

WORK WITH THE READING

- A.** Read the article and gather information on what makes a public place appealing.

A Path to Road Safety with No Signposts

By Sarah Lyall

- 1 DRACHTEN, The Netherlands. “I want to take you on a walk,” said Hans Monderman, abruptly stopping his car and striding—hatless, and nearly hairless—into the freezing rain.



Pedestrians, bicycles, and cars all share this intersection in Drachten without the need for traffic lights or road signs.

- 2 Like a naturalist conducting a tour of the jungle, he led the way to a busy intersection in the center of town, where several odd things immediately became clear. Not only was it virtually naked, stripped of all lights, signs, and road markings, but there was no **division** between road and sidewalk. It was, basically, a bare brick square.

- 3 But in spite of the apparently anarchical¹ layout, the traffic, a steady stream of trucks, cars, buses, motorcycles, bicycles, and pedestrians, moved along fluidly and easily, as if directed by an invisible conductor. When Mr. Monderman, a traffic engineer and the intersection’s proud designer, deliberately failed to check for oncoming traffic before crossing the street, the drivers slowed for him. No one honked or shouted rude words out of the window.

- 4 “Who has the right of way?” he asked rhetorically². “I don’t care. People here have to find their own way, **negotiate** for themselves, use their own brains.”

- 5 Used by some 20,000 drivers a day, the intersection is part of a road-design revolution pioneered by the 59-year-old Mr. Monderman. His work in Friesland, the district in northern Holland that takes in Drachten, is increasingly seen as the way of the future in Europe.

- 6 His philosophy is simple, if **counterintuitive**.

- 7 To make communities safer and more **appealing**, Mr. Monderman argues, you should first remove the traditional paraphernalia³ of their roads—the traffic lights and road signs; the center lines separating lanes from one another; even the speed bumps, speed-limit signs, bicycle lanes, and pedestrian crossings. In his view, it is only when the road is made more dangerous, when drivers stop looking at signs and start looking at other people, that driving becomes safer.

¹ anarchical: without order

² rhetorically: asked only to make a statement or to produce an effect rather than to get an answer

³ paraphernalia: a large number of different objects, especially the equipment that you need for a particular activity

**WRITE WHAT YOU THINK****A.** Discuss these questions in a group.

1. Do you know a building like the Stata Center or a place like Bryant Park that is multifunctional or has a hybrid purpose? Describe it and explain whether it is appealing to you.
2. Do you agree with the idea that technology such as smartphones and tablet computers can have an alienating effect? Do you like the ideas that Christopher Waters had to encourage customers to mingle more?
3. Do you think third places differ from country to country? Why might some third places in your country be less appealing elsewhere?

B. Choose one question and write a paragraph in response. Look back at your Quick Write on page 131 as you think about what you learned.**READING 2****A Path to Road Safety with No Signposts****UNIT OBJECTIVE**

You are going to read a profile from *The New York Times* about Dutch traffic engineer Hans Monderman. Although he died in 2008, Monderman's ideas about cars, pedestrians, and bicyclists sharing roads are still popular today. Use the article to gather information and ideas for your Unit Assignment.

PREVIEW THE READING

- A. PREVIEW** Read the title, subheadings, and caption in the article. What do you think Monderman did to make roads safer? Make three predictions.
- B. QUICK WRITE** How do you think urban planners can make towns and cities friendly for motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians? Write for 5–10 minutes in response. Remember to use this section for your Unit Assignment.
- C. VOCABULARY** Work with a partner to find these words in the reading. Circle clues in the text that help you understand the meaning of each word. Then use a dictionary to define any unknown words.

accommodate (v.)

counterintuitive (adj.)

negotiate (v.)

anticipate (v.)

criteria (n.)

proponent (n.)

appealing (adj.)

division (n.)

regulated (adj.)

concede (v.)

fatal (adj.)

reinforce (v.)

"All those signs are saying to cars, 'This is your space, and we have organized your behavior so that as long as you behave this way, nothing can happen to you,'" Mr. Monderman said. "That is the wrong story."

9 The Drachten intersection is an example of the concept of "shared space," a street where cars and pedestrians are equal, and the design tells the driver what to do.

