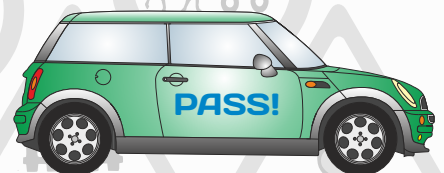
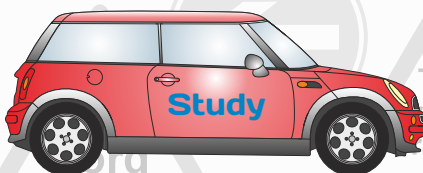


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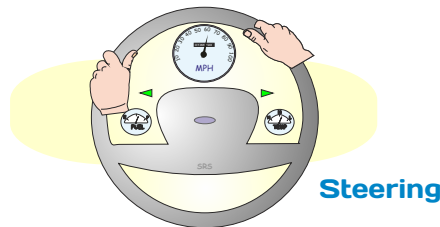
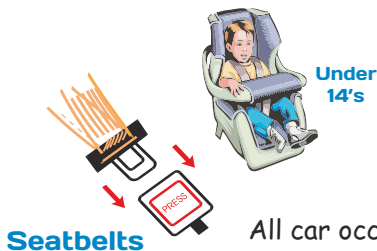
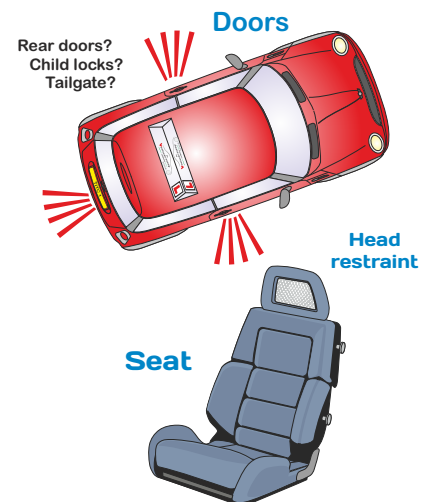
1. Cockpit Drill

www.driveractive.com

As a driver, you are responsible for your vehicle; part of this responsibility is to ensure the safety of yourself and your passengers during every journey.

Before you start your engine, check that all the doors are firmly closed, including passenger doors and the hatchback. If you are carrying children, ensure that the child-locks are activated.

The law states that you must be seated in a position from which you can control your vehicle and have a proper view of the road. You should be able to press the clutch pedal down to the floor and comfortably run your hands around the rim of the steering wheel. Correct adjustment of your head-restraint is important in order to minimise 'whiplash' if someone accidentally bumped into your car



All car occupants must wear seatbelts. As a driver (and learner driver) You are legally responsible for all passengers under 14 years of age.

Adjust your mirrors for maximum rear view. Most cars have convex door mirrors; these give a wider angle of view but can distort your perception of distance making vehicles appear further away than they actually are.

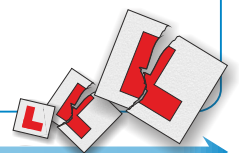
An easy way to remember the cockpit-drill is 'DSSSM' (D triple S, M). The letters stand for Doors, Seat, Steering-reach (& head restraint), Seatbelt and Mirrors.



Completing the cockpit drill before every trip will help to ensure your safety and the safety of your passengers.

D-S-S-S-M
D- 'Triple S' -M

Lesson Notes:



2. The foot controls

www.driveractive.com

The accelerator or gas pedal (as it is known for easy reference) controls the flow of fuel to the engine.

To go faster, or climb hills, etc., you will need more power; by (gently) pressing the gas pedal you can increase the power. Releasing the gas pedal reduces the power, however, the car's momentum will keep it moving.

By pressing the footbrake with your right foot you can slow down or stop the car. 'Progressive' braking describes the skill of spreading your braking for smoothness and safety.

Progressive braking starts with gentle pressure on the brake which is gradually increased to reduce speed; you then gently release the pressure as you reach your target speed (or just before the car stops).

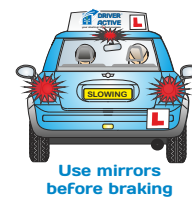
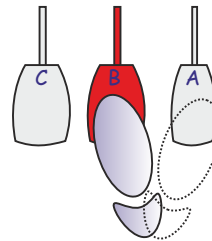
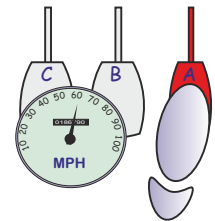
In simple terms, the clutch allows you to separate the engine from the wheels, this enables the engine to keep running when the car is stationary. It is also necessary to press the clutch pedal down when changing gear.

When pressing the clutch down you can use one firm movement; however, when bringing the pedal up (to connect the engine to the wheels) you need a more gentle action. By pausing momentarily as you feel the clutch engage you will have smoother control and a reduced risk of stalling.

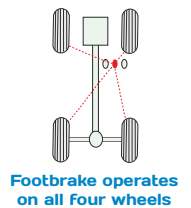
When not operating the clutch it is best to rest your left foot on the floor this will help to reduce fatigue on long journeys and will lessen the risk of premature clutch wear.



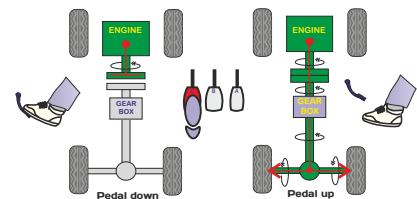
More gas, more power



Use mirrors before braking



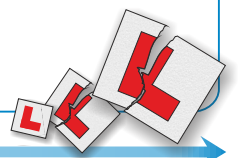
Footbrake operates on all four wheels



Biting point

A-B-C ← As easy as

Lesson Notes:



3. The hand controls

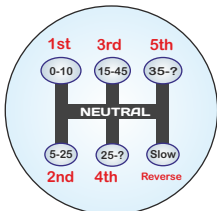
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The parking-brake (handbrake) should be used to secure your car when parking or when waiting for a safe gap in the traffic; for example, at junctions, traffic lights, pedestrian crossings or in traffic queues.

By pressing the ratchet button when applying the handbrake you will prevent unnecessary wear and tear to the mechanism and minimise stretching of the brake cables.

Most modern cars have five forward gears. The gears allow you to make efficient use of the engine power. You will soon get used to the different range of speeds for each gear.

By using the 'palming method' of gear changing, selecting the correct gear is easy without looking at the gear lever, however, palming is not essential, the most important thing is that you are comfortable with the method you use and always find the gear you want.



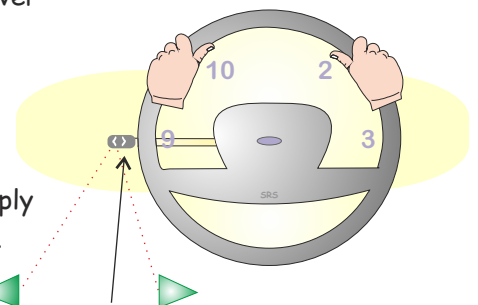
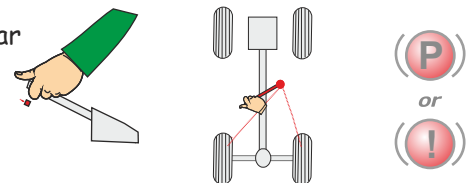
The more relaxed your hand is, the easier it will be to make your gear changes. Avoid 'gripping' the gear lever tightly. The speeds shown on this diagram are approximate and may vary from car to car

For the best steering control, hold the steering wheel with a light, positive grip placing your hands in the 'ten-to-two' or 'quarter to three' position. Apply pressure with your palms and thumbs rather than gripping with your fingers.

Operate indicator switch with 'fingertip control' by moving it the same way as the steering wheel moves for your intended direction.



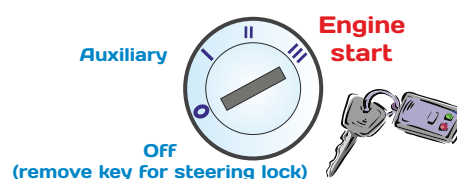
The handbrake only operates on the rear wheels. Never use it while the car is moving!



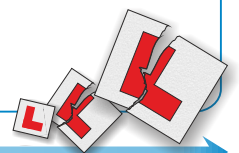
Use fingertip control when operating the indicators

Ignition switch

Turn the ignition key to start the car, but be sure to release it as soon as you hear the engine start, otherwise you risk causing damage to the starter motor.



Lesson Notes:



4. Mirrors

www.driveractive.com

Sit in your normal driving position when you adjust your mirrors to ensure that they are set up for the best possible view behind and to the sides. Avoid getting finger marks on the glass; they can reduce your view and cause dazzle at night.

It's important to use your mirrors **well before** any action. This is necessary to ensure that it is safe to proceed with your manoeuvre and that your driving will fit safely with other road users.

Getting into the habit of using the **Mirror-Signal-Manoeuvre (MSM)** routine will help speed your progress towards an early test pass and more importantly to becoming a safe driver. Although mirrors are only mentioned once in the MSM routine, you might need to check your mirrors several times. Use the mirrors at least once and then as often as necessary for each manoeuvre.

Avoid staring at the mirrors; several quick glances will allow you to build a picture of the traffic situation all around without distracting you from the road ahead. If your mirrors are correctly adjusted, you will be able to check them with minimal head movement.

Convex mirrors make things appear further away than they are.

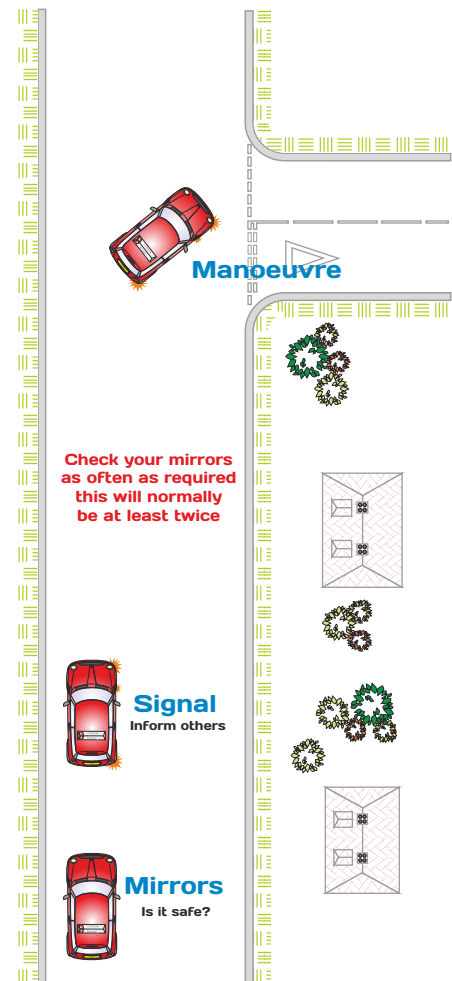


Flat mirrors give a true image of distance.

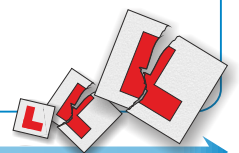


Another useful tip is to use at least two mirrors before changing speed position or direction, the centre mirror first and then the appropriate door mirrors; doing this will give you a wider field of view.

Even with correctly adjusted mirrors, you cannot see everything to the sides. The hidden areas are called '**blind-spots**'. In some situations, you will need to check your blind-spots by turning your head to the left or right in addition to using your mirrors; this is especially important when moving off from the side of the road and during slow speed manoeuvres.



Lesson Notes:



5. Signals

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In day-to-day life we often have to communicate with other people. For example, we are communicating every time we go into a shop, meet a friend or make a telephone call.

Successful communication requires the clear use of a language that is easily understood by all involved. When driving, the language we use takes the form of signalling with indicators, arm-signals, brake-lights, reversing-lights, vehicle position, headlights, hazard-warning-lights, fog-lights and the horn.

The most common way to signal your intentions is the use of flashing direction indicators. To help others to make sense of your indicators you need to use them early; this will allow enough time for your intentions to be clearly understood.

Flashing headlights and the horn provide a more immediate way of signalling. Use these to warn people of your presence. Some drivers use flashing headlights for other purposes, but this can be confusing. Stay safe by keeping to the rules of the Highway Code! If someone flashes at you always double check the situation to make sure that it's safe for you to proceed.

Use hazard warning lights to let people know that your vehicle is stationary. It is important to remember that you should always park safely - hazard warning lights offer little protection for a dangerously parked vehicle - only use them in emergencies, not as an excuse for bad parking!

You can also use your hazard lights to warn following drivers of danger on high speed roads in emergency situations where you have to slow down rapidly.

**Only use the signals
shown in the Highway Code!**



I intend to turn right



I intend to turn left



I am slowing down



Headlights



Horn

I am here!



Hazard lights

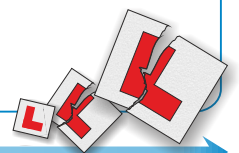
I am stationary
or slowing down
rapidly



Reversing lights

I am reversing
or intending
to reverse

Lesson Notes:



6. Using the clutch

www.driveractive.com

Smooth operation of the clutch is essential for safe and easy driving, but like all things that are worth doing well, clutch control will take a little practise.

Your aim here is to get silky-smooth, unnoticeable gear changes; balance between the clutch and gas pedal is important to achieve this. You might not get it right first time - but that's OK!

One of the best mistakes that you can make, while mastering the clutch, is to use a bit too much gas rather than too little; this might result in a few jumpy starts (if your clutch release is rushed) but will help to prevent the car from stalling!

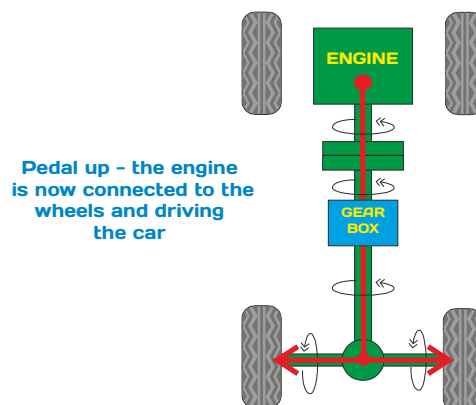
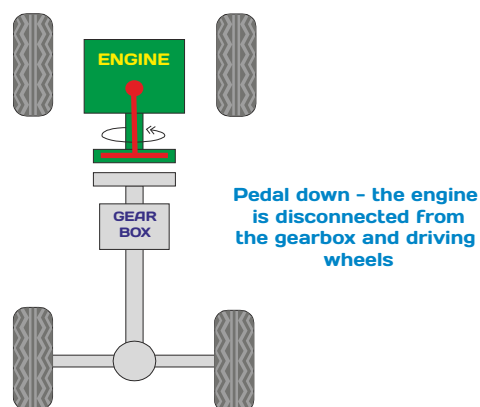
When you bring up the clutch pedal, start by sliding your heel backwards along the floor; you will find a natural 'pivot-point' where you can hold your heel still and raise the ball of your foot. When the car starts to move, pause for a moment and then lift your foot off the floor (if necessary) to bring the clutch up gently all the way.

Clutch-control is a method of keeping a very slow (Zimmer frame) speed in first and reverse gears; this is necessary for manoeuvring in car parks and for 'creeping out' at blind junctions.

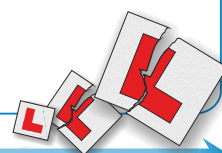


You can achieve clutch-control by holding the gas pedal still and moving the clutch pedal slightly above and below the 'biting-point'. The movement should be no more than about the thickness of a one-pound coin. However, it's OK to press the clutch down further than this, as long as you can find your 'biting-point' easily.

