

C A R E 2 D R I V E

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Sitting in the passenger seat

A guide for parents and supervising drivers: the legal basics,
the first drive, and ten sessions in order.



The legal basics

Words that help

Ten sessions in order



9 pages · PDF · for parents and supervising drivers

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Sitting in the passenger seat

Private practice is the single biggest thing you can give a learner. Lessons teach the skill; the hours between them are where it settles. This guide is about making those hours count.

Your part, and their instructor's part.

Their instructor teaches the skill and sets the order things are learned in. Your part is mileage, repetition and time in real conditions, which is what an hour a week cannot provide on its own. If your way and the instructor's way differ, follow the instructor's, and mention it to them afterwards.

What makes practice work

Mileage. A learner who has driven the same roundabout eleven times knows what to expect on the twelfth.

Variety. Dark, wet, busy, empty. Test day is one set of conditions. Driving is all of them.

Consistency. The same words for the same things, every time, so nothing has to be decoded mid-junction.

Little and often. Several short sessions do more than one long one.



Ellie says: the aim is not to pass on everything you know. It is to give enough safe repetitions that the thinking becomes automatic.

The legal bit, in one page

You, the supervisor.

Over 21, and you must have held a full licence for that type of car for at least three years. If the car is manual, you need a manual licence.

It is illegal to use a mobile phone while supervising, exactly as it is while driving.

The learner.

They must hold a provisional licence, and be able to read a number plate at 20 metres, with glasses or lenses if they use them.

The car.

Insured for the learner to drive it. Check the policy in writing rather than assuming, since many insurers also ask that the supervisor is over 25.

Taxed, MOT'd and roadworthy, with L plates front and back. In Wales, D plates may be used instead.

An extra interior mirror for the passenger side is not required, though many supervisors find one useful.

Where private practice cannot go.

Motorways. A learner may drive on a motorway only with an approved driving instructor, in a car with dual controls, so that stays with their lessons.

Before you turn the key, every time

Licence with them, L plates on, phones away, and you both know where you are going and what the session is for.

Rules change from time to time. Check the current requirements at gov.uk before you start, and confirm the insurance position in writing.



Words that keep them thinking

Two ways of saying the same thing. The versions on the right name the action or ask a question, so the learner stays in charge of the decision.

Instead of	Try
Brake!	Ease off now
You're too close	Give yourself two seconds
Mirror!	What's behind you?
You're going too fast	What's the limit along here?
Watch that cyclist	What are you going to do about the cyclist?
Why did you do that?	What were you thinking there?
You keep doing this	This one keeps coming up. Shall we work on it?
Never mind, forget it	Pull up when it's safe to do so and we'll talk it through
That wasn't good	What would you change about that one?
You're fine	You held the gap better than last week

Two general rules.

Say what to do next, not what just happened. "Give yourself two seconds" tells them what to do. "You're too close" only tells them where they are.

Ask when there is time, tell when there is not. Questions build judgement, and they need a spare second to answer in. If the moment is urgent, a short clear instruction is the right tool.

One to leave to the examiner.

Guessing at how an examiner would have marked something is worth avoiding, because you cannot know, and it turns one moment into a verdict. "What would you change about that one?" gets you further.

Ten sessions, in order

A ladder rather than a syllabus. Their instructor sets the real order, so check first, though this is a sensible shape if you have not been told where to begin. Tick them off as you go.

✓	No.	Where	What you are practising
☐	1	Quiet estate, engine on	Moving off, stopping, steering. Nothing else.
☐	2	The same estate, longer	Left turns in and out of side roads, mirrors before every one.
☐	3	Add right turns	Choosing gaps, with you saying nothing unless it is a safety call.
☐	4	Quiet roads, 30 mph	Holding a steady speed, reading the limit signs out loud.
☐	5	Busier roads, same 30	Following distance, and the two second gap.
☐	6	Roundabouts, small ones	Approach speed, lane choice, and signalling off.
☐	7	Crossroads and traffic lights	Filter lanes, box junctions, and what to do on amber.
☐	8	Country roads, daylight	Bends, dips, mud, horses, and why the limit is not a target.
☐	9	Dual carriageway	Joining, lane discipline, and leaving in good time.
☐	10	Anything they want to repeat	Their choice. Ask them which one.

Repeat any rung as often as it is useful. Extra time on roundabouts is rarely wasted.

1. What went better than last time?
2. What one thing would you change about that drive?
3. What do you want to practise next time?

Conditions, and your own driving

Night.

Worth planning rather than meeting by accident on the way back from somewhere. Start on lit roads they already know, then unlit ones. Talk about dipping headlights and judging distance in the dark.

Rain.

Double the gap, and say why. Rain at least doubles braking distance, and it is one of the easiest things to teach because they can feel the difference.

Passengers.

Once they are steady, take someone along. Driving with conversation in the back is a separate skill, and one they will meet soon after they pass.

Motorways.

These stay with their instructor, in a dual-controlled car. If motorways are on their mind, it is worth booking a lesson for it before the test rather than after.

Your own driving

Learners take cues from the drivers they travel with, and they have been travelling with you for a while. That works in your favour here, because the example is already being set and you can choose what it shows.

For the next few months, drive the way you would want them to. Mirrors before signalling. Two seconds of space. Phone away. Limits treated as limits. Most people find this takes more attention than expected, which is a fair measure of what a learner is managing.



Ellie says: if you notice yourself doing something you would rather they did not copy, say so. Naming it out loud makes the standard clear and costs nothing.

[illegible]

Total hours so far	Theory test booked for	Practical booked for

Test day, and after

Booking it.

Book when their instructor says they are ready. A useful question to ask the instructor: "if they took it on Tuesday, what would they want more practice on?" Then spend the remaining weeks on that answer.

On the day, if they are testing with their instructor.

The instructor usually collects them from home and takes them to the centre, unless the two of them have agreed to meet there. So your part is the send-off, and being around afterwards if they want you.

On the day, if they are testing in the family car.

You drive them there and wait at the centre until they are back. Most people wait inside or in the car park.

The examiner will ask whether they would like somebody in the back for the drive and the debrief. That is entirely their call, and either answer is the right one.

Many learners would rather the journey there was about something other than the test.

If they pass.

Worth marking properly, then talking about the first year: the six point rule for new drivers, night driving, carrying passengers, and motorways. The first months of solo driving are when support is most useful.

If they do not.

Plenty of drivers take more than one attempt, and the report names exactly what to work on. Their instructor will go through it, so the useful step on the day is simply booking the next one.

Want the full version?

The Parent's Guide to Teaching Your Child to Drive is our 96 page workbook. It starts with the supervisor's own driving, with a two-week programme to sharpen it up, session plans to fill in, and the grading charts instructors use to track progress to test day. For the learner side, Spot the Hazard! and The Question Book cover the theory properly. All at care2drive.co.uk

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