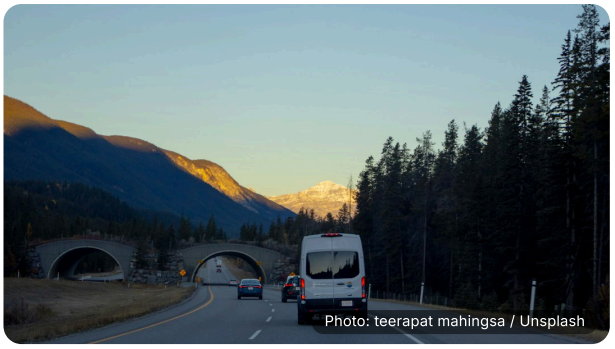
Colorado wildlife crossings cut crashes by 91%

LEVEL B2


Photo: teerapat mahingsa / Unsplash

I. WARM-UP

1. Where have you seen roads affect wildlife in your area?
2. What makes roads dangerous for animals and people?
3. How could a city reduce crashes without slowing traffic too much?

II. KEY VOCABULARY

overpass
A bridge built over a road so people or animals can cross safely above traffic.

habitat
The natural place where an animal or plant normally lives.

collision
A crash when two things hit each other, such as a car and an animal.

corridor
A long route that connects areas so animals can move between them.

span
To extend across something from one side to the other.

funding
Money provided for a project or purpose.

infrastructure
Public systems and structures like roads and bridges that a society uses.

threatened
At risk of becoming endangered or disappearing in the future.

III. READING

Colorado's new wildlife overpass, which sits on Interstate 25 between Denver and Colorado Springs, completes a system that has sharply cut crashes. A state report found that fencing and five underpasses in this corridor cut wildlife-vehicle collisions by 91% in 2024.

The bridge opened 10 months ago, and data on it is still being collected. The overpass, which spans six lanes of traffic, links 39,000 acres of habitat on both sides. It is covered with grass and has gently sloped entrances to help animals cross. Officials have tracked elk, bears and pronghorn using the crossing.

The threatened Preble's meadow jumping mouse has also been recorded. Colorado's transport department says there used to be about one collision a day here. Underpasses often fail for large animals, which prefer open views, so an overpass was chosen.

The project had $22m in federal funding and $8m from the state, and was completed for $15m. Supporters argue such infrastructure can pay for itself by preventing costly crashes. Officials now hope to build more crossings around the state.

Reading text adapted from reporting by **The Guardian***: "Colorado wildlife overpass cut...". Original article linked at theenglishwire.com.*

IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What percentage drop in collisions did the report find?
2. Where is the overpass located in Colorado?
3. How much habitat does the bridge connect?
4. Name two animals that have used the crossing.
5. How much did the project cost to complete?

V. DISCUSSION

1. Should governments invest more in wildlife crossings? Why or why not?
2. Are overpasses better than underpasses for large animals? Explain.
3. What evidence would show a crossing has succeeded?
4. Where in your country could a crossing like this help?

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Relative clauses (non-defining)

Use commas to add extra, non-essential information: , which/who + clause ,. Use which for things and who for people; that is not used in non-defining clauses.

*"The overpass, **which is covered with grass**, blends in."*

*"Officials, **who hope to build more crossings**, welcomed it."*

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

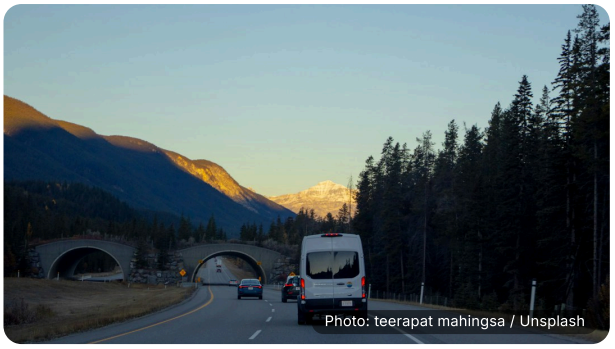
Circle the correct option in each sentence.

1. Preble's mouse, (which / that) is threatened, was also recorded. _____
2. Officials, (who / that) tracked elk, shared videos. _____
3. The crossing, (that / which) links habitats, helps animals. _____
4. Large mammals, (that / which) prefer open views, use it. _____
5. Supporters, (that / who) argue it pays, back more builds. _____

Teacher's Notes

TEACHERS ONLY

These notes are designed to help you get the most out of this lesson. Please do not share this page with students.


Photo: teerapat mahingsa / Unsplash

I. LESSON GUIDE

- Timing: 8–10 minutes warm-up, 10 minutes vocabulary, 12–15 minutes reading and comprehension, 8–10 minutes grammar, 10 minutes discussion.
- Pre-teach: overpass, habitat, collision, corridor, span; show a photo of a wildlife bridge if possible.
- Run the reading once for gist, then again for details (numbers, places, species). Pair-check answers before a brief whole-class check.
- Differentiation: stronger students write a 60-word summary of benefits; others underline figures and proper nouns first.

II. DISCUSSION FACILITATION TIPS

1. If most students say yes, ask them which places should come first and why.
2. List pros/cons on the board, then form pairs to argue for one option.
3. Guide students to mention numbers, locations, species and crash data.
4. Have students mark a spot on a map and justify it with one clear reason.

III. EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Writing: In pairs, write a 70-word press release announcing the 91% collision drop.

Presentation: Make a 2-minute pitch to fund the next Colorado crossing, using facts from the text.

IV. ANSWER KEY OVERVIEW

Comprehension questions: short factual answers from the text.

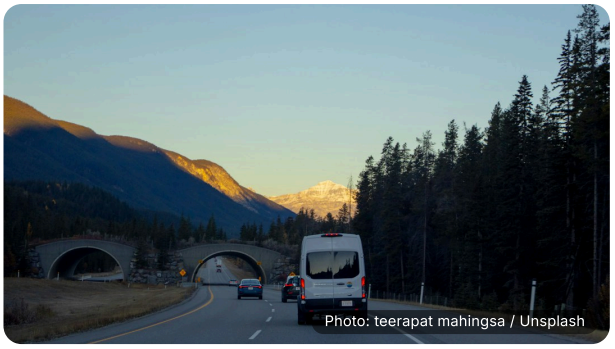
Grammar exercise: Relative clauses (non-defining)

Discussion: open-ended. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

Answer Key

TEACHERS ONLY

These answers are for teachers only. Please do not share this page with students.


Photo: teerapat mahingsa / Unsplash

IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What percentage drop in collisions did the report find?
   A 91% decrease.
2. Where is the overpass located in Colorado?
   On Interstate 25 between Denver and Colorado Springs.
3. How much habitat does the bridge connect?
   39,000 acres.
4. Name two animals that have used the crossing.
   Elk and pronghorn.
5. How much did the project cost to complete?
   $15 million.

V. DISCUSSION

Open answers. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Circle the correct option in each sentence.

1. Preble's mouse, (which / that) is threatened, was also recorded. **which**
2. Officials, (who / that) tracked elk, shared videos. **who**
3. The crossing, (that / which) links habitats, helps animals. **which**
4. Large mammals, (that / which) prefer open views, use it. **which**
5. Supporters, (that / who) argue it pays, back more builds. **who**

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Key point: Use commas to add extra, non-essential information: , which/who + clause ,. Use which for things and who for people; that is not used in non-defining clauses. (Examples constructed.)

"The overpass, **which is covered with grass**, *blends in."*

"Officials, **who hope to build more crossings**, *welcomed it."*