Author's Point of View and How They Distinguish It

Name: _____ Date: _____ Score: _____ / 10

Quick Review

An author's point of view is the position they take on a topic. Grade 7 readers should also track HOW the author distinguishes that position from other points of view — by naming them, quoting them, or showing what they get wrong.

PART 1 — READ

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

Are Self-Driving Cars Really Safer?

For more than a decade, technology companies have promised that fully self-driving cars will dramatically reduce traffic deaths. Roughly 40,000 people die on American roads each year, and human error is involved in more than ninety percent of those crashes. Many engineers argue that a careful machine, which does not text, drink, or fall asleep, must inevitably outperform a tired human driver. The promise sounds reasonable. It is also harder to verify than most readers assume.

I have spent the last several years reading the safety reports that companies submit to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, and I have come to a more cautious view than the one offered in glossy press releases. The companies' own data show that automated vehicles do crash less often in clear weather on familiar streets. They also show that the same vehicles struggle in rare situations — heavy snow, unusual road work, a child stepping suddenly from between parked cars — where a human driver still performs better. Industry critics, including some transportation safety researchers I respect, argue that these failures are reasons to ban the technology entirely. I disagree with that position. A ban would freeze progress and would also freeze the high rate of human-driver deaths in place. But I disagree, just as strongly, with the position that the technology is already safe enough for unsupervised deployment. The middle ground is what the evidence supports.

That middle ground looks like this: continued testing with trained safety drivers in the front seat, mandatory release of crash data to the public rather than only to regulators, and city-by-city decisions about which streets are appropriate. Companies that have refused to share data, or that have rolled out vehicles without safety drivers in cities they had not adequately mapped, have produced exactly the kind of high-profile failures that hand ammunition to the ban-it-now camp. Honest progress requires that the companies, the critics, and the public stop talking past each other. The technology has real promise. It also has real limits. A reader who has decided in advance which of those sentences is true has stopped reading the evidence.

PART 2 — PRACTICE

Use the passage to answer each question.

1. Which sentence BEST states the author's OWN point of view?

   A. Self-driving cars should be banned because they are not yet safe.

   B. Self-driving cars are already safer than human drivers in every situation.

   C. Self-driving cars should keep developing under careful conditions — with safety drivers, public data, and city-by-city decisions — because the evidence supports neither a ban nor unsupervised deployment.

   D. Self-driving cars are mostly a marketing trick.

2. How does the author DISTINGUISH their point of view from the position of "industry critics"?

   A. By ignoring the critics entirely.

   B. By agreeing with the critics' evidence about real failures but rejecting their conclusion that the technology should be banned.

   C. By accusing the critics of lying.

   D. By copying the critics' position word for word.

3. How does the author DISTINGUISH their point of view from the technology companies' position?

   A. By praising the companies' press releases as the most reliable source.

   B. By pointing to companies that have refused to share data or have skipped adequate mapping, and treating those choices as the cause of high-profile failures.

   C. By saying that companies have no responsibility for crashes.

   D. By arguing the companies should be allowed to operate without any rules.

4. Read this sentence from paragraph 2: "A ban would freeze progress and would also freeze the high rate of human-driver deaths in place." The MAIN purpose of this sentence is to —

   A. argue that the author favors a ban.

   B. explain why the author rejects the ban-it-now position, by showing what a ban would also keep in place.

   C. blame human drivers for the technology's failures.

   D. argue that all driving should stop.

5. Which detail BEST shows the author trying to be FAIR to opposing views?

   A. "Honest progress requires that the companies, the critics, and the public stop talking past each other."

   B. "For more than a decade, technology companies have promised…"

   C. "Roughly 40,000 people die on American roads each year."

   D. "I have spent the last several years reading the safety reports."

6. Which choice BEST distinguishes the author's POINT OF VIEW from the article's TONE?

A. The author's point of view is that progress should continue under careful conditions; the tone is measured and evidence-based.

