

Listening Comprehension Questions

These questions will help you to stay focused and to test your listening skills.

How to do this:

Listen for the answer to the first question. Once you hear the answer, stop the audio and read so you know what to listen for.

The answers are not provided but instead, we show you where you can find the answers within the transcription :)

1. To drive a vehicle in Canada, what do you need? (page 2)
2. When do you study the driving rules? (page 2)
3. Who taught Curtis to drive? (page 3)
4. Who taught Amy to drive? (page 3)
5. Is the bus system good or bad where Amy and Curtis lived? (page 3)
6. What is a road trip? (page 4)
7. Has Amy had a speeding ticket? (page 4)
8. Why did Curtis get pulled over by the police? (page 5)
9. Did he get a ticket or a warning? (page 6)
10. What type of ticket did Amy get last year? (page 6)

Transcription:

Amy: In this conversation, we're going to be talking about what it's like to drive in North America. And for the Real English tip, we've got some great advice about how you can learn vocabulary faster and be able to use it in your speaking a lot easier.

Intro with music

Curtis: Hi, everybody. It's Curtis and I'm here with Amy from Real English Conversations. And we're going to talk about driving in Canada and North America. And it all starts with getting your learner's licence, right Amy?

Amy: Yeah, definitely. In order to be on the road behind the wheel of a vehicle, you've got to have a license. And the first thing that you do is you actually--at least in Canada, we do things in a very specific way. We have something called a graduated licensing program. I'm sure that the United States does it differently. But you pick up this book and it has all the rules of the road.

Curtis: Yeah, you have to study it because you have to write a written test or something like that.

Amy: Yeah, it's been a long time. Right, Curtis?

Curtis: It's been a very long time for me, yeah.

Amy: So, yeah, you have to go in. There's a test that makes sure that obviously you've studied the book, you know about the rules of making a right hand turn, for example, when you need to yield, when you need to stop. All of those sort of things.

Curtis: Parallel parking.

Amy: Yup. And then if you pass the test, they give you a license, which you're able to drive a vehicle under the supervision of someone who has a proper license.

Curtis: Right.

Amy: Anyway, we have in Canada, there's a phase where after you've had your training with whoever is teaching you, you come back and you get another license which has restrictions for a year or so until you pass your final exam and you're able to drive without all of the rules.

Curtis: Is that your novice license?

Amy: Yeah, we call it the novice license period or something. I'm not sure of the exact terminology. So who taught you how to drive?

Curtis: I had a driving instructor. So I learned from a driving school and I learned in the wintertime.

Amy: So your parents didn't want to teach you.

Curtis: I think they were a little bit scared.

Amy: For me, my grandpa actually taught me. Because of course he was retired and he had time. And he had a small car that he could take me out and we would drive around. I think we had to do 30 hours or something like that of practice before I was able to take my first driving test.

Curtis: Right.

Amy: So that was really good. It was nice spending time with him and, of course, he was patient and I didn't have to learn from a professional.

Curtis: Probably didn't take you very long, too. You learn things really quickly, don't you?

Amy: It took me time. It was--I mean, it takes a long time when you're learning how to drive initially. There's a lot of things¹ that are happening all at the same time and it's difficult to process all of that information. It takes practice before you start being able to observe things confidently and feel comfortable. So, yeah, I definitely was nervous when I took my test.

Curtis: So after you go through all the exams and you reach that exciting point of getting your official license. What does it feel like when you're on the road for the first time? Is it exciting? Were you excited?

Amy: I think I was excited that I had passed the test and that I didn't have to worry about any of these extra rules that, you know, might affect me not being--we call it a class 5 driver, that's like a normal driver's license. So I think for me that's more what it was about. But driving and being able to have a car sure gives you a lot of freedom. Especially - especially the city that we were living in. Like what's the bus system like? Is it good?

Curtis: No, it's not very good. It's ...

Amy: Like it's okay. You know, it's safe. Everything, you know, the bus routes go all over the city and they arrive at a certain time at the bus stops. But the ...