Good clutch control comes naturally after a while, but remember, you will need lots of practise... Occasionally, this might lead to the engine stalling... Remember - that's OK! It's all part of the learning process.

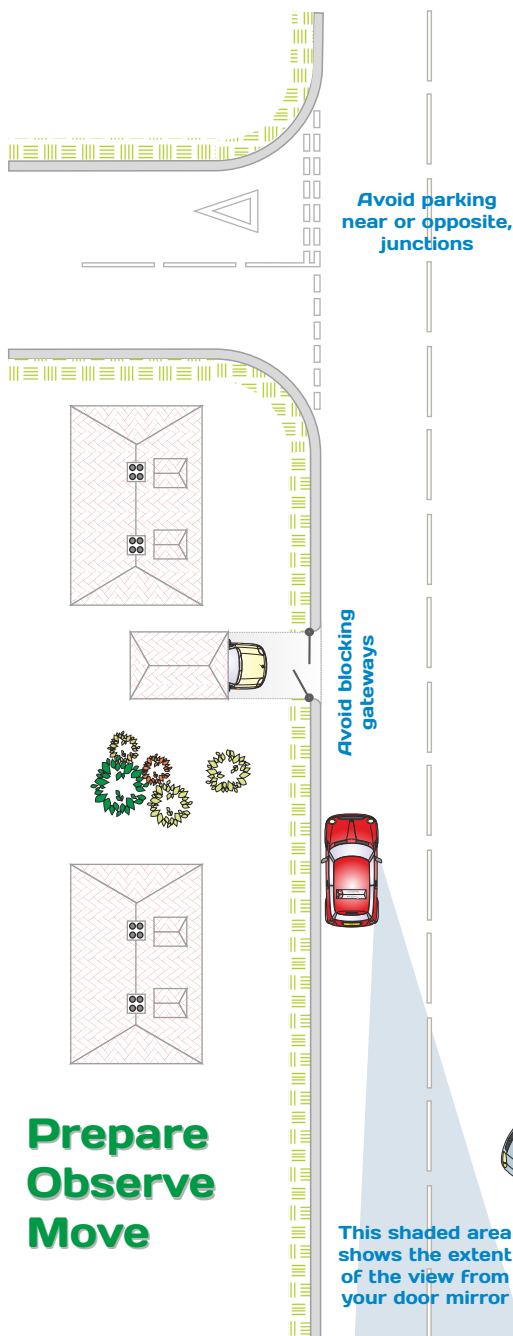


Lesson Notes:



7. Moving off and stopping

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There are simple routines to help you with all aspects of driving. You have already learned about MSM. Moving off also has a simple routine.



This routine can help you to develop a safe moving off method...

'Prepare - Observe - Move'.

When **preparing** to move, your first job is to check that the handbrake is on and the gear lever is in the neutral position before starting the engine. Next, press the clutch pedal down and select first gear (keep the clutch pedal down at this point!) Set the gas by pressing the accelerator pedal to get a lively hum from the engine (this give the car enough power to move without stalling). Finally, find, and hold, the biting point.

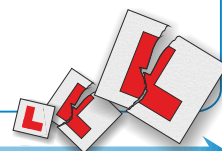
Make all-round **observation** by completing a 'six-point-check' using all your mirrors, checking the road ahead and your blind spots. Consider a signal, and, if it is safe, release the handbrake; bring the clutch up gently and move away steering slightly to the right to take up a safe position in the road.

The routine for stopping begins with observation. Check your mirrors and consider a signal. When it is safe to stop, press the footbrake gently, steer towards the kerb (looking well ahead as you do so) and press the clutch down just before the car stops.



Ideally the car should feel as though it's stopping too soon, ease off the footbrake to make it to the stopping position. Finally, handbrake, neutral - and relax!

Lesson Notes:



8. Steering

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The first 'rule' for steering is 'keep your eyes open!'

Most of the information that your brain needs to make sense of things when driving a motor car will come in via your eyes.

The second rule is - 'look at what you want to hit'. Your first reaction might be that you don't want to hit anything - very sensible! However, this rule is not as silly as it might at first seem.

Think about walking through a doorway, or along a corridor. What do you look at? My guess is that you concentrate on empty space, not at the door frames, not the walls, but the space ahead that you intend to fill with your body.

***Aim at what you
want to hit!***



Let your hands follow your eyes

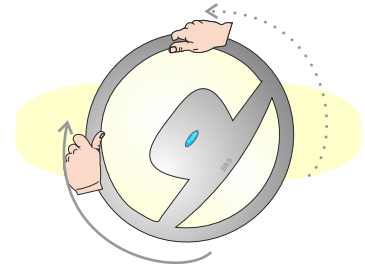
You want to hit the space and so that's what you look at; naturally. The same simple rule applies when steering a motor car - look well ahead for the empty space that you want to 'hit' with the car.

Although you will be looking well ahead, you need to scan the road by keeping your eyes moving in order to make sure that no one else is aiming for the same space as you! Scanning the road will also help your brain with positioning and give you advance warning of potential dangers that might be ahead (ask your instructor to demonstrate visual scanning with a 'commentary drive').

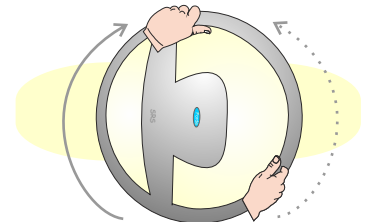
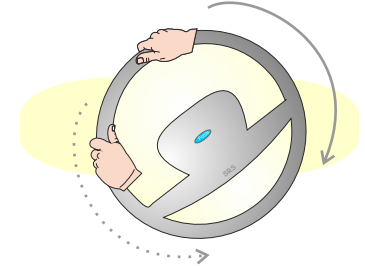
Finally, get into the habit of keeping both hands on the steering wheel. This gives maximum control, especially if something takes you by surprise, for example, a burst tyre.



Allow your hands to flow

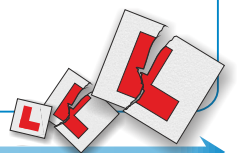


For some curves you might keep your hands in a 'fixed' position on the wheel



At other times you will 'feed' the wheel using pulling and pushing actions

Lesson Notes:



9. Emergency stop

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One of the main rules of driving is: 'check your mirrors before every manoeuvre'. The emergency stop is the one (and only) occasion that this rule can be broken.

In an emergency, the most important thing to do is to stop quickly and safely; taking time to check your mirrors could literally mean the difference between life and death. However, this does not mean that you should ignore what's happening behind or that it's OK not to check the mirrors; simply remember that stopping is a higher priority than a mirror check. Brake first - then mirrors.

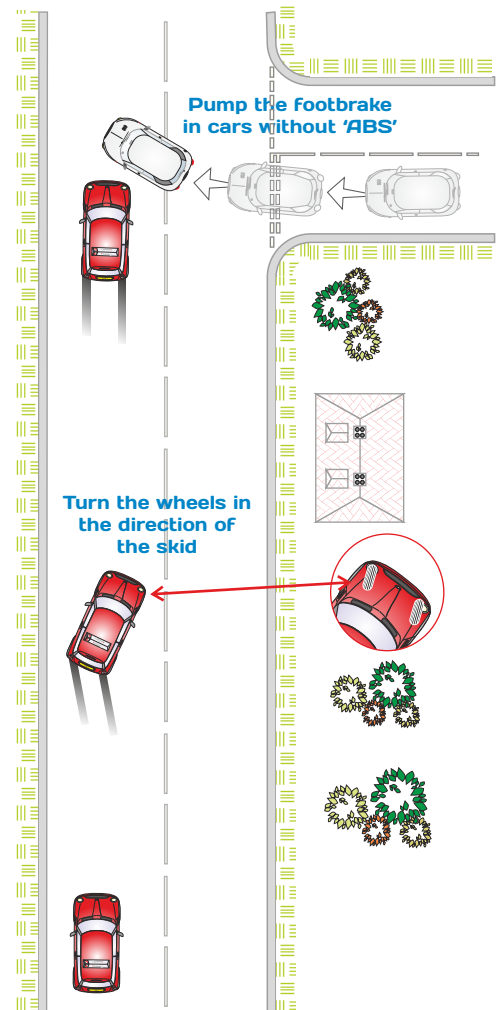
By keeping both hands firmly on the steering wheel and pressing the brake pedal before the clutch, you will gain maximum stability. Be prepared for the 'rattle' of the anti-lock braking system (ABS) and keep the brake pedal firmly pressed.

When practising the emergency stop, apply the handbrake and select neutral after the car has stopped. In a real emergency, quickly assess the situation all around (mirrors) after stopping; you might need to move your car in order to avoid further danger.

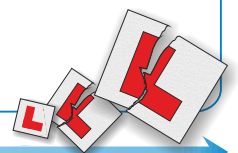
There is a possibility of skidding in some emergency situations. In a car without ABS you can regain control by releasing and then reapplying the footbrake in quick succession. If the rear of the car slides sideways, turn the steering wheel in the direction of the slide to straighten up; at the same time, look well ahead to keep on course.

In emergency situations it becomes especially important to look for spaces and not obstructions - always look for a gap, a way out. Ultimately, the best advice about emergencies is avoid them! Do this by always keeping a safe speed and distance from others.

**Be prepared for
the unexpected!**



Lesson Notes:



10. Meeting vehicles

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The term 'meeting vehicles' applies to any situation where the road width is restricted and there is not enough space for two vehicles to pass safely at their normal speed.

You will 'meet' vehicles where there are parked cars, road works, narrow bridges, single-track roads, and in other similar situations.

As you approach a 'meeting' situation, your first job is to decide who has priority. Normally, if the obstruction is on your side of the road, you will need to give way.

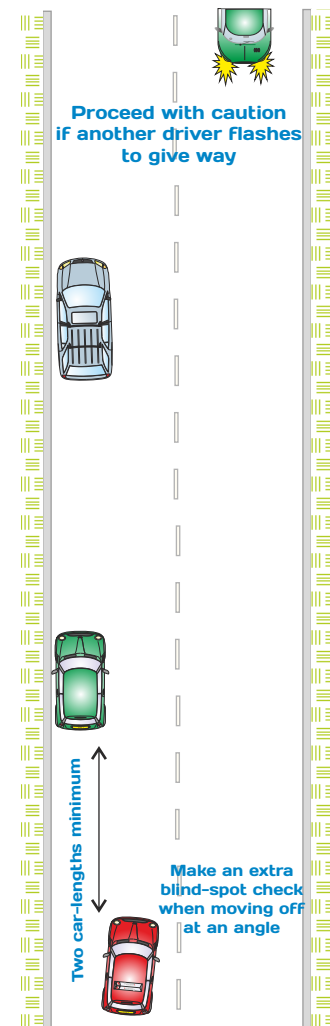
Where possible, time your approach by slowing down to arrive when the road is clear. If this is not possible you will need to decide whether there is enough room to proceed with caution, or if it would be better to stop and give way. It is not always easy to make this decision on the move and quite often you won't know. This is perfectly OK! Simply follow the safety rule:

If you don't know - don't go!

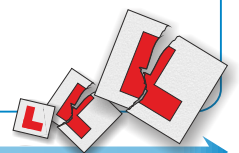
When giving way, leave plenty of space between yourself and the obstruction (a **minimum** of two car lengths), this will maximise your forward vision and make it easier to move off when the road is clear, doing this will also help cars behind to realise that you are waiting to give way and not pulling in to park.

After giving way, make sure that it is safe to move off by checking your mirrors, blind-spots and the road ahead. You might need an extra blind-spot check if you are waiting at an angle (as shown in the diagram).

Take special care if other drivers flash their headlights. Remember, flashing headlights simply alert you to the other drivers presence - make absolutely sure that the situation is safe before proceeding.



Lesson Notes:



11. Approaching junctions

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As with any other situation where you are changing speed, position or direction you will use your hazard routine (MSM) when approaching junctions, making sure that you are fully aware of how your actions will affect other road users at each step.

Mirrors: Your first job when approaching any hazard, in this case a junction, is to check your mirrors. You are doing this to make sure that it is safe to slow down and turn (you might quickly change your mind about turning if you realised that there was a large, out of control, lorry following closely behind and unable to stop!).

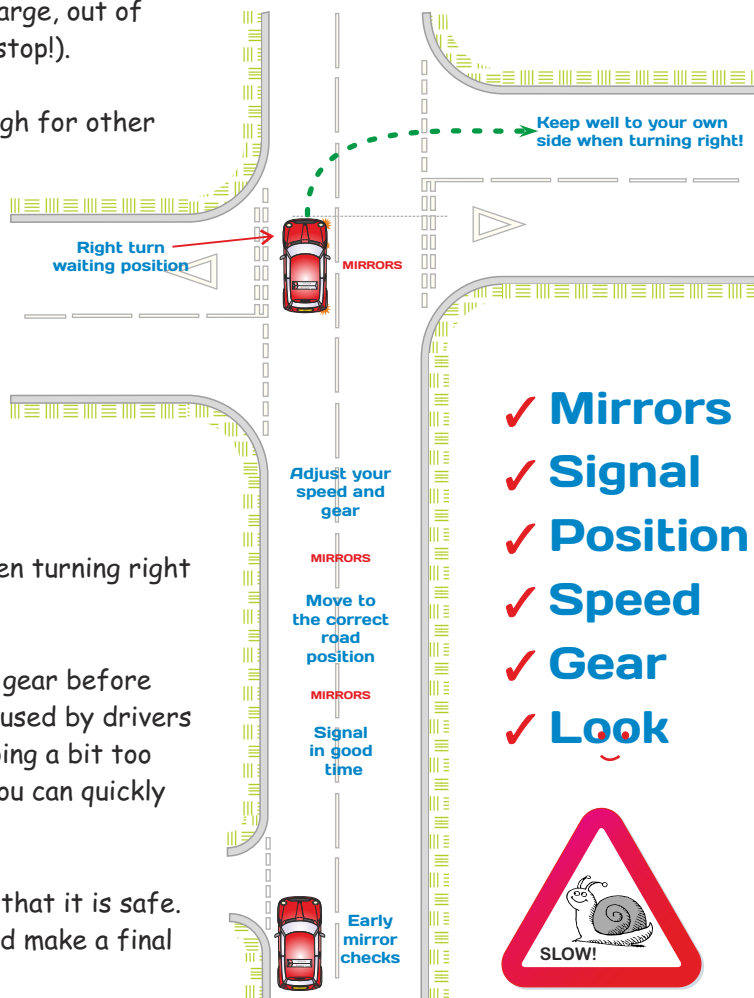
Signal: Remember that you need to signal early enough for other road users to recognise your intentions, making sure that your signals are not misleading. For example, a signal given too early might confuse someone into thinking that you are turning into a driveway, or that you are parking on the left.

Position: Move into position after you have signalled. For left turns you will normally maintain your safe driving line, for right turns it might be necessary to move towards the centre of the road.

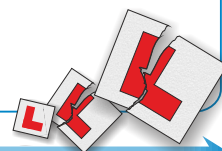
Make sure that you do not stop too far forwards when turning right otherwise you will not have enough space to steer.

Speed: Adjust your speed and select an appropriate gear before you start to turn. Most accidents at junctions are caused by drivers who approach too quickly. If you find that you are going a bit too slow it's easy to speed up; if you are going too fast you can quickly run out of road...

Look: Before turning you must make absolutely sure that it is safe. In order to do this you will need to look all around and make a final check in your mirrors (especially the door mirrors).



Lesson Notes:



12. Crossing traffic

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As you gain more driving experience, you will come into contact with more traffic.

There will be lots of places where you will have to 'cross the path' of other vehicles, in other words, drive in front of them. Turning right from a main road to a side road is a common example of 'crossing' (as shown in the diagram) but it is not the only one, you will 'cross' when turning in or out of driveways or other openings on the right, going ahead at crossroads, etc.

