

Mr. Larry Stephens is a 53-year old college professor of biology at the University of Wisconsin, Platteville. I have lived next door to Mr. Stephens for seven years and have taken two of his college courses; he has asked me to help him find the best automobile for his needs. Currently driving a rusty 1987 Dodge Caravan with over 200,000 miles, he is looking for a replacement car. His four children have moved out and he no longer needs the extra passenger space. Because of his concern for the environment, Mr. Oxford would like a smaller, fuel-efficient car for his usual driving experiences, which include mainly driving to and from work (32 mile round-trip), and short trips (10 miles or less) to town on a daily basis. Mr. Oxford's home is located on a county road approximately six miles south of the city of Lancaster, which is in the hilly, un-glaciated region of Wisconsin; safe winter drivability is a concern, but it is not necessarily a deciding factor. The new automobile need not be flashy, but must include a variety of features.

Based on Mr. Oxford's needs, I chose to research four automobiles – the Chevy Cavalier, the Dodge Neon, the Geo Metro, and the Ford Z-X2. These cars would be appropriate for Mr. Oxford because they are much more fuel efficient than the Caravan and suit his modest driving needs well. Since Mr. Oxford does not require much hauling or passenger space, the Metro may be an automobile of special interest given its reputation as being built for impressive fuel economy. None of these cars is designed to be particularly flashy, but they all offer a variety of features, such as manual transmission (which Mr. Oxford prefers), air bags, power windows, power locks, sunroofs, and air conditioning. Given the hilly nature of the region and the often-poor condition of country roads in the winter, the traction control and ABS offered by the Cavalier, Neon, and Z-X2 are appropriate for Mr. Oxford.