10 "It's a moving away from **regulated** traffic toward space which, by the way it's designed and configured, makes it clear what sort of behavior is **anticipated**," said Ben Hamilton-Baillie, a British specialist in urban design and movement and a **proponent** of many of the same concepts.

11 Highways, where the car is naturally king, are part of the "traffic world" and another matter altogether. In Mr. Monderman's view, shared-space schemes thrive only in conjunction with well-organized, well-regulated highway systems.

Social Space

12 Mr. Monderman is a man on a mission. On a daylong automotive tour of Friesland, he pointed out places he had improved, including a town where he ripped out the sidewalks, signs, and crossings and put in brick paving on the central shopping street. An elderly woman crossed slowly in front of him.

13 "This is social space, so when Grandma is coming, you stop, because that's what normal, courteous human beings do," he said.

14 Planners and curious journalists are increasingly making pilgrimages⁴ to meet Mr. Monderman, considered one of the field's great innovators, although until a few years ago he was virtually unknown outside Holland. Mr. Hamilton-Baillie, whose writings have helped

bring Mr. Monderman's work to wider attention, remembers with fondness his own first visit.

15 Mr. Monderman drove him to a small country road with cows in every direction. Their presence was unnecessarily **reinforced** by a large traffic sign with a picture of a cow on it.

16 "He said: 'What do you expect to find here? Wallabies⁵?' " Mr. Hamilton-Baillie recalled. "They're treating you like you're a complete idiot, and if people treat you like a complete idiot, you'll act like one.' Essentially, what it means is a transfer of responsibility to the individual and the community."

17 Dressed in a beige jacket and patterned shirt, with scruffy facial hair and a stocky build, Mr. Monderman has the appearance of a football hooligan⁶ but the temperament of an engineer, which indeed he trained to be. He was working as a civil engineer building highways in the 1970s when the Dutch government, alarmed at a sharp increase in traffic accidents, set up a network of traffic safety offices. Mr. Monderman was appointed Friesland's traffic safety officer.

18 In residential communities, Mr. Monderman began narrowing the roads and putting in design features like trees and flowers, red brick paving stones, and even fountains to discourage people from speeding. This principle is now known as psychological traffic calming, where behavior follows design.

19 He made his first nervous foray into⁷ shared space in a small village whose residents were upset at its being used as a daily thoroughfare for 6,000 speeding cars. When he took away the signs, lights, and sidewalks, people drove more carefully. Within two weeks, speeds on the road had dropped by more than half.

⁴ **pilgrimage**: a journey to a place that is connected with someone or something that you admire

⁵ **wallaby**: an Australian animal like a small kangaroo

⁶ **hooligan**: someone who behaves in an extremely noisy way

⁷ **make a foray into**: to attempt to become involved in (a new activity)

20 In fact, he said, there has never been a **fatal** accident on any of his roads.

Limits of Shared Space

21 Mr. Monderman **concedes** that road design can do only so much. It does not change the behavior, for instance, of the 15 percent of drivers who will behave badly no matter what the rules are. Nor are shared-space designs appropriate everywhere, like major urban centers, but only in neighborhoods that meet particular **criteria**.

22 Recently a group of well-to-do parents asked him to widen the two-lane road leading to their children's school, saying it was too small to **accommodate** what he derisively⁸ calls "their huge cars."

23 He refused, saying the fault was not with the road, but with the cars. "They can't wait for each other to pass?" he asked.

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⁸ **derisively**: in a way that shows that he thinks something is ridiculous

B. VOCABULARY Here are some words from Reading 2. Read the sentences. Then write each bold word next to the correct list of synonyms.

1. In most countries, driving is a **regulated** activity.
2. Drivers learn traffic laws when they get their licenses, but signs **reinforce** the laws in case drivers forget them.
3. Urban planners try to **anticipate** conflict between cars and pedestrians when they design streets.
4. Most street planners try to create a strict **division** between the road and the sidewalk.
5. Whenever possible, roads are built to **accommodate** all the vehicles that are likely to use them.
6. Streets can be hard to **negotiate** if rules are complicated or there is a lot of traffic.
7. Despite many safety measures, sometimes there are **fatal** accidents on the roads.
8. Many home buyers think houses on large, busy streets are less **appealing** than those on small, quiet streets.
9. One street designer is a **proponent** of a planned shared-space movement and is trying to convince other people of the plan's value.