When turning right from a main road to a side road you must not get in the way of the cars coming towards you.

Ideally, in many situations you will be able to slow down to time your approach so that you arrive when the road is clear, do this by reading the road well ahead. But a word of warning - never speed up to 'make the gap'; the driver coming the other way could also speed up!

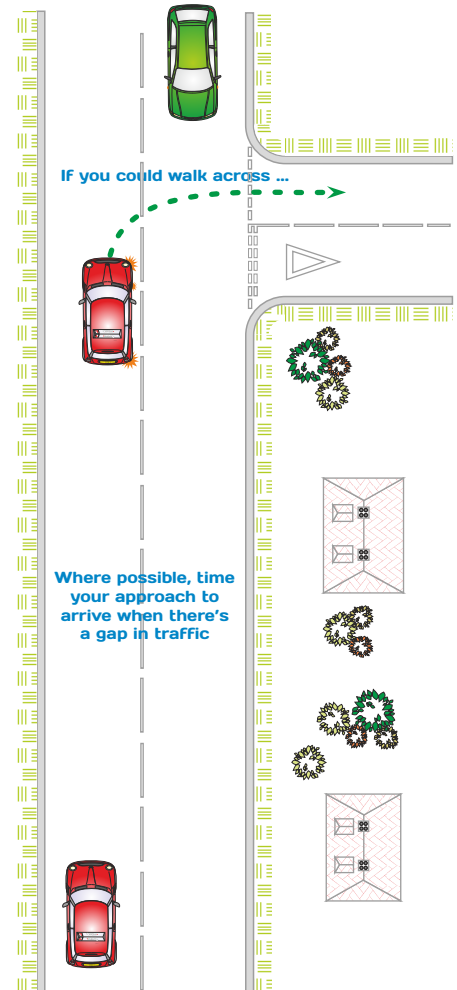
The vehicles that you are turning in front of have priority and shouldn't need to change their speed or direction because of your actions. A useful guide for judging the gap when getting used to crossing the path of traffic is the 'walk across' rule...

If you think that you could safely walk across the whole width of the road in front of an approaching vehicle, then it is probably safe to drive across (assuming that the 'side' road is clear!).

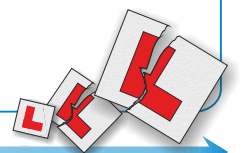
Crossing traffic requires extra care on fast roads, for example, when crossing dual-carriageways.

Always wait until you are 100% sure it is safe before making your decision to proceed. Better to be held up for a few minutes than to find yourself waking up in the local hospital!

If you don't know... Don't go!



Lesson Notes:



13. Emerging

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'Emerging' is the term used to describe the process of leaving a side road to enter, or cross, a main road. When leaving a side road it can be useful to think of the junction as 'open' or 'closed' - these terms relate to the view into the main road.

An **open** junction is one where you have a clear view into the main road (both to the left and right) well before you arrive at the 'mouth' of the junction. A **closed** junction is just the opposite, your view is restricted until the very last moment of the approach.

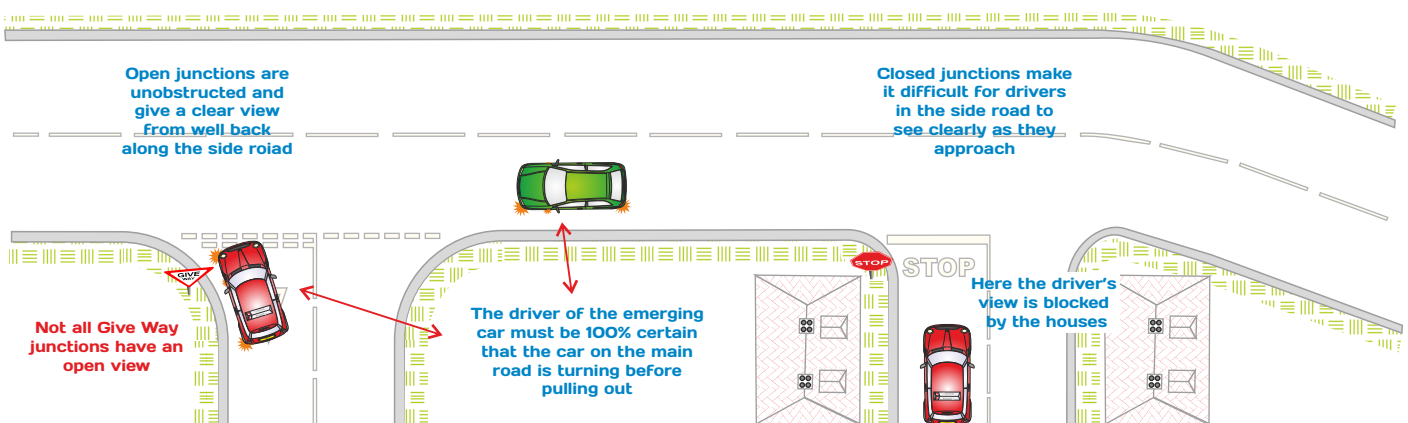


As you approach junctions you need to take early observation to gain information about the road layout. In the case of an open junction, early observation provides information about traffic movement in the new road and will sometimes enable you to carry on without stopping because you will see the road is clear.

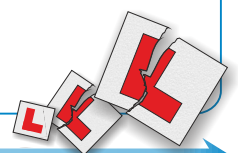
Your approach speed must be slow enough to enable 'effective observation' - this means that you need plenty of time to look for traffic in order to decide whether you can emerge safely. Most emerging situations junctions will need first gear (even when you don't stop), especially in town.

Be especially careful if there is a vehicle approaching from your right on the main road that's signalling left to turn into the road from which you are emerging. The signal may have been left on by mistake (see the diagram). Also take special care at unmarked junctions - other drivers might not know who has priority.

Emerging safely takes practise. If you remember that your aim is safety rather than speed you will soon gain success. If in doubt, wait! Remember that the traffic on the main road has priority.



Lesson Notes:



14. Crossroads

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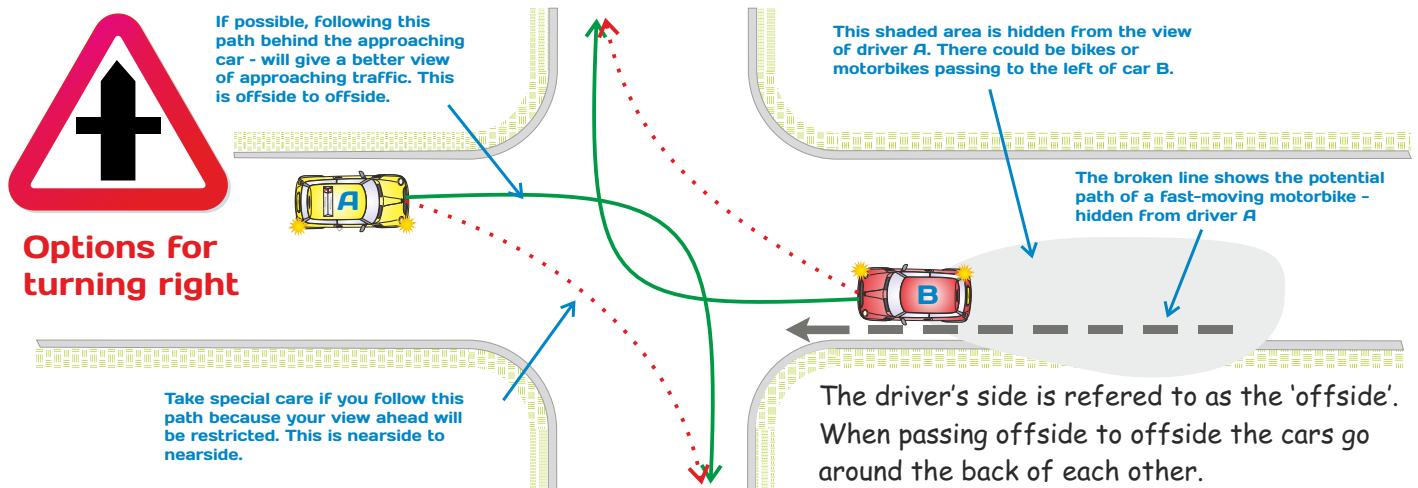
A crossroad is a junction where one road crosses another.
Crossroads can be marked or unmarked.

When approaching on the main road, check to make sure that the roads on the left and right are clear before proceeding - even if you have priority; you will often need to slow down by easing off the gas and perhaps selecting a lower gear. When turning left or right from a main road at crossroads make sure that you check all around - traffic can approach from any direction! (Remember to count to three - see the DriverActive web course)

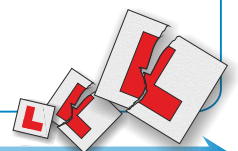


When approaching from a side road, the crossroad is simply an extension of a T-junction. Make your normal safety checks left and right but this time you also need to check the road ahead. Priority is determined in the same way as when turning from a main road, however, always double check and only proceed when you are absolutely sure that it is safe. Take care when following the road ahead... Make sure that the 'new' road ahead is clear before you start to move..

Take extra care at unmarked crossroads - no one has automatic priority. Be prepared to stop and give way, even if you consider that you are on the main road - other drivers might be strangers to the area, or might genuinely think that they have priority.



Lesson Notes:



15. Y-Junctions

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Y-Junctions are, in many respects, similar to T-junctions. The main difference is that the shape of the junction affects what you can see as you approach; this often misleads people into approaching too fast in the mistaken belief that the road is clear.

Some drivers in the side road might not even see the junction, especially when in a strange area or on unlit roads at night.

When emerging from Y-junctions your view will be restricted by blind-spots created by the 'pillars' of your car - ask your instructor to point these out to you.

You need to take extra precautions with your observation and will often need to lean forwards and/or backwards to compensate for the extra blind-spots.

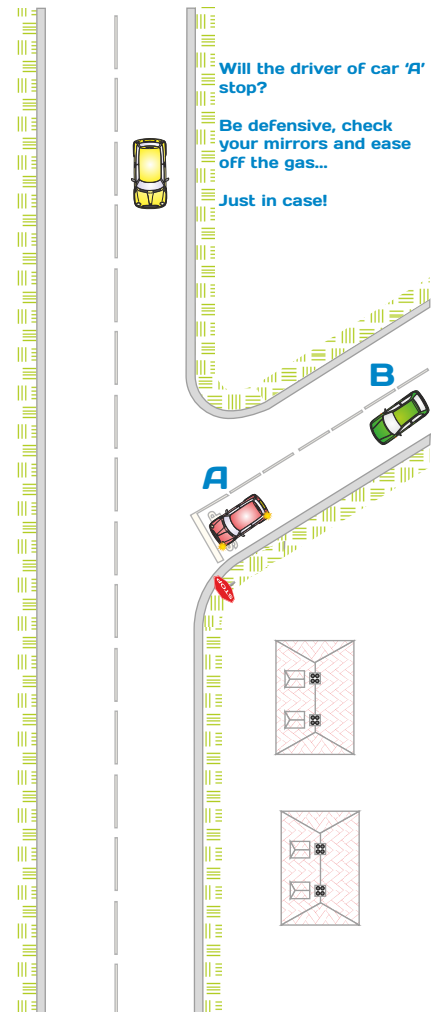
If you have an early, open view into the main road, and can see that the road is clear (car B), make sure the driver in front (car A) has moved before you make your move! There is a real risk of rear-end shunts when emerging from this type of junction.

From the main road you can easily spot side roads that enter at an acute angle like the one in the diagram. If you can clearly see the 'Stop' or 'Give-Way' sign in the side road as you drive along the main road, take extra care. Remember that drivers who are approaching or waiting to emerge might not have seen you.

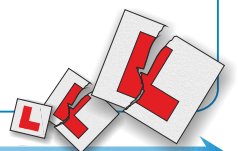
Be especially careful if the side road is unmarked, drivers on that road might not realise that they are joining a main road.



**Be prepared for
the unexpected ...**



Lesson Notes:



16. Safety bubble

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For your own safety and the safety of other road users you must maintain an adequate space around your vehicle at all times - a safety bubble ...

By maintaining a safe space around your car you will have room to react when things take you by surprise. And you can be absolutely certain that things take even the best drivers by surprise from time-to-time!

When passing parked vehicles leave a minimum of one car door's width. This will help to prevent an accident when someone suddenly opens a door or steps out from behind a parked car. If there is not enough space to leave a door's width, slow down, or stop and give way.

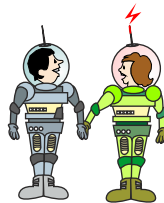
Leave plenty of space when passing cyclists, pedestrians, or animals - these road users are very vulnerable.

Make sure that you understand the 'two-second' rule taught by your instructor, and use it whenever you are driving in free flowing traffic. Remember, you need at least twice as much space to stop in wet weather (this means a gap of four seconds).

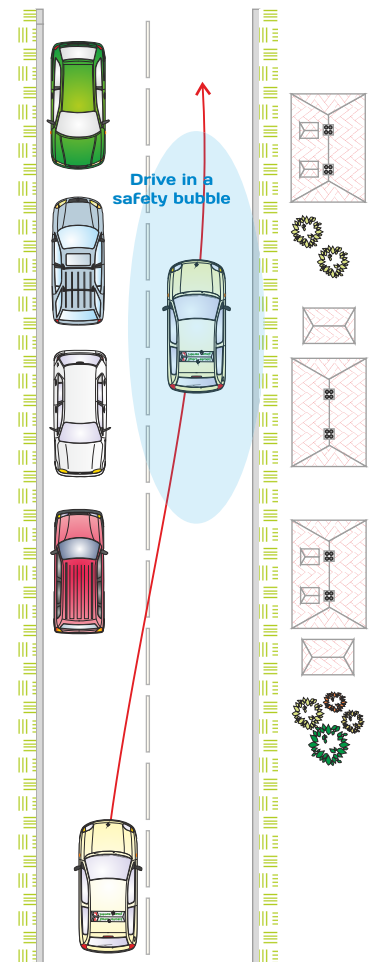
You can control the safety space behind your vehicle by adjusting your speed. If the driver behind is following too closely, gently reduce speed and increase your forward safety gap to allow extra stopping distance.

If closely following vehicles make you feel uncomfortable, simply allow them to overtake - this will make little or no difference to your journey time, but you will be much more likely to arrive safely ...

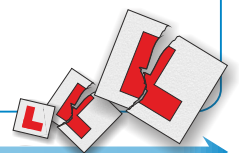
Be a 'space person' - keep a safe space, a safety bubble around your vehicle all the time.



Less space ... Less speed!



Lesson Notes:



17. Roundabouts

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The '12 o'clock' guide is a simple way to remember the procedure at roundabouts. Look out for signs on the approach to the roundabout and imagine the layout as a clock face. Exits beyond 12 o'clock will usually require use of the right-hand lane and a right turn signal. However, you must be aware that there are local variations to this rule, multi lane roads may also vary - ask your instructor for details.



Slow down early on approach, looking for gaps. In busy traffic make an early decision about which of the cars (already on the roundabout) you intend to follow in order to join the roundabout; adjust your speed to merge into the gap behind that car.

