

GOAL: Get a Drivers' License

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Overview

Having a drivers' license allows you to legally drive in the United States. A drivers' license means you can get places faster than public transportation and cheaper than a taxi. A drivers' license permits you to have a more open schedule, meaning more time to spend with family, work, or to become active in your community. The possibilities are endless. Through studying the DMV handbook and taking a driving course, you can get your drivers license. Achieving this goal will take some time, commitment and practice but believe in yourself and you will succeed.



Getting Started

The first thing you must do is get a copy of the Drivers' Handbook. Obtain a Drivers' Handbook from the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). The Drivers' Handbook can also be viewed and printed from the DMV website, www.dmv.ca.gov. If you print the handbook from the website, it is 100 pages so it might be better to pick up a copy from the DMV. Without the handbook, you will not be able to learn everything that needs to be learned. The handbook lists the requirements for an adult 18 and over. There is a list for minors under the age of 18 also. The Handbook is the most important source to use. If needed, the DMV and the DMV website provide the Drivers' Handbook in many different languages.

Search through your local library to find more resources to use. Listed below are some possible resources. I found these resources in my library and on the internet. You will also need to get the DL-44 form, which is the form used to apply for the permit and drivers' license. This form cannot be found on the DMV website. You must pick it up at the DMV.

Books and Materials

Websites

Department of Motor Vehicles Drivers' Handbook. www.dmv.ca.gov

California DMV website, found under "Publications." Also found at your local DMV Office. The reference desk at your library may also have copies of the handbook.

Department of Motor Vehicles Video. <http://www.youtube.com/user/californiadmv>

Useful videos created by the DMV on topics like: "Top 10 Reasons for Failing the Driving Test," and "Rules of the Road."

Dept. of Motor Vehicles Sample Tests. <http://www.dmv.ca.gov/pubs/interactive/tdrive/exam.htm>

This sample test page has several interactive tests that ask 20- 40 questions. You can follow the web address or go to the DMV website, click on "Publications" and scroll down to sample tests.

Books

Studying for A Driver's License. Kenel, Frank C., and Beverly Vaillancourt. New Readers Press, 1994 or check you library literacy collection.

The Oxford Picture Dictionary: Monolingual. Shapiro, Norma, and Jayme Adelson-Goldstein. Oxford University Press, 1998. Check the literacy collection at your library for a copy. See pages 105-109.

The Oxford Picture Dictionary: Beginning Workbook. Fuchs, Marjorie. Oxford University Press, 1999. See pages 104-109.

DVD

Rules of the Road DVD. Jumby Bay Studios, 2003. www.gooddriverdvd.com. They have come out with a new 2008 version. If you do not have a copy readily available, they are pricey to purchase. Talk with your literacy coordinator about purchasing a copy for the library's literacy collection.

Key Vocabulary

- | | | |
|----------------|----------------------|----------------|
| ◆ Yield | ◆ Emergency Flashers | ◆ Speedometer |
| ◆ Odometer | ◆ Ignition | ◆ Brake |
| ◆ Accelerator | ◆ Windshield Wipers | ◆ Headlights |
| ◆ Stop | ◆ U-Turn | ◆ Right-of-way |
| ◆ Intersection | ◆ North | ◆ West |
| ◆ East | ◆ South | ◆ Pedestrian |
| ◆ Stop | ◆ Horn | |

Reading Practice

Read and Listen to the Handbook. The DMV Website has an audio version of the DMV Handbook. You can listen to the audio version while reading along in the hardcopy of the Handbook.

Study, Study, Study! Study the drivers' handbook. It is very important that everything in the handbook is reviewed and learned because all of the information in the handbook is fair game for the permit test.

Picture Dictionary. In The Monolingual Oxford Picture Dictionary, there are pictures with numbers that correspond to the numbers with words on the bottom portion of the page. The Monolingual Oxford Picture dictionary is useful to have because it allows you to see a picture or portion of a vehicle and relate it to its name.

Word Search. Make a Word Search that includes the vocabulary from the Key Vocabulary section or any words that pertain to the Drivers' Handbook. Look for websites that will help you create a word search for free. Go to www.google.com and type in "Free Word Search Maker."

Do the Practice Tests. Take the DMV provided practice quizzes before applying for a permit.

