

Passenger Safety

Upper Primary

Activity 4: The history of the seat belt

Read the passage and select if the sentences in the table below are true or false.

When cars were first invented, many of them didn't have seat belts. Over time, people realised that without seatbelts, injury could occur if a car crashed or drove fast. In 1959, the car company Volvo introduced three-point seat belts into the cars they manufactured. These three-point seat belts are the same design used in today's cars and are constantly being improved with modern technology.



Have you ever tried to put your seatbelt on only to find that it's stuck in place? Have you ever leaned forward in the car to find that your seat belt stops you? It doesn't matter how much you pull, the seatbelt is locked in place! This is called a retractor locker. It locks your seat belt in place if too much tension is put on the seatbelt.

When Volvo first invented the three-point seat belt, it didn't have a retractor locker, which meant no matter how much you pulled, the seatbelt would keep getting longer. This was dangerous because if a car crashed, a person's body would move and hit the dashboard, windscreen or the seat in front of them. The invention of the retractor locker meant that in the event of a crash, the seat belt locked into place, keeping the person sitting back in their seat. Next time you're in the car, see if you can feel the retractor locker keeping your seat belt in place!

Did you know?
 Seat belts were only introduced to all Australian cars in 1971, so on your grandparents' car ride to school they were probably sliding around in the back seat with no seat belt!

Sentence	True	False
Volvo is a company that makes seat belts.		
In 1959 Australians did not have to wear a seat belt.		
The three-point seat belt is still used in cars today.		
The retractor locker helps to stop people moving forward in a crash.		
Driving without a seat belt could cause injuries.		