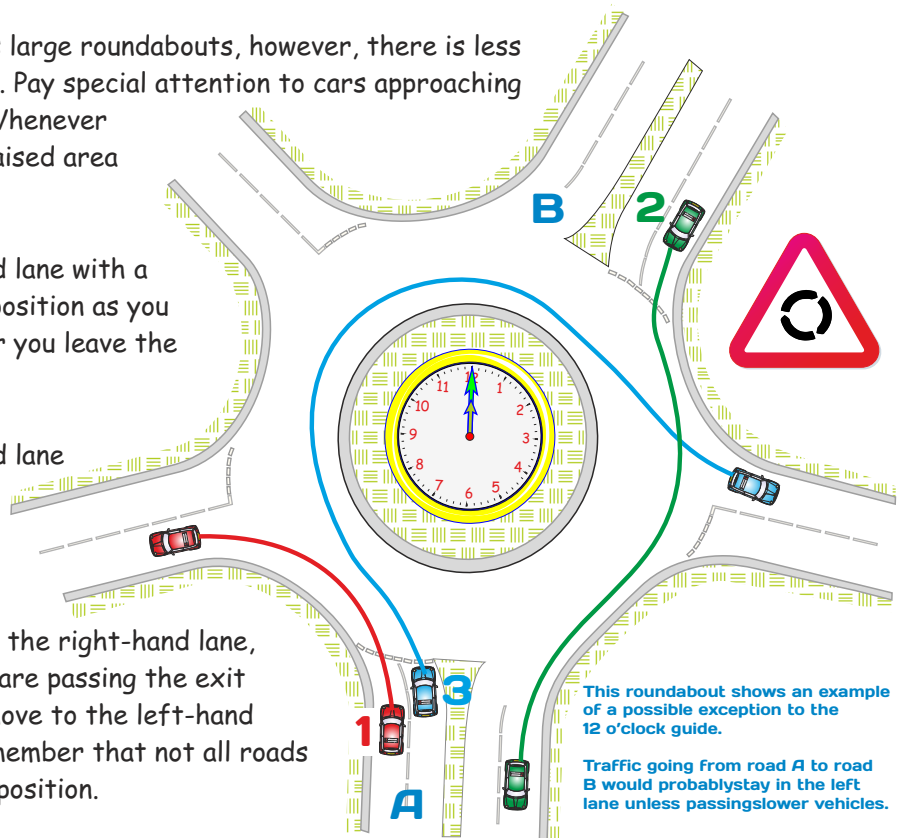
Although roundabouts are 'one-way' systems you must always check that the road is clear to the left as well as to the right. Keep a lookout for pedestrians, cyclists, broken down vehicles, or even people coming the wrong way!

Mini-roundabouts follow the same rules as large roundabouts, however, there is less space so you need to do everything slower. Pay special attention to cars approaching from ahead before deciding to proceed. Whenever possible, avoid driving on the painted or raised area in the centre of the junction.

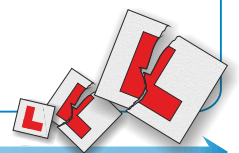
1 Turning left: Approach in the left-hand lane with a left-turn signal. Maintain your signal and position as you drive to your exit. Cancel your signal after you leave the roundabout.

2 Going ahead: Approach in the left-hand lane without a signal. Keep left as you drive to your exit. Signal left as you pass the exit before the one that you intend to take.

3 Turning right: Signal right, approach in the right-hand lane, maintain your signal and position until you are passing the exit before the one you want, signal left and move to the left-hand lane in order to leave the roundabout. Remember that not all roads beyond 12 o'clock will require a right lane position.



Lesson Notes:



18. Pedestrian crossing safety

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Pedestrian crossings provide a safe place for people to get from one side of the road to the other.

Crossings are either 'controlled' or 'uncontrolled'. At controlled crossings, both the drivers and pedestrians are given instructions, either by traffic lights or crossing wardens (for example, 'lollipop ladies'). At uncontrolled crossings pedestrians have to decide for themselves when it is safe to cross, relying on the courtesy and consideration of drivers.

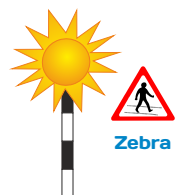
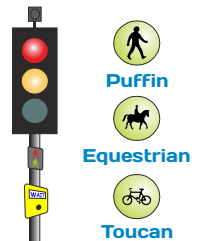
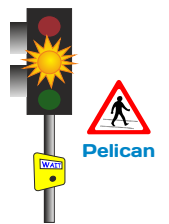
When approaching a pedestrian crossing you must always be on the lookout for pedestrians, especially children and elderly people. Be prepared to slow down and stop if there are pedestrians about. When pedestrians are on the crossing, they always have priority.

Don't instruct pedestrians to cross - allow them to make their own decisions. By waving to a pedestrian you could be inadvertently exposing them to a danger that you have not seen; for example, there may be another vehicle overtaking illegally. The pedestrian normally has a better all round view of the traffic from the footpath than you have from the driving seat.

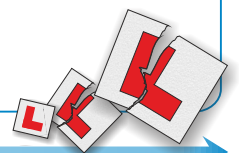
Zebra crossings are marked by Belisha beacons - black and white poles with an amber flashing globe at the top. You must always be on the look-out for people near the crossing and be prepared to stop to allow them to cross. On the approach to, and after, the crossing there are zig-zag white lines painted on the road surface. It's dangerous and illegal to park or overtake within these lines.

The sequence of pedestrian traffic lights sometimes differs from regular traffic lights; at pelican crossings there is a flashing amber light. When the flashing amber light shows you may proceed if there are no pedestrians on the crossing. (Note: you must stop, as usual, at the steady amber light that shows before red.) Watch out for pedestrians near the crossing who may have pressed the button to activate the lights; use your hazard routine and be prepared to stop.

School crossings often have flashing amber lights under a 'children crossing' sign; these indicate that there is a school crossing patrol ahead. The crossing may be manned by a school warden, traffic warden or by a police officer. You must stop when you are instructed to do so. Wait until all the children have crossed and the warden is back on the footpath before you move off.



Lesson Notes:



19. Overtaking

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Overtaking is potentially one of the most dangerous driving manoeuvres; this is because it puts you in the direct path of other traffic. However, overtaking need not be dangerous if you take care and follow some simple rules.

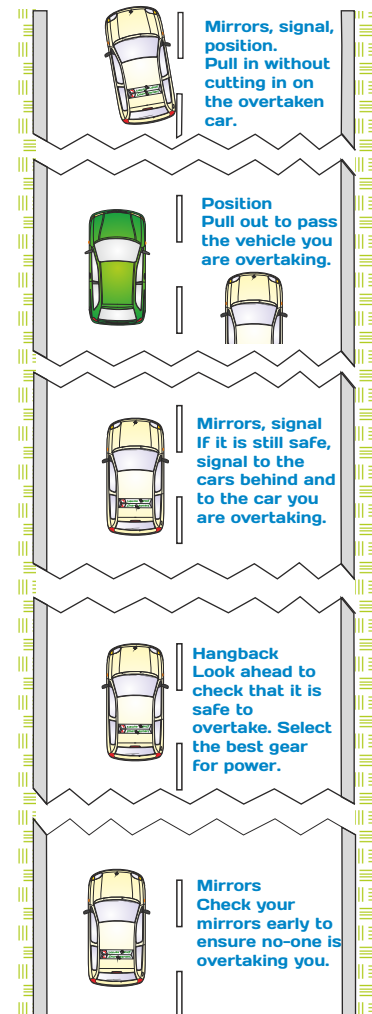
The question to ask yourself is "Will I gain anything by overtaking?". Many people have been killed or injured because their decision to overtake was driven by frustration with a slow-moving vehicle ahead.

Your decision should be based on the effects that overtaking will have on your overall journey time. There is not much point overtaking if you can only pass one or two vehicles in a long slow queue or if you are about to enter a low speed limit area. If there are only one or two slow vehicles it might be worth overtaking, but in today's busy traffic it is often a waste of time - and not worth the risk.

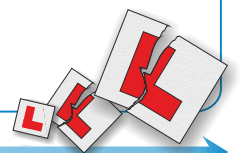
If you have decided that it would be worthwhile to overtake, make sure that the road ahead is clear, be especially careful to check side roads or gateways from which vehicles might emerge, and that there is no dead-ground. (Ask your instructor to explain the term 'dead-ground')

You will often need to change to a lower gear in order to accelerate briskly past the vehicle you are overtaking. Leave plenty of space, especially when moving back in to the left - make sure that you can see the vehicle that you have overtaken in your centre mirror.

Allow others to overtake you... This doesn't mean that you must crawl around at a snail's pace letting everyone pass; it simply means that it is often safer to have someone in front, where you can see them, rather than behind. There are no gold stars for being stubborn and blocking the path of other drivers. In the worst imaginable situation you could end up involved in someone else's accident. Again, concentrate on your journey time - having one or two, or ten, more vehicles ahead is unlikely to make any difference. If you have a sat-nav, get into the habit of checking the estimated arrival time - this will stay much the same regardless of whether you overtake or not.



Lesson Notes:



20. Railway crossings

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There are several types of railway crossing, including: crossings with barriers or gates; crossings without barriers or gates; and roads that cross one or several railway lines. All the crossings have one thing in common - great big trains! Trains weigh 100's of tons and often travel over crossings at high speed, which means that they must be treated with the greatest respect. They always win in arguments with cars!



Look out for warning signs; these will give information about the type of crossing to expect. Use the hazard routine as you approach crossings and stop when the lights show. There may also be bells or sirens.

If you come across a half-barrier crossing - that is, a crossing where the barriers block off each side of the road separately - you must stay on your own side of the road. Never try to zig-zag around the barriers; the train will be very near. At this type of crossing the train triggers the lights and barriers approximately 30 seconds before its arrival.

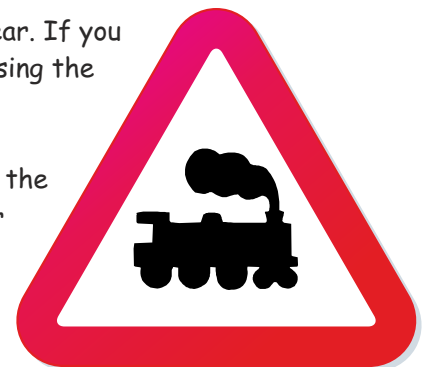
At crossings with gates, but no lights or attendant, look for signs giving instructions about procedure. You will need to be sure that the line is clear before opening the gates to cross. At crossings with no gates or barriers look for signs or lights. When the lights are on, you must stop and wait, even if the line seems clear.

If your car breaks down on a railway crossing get your passengers out of the car and clear of the crossing straight away. Don't wait until the lights start to flash or the barriers come down; this may lead to panic. If there is a telephone at the side of the crossing, use it to contact the signalman. Tell him the problem and he will be able to alert approaching trains until the crossing is clear.

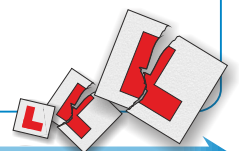
If there is time, move the vehicle from the crossing. Try to push your car clear. If you are unable to do this, try to 'jerk' the car clear by selecting third gear, releasing the handbrake and turning the ignition key to activate the starter motor.

After you have moved your car, phone the signalman again to inform him that the crossing is clear. If you are unable to move your car, use the phone to ask for further advice.

If the bells ring, or if you see a train approaching, you must leave your car and stand well clear of the crossing.



Lesson Notes:



21. Road markings

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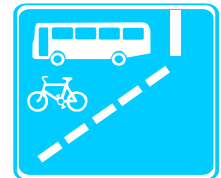
Road markings are mostly painted white or yellow. White lines separate streams of traffic; yellow lines and markings prohibit waiting and parking.

A notable exception to the white and yellow norm are red lines painted in the place of double yellow lines - these 'red-route' lines mean absolutely no waiting or parking because the route must be kept clear at all times. You can expect to be towed away very quickly if you try to wait on a red-route!



Roads in towns and city centres use the same system of white lines that is found elsewhere: lane lines, hazard lines, stop and give way lines, etcetera. However, in addition to these you will find bus and cycle lanes, and more hatched markings. Whatever markings you encounter there is a general rule to apply: simply, the more paint you see, the more careful you must be.

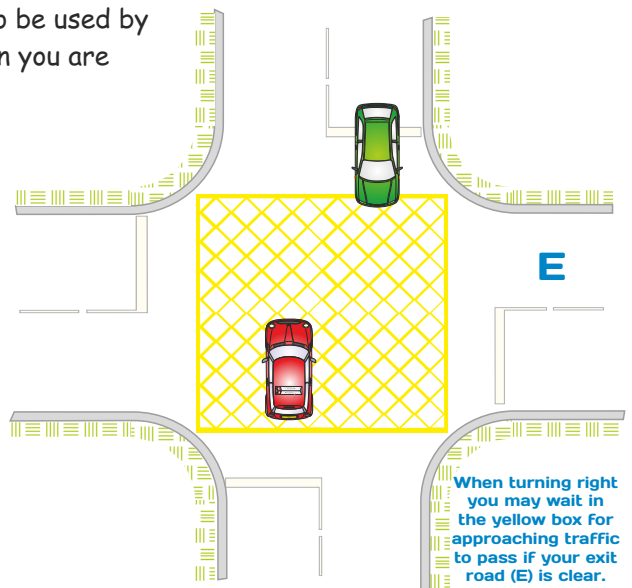
Bus lanes are provided to allow the free passage of public transport during peak traffic periods. They are marked by a broad solid white line and the words 'Bus Lane' painted on the road surface.



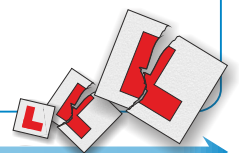
You must not drive in a bus lane during its period of operation (indicated on the signs). You must also take special care when turning left across a bus lane. Some bus lanes can also be used by taxis and pedal cyclists who may try to pass you on the left when you are turning.

White 'hatched markings' are used to separate traffic streams and increase safety margins. As a general rule, you should avoid driving on the hatched areas edged with broken white lines. You must never cross a solid white line on to a hatched area except in an emergency.

Yellow box junctions (see diagram) are used to help prevent traffic snarl-ups at junctions. The general rule is: do not enter the box unless your exit is clear. If your exit is clear, you may wait in the box when turning right until the road is clear of approaching traffic.



Lesson Notes:



22. One-way systems

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One-way systems help to smooth the traffic flow around busier central areas of towns and cities.

For the systems to work well, drivers need to choose the best road position for their intended destination. Stay in the left-hand lane to leave the system via a road to the left; keep right if you want to leave to the right. Always be on the look-out for signs and markings showing the best lane for your destination and move into that lane as soon as possible after entering the system.