Curtis: But the timing and the schedules. It's not very good.

Amy: There's a lot of waiting. So by having your own car and a driver's license, what does it help you to do?

Curtis: It helps you to be able to get to work on time. It helps you to be able to get from point A to point B quicker.

Amy: Yeah, yeah. Without having to be restricted to a certain schedule, you know, that a bus has, for example. And I know for us, we really enjoy taking road trips.

Curtis: Oh, yeah.

Amy: So what are road trips?

Curtis: Like little vacations, I guess you could say. But you drive a certain distance, like two or three hours.

Amy: Sometimes further, like some people go on road trips that are like, you know, you could go on a road trip to California, for example, and maybe it's 30 hours, but ...

Curtis: Yeah, you can go across the country.

Amy: You wouldn't do that in one day. You'd take breaks. But the point is that you're travelling via a car. You know, it's not like you're taking a bus or a plane or something. You're able to stop whenever you see something cool.

Curtis: Yeah, you get to see a lot more scenery and things like that, so it can be fun in that way too.

Amy: Yeah, definitely. Now, one part about driving and actually I remember it was during a road trip. Have you ever got a ticket?

Curtis: Yes.

Amy: We've both had tickets.

Curtis: Yeah, speeding tickets. This is where, you know, you're going faster than the posted speed limit.

Amy: Yeah, there's like a special speed limit and it changes depending on whether you're in the city or on the highway or something like that.

Curtis: You're only allowed to go a certain speed. And if you go over that and there's a police officer waiting, he will pull you over and he will give you a ticket with a very hefty fine if you're going really, really fast.

Amy: Yeah. Exactly. And I remember for me, this was actually the thing that motivated me to finally get rid of that novice driver's license. I got my first speeding ticket when I had that license and the rules are actually if you get a fine during that period, and they have time to process it, like it takes a few weeks for them to process it. But if they process that fine and realize that you don't have your class 5 license, they'll actually take it away for a certain period of time, like you lose your license. So anyway, I went in to go pay my ticket and the lady at the counter explained this to me. And she's like, "so I would

suggest you walk over there and book your road test before you lose your licence.” And luckily I was able to do that. And I got my license and everything was fine.

Curtis: You got lucky.

Amy: Yeah. What about you? What have you been pulled over for?

Curtis: I've been pulled over for tailgating an ambulance.

Amy: Oh, my God. I didn't think that was the story he was going to pick.

Curtis: No, this is a very, very bad thing to do. I don't recommend you doing this.

Amy: Okay. What's tailgating?

Curtis: Tailgating is following somebody too close. So usually you have to leave a car length in between the car in front of you and your car. And I at that point ...

Amy: Had a very, very bad habit of driving way too close.

Curtis: Right. And in between--or I was in between the emergency ambulance vehicle in front of me and a police car behind me. But I didn't know it was a police car because it didn't have the lights.

Amy: Oh, it was a ghost car.

Curtis: It was a ghost car.

Amy: Sneaky.

Curtis: Or an unmarked car. Yeah.

Amy: Right. An unmarked car.

Curtis: And right away, he turned on his lights that were on his dashboard and the front of his car and his siren. And he was mad.

Amy: He was.

Curtis: But I got lucky on that one too. Even though he was mad, he didn't give me a ticket.

Amy: Yeah. Sometimes they let you off. They--like they let you off the hook or I don't know. They give you, what is it? A warning?

Curtis: A warning.

Amy: Yeah, they give you a warning. Don't do it again. Oh, yeah. It's a written warning. And it goes on record that you've been warned about this. But they don't actually give you a fine.

Curtis: Yeah. He kept track of it for sure.

Amy: Yeah. I had last year actually. It had been a really long time since I had got a ticket. And we have like I believe most countries in the world are starting to implement traffic laws associated with talking on your cellphone, talking or texting on your cellphone.

Curtis: Right.

