

CHESTNUT FIELD TRADING · PUBLISHING



PRACTICAL DRIVING TEST

THE COMPLETE PASS CHECKLIST

Booking, car checks, show me tell me, manoeuvres & test day

2026 EDITION

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START HERE

The test at a glance

Use this checklist in the weeks before your test, the night before and on the day. Tick each box as you go. If you can tick everything, you're ready.

Driving time	Around 35 minutes
Eyesight check	Read a number plate from 20 metres (20.5 metres for an old-style plate). Fail this and the test ends.
'Tell me' question	One vehicle safety question at the start, before you drive
'Show me' question	One task you do while driving, such as washing the windscreen
Independent driving	Follow the examiner's sat nav, traffic signs, or both
Reversing manoeuvre	One of: parallel park, park in a bay, or pull up on the right and reverse
Emergency stop	You might be asked to do one
To pass	No more than 15 driving faults (minors) and no serious or dangerous faults
Fee	£62 weekdays · £75 evenings, weekends and bank holidays

New for 2026: only you, the learner, can book and manage your practical test. Each booking can be changed twice, and after your first booking you can only move to your 3 nearest test centres. Book through GOV.UK and never pay a reseller more than the official fee.

STEP 1

Booking & admin

- ☐ I have passed my theory test and have the pass certificate number to hand
- ☐ I have a valid provisional licence, and the photo still looks like me
- ☐ I booked the test myself on GOV.UK (instructors and family can no longer book it for you)
- ☐ I have checked the date and time with my instructor if I'm using their car
- ☐ I know I only get **2 changes** per booking, so I will only move the test if I really need to
- ☐ I know I need at least **10 working days' notice** to change or cancel for free
- ☐ I have saved my booking confirmation email and reference number
- ☐ I paid £62 (weekday) or £75 (evening, weekend or bank holiday), not a reseller's price

STEP 2

Am I ready?

Tick only what you can do consistently, without your instructor helping. Two or more gaps? Consider moving the test while you still have free notice.

Core control

- ☐ Move off smoothly on the flat, on a hill and from behind a parked car
- ☐ Stop smoothly and park safely at the side of the road
- ☐ Keep full control of the car at low speed and in heavy traffic
- ☐ Use mirrors every time before signalling, changing speed or changing direction
- ☐ Signal clearly, at the right time, and cancel it afterwards

Roads & junctions

- ☐ Emerge from T-junctions with full observation, peeping and creeping where the view is limited
- ☐ Turn right across traffic safely, judging gaps without hesitating
- ☐ Choose the correct lane and signal on all types of roundabout, including mini and multi-lane
- ☐ Join, drive on and leave a dual carriageway at the right speed
- ☐ Drive on country roads, adjusting speed for bends and narrow lanes
- ☐ Respond correctly to traffic lights, signs, road markings and pedestrian crossings
- ☐ Keep to speed limits and spot a change of limit straight away
- ☐ Deal with meeting traffic in narrow streets and passing parked cars safely

Manoeuvres & test skills

- ☐ Parallel park behind a car within about two car lengths
- ☐ Drive forwards into a bay and reverse out

- ☐ Reverse into a bay and drive out
- ☐ Pull up on the right, reverse about two car lengths, and rejoin safely
- ☐ Carry out an emergency stop under control
- ☐ Follow sat nav directions and road signs without getting flustered
- ☐ Pass at least two mock tests with my instructor, with no serious faults

STEP 3

Car checks

Most people use their instructor's car, which will already meet the rules. If you're using your own car, it must pass every check below or your test will be cancelled.

- ☐ Taxed, with a current MOT if it's over 3 years old
- ☐ Insured for you to use on a driving test
- ☐ L-plates on the front and back ('L' or 'D' plates in Wales)
- ☐ An extra interior rear-view mirror fitted for the examiner
- ☐ A passenger seatbelt and a fixed passenger head restraint (slip-on types are not allowed)
- ☐ An officially fitted mph speedometer (not just a phone app or extra display)
- ☐ No warning lights showing on the dashboard for safety problems
- ☐ No tyre damage, and legal tread depth on every tyre
- ☐ Able to reach at least 62mph
- ☐ Smoke-free
- ☐ Any dashcam faces outside only and doesn't record audio inside the car
- ☐ Not a car banned for poor all-round vision, such as some convertibles and 2-door models (check GOV.UK if unsure)

You can't use self-parking features, autopilot or your own sat nav during the test.

STEP 4

The night before & on the day

Take with you

- ☐ Your UK photocard driving licence (or a valid passport plus paper licence if you don't have a photocard)
- ☐ Your theory test pass certificate, if you have it
- ☐ Glasses or contact lenses, if you need them to read a number plate
- ☐ The car, with a full tank of fuel and clean windows and mirrors

Get ready

- ☐ Get a proper night's sleep and eat before you go
- ☐ Book a lesson just before the test to warm up
- ☐ Arrive early, but don't wait in the car park stressing
- ☐ Wear comfortable, flat shoes you've driven in before
- ☐ Go to the toilet before the test starts
- ☐ Remember: if you don't understand an instruction, you can ask the examiner to repeat it

STEP 5

Show me, tell me

You'll get one 'tell me' question before you drive and one 'show me' task while you drive. Getting one wrong is a driving fault. Losing control while doing the 'show me' task can be a serious fault. Practise these in your instructor's car.