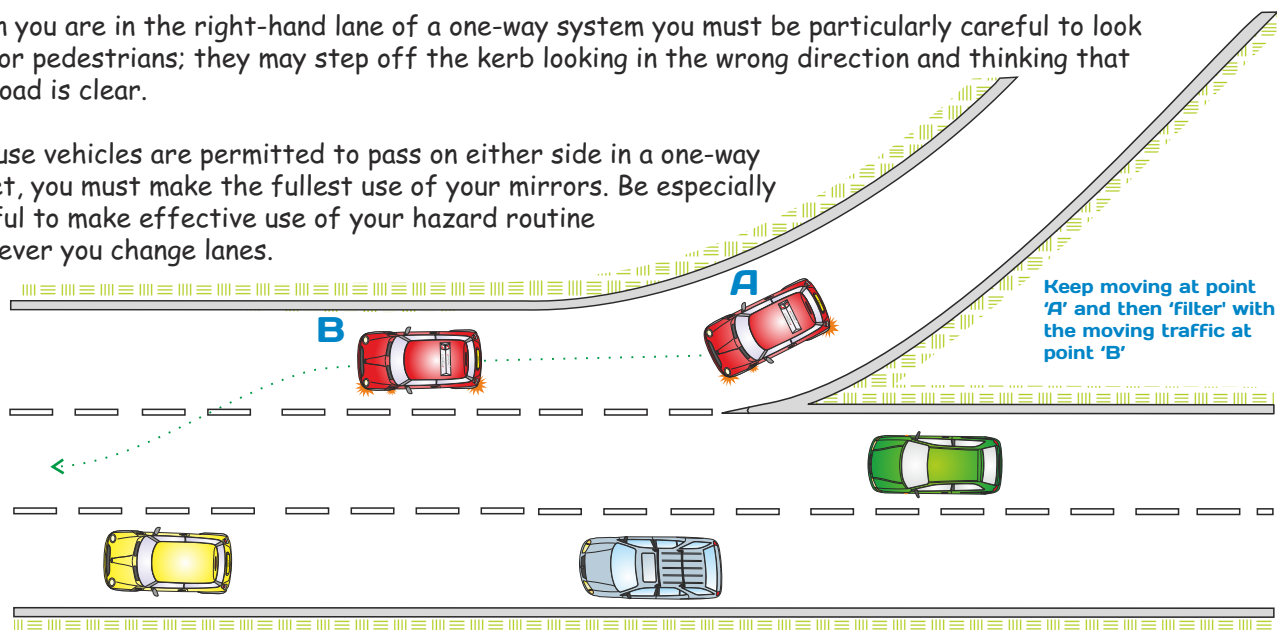
You may occasionally come across a one-way system that has no road markings (perhaps on a recently resurfaced road); in these circumstances you should use your skill and experience to guide you to the best 'imaginary' lane position. In other words, drive as if the lanes were marked.



Driving in the centre of your lane without straddling the white lines will help other drivers recognise your intentions. If you are unsure about which lane to choose, move to the right and drive around the one-way system again; this will give the information needed for you to choose the best lane second time around.

When you are in the right-hand lane of a one-way system you must be particularly careful to look out for pedestrians; they may step off the kerb looking in the wrong direction and thinking that the road is clear.

Because vehicles are permitted to pass on either side in a one-way street, you must make the fullest use of your mirrors. Be especially careful to make effective use of your hazard routine whenever you change lanes.



Finally, get into the habit of filtering (above) by keeping your car moving when you change lanes instead of stopping to wait for a gap in the traffic. Filtering reduces the risk of being hit from behind (by drivers who are not looking where they are going!).

Lesson Notes:



23. Dual-carriageways

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To accommodate this faster-moving traffic, dual-carriageways have two lanes or more in each direction and often have higher speed limits than single-carriageway roads.

Traffic moving in opposite directions is separated by a central reservation; this sometimes has a crash barrier to further protect the streams of traffic from one another.

Although the average speed on dual-carriageways is higher than on many other roads, you might still encounter pedestrians, cyclists, parked vehicles, entrances to houses and other premises - in fact, anything that you would expect to find on a single carriageway road. The higher speeds on a dual-carriageway mean that you will often have less time to respond to these hazards. To compensate you will probably need to plan your driving 'further ahead' than you may have been in the habit of doing so far.

Look out for brake-lights well ahead and ease off the gas when you see them. As a driver, you should be aware of your speed at all times - this becomes especially important when approaching a queue of stationary traffic, or when you are planning to leave a fast dual-carriageway. Getting into the habit of checking your speedometer regularly will help to ensure your continued safety.

Although there are many conventional T-junctions and crossroads on dual carriageways, motorway-type slip roads are becoming more common. Slip roads have acceleration and deceleration lanes. The acceleration lane is an extra lane on the left for use when building up your speed before merging with traffic on the main carriageway so that you can join the flow safely. Deceleration lanes are found on exit slip roads; they allow you to slow down without holding up following traffic on the main carriageway. Usually, you shouldn't need to start braking until you enter the deceleration lane.

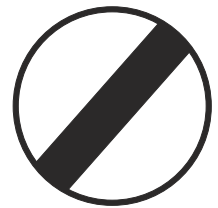
If you join a fast dual carriageway from a T-junction take extra care when judging the speed of traffic already on the main road. If you are turning right, wait until both sides are clear unless there is a large gap in the central reservation

Most dual-carriageways are clearways (but not all clearways are dual carriageways). Clearways are roads on which you are not allowed to stop; this is because stationary vehicles would pose extreme danger to fast-moving traffic.

One of the most important signs that you will see on a dual-carriageway is the one shown on the right - when you see this dual-carriageway ends sign ease off and keep to the left lane.



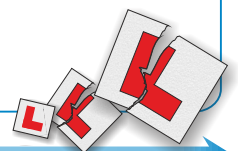
National Speed Limit



Clearway



Lesson Notes:



24. Reversing right

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As with reversing to the left, for this exercise you will begin from a parked position before the 'target' road. You need to take special care when driving across to the 'reverse start point'. Consider your signal timing carefully to avoid confusing other drivers.

Another important difference between this manoeuvre and the left reverse is the distance that you travel after turning the corner. On a right-hand corner you need to reverse for a longer distance (up to seven car-lengths) to allow room to safely move back to the left-hand side of the road when driving away.



As with the left reverse it is essential that you maintain a good lookout for other road users making specific checks at the points shown below.

A Make your normal safety checks before moving off.

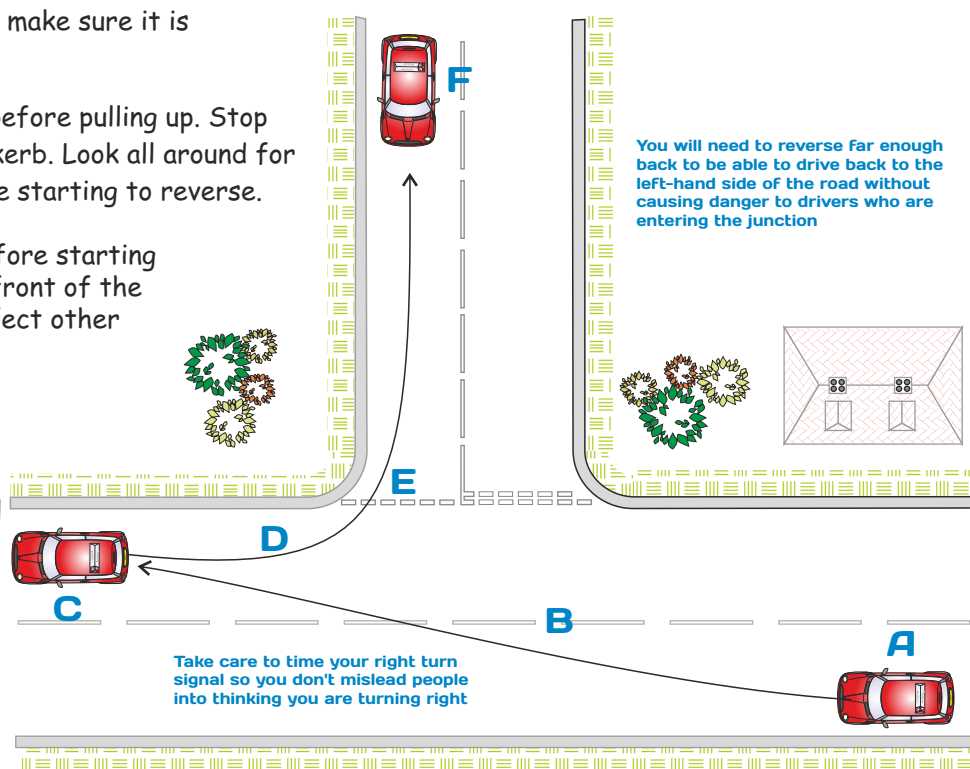
B Glance into the target road to make sure it is safe and clear to reverse.

C Take the normal precautions before pulling up. Stop about 45 cm (18 in) from the kerb. Look all around for traffic and pedestrians before starting to reverse.

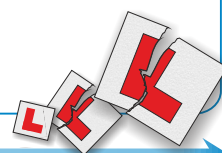
D You must look to the front before starting to steer. This is because the front of the car will 'swing out' and may affect other traffic.

E Glance around, at least twice, as you steer round the corner. Then keep looking well back (for accuracy), with occasional glances to the front (for safety) as you reverse in a straight line.

F Remember your normal safety checks before you move off after reversing.



Lesson Notes:



25. Reversing left

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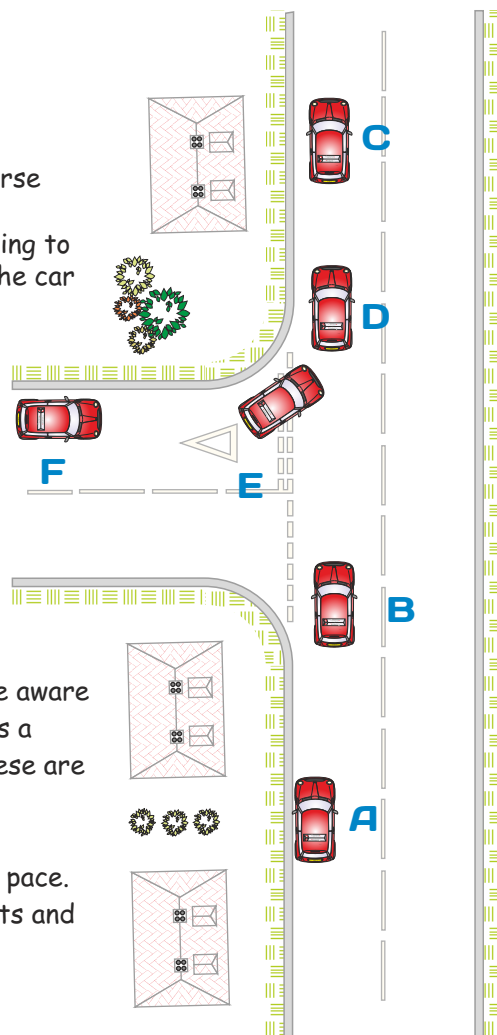
The ability to reverse while steering left or right is essential for safe driving. You might need to reverse into a driveway in order to park outside your home, or you might need to reverse because of a problem on the road ahead, for example, a broken down vehicle, or even a herd of sheep or cows.

Driving Test Examiners check your ability to drive backwards by asking you to reverse into a road on either the left or right. When reversing to the left you will be asked to stop just before the road that you are going to reverse into. You will then drive past the turning, stop, and reverse around the corner.

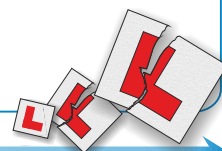
- A** Remember your normal safety checks before you move off .
- B** Glance into the 'target' road to make sure it is safe and clear to reverse
- C** Stop about 45 cm (18 in) from the kerb. Look all around before starting to reverse. Glance to the front before starting to steer; the front of the car will 'swing out' and might affect other traffic.
- D** Check to the front and your right shoulder blind spot frequently.
- E** Look around, at least twice, as you steer round the corner. Then keep looking well back (for accuracy), with occasional glances to the front (for safety), as you reverse in a straight line.
- F** Remember your normal safety checks before you move off after reversing.

Good **observation** is essential for safe reversing to the left; you must be aware of what is happening all around you throughout the manoeuvre. As well as a general awareness, you must make some specific observation checks; these are shown on the diagram.

Use **clutch control** to keep your speed to a slow (zimmer-frame) walking pace. This will give you plenty of time for observation and steering adjustments and help you to position your car accurately (approx. 45 cm from the kerb).



Lesson Notes:



26. Turn-in-the-road

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This manoeuvre is sometimes called the three-point-turn but this term is a little misleading. The turn doesn't have to be completed in three movements although there are three important points to remember - you must use effective observation, keep the car under control and be reasonably accurate.

The number of moves required to complete the manoeuvre will depend upon the size and steering capabilities of your car, the width of the road and your driving skills.

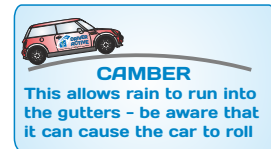
You may be required to do this manoeuvre as part of your driving test; however, the main reason for learning the turn-in-the-road is to equip you with the skills you will need in car parks, garages, tight driveways, petrol stations, etc., after you have passed your test.

The turn-in-the-road uses some of the driving skills that you have already mastered:

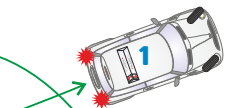
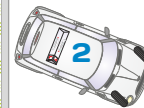
- Angle start
- Clutch control
- Uphill start
- Observation skills
- Reversing skills
- Right turn skills
- Skills for dealing with other traffic
- Reasonable manoeuvring accuracy

While completing this manoeuvre you must be aware of the movement of other traffic, cyclists and pedestrians at all times, which means constant all-around **observation**.

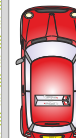
If other vehicles approach during the turn you should make eye-contact with the driver (your instructor will explain this in detail) and be prepared to give way. **Control**, as with all slow-speed manoeuvres, will be accomplished by careful clutch control. **Accuracy** can be achieved by brisk steering; keep the car moving slowly but turn the steering wheel quickly.



2. Moving off from this position is like making a right turn



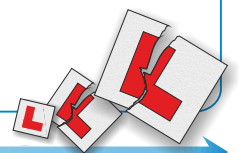
1. Make sure that you check behind before you start to reverse



Use your normal safety checks to ensure that the road is clear before starting



Lesson Notes:



27. Reverse parking

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The heavy volume of traffic on our roads sometimes means that parking spaces can be hard to find. Because of this, it's well worth preparing to make the best of every parking opportunity, otherwise you may end up parking a long way from your intended destination.

Reversing into parking space will enable you to manoeuvre your car into a smaller gap. In order to drive into a space you need a gap of at least three or four car lengths - with practise, reverse parking will enable you to fit into a space of about one-and-a-half car lengths.

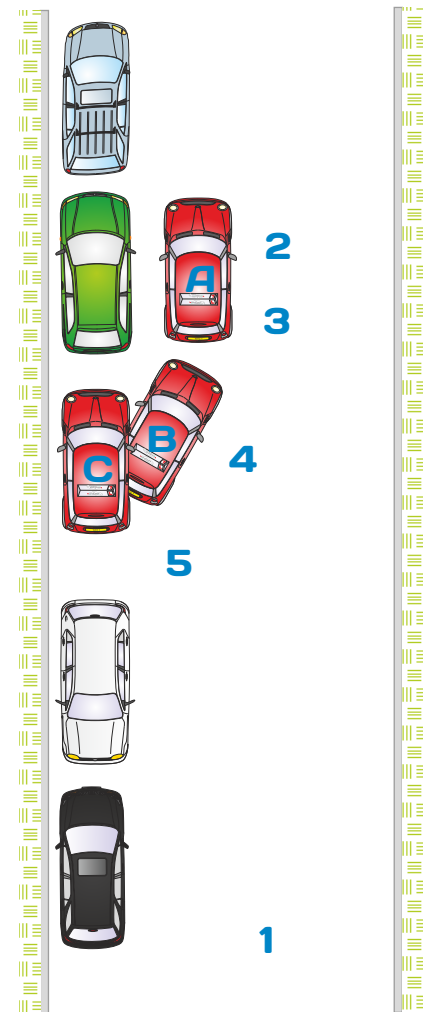


Step by step

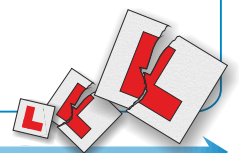
- 1 Select a suitable parking position by looking well ahead.
- 2 Check your mirrors, signal if necessary and stop alongside, and parallel to, the car that you wish to park behind. You should be about a metre away from it with the front of your car approximately level with that of the other car (position A). If for any reason it isn't safe to stop, drive around the block and come back to the space again.
- 3 Select reverse gear, and if the road is clear all around, drive slowly back, steering into the space. Aim to reverse at an angle of approximately 45° to the centre of the gap (position B); to do this you might need full lock. As you move back, your speed will be slow walking pace or less and you will be keeping a look-out for traffic. If any traffic approaches, take the usual manoeuvring precautions.
- 4 When the front of your car is clear of the 'target car', steer briskly to the right and continue to reverse slowly.
- 5 Stop, select first gear and drive slowly forward to straighten up (position C).