Writing Practice

Test Your Memory. In The Oxford Picture Dictionary Workbook, you can test your memory for the names of the items pictured there. Refer back to the Monolingual Oxford Picture Dictionary and use the words listed under the numbered pictures if you need to.

Fill-In-The-Gap. Prepare a paragraph with missing words to be filled in. Put the words to be filled in at the bottom of the paragraph:

Example: Sam is running behind schedule today. The highway is wet and a little slippery. The sign says the _____ is 65 M.P.H., but the car in front of her is going only 30 M.P.H. Sam sees a sign which warns her that two _____ of the highway are _____ into one. Another sign warns her about _____ work, so she knows there will be highway workers on the side of the road. She gets off the highway, but at the traffic light there is a big truck _____ the intersection, so Sam must wait. Then she makes a wrong turn onto a _____ street which stops. She makes a _____ and goes back.

dead-end merging blocking speed-limit U-turn lanes road

Real World Practice

- Take a trip to the DMV to set up an appointment for your written test. Some DMVs have a very short wait time and may ask if you want to take the written test that day instead of setting up an appointment. If you are ready to take the test, then go for it! If not, make an

appointment, if they allow you to. When it is time to take the driving test, you will need to make an appointment.

- While driving with your family or friends, play “I Spy” looking for road signs, unsafe drivers, bad road conditions, good driving techniques and anything else that you feel like finding. Anytime you are in a vehicle, or a bus, you can play this game and write down what you have seen and observed.
- If you don't have access to a car to practice your driving, look for Drivers Education courses in your area that will allow you to get behind-the-wheel training.

Games and Activities

Jeopardy. Create questions and answers under various categories such as: Signs, Curb Colors, Car Parts, Laws & Rules of the Road, Parking, etc. Remember, in Jeopardy, the answer is given first and then you have to come up with the question. There are many other questions and categories that can be made for this game. You can take all the information to make these questions and answers from the DMV handbook. The categories are the main sections of the handbook. Here are some possible answer/question pairs:

Category: Traffic Signs



Question: What is a railroad crossing?



Question: What is slippery when wet?



Question: What is merging traffic?



Question: What is a divided highway?



Answer:

Question: What is a sharp turn?



Answer:

Question: What is a traffic signal ahead?



Answer:

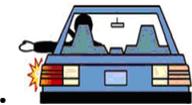
Question: What is a crossroad?



Answer:

Question: What is a winding road?

Category: Laws & Rules of the Road



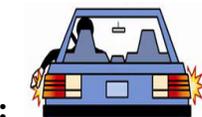
Answer:

Question: What is the signal for a left turn?



Answer:

Question: What is the signal for a right turn?



Answer:

Question: What is the signal for slowing down or stopping?

Memory Game. Make memory cards. Create pairs of cards, one with words, the other with a picture. For example, one can have the words “left turn,” the match would have a picture of the left turn hand signal. Or one can say “merging traffic” and match would have a picture of that sign. Or one can say “disabled parking only” and the match would have a picture of a blue curb. Once the cards are made, “shuffle” the deck then spread the cards out on a table and begin bringing the matching pairs back together.

Move Like a Car. Make signs based upon those found in the DMV Handbook. Post the signs around the library, building, or room. Pretend that you are a car coming up to these signs and respond to them as a car would. You may look a little goofy, but you're practicing to remember what the sign means. If your literacy program already possesses road signs, then those can be

used instead of making them. Then again, coloring and drawing is a nice activity that you can do together.

Independent Practice/Homework Ideas

- Each time you get into a vehicle, practice pointing out the essential things, such as the emergency flashers, the lights, the horn, and so on.
- If you made road signs during your tutoring session, take them home to paste around your house. Practice what to do when you see a particular road sign.
- Take a driving course with an instructor, or ask a family member or friend that has a car and license to help you become a better driver.
- Go to an arcade that has driving/racing games. The key is to practice safe driving, not to win! Or go to a place that has go-karts to practice driving without worrying about hitting anything or anyone.

Review: Get Your Drivers' License in 12 Easy Steps

 **Step 1** – Go to your local Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to familiarize yourself with where it is located. While you are there, pick up the Drivers' Handbook. You may want to consider getting the DL-44 form, which you need to fill out to apply for a driving permit.