Amy: And Curtis and I, we had a delivery business for years and years and years. And most of the communication was done through text messaging and stuff like that. And we were distracted drivers and fortunately had nothing happen to us, although I don't recommend it and would never do it again. But we definitely, you know, had a lot of text messages and sending messages while we were driving. So I don't know if it was like karma or something like that, but of course I never got caught all the years that we were doing deliveries and stuff. Never got caught texting and driving or being on my phone while I was driving. But this one day I was late, I was coming from just the next town over from where we live. I had just finished with some friends out at the lake. And I was late and I called Curtis to let him know, hey, can you get this stuff ready. We're going to go down to someone else's house and I'm running behind. And I couldn't find my Bluetooth. And that's the hands free device.

Curtis: Right. It goes in your ear.

Amy: So you don't have to touch your cellphone. You can just make a phone call and, you know, it's really, really good. And I always have it. I use it every single day during my delivery shift. Whenever I'm in my car. I never, ever talk on my cellphone. And I didn't have it. So I picked up the phone because it was kind of like a side road and I didn't think it was going to be a big deal. And sure enough this sneaky cop comes flying up the road and he saw me. And I thought, oh, no, I was on my phone, he caught me. And he kept driving. And then all of a sudden a minute or two later here he was behind me, lights on. And I got a ticket. So anyway, moral of the story – don't drive distracted, even if it's not a law in your country. It's very, very dangerous.

And this is the English Conversation Tip:

Curtis: So for the Real English tip, today we're going to talk about vocabulary and some of the ways you can build it, not just build it quickly, but to understand it and to use it while you're speaking and what are some of those ways we can do that, Amy?

Amy: Well, this is actually a really important thing because without knowing the most common vocabulary within English, you're going to have a difficult time understanding native speakers. It's going to be difficult to understand things that you read and it's also going to be difficult to say whatever you want to say. So really vocabulary continues to be an important part of your English development, all the way from beginner to upper advanced.

Curtis: Exactly.

Amy: Of course, upper advanced you're using words now that aren't the most common. You're using words that are more detailed. So a lot of times the way that vocabulary is taught to you is by memorization. And this is the technique that you're supposed to use. They give you a list of words, the teacher gives you a list of words. They send you home. You memorize them. And then you come back to class the next day and you write a test.

And what's really interesting about that is that process does not involve listening to any of those words. And it doesn't involve using any of those words while you're speaking. So what happens when you memorize a list of words, Curtis, and then you want to use it with your friend the next day?

Curtis: Usually, if I have a list of words in my flashcard deck and I try to memorize them, I can't recall them the next time I want to use them. So it's really hard for me to remember them when I go to speak with my friend.

Amy: Yeah. And I mean, if you've been studying those words maybe for a couple weeks or something like that and you really, really know them well, you might be able to use them within your speaking. But for the most part, if you've studied 20 or 30 words all at the same time and you've never heard those words and really you don't know how they sound very well, especially with English. English spelling and how it's said are completely different. So you need to hear these words in order to have that association or connection with it.

So although you can pass a test with writing and you can do maybe multiple choice and select the correct vocabulary and do all of that stuff, in the real world, for the actual skills that you're going to need to understand native speakers and to be able to use them while you're speaking, this method of memorization is not very useful.

Curtis: No.

Amy: So I'm actually going to talk about how you can not only improve your speaking skills, but you can learn vocabulary faster. And this is actually one of the tips that I give in our speaking course that we have available on our website.

Curtis: That's right.

Amy: So basically when you are speaking about something and you realize you don't know a word in that moment and you look it up, because obviously you need it. It's a word you need, a good one to learn. Okay. Step one. Learn the most common words. And you look it up and then right away you use it to finish explaining whatever you want to say.

Obviously, you can't do this in a live conversation with someone. I'm talking about techniques that we have within our course that you can do when you're not practising with a native speaker. Or maybe you don't have a native speaker to practice with.

