

NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript

- Rob:** Hello I'm Rob. Welcome to 6 Minute English. I'm joined today by Finn. Hi Finn.
- Finn:** Hi Rob.
- Rob:** Today we're talking about high-speed train travel. Many countries have very fast trains that whisk people from city to city in super-quick time.
- Finn:** Yes, we might think that air travel is the transport of the future but it seems high-speed train travel is becoming just as popular.
- Rob:** I've travelled on high-speed trains in Japan – the Shinkansen – and I have to admit it's an exciting experience, very comfortable and you get to see things out of the window.
- Finn:** Well, we'll be finding out why the UK is hoping **to jump on the bandwagon** – or do something that is already popular – by building a new high-speed rail line. And we'll be learning some related vocabulary.
- Rob:** But before we set off **on the right track**, how about a question?
- Finn:** Why not!
- Rob:** Here goes. According to Guinness World Records, which country currently holds the record for the fastest train running on a national railway system? Is it:
- a) France
 - b) Spain
 - c) China
- Finn:** They all have fast trains but I'm going to say c) China.
- Rob:** I'll let you know the answer at the end of programme. Back to our discussion about high-speed rail travel. We know that it has many **benefits** – good things; it helps to take traffic off the road, it causes less pollution, it can **transport** – or move – lots of people and it's quick.
- Finn:** Yes speed is important. The TGV train in France takes about three hours to travel over 750 kilometres from the capital, Paris, to Marseille in the south – very impressive.

Rob: And the AVE - Spain's **ultra-modern** high-speed train – stole 20 per cent of the national airlines' customers when it started a service from Madrid to Barcelona.

Finn: But the UK has been slow to build high-speed rail lines. It has one from London to Paris but the government wants to build another one – called HS2 – connecting London to the middle and north of England.

Rob: The Transport Secretary, Patrick McLoughlin, thinks one line is not good enough. What word does he use to mean that the UK must have another high-speed line?

Transport Secretary, Patrick McLoughlin:

I do find it ironic that I can go from London to Paris or London to Brussels on high-speed trains, but I can't go from London to Leeds, or London to Manchester, or London to Birmingham. This is essential to actually make sure that our great cities are connected and we get the right benefits for the United Kingdom.

Finn: So he finds it **ironic** – so different from what you would expect – that he can get to Paris by train more quickly than he can travel to many British cities.

Rob: He used the word '**essential**' to mean a new line to connect British cities has to be built. It would connect the poorer northern cities with London, cut journey times and stop **overcrowding** – that's when there are too many people on one train.

Finn: But plans to build HS2 are **controversial** – not everyone agrees and there is much discussion. Some say other areas of the country will miss out on the economic benefits.

Rob: And it will be very very expensive to build - although some experts say for every £1 spent, it will bring £2 into the economy.

Finn: There are also concerns that some of the countryside will be destroyed. So these are just some of the **arguments** and it could be a long time before a final decision is made.

Rob: So now we'll just have to accept that our trains in the UK will carry on at a **sedate** speed while we watch with **envy** as another country's high-speed train passes us by!

Finn: But which country's train is the fastest?

Rob: Yes, earlier I asked you which country currently holds the record for the fastest train running on a national railway system. Is it:

- a) France
- b) Spain
- c) China

Finn: I said c) China.

Rob: You are wrong. The record belongs to France. It ran a modified version of its TGV train on its network at a speed of 574.8 km/h.

Finn: That's 357.2 miles per hour. I wouldn't like to be standing on the platform as that went by!

Rob: That train ran on a railway track – but a train that uses magnets to float above the track is being developed in Japan that will run, slightly slower, at 500 km/h. OK Finn, there's just time to remind us of some of the vocabulary we've heard today:

Finn: Yes, we heard:

to jump on the bandwagon
on the right track
benefits
to transport
ultra-modern
ironic
essential
controversial
arguments
sedate
envy

Rob: Thanks. We hope you've enjoyed today's programme. Please join us soon again for 6 Minute English from BBC Learning English.

Both: Bye.

Vocabulary and definitions

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| to jump on the bandwagon | to get involved with something that is already successful |
| on the right track | making good progress |
| benefits | good effects |
| to transport | (here) to move |
| ultra-modern | extremely up-to-date; the latest |
| ironic | opposite from what you usually expect |
| essential | completely necessary |
| overcrowding | when there are more people in a space than is comfortable or safe |
| controversial | a subject that many people disagree about |
| arguments | reasons that people agree or disagree with |
| sedate | slow or gentle |
| envy | wishing you had something that someone else already has |

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