



**ACReS**  
Academic Career and Readiness Skills

**Life Skills**

**Unit**

**5**



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## Driving Responsibilities

### Words to know:

- ✓ learner's permit
- ✓ DMV
- ✓ BAC
- ✓ title
- ✓ registration
- ✓ bill of sale
- ✓ proof of insurance
- ✓ license
- ✓ license plate

**D**riving! The happiness that comes with the freedom of driving yourself where you need to go is endless for many people. A milestone in many young lives is getting a *learner's permit* and then a *license*. Driving is a great privilege and a great responsibility. There are many things to consider when you make the decision that you want to drive.

First, you must take the test to get a learner's permit. This takes hours of study. After you get your learner's permit, you will need someone with a driver's license who is old enough to help you learn how to operate a vehicle and to learn the rules of the road. After you get your driver's license, you will probably want to buy a car and with that decision comes more responsibility. You must pick the right car and then keep it running and carry insurance on it.



## A Learner's Permit

You want to drive? The first thing you must do is to get your ***learner's permit***. You must go to your local ***Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)*** and pick up a driver's manual. Many states will also have a copy of their manual on the Internet. In this manual you see chapters on different topics like traffic signs, intersections, passing, parallel parking, defensive driving, and the use of alcohol and other drugs. The manual helps you learn the rules of the road. Many of these topics you might already know. For example, everyone knows you must not drink or take drugs and drive a car. You could cause an accident and hurt someone or even take someone's life. You probably also know many of the street signs already.



Academic & Career Readiness Skills

Do the exercise below and see how many signs and rules you recognize. Fill in the blank explaining what each sign or rule means.



1. \_\_\_\_\_



2. \_\_\_\_\_



3. \_\_\_\_\_



4. \_\_\_\_\_



5. \_\_\_\_\_



6. \_\_\_\_\_

7. What does a flashing red light at an intersection mean? \_\_\_\_\_

8. What type of pavement marking is used to show you which lane you must use for a turn? \_\_\_\_\_

9. What does "right-of-way" mean? \_\_\_\_\_

10. What do you do when an ambulance is behind you with its lights flashing?  
\_\_\_\_\_

How did you do? Do you think you are ready to take the test? Be careful, the written test can be very hard.



After you have studied the manual and feel that you are ready to take the test to get your learner's permit, you must go to the DMV office and take the written test. You will have to take your identification (ID). The DMV office will charge you a fee to take the test, so you will need to bring money with you. The office will also give you a vision test. This usually means that you will need to look into a special machine and read a line of letters, numbers, and symbols. After this, you will be able to take the written test. It will be multiple-choice. Once you finish the test an employee of the department will correct it and, if you pass it, will give you a learner's permit. If you fail it you must take the test again. States charge different amounts for their tests and have different rules about how often you can take the learner's permit test if you fail it. Check with the office in your town to learn that information.

Check your understanding. Put the following steps in order.

Number them from 1 (the first step) to 6 (the last step). The first one is done for you.

11. \_\_\_\_\_ Take the written test.
12. \_\_\_\_\_ Pay.
13. \_\_\_\_\_ Take your ID to the motor vehicle office.
14.   1   Pick up a driver's manual.
15. \_\_\_\_\_ Take a vision test.
16. \_\_\_\_\_ Receive your learner's permit.

Now that you have a learner's permit, what do you do next? The first thing to do is to find another driver with good skills. She will ride with you and teach you how to operate a vehicle. She will teach you the rules of the road. Many states have rules that define "another driver with good skills." Many states require the teaching driver to be at least 21 years old. You will need to check with your state for those rules.

If you do not have someone who can teach you how to drive, you can go to a driving school. Many public schools offer driver's education. If you are not in school, you can go to a driving school that may be in or near your town. The teachers at the school will take you out in a car and get you the practice you need to be a good driver.



Once you are ready, you will need to return to the DMV office and make an appointment to take your driver's test. This test will be taken in a car. You will need to have a parent or friend, with a car, come to the test with you. You will need to bring your identification. You will need to bring your learner's permit too. It is a good idea to check at the DMV office what official document you will need to give to the person giving you the test. If you do not have those documents, you may not be able to test.