B. The author's point of view is sarcastic; the tone is angry.

C. The author has no point of view; the tone is enthusiastic.

D. The author and the tone are the same thing.

7. Why does the author MOST LIKELY mention "glossy press releases"?

A. To praise the design of the press releases.

B. To distance their own position from corporate marketing and signal that the article will use harder evidence instead.

C. To argue that all press releases are illegal.

D. To suggest that nobody should trust technology companies.

8. Which sentence from the passage BEST shows the author rejecting BOTH extreme positions?

A. "The technology has real promise. It also has real limits."

B. "Roughly 40,000 people die on American roads each year."

C. "Industry critics… argue that these failures are reasons to ban the technology entirely."

D. "I have spent the last several years reading the safety reports."

9. In your own words, explain the author's point of view AND describe TWO ways the author distinguishes it from other points of view.

_____

_____

10. How is the author's POINT OF VIEW different from the article's TONE? Explain in 2-3 sentences, using one detail from the passage.

_____

_____

Answer Keys

1	A	B	**C**	D	6	**A**	B	C	D
2	A	**B**	C	D	7	A	**B**	C	D
3	A	**B**	C	D	8	**A**	B	C	D
4	A	**B**	C	D	9	See below			
5	**A**	B	C	D	10	See below			

Explanations

1. C	C is the explicit middle-ground position the author argues for. A is the position the author names and rejects. B overstates a claim the author limits. D is dismissive and the author is careful, not dismissive.
2. B	The author respects the critics' evidence ("researchers I respect") AND rejects their ban conclusion — the careful distinction the question asks about. A is false (the author names them). C invents an accusation. D contradicts the explicit disagreement.
3. B	The author names a specific company behavior (no data sharing, inadequate mapping) and pins failures on it — a clear distinction from a pro-company stance. A reverses the author's view. C and D contradict the middle-ground position.
4. B	The sentence is the author's argument AGAINST a ban — exactly distinguishing the author from the ban camp. A reverses the meaning. C invents blame. D is absurd.
5. A	A names ALL THREE sides as needing change — the textbook fairness move. B describes the companies. C is a statistic. D is the author's credential, not fairness.
6. A	A names the position (continue under conditions) AND the tone (measured) as different things — the structure of the distinction the question asks about. B invents sarcasm and anger. C is false (the author clearly has a position). D collapses two different ideas.
7. B	"Glossy press releases" is contrasted with the author's reading of safety reports — a contrast designed to distinguish the author from the marketing voice. A praises what the author criticizes. C invents a legal claim. D overstates a careful distinction into total distrust.
8. A	Two sentences side by side, naming promise AND limits, are the explicit two-sided rejection the question targets. B is a statistic. C is one side the author rejects. D is the author's credential.
9.	**Answer:** Strong answer: Point of view — the author argues for a careful middle ground: keep developing self-driving cars with safety drivers, public crash data, and city-by-city decisions, rather than banning the technology or rolling it out without supervision. Distinction 1 — the author names industry critics who want a ban, accepts their evidence, but argues that a ban would also freeze human-driver deaths. Distinction 2 — the author criticizes companies that hide data or skip mapping, distancing themselves from corporate "glossy press releases." Acceptable variations: any pair of distinctions that names (a) the critics/ban camp and (b) the companies/over-promising camp, with at least one specific detail for each. NOT acceptable: answers that name only one side; answers that confuse the author's view with one of the rejected positions; answers without any specific detail. A 2-point answer (1) states the author's middle-ground position AND (2) describes how the author distances themselves from BOTH extremes.

10.	**Answer:** Strong answer: The author's point of view is a specific position (continue developing self-driving cars under strict conditions). The tone is the FEEL of the writing — careful, measured, evidence-based, and willing to acknowledge real failures. They are different because a writer with the same evidence-based tone could, in theory, defend a different position. The detail "I have spent the last several years reading the safety reports" shows the careful tone without committing to a position by itself. Acceptable variations: any answer that defines point of view as the position taken AND tone as the writing's feel/attitude, with a paragraph detail to anchor the difference. NOT acceptable: answers that say point of view and tone are the same; answers without a passage detail; answers that confuse "point of view" with first-person/third-person narration. A 2-point answer (1) clearly defines BOTH terms and (2) cites a passage detail to anchor the distinction.

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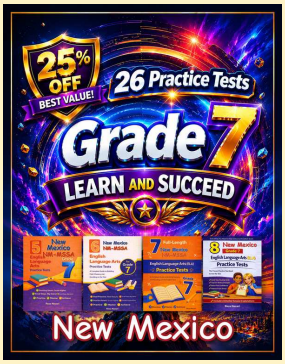

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