 **Step 2** – Visit the DMV website to view the resources they have made available to you. They have a link for videos on YouTube that are DMV approved. The link for these videos is found in “Publications” under the Video and Audio section.

 **Step 3** – Gather other driving resources from your local library. I found the Rules of the Road DVD at my local library. Materials listed in the Books and Materials section above are useful if you can get a hold of them.

 **Step 4** – Learn the information in the Driver Handbook, including the signs. Now would be a good time to use some of the games described above, such as Jeopardy.

 **Step 5** – Gather together all documents needed to apply for a drivers permit. You need to have the appropriate fee to pay for the permit test, which is also good for the driving test. Documents you need to have to apply for your permit are under “Acceptable Documents” in the Driver Handbook.

 **Step 6** – Set up an appointment at the DMV to take your permit test. (If you did not pick up a DL-44 form on your first trip to the DMV, you will need to arrive to your appointment at least a half hour early to fill out the form.) Some DMV's do not allow for

you to make an appointment to take the permit test. Know your DMV! If your DMV is always crowded, allow for enough time to take the test, or arrive early in the morning before it becomes crowded. If you do not pass the first time you will have two more chances to take the test and pass. Go home and study before trying again.

 **Step 7** – Once you pass the written test and get your permit, you have 12-months to learn how to drive in an actual car (remember, you cannot practice your driving without the permit). If the permit expires before you take your driving test you will have to pay the fee again and retake the permit test. Now is the time to practice driving.

 **Step 8** – If someone you know has a vehicle with a valid drivers' license and car insurance, you can practice with that vehicle if the owner is willing to teach you and let you practice in it. If not, ignore this step and go to Step 9.

 **Step 9** – If there is not a vehicle readily available for you to practice with, locate an agency that gives behind the wheel driving practice. This can be a bit pricey, but you do receive instruction on driving. From what I have found in my area, the price is from \$230 to \$590 for four to ten hours of behind the wheel driving practice. There is also the option of renting a car with insurance, but you would have to check with your local car rental agencies to see what their policy is about a person driving with a permit under a licensed driver's supervision.

 **Step 10** – Once you are confident with your driving skills; make an appointment at the DMV to take the driving test. For planning ahead purposes, you will need to make arrangements with someone to use their vehicle for the driving test. Familiarize yourself with the vehicle and where its controls are located.

 **Step 11** – If you do not pass the driving test, make another appointment for a couple of weeks to a month down the road so you have time to practice in your trouble areas. You get two more chances to pass the driving test. If you passed your driving test, ignore this step and go on to step 12.

 **Step 12** – Congratulations! You have passed your driving test! Time to celebrate at a favorite restaurant, an ice cream shop, or anywhere else you may want to go!

Milestones

- **Initial Effort** – You have a copy of the Drivers' Handbook and have begun to understand the basics of driving and the rules of the road. Studying the handbook is the key to succeeding.
- **Making Progress** – After a few weeks of studying the handbook and doing fun activities to reinforce what you have learned, including taking the practice tests, you

should be ready to take your written test at the DMV to get your permit. Once you pass the written test you can put your effort and energy into practicing your driving.

- **Accomplished** – For this goal to be considered accomplished, you must successfully demonstrate that you can drive a car to an employee of the DMV. The two of you will go on a short drive together in your car and you will simply follow the directions given to you. When you pass this test, you will hold in your hand the piece of paper saying that you have passed your driving test. That piece of paper is your temporary Drivers' License until the permanent one reaches you in the mail.

Contributor's Biography

Tammera Gist. While in college, Tammera received her Drivers' License with the help of a friend who allowed her to practice driving in his vehicle. The friend also gave her mock driving tests and tested her on her knowledge of the rules of the road. Thanks to this team effort, she passed all of her tests and has been driving ever since.

Tammera graduated from Humboldt State University with a bachelor's degree in Liberal Studies Elementary Education. Instead of working on her teaching credential, she decided to take a couple of years off to explore other career opportunities, especially those that do not work with children on a regular basis. She found a program with AmeriCorps State, which is the CLLS AmeriCorps Initiative. She says, "Tutoring adults sounded like a great opportunity and it has turned out to be amazing. When I think about literacy, I think about reading. My whole life I have enjoyed reading and making my own stories up."