INTERMEDIATE
Japanese cars still most reliable

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a pretty good track record," said Dave Sargent, a J.D. Powers executive. Lexus was first place in six categories, while other Toyota and Honda cars led four categories. Toyota's Prius hybrid was the winning compact car.

Mr Sargent said that reliability in cars is improving every year. In the past two years, the industry average has improved from 237 problems per 100 vehicles to 206. Land Rover, sold earlier this year to India's Tata Motors, was the worst-performing brand, with 344 problems. Sargent also said the "seriousness" of the problems was decreasing. The complaints being reported a few years ago were "hard" problems, such as serious technical defects. Sargent said these were becoming less common. He told reporters it is now more likely that car owners will complain about "soft" problems, like strange noises or wear and tear of the car"s interior. He added that: "Improved quality is good for everybody, [especially] for the consumers, who don't have the annoyance of problems [and costs]."

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READING / LISTENING
TRUE / FALSE
Look at the article"s headline and guess whether these sentences
are true (T) or false (F):
a. A market research firm found Japanese cars to be the most reliable.
b. Japanese makers have topped the reliability list for the past 14 years.
c. Only 145 people said they had problems with their Japanese car.
d. Toyota"s energy-saving hybrid car was the most reliable of all cars.
e. Industry-wide, overall reliability worsened in the past year.
f. The best-performing non-Japanese car maker was Land Rover.
g. Car owners are now more likely to complain about strange noises.
h. People will complain about wear and tear more than engine problems.

SYNONYM MATCH

10. annoyance   j. probable

PHRASE MATCH
Match the following phrases from the article
(sometimes more than one combination is possible):

1. Japanese cars are the most   a. in a row
2. an international market   b. defects
3. The Lexus car topped   c. common
4. the fourteenth year   d. research company
5. Lexus was first place   e. tear of the car"s interior
6. the industry average   f. reliable in the world
7. serious technical   g. good for everybody
8. becoming less   h. has improved
9. wear and   i. the reliability list
10. Improved quality is   j. in six categories