Once your tester arrives, he will sit in the front passenger's seat and give you instructions on where to drive and what to do. He will be checking to see if you know what the road signs mean and if you can parallel park, can turn corners, and drive with traffic. If you have mastered all these skills, then you will pass the test and receive a driver's license.

How close are you to being ready?

## Alcohol/drugs and driving

It is illegal for you to drink alcohol or use drugs and drive a motor vehicle. Not only is it illegal, it is the **WRONG** thing to do. When you drink or use drugs and drive a car, you could have a serious accident that could hurt you, someone you love, or a stranger. Driving is a responsibility. That means you have agreed to follow the rules of the road. You promised to be careful in a car so that you don't injure yourself or someone else. All states have laws against driving when you have been drinking.

Why do you think it is important not to drink or use drugs and drive?

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Alcohol slows your reflexes and reaction time. It reduces your ability to see clearly. It gives you poor judgment. It affects your judgment about speed and distances. Many times it will encourage you to take risks that you wouldn't normally take. It makes you less alert. The important physical and mental skills you need to drive safely are weakened. If you drink and take drugs at the same time, the effect is even worse.

There are ways to protect yourself against drinking and driving. If you are going out with a group of friends, get a designated driver before you go. A designated driver is someone who agrees not to drink or take drugs and promises to drive you home after the party. If no one wants to be the designated driver then plan to spend the night or call a cab to take you home. Make these decisions before you go.



If you drink or use drugs and drive, you may have to pay the consequences. If you have an accident or the police pull you over and think you have been drinking, they will conduct a **blood alcohol test (BAC)**. Your blood alcohol test (BAC) is the percentage of alcohol in your blood and is usually tested by a chemical test of breath, blood or urine. A BAC of .08 or higher shows that you are intoxicated. Your BAC is affected by how many alcoholic drinks you have, how much time passes between drinks, and your weight. It is not safe to drink or use drugs and drive. The penalties are steep. In New York State, for example, they have a zero-tolerance law for drivers under the age of 21. If you are caught driving while under the influence, you will lose your license. If you are over 21, the penalties range from fines, to jail time, to loss of license. You worked hard to get your license. Be smart. Don't drink or use drugs and drive.

How smart are you? Take the test below and see how you do. Answer each question true or false.

17. \_\_\_\_\_ Alcohol slows your reaction time when driving.
18. \_\_\_\_\_ Marijuana, a cold remedy, or a sleeping pill can affect your driving ability.
19. \_\_\_\_\_ Non-prescription drugs do not affect your driving.
20. \_\_\_\_\_ Taking another drug while drinking alcoholic beverages has no effect on you.
21. \_\_\_\_\_ Your blood alcohol content (BAC) depends on your body weight, the number of drinks you have, and the time that passes between them.
22. \_\_\_\_\_ Fines, the loss of your license, and a possible jail term are some of the consequences of driving under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.

## Buying and Maintaining a Car

Many people who have their license also like to own a car, but cars are a big responsibility. They cost a lot of money. Once you buy the car, you have to get insurance. You have to put gas in it. You have to put tires on it. You must fix the parts that break like the engine, the muffler, and the brakes.

Now that you are ready to buy a car, what type of car would you like? Do you need a big car, a little car, an SUV, a truck, or a car that gets good gas mileage? What type of vehicle do you need?



- Do you need a car to get to work?
- Do you need a car that can seat a lot of people?
- Do you need a car that gets good gas mileage?

Would you rather have an SUV? They do not get as good gas mileage as a car, but they have more room and are rugged.



Or would you prefer a truck or a sports car? Trucks can haul lots of things, but there is only room for a couple of people. A sports car is nice. It will amaze your friends. Sports cars cost a lot of money. The insurance on them is very high, too.



Make a list of the things you need from a vehicle.

