

PRACTICE GUIDE: MANOEUVRES

INTRODUCTION

There are four possible manoeuvres in the driving test, but only one will be required. For each one, key skills include decent clutch control, an ability to reverse and an ability to perform a hill start. The key is to keep the speed down while checking what's going on around, while also turning the steering wheel smoothly. It might be worth winding down the windows slightly to hear oncoming cars before they're visible.

When supervising a learner driver you must be over 21 and have held a full driving licence for a minimum of three years. As a supervisor, to stay within the law, the same rules apply to you as to your child when they're driving.

Focus on:

TURNING IN THE ROAD

The examiner will ask you to stop the car on the left, explain what they want you to do, then ask you to proceed when you're ready.

- » Select first gear and find the clutch biting point, having checked for other road users.
- » Do a quick over-the-shoulder check, then move across the road if safe to do so.
- » Once you're well underway, be aware of other road users who may want to go around you even if you're most of the way across the road road. The key is to give them the option.
- » Try not to hit any kerbs.

BAY PARKING

Here, the car will be in a parking space at the start of the test.

- » Select reverse gear and check all around before slowly backing the car out of the space to the left or right (usually the right). Your aim is to get the car square on your side of the road, ready to drive away.
- » Alternatively, you may be asked to reverse your car into a parking bay, in which case you may need to use your door mirrors to ensure you park in the centre of the bay.
- » You're allowed to move forward and reverse again or make adjustments, but you get just one attempt, so you can't start all over again once you've entered the bay.

PARALLEL PARKING

The examiner will ask you to pull up on the left, usually before the car that he wants you to park behind.

- » Move out safely and stop parallel with the car, no more than one metre away from it.
- » Select reverse, check all around then reverse slowly, watching for the corner of the car appearing in the side window. Check all round that everything is clear and that it's safe to manoeuvre.
- » If it's safe, moving slowly turn the wheel to the left one full turn. Continue reversing until the passenger side door mirror is level with the rear lights of the car that you're alongside, then turn the wheel two turns to the right, ensuring that you're clear of the parked car. Continue to reverse until your car is almost parallel with the kerb, then turn the steering wheel one turn to the left. Check your distance from the kerb and keep your car close to the parked car.

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REVERSING AROUND A CORNER

- » When asked, pull up half a metre from the kerb and about two car lengths past the junction. You can take your seat belt off, then if it's clear, reverse slowly; don't signal.
- » Look in the rear window, then as the kerb appears in the rear side window, check all round, turn the steering wheel to the left keeping the kerb visible through the side window; the front of the car will swing out, so check all round for hazards.
- » Continue slowly if clear, then straighten up when looking out of your rear window and check that the car is parallel with the kerb.
- » If a vehicle comes down the road you're reversing round, stop. If it continues, wait until they've passed, but if it stops behind you, you'll have to start again.
- » With the manoeuvre complete, stop on the examiner's instruction. Engage your handbrake and neutral. Put your seat belt back on and wait for the examiner's next instruction.

HILL START

A skill rather than a manoeuvre, the hill start is an essential technique for driving safely.

- » With the handbrake on, select first gear and bring the clutch to its biting point. Use a few more revs than usual, and with the handbrake on find the clutch biting point. Once you've found this, check your mirrors and ensure there are no pedestrians about to cross the road immediately behind. Next check over your right shoulder and put on your indicator if necessary.
- » If it's safe to move off, release the handbrake and let the clutch bite a little more - enough to get the car rolling forward, but not enough to cause the car to jerk. Let the revs rise a bit as the car moves off, letting the clutch come right up as the car gathers speed.
- » Compared with setting off on the flat, you might need to change up from first a little later if the engine isn't to struggle against the gradient. You'll also need to change gear quickly and smoothly, if you're not to grind to a halt because the car has lost all of its momentum. Once you've set off, make sure you've cancelled your indicator, if you set it going.

EMERGENCY STOP

The emergency stop has long been a part of the driving test; at one time, every candidate had to perform one. But since 1999 this has dropped to just one in three - chosen at random. If your child is one of those asked to perform an emergency stop, their examiner will make it clear what signal they'll give; it's likely to be a raised right hand with an audible instruction to stop.

- » Once the signal has been given, your child needs to take their right foot off the accelerator and brake sharply, but without going crazy.
- » Throughout the process, hold the steering wheel with both hands to retain control of the car, and don't press the clutch until you've come almost to a stop.
- » Once the car has stopped, with the clutch and brake pedals depressed apply the handbrake and move the gear lever into neutral.
- » Prepare to start off again; check all round and if it's safe to move off, pull away.