Be careful to avoid hitting the kerb with your tyres or rubbing them along the kerb edge. This can weaken the sidewalls and cause them to 'blow out' at a later date, possibly when travelling at high speed!

See the DriverActive web site for an easy way to learn this manoeuvre.



Lesson Notes:



28. Stopping on the right

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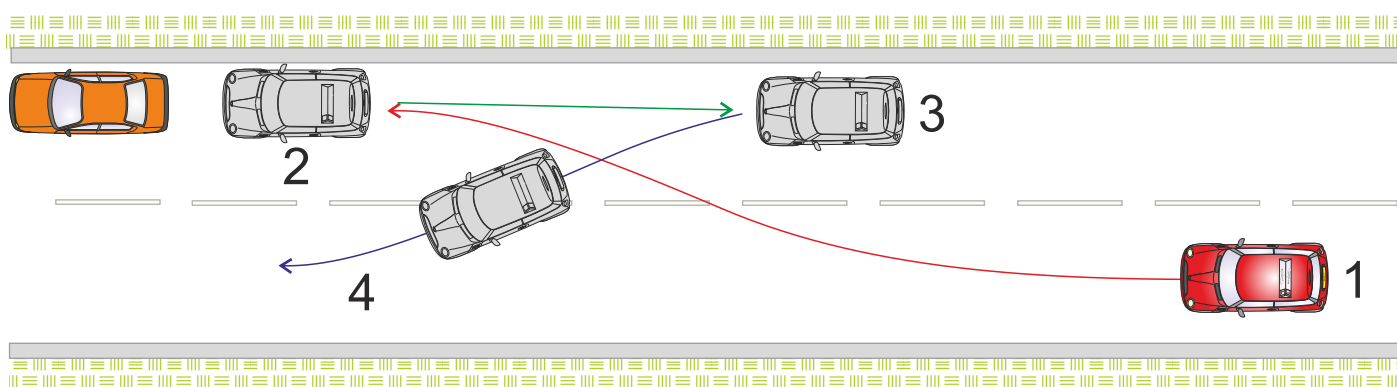
This manoeuvre combines stopping on the right with straight-line reversing. It is included in the driving test to reflect the some of the everyday manoeuvring skills that you will use after passing your driving test.

During your test you might be asked to pull up on the right, possibly behind a parked vehicle. You will then be asked to reverse in a straight line before moving off again.

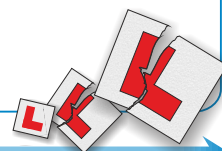


Step by step

- 1** MSM - Give way to approaching traffic. Look at the car you are stopping behind to gauge your position.
- 2** After stopping secure the car with the handbrake and select neutral, Before starting to reverse make sure that the road is clear and that the footpath is clear of pedestrians. Use your straight line reversing skills to reverse for around three car lengths. As you reverse look well back for accurate positioning but also keep glancing all around and if other road users approach stop to give way and/or pause until they have passed.
- 3** Take care when moving off remembering that your main observation will be to the rear left and the road ahead - with this in mind your normal observation checks, as used when moving off from the left, will be reversed... Right shoulder, right mirror, centre mirror, road ahead, left mirror, left shoulder.
- 4** Move back to the left-hand side of the road as quickly as possible but without rushing. Check your mirrors and make sure that your signal (if given) is cancelled.



Lesson Notes:



29. Using car parks

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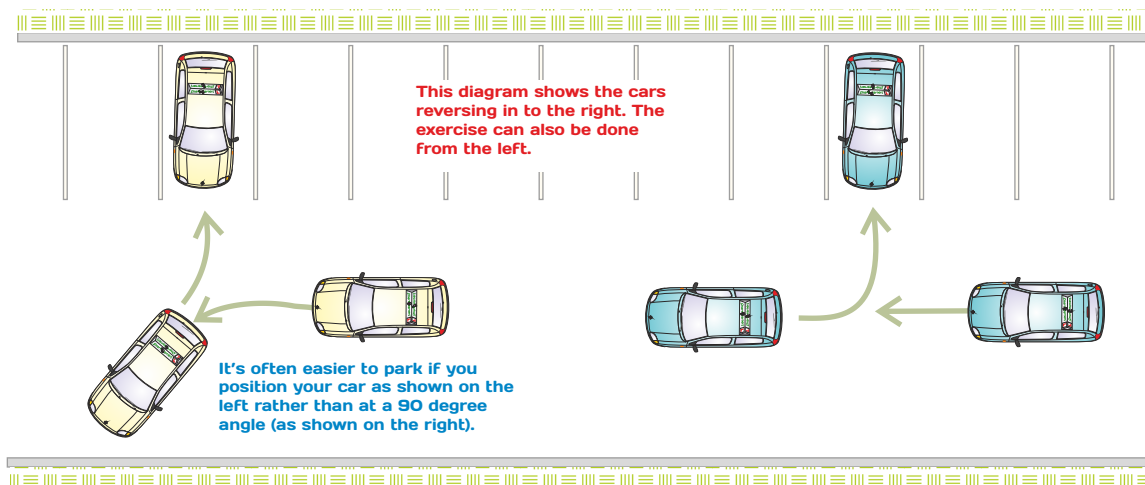
If you were to check insurance company statistics you would find that many claims are made after accidents in car parks. Drivers are often thinking about other things, apart from driving, for example, shopping or collecting the kids; this can be a real problem with other vehicles and pedestrians in close proximity and it's one of the reasons why the ability to reverse safely into a parking bay is checked during the driving test.



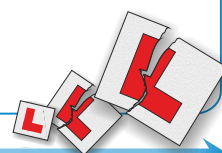
With a little practice you will soon become competent and confident at reversing into bays. The benefits of reversing in, as opposed to driving in, include the fact that it's usually easier, and it's much safer to drive out forwards rather than reverse out. There is also the added security benefit that in the unlikely event of being threatened by someone with malicious intent in a car park, driving out forwards will offer a quicker and safer exit. However, there may be some situations where driving in is the best option.

You can choose to reverse from a 90 degree angle into the parking space or alternatively drive into a position where you can reverse into the bay from an 'almost straight line' (see the diagram). Use clutch control to maintain a very slow speed and aim at the back of the space. If, at any time, you are unsure about your position, simply drive forward (straightening the car as you do so) - doing this will give you a better view of the space.

Finally, make sure that you park in the centre of the available space to leave yourself, and the drivers and passengers of the cars on either side, sufficient room to open the doors and get in and out easily; doing this will also help to protect your paintwork if other drivers open their doors carelessly.



Lesson Notes:



29b. Driving into parking bays

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While reversing into a bay is often the best, and with practise the easiest, way to park there will sometimes be times when it makes sense to driving in.

The most common everyday reason would be because you need to load something into the back of your vehicle in a situation where there would not be enough space if you reversed in.

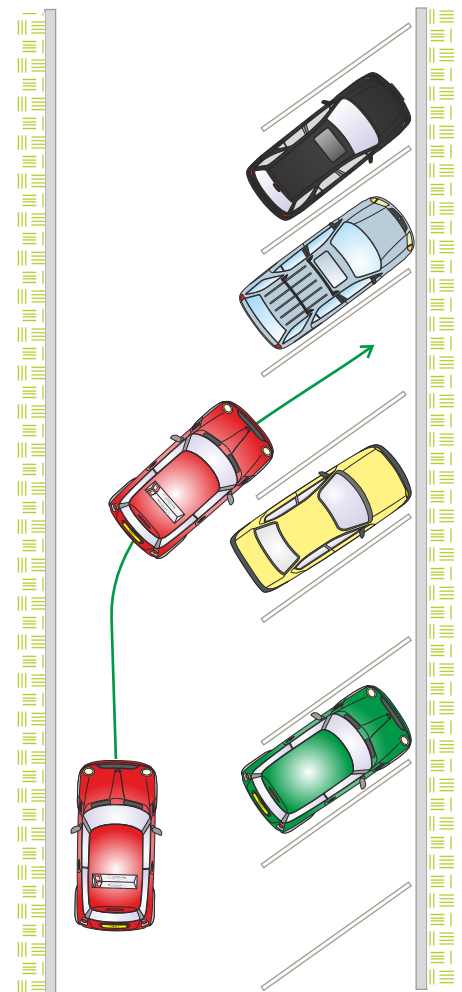
Some car parks are designed with a 'herringbone' layout as shown in the diagram. These car parks are designed to make maximum use of the available parking space. You will sometimes find 'on street' parking designed in this way.

Unless you have found a 'drive through' space, driving in will mean that you have to reverse out. This is tested during driving test because although, as mentioned, it's not the ideal way to park, sometimes it's the best option available and so the DVSA need to make sure that drivers can do it safely.

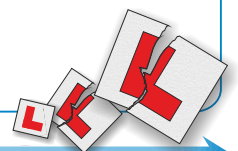
Reversing out into a space where there is moving traffic or pedestrian activity will always be more hazardous than moving in, but by taking care and making sure that the space you are reversing into is clear there is no reason why you should not be able to do this safely.

The safest way to do this will be to get a passenger to guide you out when the road is clear. If you don't have a passenger you must reverse very slowly.

By reversing very slowly you give other car park users time to see you and you will be able to stop quickly if you need to. In an absolute worse case scenario if you were to bump into something or someone you will do less damage if you are going no faster than a very slow walking speed. But of course - with proper all around observation you should never bump into anything!



Lesson Notes:



30. Driving at night

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In some respects, driving at night can be easier than driving in daylight; for example, there is often less traffic at night and you can usually see approaching headlights early.

However, there are a lot of things that you can't see at night, cyclists, pedestrians, animals, unlit vehicles, obstructions in the road and so on. Also, the things that you do see will not be seen as early as in the daylight and so you will have less time to react. Because of these things it's really important to remember that you must be able to stop safely well within the clear space that you can see ahead - generally this will mean driving more slowly at night than you do in daylight, especially on unlit roads.

The first night driving 'must' is to maximise what you can see and reduce dazzle by keeping your windows and mirrors clean; next, help other drivers to see you by keeping your lights, reflectors and indicators clean.

If you are dazzled by approaching headlights, slow down and look away from the source of the light, the best way to do this is often to look down at the left kerb or road edge. If necessary, stop your car. Whatever you do, don't try to dazzle other drivers in retaliation if they don't dip their lights - that would result in two 'blind' drivers, a sure recipe for disaster!

Use the 'dip' lever on the interior mirror to reduce glare from following headlights (some cars have electronic systems to dim the mirrors automatically). If you are dazzled by lights in your door mirrors simply move your head slightly to one side to avoid dazzle.

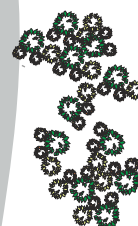
Avoid dazzling drivers in front by keeping well back. If you can see the colour of the car in front on an unlit road you are probably following too closely.

It takes time for your eyes to get used to the lower light levels when leaving brightly lit places, for example, supermarkets. Because of this, it's a good idea to allow a couple of minutes for your eyes to adjust to the darkness before you start to drive.

Finally, keep plenty of fresh air in your car at night to avoid drowsiness, if you feel tired, stop and take a break.

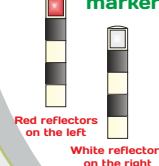


Brake lights can dazzle, especially in the rain. Use the handbrake when waiting in queues and at junctions!



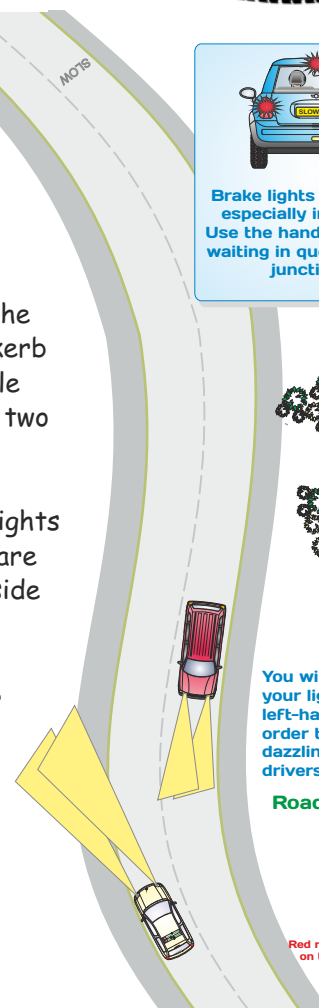
You will need to dip your lights earlier on left-hand bends in order to avoid dazzling approaching drivers

Road edge markers

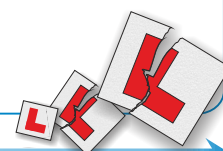


Red reflectors on the left

White reflectors on the right



Lesson Notes:



31. Sun & Fog

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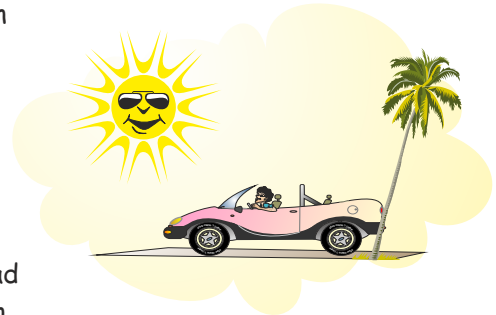
Drivers in the British Isles have a wide range of different weather to cope with. During the course of a single journey you might encounter rain, snow, bright sunlight, fog, ice, wind - just about anything that you can imagine.

Bright sunlight

Although sunshine is normally welcome it can cause severe problems for drivers when it reflects off snow or wet roads. Bright sunlight can reduce visibility as much as thick fog when it shines onto a dirty windscreen.

Be especially careful when driving into morning and evening sun in the Spring and Autumn.

Keep your speed down and be prepared to stop if you can't see the road ahead. Take extra care when entering tunnels or tree-shaded areas on bright summer days. Sunglasses provide the best solution to prevent sunshine dazzle. You can choose from polarised lenses which reduce reflected glare (good for winter sun and bright wet roads), photochromic lenses that get darker as the light gets brighter, or simple tinted lenses.

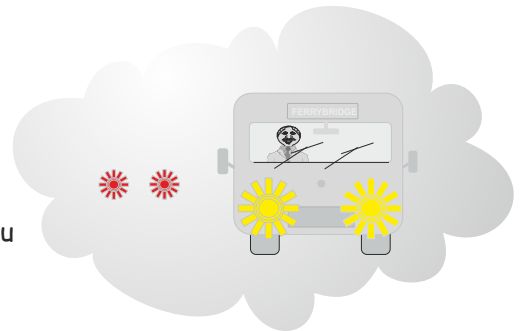


F-O-G - Foot Off the Gas

Fog is caused by droplets of moisture in the air. At its worst you can barely see the bonnet of your car. In these conditions it would be extremely unwise to drive. Always use dipped headlights (or front fog lights) and high-intensity rear lights when visibility is seriously reduced. You must remember, however, that rear fog lights should not be used simply because it is dark, raining, or misty.

Never 'hang on' to the tail lights of another vehicle in fog as this would reduce your available stopping distance in an emergency.

Holding your foot on the brake pedal at foggy junctions will keep the brake lights on; this will help drivers approaching from behind to see you sooner. Open your window at junctions to listen for other traffic, then use your horn and listen for a reply before emerging.