'Tell me' questions (answered before you drive)

Question	What to say
How would you check the brakes are working before a journey?	The brakes shouldn't feel spongy or slack. Test them as you set off. The car shouldn't pull to one side.
Where would you find the tyre pressures, and how would you check them?	In the manufacturer's guide. Use a reliable gauge when the tyres are cold, including the spare, and refit the valve caps.
How would you check the head restraint is adjusted correctly?	The rigid part should be at least as high as your eyes or the top of your ears, and as close to the back of your head as is comfortable.
How would you check the tyres have enough tread?	No cuts or bulges. At least 1.6mm of tread across the central three-quarters of the tyre, all the way round.
How would you check the headlights and tail lights are working?	Switch them on (turning on the ignition if needed), then walk round the car to check.
How would you know there's a problem with the anti-lock brakes?	The ABS warning light on the dashboard would stay on.
How would you check the indicators are working?	Switch on the hazard warning lights and walk round the car to check.
How would you check the brake lights are working?	Press the brake pedal and look for the reflection in a window or garage door, or ask someone to check.
How would you check the power-assisted steering is working?	Apply gentle pressure to the wheel as the engine starts, and you'll feel it move slightly. Or check the steering isn't unusually heavy when turning.
How would you switch on the rear fog light, and when would you use it?	Show the switch. Use it when visibility drops below 100 metres, and switch it off when visibility improves.

Question	What to say
How would you switch to main beam, and how would you know it's on?	Show the stalk. A blue warning light shows on the dashboard.
How would you check there's enough engine oil?	Use the dipstick. The oil level should be between the minimum and maximum marks.
How would you check there's enough engine coolant?	Look at the markers on the coolant header tank. The level should be between high and low.
How would you check there's enough brake fluid?	Look at the markers on the brake fluid reservoir. The level should be between high and low.

'Show me' tasks (done while you drive)

- ☐ Wash and clean the rear windscreen
- ☐ Wash and clean the front windscreen
- ☐ Switch on your dipped headlights
- ☐ Set the rear demister
- ☐ Operate the horn
- ☐ Demist the front windscreen
- ☐ Open and close the side window

Only do each task when it's safe. Keep one hand on the wheel and your eyes on the road.

STEP 6

Manoeuvre routines

Examiners mark three things on every manoeuvre: control, accuracy and observation. Most fails come from missed observation, not from a wonky park. Look all round before you start and keep looking throughout.

Parallel park

- ☐ Pull up alongside the target car, about a door's width away
- ☐ Check all round, including your blind spot, then select reverse
- ☐ Reverse slowly until the reference point your instructor showed you, then steer in
- ☐ Keep checking all round, stopping if anyone approaches
- ☐ Straighten up and finish parallel, close to the kerb, within about two car lengths

Bay park (either direction)

- ☐ Check all round before moving and before each change of direction
- ☐ Crawl the car at clutch control speed
- ☐ Use your mirrors and reference points to line up between the lines
- ☐ Finish straight and inside the bay, then secure the car
- ☐ When leaving, check all round again, including for pedestrians

Pull up on the right and reverse

- ☐ Check mirrors, signal right and cross only when it's safe
- ☐ Stop close to and parallel with the right-hand kerb
- ☐ Check all round, then reverse slowly about two car lengths
- ☐ Check all round again, including your blind spot, before moving off
- ☐ Rejoin on the left side of the road when it's safe

Emergency stop

- ☐ React quickly when the examiner raises their hand and says 'Stop'
- ☐ Brake firmly and progressively, keeping both hands on the wheel
- ☐ Press the clutch just before stopping to avoid stalling
- ☐ Once stopped, apply the handbrake and select neutral
- ☐ Check both blind spots before moving off again

STEP 7

Avoid the most common fails

These are the areas where learners most often pick up serious faults. Tick each one off once you can do it every time.

Area	What goes wrong	Fix
Observation at junctions	Pulling out without a proper look, or misjudging speed	Stop or slow right down, look both ways twice and only go when you're sure
Mirrors before changing direction	Signalling or turning without checking mirrors first	Always Mirrors, Signal, Manoeuvre, every time
Steering control	Cutting corners or swinging wide on turns	Slow down earlier and start steering at the right point
Turning right at junctions	Cutting across or stopping in the wrong position	Position just left of the centre line and wait at the turning point
Traffic lights	Going through on amber when you could have stopped, or not moving on green	Anticipate changes and approach at a speed you can stop from
Traffic signs	Missing a speed limit, no-entry or give-way sign	Scan ahead and call out signs to yourself on practice drives
Road position	Driving too close to the kerb or the centre line	Stay about a metre from the kerb on normal roads
Moving off safely	Pulling away without checking the blind spot	Check mirrors and your right shoulder every time
Road markings	Wrong lane at roundabouts or ignoring box junctions	Read lane markings early and pick your lane in good time
Moving off with control	Stalling or rolling back on hills	Find the biting point and use the handbrake on slopes

Made a mistake? Keep driving. You don't know how the examiner has marked it, and one minor fault won't fail you. Worrying about it is what causes the next mistake.

STEP 8

After the test

If you pass

- ☐ Let the examiner send your full licence automatically, or apply yourself within 2 years
- ☐ Check the rules on displaying P-plates (they're optional, but useful)
- ☐ Think about Pass Plus or motorway lessons for extra confidence
- ☐ Tell your insurer you've passed

If you don't pass this time

- ☐ Listen to the examiner's debrief and ask for your marking sheet
- ☐ Write down every serious fault while it's fresh
- ☐ Book lessons that focus on those exact faults
- ☐ Book your next test yourself on GOV.UK. You'll need to wait at least 10 working days

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