

ESL Topics: Transportation

Sample Questions & Answers

Beginner:

1.) Do you have a drivers license? What is the minimum required age to get a license in your country?

Yes, I have a drivers license. The minimum age required to get a license is 18 years in Canada.

2.) Do you have your own car? If so, how much do you pay for insurance?

*Yes, I have my own car I bought it **secondhand** last year. Since it's **used**, insurance is pretty cheap. I pay \$1200 a year for auto insurance.*

3.) Do you drive to work? If not, how do you get to work?

*I **commute** to work by bus. Parking is **costly** in the **downtown core** of my city. So, I use public transportation.*

4.) Is owning a car **a must for people in your country?**

*Since Canada is very **vast**, owning your own car is definitely a must if you enjoy traveling on the weekends or visiting the **suburbs**. However, if you live and spend the weekends in the city, you can get by without a car.*

5.) Have you ever **carpooled to work or school in the past?**

No, even though Canada has a carpool lane on the highway, most people don't carpool.

6.) How is your country's subway system?

It's reliable, but in much need of an upgrade. It's not as modern as Seoul or Tokyo's subway systems.

7.) Have you ever traveled by plane?

I travel internationally once a year to the Caribbean during the winter season. Most Canadians try to get some sun in the winter by going overseas.

8.) How long does it take to get from your house to your country's capital?

It takes five hours by car to get to Ottawa from Toronto.

9.) How long is your morning commute to work? How about your evening commute home?

*My morning commute takes 40 minutes due to **rush hour** and **congestion**. My evening commute is shorter because the traffic is much lighter; it takes about 30 minutes to get home from work.*

Intermediate:

1.) What do you think of your country's transportation **infrastructure?**

*While our expressways and roads are superb, my country's public transportation system is lacking, especially our subway system. It's quite outdated and in major need of **renovation**.*

2.) Do you ever use taxis? Is it customary to leave a tip when using taxis?

Taxis require tips. However, it's not as expensive as hair shops or servers. I usually leave a two-dollar tip for a short ride, and about five dollars for a longer ride.

3.) How safe is public transportation in your country?

*Buses and subways attract some **mentally unstable** people for some reason in Canada. However, I think it's pretty safe, as long as you mind your own business.*

4.) What is the punishment for drinking and driving in your country?

*If you are caught drinking and driving in Canada you pay a **substantial** fine, upwards of \$2000. Furthermore, your license is*

suspended for one year and you have an ignition interlock device installed on your car.

Advanced:

1.) What is the legal alcohol limit for operating a vehicle in your country? Have you ever had to provide a **breathalyzer sample before?**

The legal alcohol limit is a blood alcohol content of 0.08. If you are over 0.08 you have committed a criminal offence.

2.) Have you ever been in an accident? tell me about it?

*I've been in several accidents. One was serious and my car was **totalled**. I suffered minor injuries including **whiplash**. My other accidents have all been minor **fender benders**.*

Tips:

1.) We always use the prepositions **by** and **take** when we talk about using a form of transportation. For example, "I **take** the bus to work everyday." Or Let's go **by** taxi.

While **by** and **take** can be used interchangeably you will find most people use **take** for public, mass transportation, like buses, subways, and ferry's. In English we tend to use **by** for private transportation like cars, taxi's, and boats.

2.) Many Korean ESL students pronounce the word "**taxi**" wrong. It's pronounced **TAX-E**, not **TAK-SHE**.

3.) When we walk we can say: "**on foot**" or "**by foot**". For example, "It's not far away we can get there by foot in ten minutes."

Match

Match the words from column 1 with the best-suited answer in column 2.

Column 1	Column 2
1.) second hand	a.) gridlock
2.) costly	b.) not new
3.) congestion	c.) to improve an outdated structure.
4.) infrastructure	d.) mental illness
5.) renovation	e.) basic structures needed for a society to operate.
6.) mentally unstable	f.) very expensive
7.) fender bender	g.) considerable size, importance or worth.
8.) totalled	h.) an injury of the neck
9.) whiplash	i.) an accident where the car can't be repaired
10.) substantial	j.) minor accident

Questions

- 1.) What car do you drive?
- 2.) What is your main mode of transportation?
- 3.) How much is the bus fare in your city?

- 4.) Have you been in a car accident?
- 5.) Does your city have a lot of traffic?
- 6.) Is insurance costly in your country?
- 7.) What is the process of getting a license in your country?
- 8.) Have you rode a motorcycle?
- 9.) Have you traveled overseas?
- 10.) Do you think buying a used car is a bad idea?
- 11.) How long does it take you to commute to work?
- 12.) Does your country have a car pool lane?

Vocabulary

- **secondhand / used:** When you buy something that is not new. *"It's in mint condition for a second hand car."*
- **commute:** Your daily travel distance from home to work. *"My commute to work was cut in half after buying a car."*
- **costly:** Very expensive. *"She has a costly addiction to handbags and high heels."*
- **downtown core:** The historical center of a city; usually associated with business. *"The downtown core of New York is packed with people from all corners of the globe."*
- **"a must":** Something you have to do or try. *"Eating deep dish pizza in Chicago is a must for tourists."*
- **vast:** Very big. *"Canada's vast wilderness is home to various wildlife."*
- **suburbs:** A residential area for houses. Usually on the outskirts of a city. *"Why don't you consider living in the suburbs if downtown is too costly for you?"*
- **carpool:** Sharing a vehicle between coworkers or friends to save gas and reduce emissions. *"My company offers a carpooling program which rewards its employees with gas coupons."*
- **rush hour:** The morning and evening time of day when people commute to work causing substantial traffic. *"I leave early to work to avoid rush hour traffic and enjoy some free time before I start work in the morning."*

- **congestion**: Another term for traffic; the slowing of vehicles on the road.
- **infrastructure**: The basic facilities and structures required for the operation of a society. *"South Korea's public transportation infrastructure is very modern and convenient for tourists and locals alike."*
- **renovation**: To improve broken or outdated facilities. *"Starbucks is closed until they finish their renovations sometime next week."*
- **mentally unstable**: Illness of the mind. *"If you keep drinking you'll end up mentally unstable."*
- **substantial**: A significant amount of importance, size, or worth. *"A substantial amount of my father's wealth was made in the stock market."*
- **breathalyzer**: A device to determine if someone has alcohol in their system through breathing. *"During the holiday season police have road blocks set up with officers with breathalyzers."*
- **totaled**: When you get in an accident so bad that it is not possible to repair. *"I totaled my car when I was 18 years old and drove into a telephone pole."*
- **whiplash**: An injury of the neck from jerking your neck severely. *"Even though I had my seatbelt on I suffered severe whiplash from the accident."*

Daily Expressions, Phrasal Verbs & Idioms

1.) **"Pull over"**: When you stop your vehicle on the side of the road or curb.

"We pulled over on the side of the road to watch the sunrise and take some pictures." "The cop put his sirens and lights on and instructed us to pull over."

2.) **"take place"**: To happen or occur.

"The concert will take place this Thursday." "Most crimes take place in the downtown core of the city."