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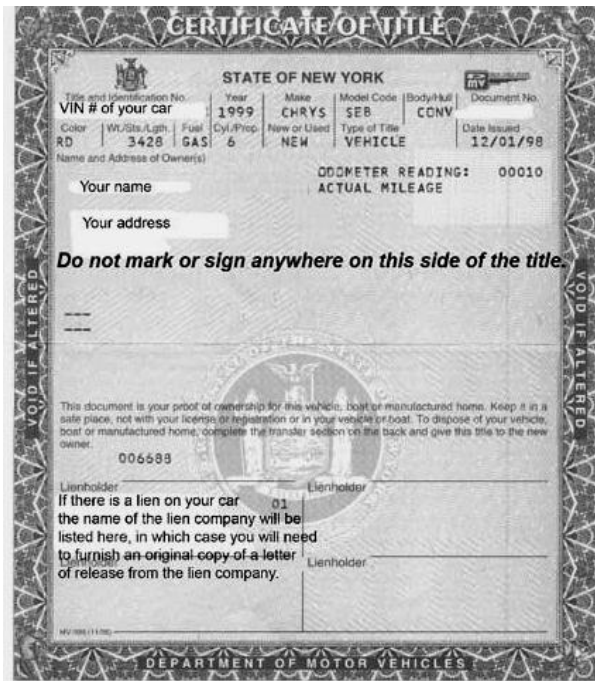
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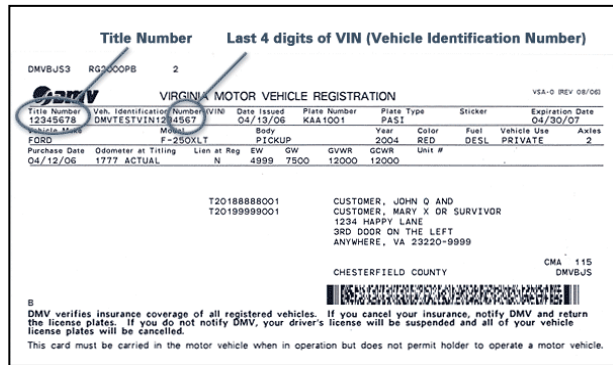
What type of vehicle will work best for you? \_\_\_\_\_

Once you know what type of a vehicle you want, you need to look for one. You can go to a car dealership. You can look for it in the paper. You can ask friends about cars for sale. You may have to take a loan out from a bank or maybe you have enough cash to pay for it. You will also have to go to an insurance agency and get insurance on your car.

There is a lot of paperwork you have to do to put a vehicle on the road. If you buy your vehicle from a car dealership, they will do the paperwork for you. If you buy your vehicle from a person, you will need to go back to the DMV. You will need to apply for a new **Title (certificate of ownership)**, a **registration**, and a **license plate**. You will need to bring a **bill of sale**, your **proof of insurance**, and money. The DMV will charge you for all of these things. The papers you get from the DMV are official documents. You will need to keep them and your driver's license safe.



Title ↑



registration ↑



license plate ↑

After you buy a car it is important that you take care of it so that it is safe to drive. The DMV will make you get an inspection on your vehicle. You will have to get an inspection every year. You have to take it to a mechanic for the inspection. If your car is not safe to drive, it will not pass inspection. You will have to take it off the road.

The mechanic will check the engine of your car. The engine must have a good battery, oil, and anti-freeze. He will check things like the spark plugs, air filter, and transmission. It must meet pollution control laws.

The mechanic will also check the body of the vehicle. It must have good tires. It must have safe seat belts. It must have a quiet muffler. It must have working lights. If your vehicle is missing any of these things, then you will have to pay to have them fixed. To have your car fixed can be very expensive.

After the mechanic says that your car has passed inspection, then you can drive it on the road. Remember that you will need money for gas. If you drive your car a lot this may add up to a lot of money. Most cars have tanks that hold about 15 gallons of gas. If you multiply 15 gallons times \$4 per gallon for gas, it will cost you \$60 to fill your gas tank.

Many people learn that they must get a job in order to have a car. Many people get a car because they have a job. They like to drive themselves to work. They do not like taking the bus or train. Cars are very expensive. It is a serious decision to buy one.

**23.** Why do you think it is a good idea to own a vehicle?

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**24.** Why do you think it might be a good idea NOT to own a vehicle?

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**25.** What type of vehicle do you think you can afford? Why?

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Notes:

∞ End of Lesson 2 ∞