

Section 6. Driving in the UK and the US

A. Driving a car in a foreign country is an interesting experience. Britain has about 250,000 miles of roadways. Many of the roads are built on the old Roman roads. You will have to drive on the left-hand side of the road and the steering wheel will be on the right. When you drive a car in Britain you will need to know:

Is this a manual car?

Is this an automatic car?

Is this a petrol or diesel car?

What is the speed limit?



Did you know?

Petrol is known as 'gas' in the US. In Britain there are petrol stations and in the US, gas stations.

B. You might need to ask for help.

Listen and repeat, paying close attention to the pronunciation and intonation.

Where's the nearest garage, please?

Where's the nearest car wash, please?

Can I park here?

What speed can I go?

Which way do I go?

Listen to the following conversations.

Steve: Which way do I need to go now?

Ruth: Turn right, then immediately left. Continue for a mile and a half. When you get to the roundabout, take the first exit.

Steve: Okay. What's the speed limit here?

Ruth: It's 30 miles an hour because it's a built-up area.

Steve: There are traffic lights ahead.

Peter: The traffic's heavy tonight. It looks as if there might have been an accident further on.

David: That's probably what's caused this delay.

Peter: No. I think it's road works. Look, we're joining the highway again. That was a short diversion.

David: Yes. I think I'd like to stop a bit further on. Tell me when you see a sign for the next exit and we'll stop for something to eat.

Peter: Good idea. The traffic might be better if we wait until rush-hour is over.



Did you know?

A 'dual-carriageway' is known as a 'highway' in the US. A 'motorway' is called a 'freeway'. If you make a long driving journey in the US, you can say you're 'taking a roadtrip'.

C. You might like to know how long your journey is going to take. Or when you are going to stop.

Listen to the keywords and repeat, paying attention to the intonation.

How much fuel do we need?

Where are we going?

How long is the journey going to take?

How many miles to go?

Are we nearly there yet?

Listen to a conversation during a journey in a car.

Sam: Are you stopping for fuel soon?

Claire: Yes, at the next station we see.

Sam: How much fuel do we have left? Do we have enough to get us there?

Claire: Not quite enough, so I'll have to stop.

Sam: How much further is it?

Claire: It'll take another 40 minutes to reach the hotel, I think. So not far to go. Look, there's a petrol station. I'll just pull in and fill up the tank.



Did you know?

An 'accelerator pedal' is known as a 'gas pedal' in the US.

D. Your car might break down on your journey. How do you explain the problem when asking for help? Listen and repeat, paying close attention to the pronunciation and intonation.

My car's broken down.

I've got a flat tyre.

The windscreen has cracked.

I've run out of fuel.

The car has stopped.

Listen to the conversations when Derek's car breaks down.

Ruby: What's happening? You've slowed down a lot.

Derek: I'm not sure. The engine's making funny noises.

Ruby: Never mind the noises. There's smoke coming out of the bonnet!

Derek: I'd better pull over and call for help. Pass me the log book. It's in the glove-compartment. Hurry up.

Ruby: Oh dear! What should we do?

Derek: Stop worrying, dear. I'll call the breakdown services. See, here's the number. But best we get out of the car and keep well clear until they arrive. I don't like the look of all that smoke! Where's your mobile phone?



Did you know?

You have to be 23 years old or more to hire a car in Britain. If you are 23 or 24, there is an extra charge.