But you're trying to complete an assignment where you explain something and you realize that you need this word. So you use it right away. And then maybe you try explaining whatever it is you're explaining again and you actually have an opportunity to use that word again. Now you've used it twice, like you've realized you needed it. You looked up that word. You looked at it. You listened to how it sounded. And then you used it a couple of times. I can guarantee you if you put that word into your list of flash cards and you look at it the next day, you're going to know that word.

Curtis: You're going to remember that word.

Amy: And if you don't know it right away really, really well, just seeing it that one time is going to be enough to really make a strong connection to that word. And now you're not needing to spend all this time studying your list of words because you're actually learning it a lot faster. And what's more important is that you've actually used it a few times. So now it's an active word in your vocabulary and you'll be able to use it in future conversations.

Curtis: Right.

Amy: So anyway, if you want to get more tips like this so that you can learn faster and start speaking better in less time, you need to come to our website, RealEnglishConversations.com. Of course, you can sign up for our email list to get some of our, you know, free email lessons that we send out. But if you're serious about taking your English to the next level, make sure that you check out our courses because the stuff that I'm sharing with you is just a very, very small amount of the amazing tips, activities and techniques that you're going to get as a member of these courses.

Lesson Notes

There's a lot of things¹ – This was a spoken error. The correct form should be 'There are a lot of things'

Speaking Practice

Now that you practiced answering the questions while listening to the conversation, you can practice giving the answers by speaking out loud. (The questions are at the beginning of this document)

While you trying to answer the questions (by speaking), you may need to look up words you don't know yet or you have forgotten. This is very important to help you learn the vocabulary you are missing while you are speaking or you do not know very well.

If you have to look up a word, be sure to write it down. There is an area for you to write down words you need to know or have learned. Later, we are going to give you activities to practice using this new vocabulary to help you remember it faster.

Practice Activities

Try to answer the questions by speaking from the listening comprehension section? Try to use a full sentence when you answer, not just one word like 'yes' or 'no'.

For example

Question #1: Where are Amy and Curtis from?

Answer: Canada

Your spoken answer in a full sentence: Curtis and Amy are from Canada.

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Let's Talk about this Conversation

Give as much detail as you can when trying to answer the following questions. Try to speak for 3 to 5 minutes for each answer. Don't forget to write down new words you realize you need to know in order to explain these parts of the conversation.

Practice your answer to these questions several times until you feel confident using the vocabulary and you can explain it more fluently.

1. Explain the steps to get a drivers licence in Canada?
2. What are some advantages of having a car versus taking the bus?
3. Explain why Amy had to take her final road test (and why the speeding ticket caused it).
4. Explain what tailgating is and why Curtis got a ticket for it.
5. Describe why Amy got a ticket for talking on her cell phone and why she wasn't using her Bluetooth.

The Big Summary

Now that you have practiced explaining each part of the conversation, try to do a summary that explains the whole conversation.

Try to speak as if you are telling a friend about a cool conversation you heard. Try to sound interesting while you talk about it.

The first time you might feel like you are explaining the story in a boring way... you need to practice explaining it several times to get better at telling stories and explaining things better.

Each time you practice explaining it, you will feel more confident using the new vocabulary and you will be speaking with more fluency.

New Vocabulary

Use this area to write down any new words you learned from this conversation OR words you needed to look up while speaking.

Vocabulary Practice

This is an exercise to help you practice using the new vocabulary you have learned. A great way to make sure you understand the words well enough to use them.

1. Use the first 5 words from your list of words you found from this conversation (or the activities).
2. While speaking, start telling a short story where the first sentence of the story uses the first word on your list.
3. After you use the first word, you need to think of a way to use the second word in the story...
4. The story does not have to be real and it does not have to make a lot of sense. The objective is to practice using the new words you have learned in context

Example words:

- carnival
- pack into (phrasal verb)
- lap
- get down (phrasal verb)
- vibrant

Example story:

I was really excited to go to carnival this year. My friends and I decided to pack everyone into Bob's truck. There was no extra space in the car so we had to put our stuff on our laps. When we arrived to the city, we could not wait to get down to the party area. We knew it would be vibrant and full of festivities.