometimes, the gas engine is running the car; sometimes, the electric motor is. In other hybrid cars, the two power sources have different jobs. For example, the electric motor might start the car but not run it.

There are many different designs. But, all hybrid cars are complex. The two power sources work together to make the car go. Because there are two ways to power the car, the gas engine can be smaller than the ones in gas-powered cars. It can also be turned off—even when the hybrid car is moving! In some hybrid cars, the gas engine turns off when the car is waiting at a stoplight or when it slows down.

The hybrid cars that are made today are different from many of the cars we are used to. They are made from lighter metals and plastics. They are shaped so that the wind does not push hard against them. They cannot always reach a high speed as quickly as a gas-powered car can. But, people still seem to want cars with hybrid engines. Why?

One big reason is that hybrid cars do not cause as much pollution. Because their gas engines are small and do not run constantly, the cars do not make as much *exhaust*, or gas fumes that go into the air. People who are worried about global warming say this is a good thing about the cars.

Make a prediction.

What do you think the author will write about next?