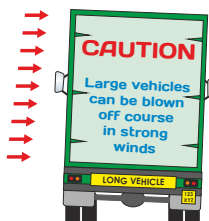
Lesson Notes:



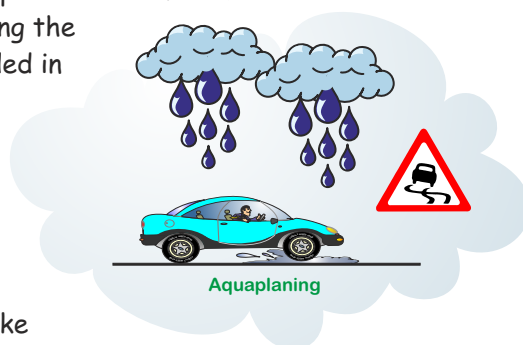
32. Wind, Rain & Snow

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Wind... The wind can cause severe problems for road users. Be especially careful when passing gaps on sheltered roads. A gap in the shelter that is offered by walls or hedges can affect cyclists, who may be blown into your path, and people, especially the elderly, who may lose their balance. Strong wind can also affect lorries and vehicles with trailers (for example, caravans). Cars travelling at speed can also be unstable in high wind.



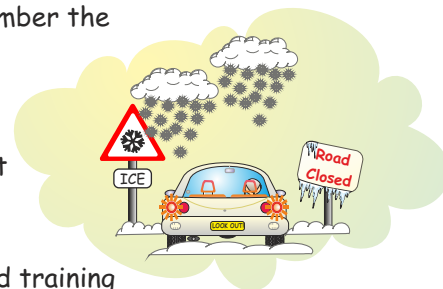
Rain... Rain affects what you can hear, what you can see and your grip on the road. In wet weather, windows are more likely to mist up. You can avoid this by using the heater fan to keep air circulating. Windscreen wipers can be overloaded in heavy rain but leave smears on the screen in light rain. Other vehicles are harder to see in the wet. Dipped headlamps can help you to be seen (this is compulsory if visibility drops below 100 metres).



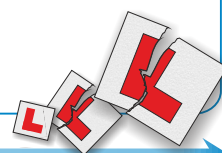
Other vehicles will be harder to hear in the rain. This is because of the noise from the rain and from your heater fan. You will have to make more visual checks to the sides of the car to compensate for lost information because of what you can't hear.

You must be sure that your tyres comply with the legal tread depth requirements in order to maintain your grip in wet weather. The tread will allow the water to be displaced and lessen the chance of skidding. A light shower after a long dry spell in the summer can leave the road as slippery as ice. You will expect to encounter ice in the winter; you are less likely to expect an ice-like surface in the summer. Remember the weather rule: 'Slow Down for Safety'.

Snow and ice... Perhaps this is the most obvious weather hazard of all. Despite this, many people have accidents in winter conditions every year. Get ready for winter by ensuring that both you and your car are fully prepared. Prepare your car by having it serviced at the start of the cold weather and keep a winter emergency kit in the boot. Prepare yourself by attending a skid training or winter driving course (your instructor will advise on this).



Lesson Notes:



33. Out of town

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Stay on the road! Out-of-town roads and country lanes have fewer junctions per mile than roads in town. This means there is less likelihood of conflict with other traffic.

However, single-car accidents are more likely on these roads if you don't concentrate fully. This is due to higher speeds, road surface condition, sharper bends, mud and grit on the road and a whole host of other reasons.



The key to staying on the road is good observation and anticipation. This will have been emphasised again and again by your instructor, simply because it is so important. The principle is the same in the countryside as in the town, but because your speed will probably be higher on country roads, you will need to look further ahead. The hazards you might encounter will be quite different as well. When did you last see a sheep in your local town centre?



Drive defensively. When driving on rural roads you need to think carefully about every bit of information you receive. You will see several official road signs – bend ahead, cattle crossing, etcetera. However, the unofficial signs can give just as much information, sometimes more, and can help you to drive defensively if you use a bit of detective work ...

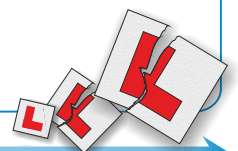
The sign shown here is for bed and breakfast, but to a 'driving detective' it means a lot more. A truly experienced driver will see this sign and consider the fact that there's a farm ahead, which means that there could be animals on the road, children playing, farm vehicles turning and so on.



Care will be needed if overtaking near the farm in case something pulls out of the driveway. There may be mud on the road or (depending upon the time of year and the location) water spraying from an irrigation system. Last but not least, there may be a few newly qualified drivers! How do they drive?

Driving in the countryside, like driving in town, requires concentration and anticipation, it's just that the hazards you meet will be different. Thinking about the B&B sign, play the 'guess what's ahead' game to help maintain your concentration every time you drive in the countryside.

Lesson Notes:



34. Vehicle safety

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A breakdown, at best, is an inconvenience, at worst it can leave you stranded in the middle of nowhere, make you late for an appointment, or stuck with no help for miles around. In short, breakdowns can leave you vulnerable and create all sorts of problems - breakdowns should be avoided!

The best way to avoid breakdowns is to plan not to break down. You can do this by carrying out a series of quick and easy vehicle checks and by having your car serviced at the regular intervals recommended by the manufacturer. A few minutes each week can greatly reduce the risk of a breakdown. During your driving test, the examiner will test your knowledge of some of the basic safety checks that you should make regularly.

Daily vehicle checks: Every day you should make sure that the following items are clean:

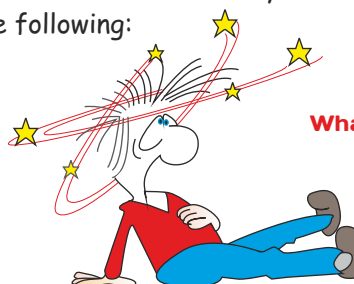
- **Windows**
- **Mirrors**
- **Lights**
- **Rear red reflectors**
- **Indicators**
- **Number plates**



**What poor maintenance
can do for your car!**

Keeping these items clean will mean that you can see other drivers and other drivers can see you! (The law requires that your number plates must be clean and visible at all times and that you have a clear view from the vehicle) You should also check the correct operation of the following:

- **Headlights**
- **Parking lights**
- **Brake lights**
- **Horn**
- **Windscreen wipers**
- **Windscreen washers**
- **Brakes**

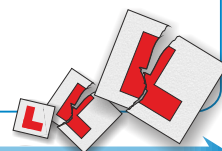


**What poor car maintenance
can do for you!**

It is illegal to drive a car if any of the items listed above are not working correctly.

You should also make a quick visual check of the tyres each day and check the tyre pressures weekly. For the daily check, walk around the car and look for any obvious tyre damage. Don't wait until your tyre bursts at 60 mph!

Lesson Notes:



35. Weekly vehicle checks

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The best way to learn about vehicle checks listed on this page is to do them.

Carry out the following checks with help from a friend or relative, using their car, or with your driving instructor. If you have a car of your own, use that. Look at the car's handbook to find out about each check and then make the checks while being supervised. The checks should be repeated every week.



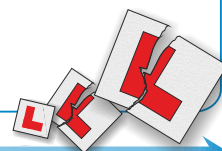
Your driving test examiner will not ask you to check the tyre pressures, oil level etc. However, you may be asked to explain how these checks are made. Always remember the safety aspects! Never make under-bonnet checks when the engine is running; the moving parts can trap clothing and jewellery and cause serious injury. Also be aware that some engine parts get dangerously hot.

Check the items below and tick them off - discuss the vehicle checks with your instructor:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Engine oil level | Too much or too little oil can lead to engine damage that may be expensive to repair. |
| <input type="radio"/> Engine coolant level | If there is a leak, or if the level is low, the car can overheat and break down - a common but easily avoidable problem. |
| <input type="radio"/> Brake and clutch fluid | This sounds complicated but it is simply a matter of looking to see how full the relevant reservoir is. If these levels are low you should consult a mechanic. |
| <input type="radio"/> Screen wash level and wiper blade condition | If you check this weekly you should never run out. Dirty windscreens have led to several serious accidents - some fatal. They could have been avoided by this two-minute check. |
| <input type="radio"/> Battery electrolyte level | These days most car batteries are maintenance free; if this is the case there are no checks to make. Most calls to breakdown companies are because of flat batteries. A well-maintained battery will last longer and will always start your car. |
| <input type="radio"/> Tyres | You should also make a detailed inspection of your tyres once a week. This involves checking the tyre pressure, looking for damage on the inside edges (be careful of your hands when doing this in case there is glass or other debris embedded in the tyre) and |



Lesson Notes:



36. The Driving test

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The examiner: The examiner's job is to watch you drive and complete a report on your performance. Sometimes the examiner's supervisor will sit in the back of the car - this is to regulate standards and ensure that everyone gets a fair test.

Driving test examiners do not try to trick you or to catch you out; in fact, they will be as helpful as possible, if you are unsure about any instruction, ask for clarification. Examiners sit quietly and do not talk unnecessarily because this could be a distraction for you.



The test: The test starts in the waiting room. The examiner will come out and ask you to sign a form; he/she will check your theory test certificate and your driving licence - you then have an opportunity to request that your instructor sits in the car during the test - this can be useful whether you pass or fail.

The examiner will ask you to "lead the way to your car please" and then check your eyesight and ask a 'Tell me' question. He/she will note the make and registration number and will check that it complies with the regulations before getting into the car. You will be asked to "Drive in your normal manner. Follow the road ahead unless road signs or markings indicate otherwise or unless I ask you to turn right or left" This simply means that you should drive normally, as you have been taught, following all the relevant rules. At some point during the test you will also be asked to drive independently without directions.

The examiner's language will be formal, but polite. For example: "Take the first road on the left, please", "I would like you to turn your car around in the road to face the opposite direction", if you are unsure about any instruction, ask for it to be repeated.

Your test will last for about 40 minutes and include a wide range of different roads and some of the manoeuvres covered during your lessons. The route will include dual-carriageways where possible. You will drive for 20 minutes following road signs or sat-nav directions and the examiner will ask a 'Show me' question while the car is on the move.

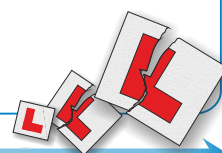
Keep calm and concentrate

At the end of the test the examiner will tell you the result and briefly discuss the test.



When you pass, you will be able to apply for a full licence. Whether you pass or fail you will be given a report form showing the mistakes that you made during the drive; this will help both you and your instructor to improve your future driving performance.

Lesson Notes:



37. Joining the motorway

Before you start: It is important to have a well maintained vehicle in order to drive safely. This becomes especially important before setting out on a motorway journey.

High speeds for prolonged periods can test a car, and its driver, to their limits. Before starting out on a long motorway journey make sure that both you and your car are up to the task by carrying out your weekly car checks.

Joining: You will sometimes join a motorway at its start, this will usually be a roundabout, however, more often than not you will be joining via a slip-road and acceleration-lane.

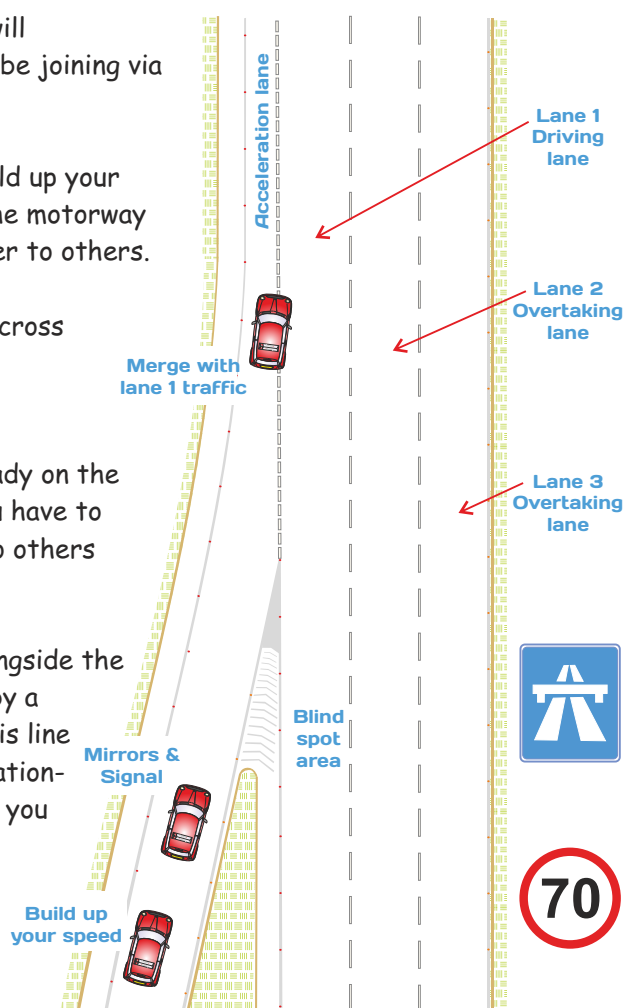
The slip-road and acceleration-lane are provided for you to build up your speed so that you can match the speed of traffic already on the motorway and merge into lane-one without causing inconvenience or danger to others.

As you are driving along the slip-road, make frequent glances across to the motorway to gauge the speed and position of traffic in lane-one (the lane that you will be joining).

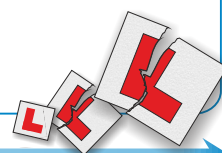
Give an early signal to alert the drivers behind, and those already on the motorway, of your intentions. Once you are on the slip road you have to enter the motorway and so your intentions should be obvious to others at this point, however, some drivers need a wake-up call!

The acceleration lane is the part of the slip-road that runs alongside the main carriageway - it is separated from the main carriageway by a single white 'give-way' line -you should never need to stop at this line (except when there is a traffic jam). As you enter the acceleration-lane, adjust your speed to match the speed of the traffic that you are joining in lane one.

Be particularly careful if there are large vehicles that block your view of traffic in lanes two and three.



Lesson Notes:



38. Driving on the motorway

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On the whole, motorways are safer than other roads. They don't have many of the hazards found on other roads; things like, cyclists, pedestrians, crossroads, traffic lights, parked cars, etc. However motorways do have their own 'hazards'. In the same way as dual-carriageways, the higher speeds on motorways can cause things to happen very quickly. In order to cope with varying traffic conditions or emergencies you must stay alert and look well ahead (at times you might spot brake-lights as far as a mile or more ahead!).



The normal rule is to use the left-hand lane unless you are overtaking, however, keep a look out for road signs and markings; sometimes (especially in places where motorways merge) the left-hand lane might lead away from your intended destination.

Allow plenty of time for your actions on the motorway. Consider every move carefully making full use of your mirrors and giving other drivers plenty of time to see your signals before starting any manoeuvre. Generally, your signals should flash four or five times before you start to move. It is also important to check your mirrors again after signalling to ensure that other drivers are reacting.

One of the most common motorway problems is driving too close to the cars ahead. Always use the 'two-second rule'; double this in poor weather conditions. When doing this you might find that other drivers pull into your safety space ahead ... This is OK, just drop back ... You will still be travelling at high speed (allowing for the conditions) and it won't affect your journey time.

If you are unlucky enough to break down, move to the hard-shoulder. Marker posts on the side of the road will direct you to the nearest phone (**never** cross to a telephone on the opposite carriageway!); the phones are numbered and connect directly to the police control centre. When you return to your car (or while using a mobile phone) stay on the grass verge, or behind a crash barrier well away from the traffic whenever possible - statistics about collisions on the hard-shoulder suggest that you will be safer out there than sitting in your car.

Marker posts



Follow the arrows for the nearest emergency telephone

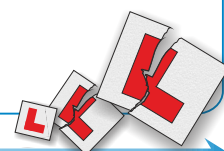


Phones are numbered to help the emergency services to find you



Use hazard lights on the hard-shoulder and when slowing down rapidly

Lesson Notes:



39. Leaving the motorway

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You will normally leave the motorway via a deceleration-lane and slip-road although sometimes you may encounter the end of a motorway - this can be at a roundabout or simply a place where the motorway narrows and becomes a dual-carriageway or even a single-carriageway (two-way traffic) road.

Using the deceleration lane and slip road you effectively do the opposite of what you do when joining the motorway. This time, instead of speeding up, you'll be slowing down.

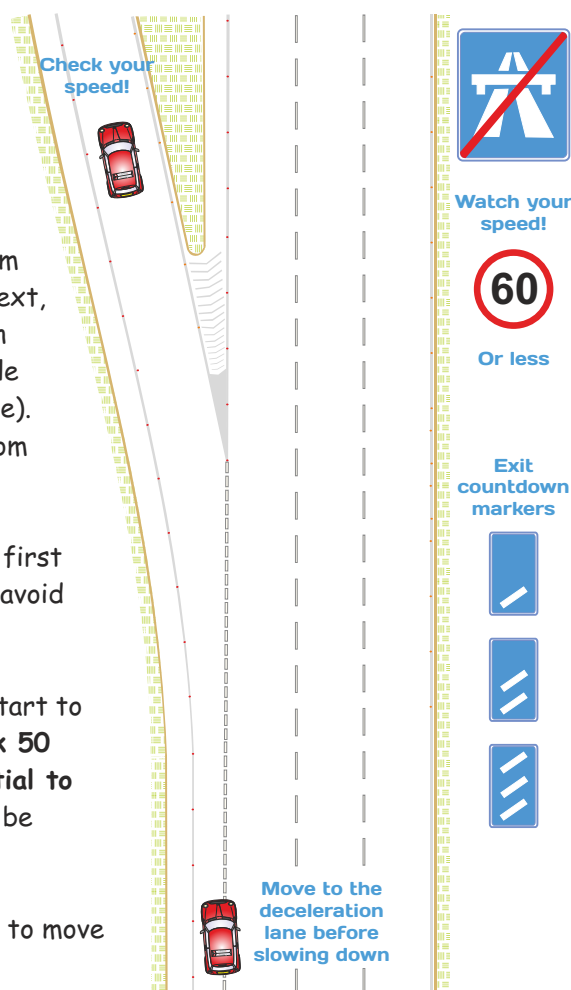
When leaving the motorway, it is important to pay special attention to your speed and to make good use of your mirrors. Remember that the traffic behind you may not be leaving and will catch up rapidly if you start to slow down too soon.

Look out for motorway exit signs, the first one will be one mile from your exit and clearly marked with the road and junction number. Next, you will see the half-mile exit sign, this has destination information (town/city names) and repeats the junction number. At the half mile sign you should be moving into lane-one (if you are not already there). Match your speed to fit in with the lane-one traffic flow; apart from this, it is not necessary to slow down yet.

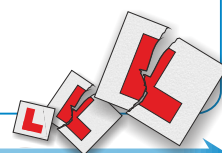
Watch for the exit marker boards; check your mirrors before the first board and signal left as you are passing it - maintain your speed to avoid holding up traffic behind.

As you enter the deceleration-lane, check your mirrors again and start to slow down. At this point **your speed may be higher than you think** 50 mph can feel like 30 mph after cruising at speed so it is essential to **glance at your speedometer**. Some slip roads have bends that can be dangerous if your speed is too high.

Finally, continue to make good use of your mirrors and be prepared to move out of the way if the driver behind has not been as careful as you!



Lesson Notes:



40. Fit state to drive?

www.driveractive.com

Most people agree that alcohol and driving do not mix. the same goes for drugs (including some prescription and 'over the counter' medicines).

With drivers, cyclists and pedestrians killed and injured every week in accidents where alcohol or drugs have been a factor, the least of your worries as a drink-driver is a large fine, possible prison sentence, a long driving ban and criminal record. To put it bluntly - you could be killed or kill someone else.



Driving unfit wrecks lives

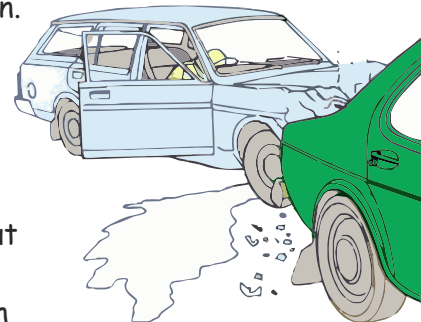
It's not just the lives of the innocent victims and their families and friends that are wrecked... Can you imagine how it might feel to be the driver who killed a mother and toddler; the driver who put a young athlete in a wheelchair for life; the driver who wiped out a whole family?

Drunk and drugged drivers don't maim and kill people on purpose, but it's not an accident either! As a driver you must accept that you have a responsibility towards everyone else on the road, and of course, to yourself and your family.

It isn't only drinking and driving that wrecks lives, drivers who are simply tired, perhaps after a long night out, or feeling ill with a cold or flu bug have accidents because they are not in a fit physical state to maintain control and concentration. Other drivers involved in fatal accidents lose control because of a moment's anger - road-rage. Road-rage can be triggered by a moment's loss of concentration while a driver is thinking about someone else's actions rather than his or her own.

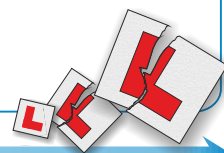
Sooner or later you will be faced with drivers who cut in front of you, slow you up, overtake on the left, swear at you whether or not you have made a mistake, and who indulge in other anti-social behaviour.

Often, however, the person committing the road rage is acting totally out of character. Some drivers describe the 'red mist' which clouds their judgement. They get so angry they only concentrate on getting even with another driver. Sadly, drivers can all too easily be killed or injured when at the wheel in this state.



Remember, some people out there are just plain stupid, it's nothing personal, they don't even know you! Stay cool... Just let it go...

Lesson Notes:



41. Driving alone

www.driveractive.com

After an accident many people can be heard to say, 'It wasn't my fault', 'The other car came from nowhere' or 'I didn't see him coming'? This is especially the case in built-up areas, where the majority of accidents happen.

Now that you have passed your test there will often be no one sitting next to you to help out if another driver fails to see you or if another car comes from 'nowhere'. If you do have passengers they might distract you - or try to get you to do things you don't want to like driving fast or racing... From now on you are on your own - you make the decisions and you are responsible for everything that happens when you are driving.

But this is what you've been waiting for and working towards and if you continue to follow the advice given by your instructor and use some basic common sense, you should stay safe behind the wheel.

It's important not to be over-ambitious the first time you go out driving alone. For many drivers, their first solo drive will be in town. If this applies to you, start off on quiet back streets, ideally using roads that you drove on during your driving lessons - these will be familiar to you.

If your first drive is out of town, avoid single track roads where you might meet approaching traffic. Try to find a route with a few easy junctions, starting with left-turns and then moving to right-turns as soon as you feel comfortable.

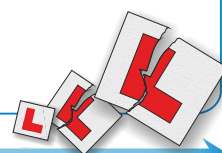
Choose a route that keeps you within a twenty-minute walk from your home or destination; that way, if you feel uncomfortable you can park the car and walk. Feeling comfortable about driving unaccompanied is much more important than covering a long distance. Don't drive for more than about 20 minutes, especially if there is busy traffic about. A short trip to visit a friend or to the shops (where there is easy parking!) would be ideal.

It's also a good idea to choose a quiet time for your first drive alone - early on a Sunday morning is ideal. If you can't wait that long, at least try to avoid the rush hour.

Enjoy your driving, stay safe ... And remember to recommend your driving instructor, and the SmartDriving and DriverActive web sites to your friends!



Lesson Notes:



Safety Questions: Tyres

www.driveractive.com

Question:

Tell me where you would find the information about the recommended tyre pressures for this car and how tyre pressures should be checked.

Example answer:

Find the tyre pressures in the car's handbook and then use the tyre inflator at the garage or a tyre pressure gauge to check the pressure when the tyres are cold. Find the valve and remove the dust cap. Then adjust the pressure as necessary and refit the dust cap. Note: Also mention that you would check the spare tyre.



Question:

Tell me how you would check the tyres to ensure that they have sufficient tread depth and that their general condition is safe to use on the road.

Example answer:

Explain that you would use a depth gauge to check the tread depth in a couple of places across the tyre and make a visible check to ensure the tread is consistent over three-quarters of the tyre width and that you would make a visual check to ensure that there are no cuts, blisters or bulges on the tyres.

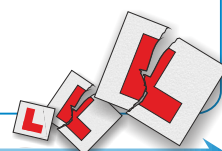
Also mention that to check side of the tyre that you can't see, you would run your hand around being especially careful because of the dangers of injury from debris that might be embedded in the tyre.

Note: it is worth mentioning that you would include the spare tyre in your checks.

Legal note: No cuts and bulges in the tyre wall, 1.6mm of tread depth across the central three-quarters of the breadth of the tyre and around the entire circumference



Lesson Notes:



Safety Questions: Brakes

www.driveractive.com

Question:

Tell me how you would check that the brake lights are working on this car.

Example answer:

Explain how to operate brake pedal and make use of reflections in windows, garage doors, etc, to make a visual check of the lights.

Or ask someone to help by pressing the pedal or checking the lights. (Ask the examiner to check the lights for you while you press the brake pedal).

Note: Some vehicles have a 'bulb failed' warning light. Mention this if its relevant to your test vehicle.

Question:

Tell me how you would check that the brakes are working before starting a journey.

Example answer:

There should be resistance felt when the brake pedal is pressed (when the car is stationary).

The brake pedal should not feel spongy or slack. Brakes should be tested by pressing the footbrake pedal gently as soon as the car is moving. The car should not pull to one side.

Question:

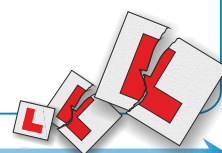
Tell me how you would know if there was a problem with your anti-lock braking system

Example answer:

The warning light should illuminate if there is a fault with the anti lock braking system



Lesson Notes:



Safety Questions: Fluids

www.driveractive.com

Question:

Open the bonnet and tell me how you'd check that the engine has sufficient oil.

Example answer:

Open the bonnet and identify dipstick / oil level indicator and then describe how to check the oil level against the minimum/maximum markers.



Question:

Open the bonnet and tell me how you'd check that the engine has sufficient engine coolant.

Example answer:

Open the bonnet and identify high/low level markings on header tank where fitted or radiator filler cap, and describe how to top up to correct level.

Important: Under no circumstances you be asked to remove the filler cap on the tank or radiator and should not attempt to do so as part of your answer.



Question:

Open the bonnet, identify where the brake fluid reservoir is and tell me how you would check that you have a safe level of hydraulic brake fluid.

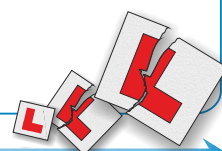
Example answer:

Open the bonnet show the examiner the brake fluid reservoir. Explain how to check the level against high/low markings. The level is normally visible without removing the cap from the fluid reservoir. Note: In some vehicles the reservoir cap needs to be removed to check the level with a 'mini' dip stick. Examiners will normally avoid questions on vehicles where the cap has to be removed.

Windscreen washer fluid:

Although not asked about in the test, you should also be able to identify where the windscreen washer reservoir is and know how to fill it. Apart from the dangers of a dirty windscreen an empty washer bottle could lead to a fine.

Lesson Notes:



Safety Questions: Lights

www.driveractive.com



Question:

Tell me how you'd check that the headlights and tail lights are working. You don't need to exit the vehicle.

Example answer:

Explain that you'd operate the switch (turn on ignition if necessary), then walk round vehicle (as this is a 'tell me' question, you don't need to physically check the lights).

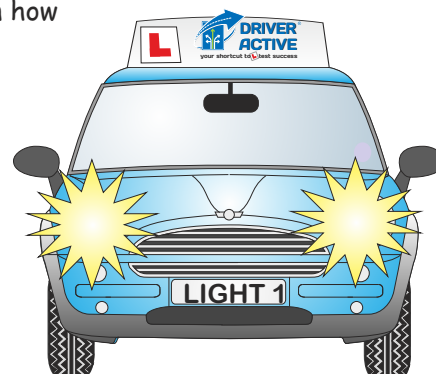


Question:

Tell me how you switch your headlight from dipped to main beam and explain how you'd know the main beam is on.

Example answer:

Operate switch (with ignition or engine on if necessary), check with main beam warning light.



Question:

Tell me how you'd switch on the rear fog light(s) and explain when you'd use it/them. You don't need to exit the vehicle.

Example answer:

Operate switch (turn on dipped headlights and ignition if necessary). Check warning light is on. Explain when you would use the fog lights. (No need to exit vehicle) Legal note: Use rear fog lights when visibility is less than 100 metres.

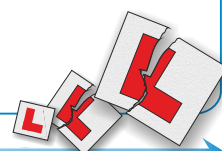
Question:

Tell me how you'd check the direction indicators are working. You don't need to exit the vehicle.

Example answer:

Explain you'd operate the switch (turn on ignition if necessary), and then walk round vehicle (as this is a 'tell me' question, you don't need to physically check the lights).

Lesson Notes:



Safety Questions: Horn/Steering

www.driveractive.com

Horn

Question on the move:

When it's safe to do so, can you show me how you'd operate the horn?



Normally you should not use the horn unless you are warning of danger or alerting another road user to your

presence - however, it's OK to demonstrate that you can use it for the purpose

of the test. If you feel that it is not safe to demonstrate the horn or any other control when asked, tell the examiner that you will do it as soon as an opportunity arises - and then remind him/her just before you do it.

Steering

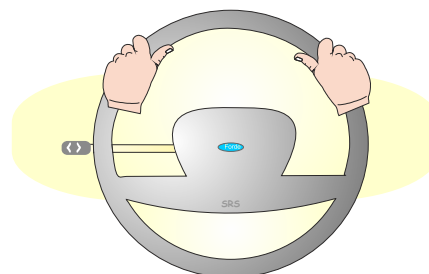
Question:

Explain how you would check that the power assisted steering is working before starting a journey.

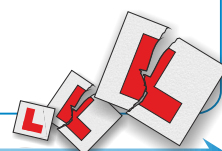
Example answer:

Explain the symptoms of power steering loss by stating that the steering becomes heavy. The two simple checks that can be made to check power steering.

1. Gentle pressure on the steering wheel, maintained while the engine is started, should result in a slight but noticeable movement of the wheel as the system begins to operate.
2. Turning the steering wheel just after moving off will give an immediate indication that the power assistance is functioning.



Lesson Notes:



Safety Questions: Vision/Safety

Question on the move:

When it's safe to do so, can you show me how you wash and clean the front windscreen? Or: "... the rear windscreen?

For these questions you will need to demonstrate either the operation of the front or rear washers and wipers. Make sure that you can locate and operate the controls for each function.



When it's safe to do so, can you show me how you'd switch on your dipped headlights?

The headlight switch is usually on the same stalk as the indicators. You need to switch on the headlights taking care not to confuse other drivers - this is best done when the road is clear ahead.

When it's safe to do so, can you show me how you'd set the rear demister? Or: "... demist the front windscreen?"

To answer these question you simply have to switch on the relevant demister - rear demisters will usually switch off automatically, however, you may have to switch off the front demister, especially if it is a noisy fan.



When it's safe to do so, can you show me how you'd open and close the side window?

Virtually all cars now have electric window, at least in the front. Simply open and close the window.

Tell me how you make sure your head restraint is correctly adjusted so it provides the best protection in the event of a crash.

The head restraint should be adjusted so the rigid part of the head restraint is at least as high as the eye or top of the ears, and as close to the back of the head as is comfortable.

Lesson Notes:

