

Talk About Transport and Driving – Video

In this lesson, you can learn how to talk about transport and driving in English.

What's the best way to get around your hometown

(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/talking-about-hometown>)? Do you drive often? What public transport do you use regularly? In this lesson, you'll see how to answer these questions—and many others—in clear, correct English.

1. Getting Around

(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/car-lights-on-street.webp>)

Daniel: How do you usually get around?

Lori: I mostly use public transport, so I'll take the metro, or sometimes buses. I have a car but I don't use it much in the city. What about you?

D: I don't have a car, so I either cycle or walk most places. Sometimes I take the metro or a taxi if I'm going further, or if I'm out in the evening.

L: You cycle? Here? That's brave! There's so much traffic.

D: It's not that bad. Once you know the best routes, you can get anywhere in the city centre quite fast. Often, it's faster than driving, because you can take small streets and you don't get stuck in traffic jams.

L: I guess... I still wouldn't do it, though. The metro works well for me. I can always get where I need, and I know how long it's going to take.

D: Yeah, the metro is good, but I hate taking it during rush hour. It's so crowded.

L: Do you cycle to work every day, then?

D: Most days. My office is actually very close, so I can walk in about 20 minutes. I walk in once or twice a week, and cycle on the other days.

L: Wow! That's lucky. It takes me at least 40 minutes to get to work.

D: By metro?

L: Yeah. I have to change lines, which adds a lot of time.

Do you remember the question you heard at the beginning of the dialogue?

How do you usually get around?

Do you know what this means? This question is asking about how you usually travel around the place where you live. How could you answer? In the dialogue, you heard these phrases:

I mostly use public transport.

I either cycle or walk most places.

Sometimes I take the metro or a taxi.

You could change these sentences to talk about your own situation. For example:

I mostly use the subway.

I drive most places.

Sometimes I use trams.

With public transport, you can use the verbs 'use' or 'take', as in:

use the metro = take the metro

use buses = take buses

The meaning is the same. If you're talking about getting around by car, bicycle, or on foot, then you can use the specific verbs: 'drive', 'cycle' and 'walk'. For example:

I don't drive often.

I used to cycle, but I don't have a bike any more.

I walk if I'm going somewhere in my neighbourhood.

Let's continue to talk about transport and driving. Next, let's see how you can talk about public transport where you live.

2. Talking About Public Transport

(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/commuters-920015-m.webp>)

Lori: So, what's the best way to get to your place?

Daniel: Are you driving, or taking the metro?

L: I'll come by metro, so I don't have to worry about parking.

D: You live on the green line, right?

L: Yeah.

D: So, you can take the green line to Victoria in the centre. From there, you can either change to the blue line for two stops, or you can get a bus.

L: Which is better?

D: I'd take the bus. It leaves you closer to my house. Take bus number 27 and get off at October Square. It's easy to find; it's the first stop after you cross the river.

L: Where does it leave from?

D: The bus stop is right outside the metro station. You can't miss it!

L: How often do the buses go?

D: They're very regular. I don't know exactly, but I never wait more than 10 minutes, and normally much less.

L: OK, I'll do that then. What time do the buses run until? I'm just thinking about getting back.

D: The buses run until midnight, so you should be fine. The green line stops at one, right?

L: It's a Friday, so it'll run until two o'clock. I don't think it'll be a problem.

D: Great, so, see you tomorrow!

Here's a question for you: what public transport do you have in your hometown? What do you use to get around? Most cities have buses. Big cities might have a metro or subway (<https://www.differencebetween.com/difference-between-metro-and-vs-subway/>). There are different words for this, because many cities have their own name. In New York and Tokyo, it's the subway; in Moscow and Paris, it's the metro; in London, it's the Tube or the Underground; in Berlin, it's the U-Bahn, and so on. All these words have the same meaning. If you aren't sure which to use, say 'metro' or 'subway'. Some cities have other kinds of public transport, like trams, light rail, or shared taxis. In many cities, you refer to metro lines by their colour. So, you might say:

I live on the green line.

Change to the blue line at Victoria.

Buses have numbers, so you can say things like:

Take bus number 27 and get off at October Square.

You can catch the number two bus from just outside the metro station.

If it's clear what you're talking about, you might just use the number, and not say the word 'bus' at all. For example: 'Take the number three for five stops.' In the dialogue, you heard these questions about public transport:

Where does it leave from?

How often do the buses go?

What time do the buses run until?

Of course, you can use these questions for other forms of transport, as in:

How often do the trains go?

What time does the subway run until?

Do you remember how to answer these questions? What could you say? You might say:

It leaves from opposite the shopping centre.

There are trains every five minutes or so.

The metro stops at midnight.

Now, it's your turn! Here's a task for you. Imagine that someone is coming to visit you. Pick a place in your hometown, for example the airport, train station or bus station. Could you give directions (<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/asking-directions>) clearly in English so that your friend can get to your home using public transport? Think about it. Pause the video, and try saying your directions out loud. If you want to get really good, practise several times, until you can say everything fluently, without hesitation.

What's next in how to talk about transport and driving? Let's see how you can talk about driving and car journeys with Oxford Online English.

3. Talking About Driving

(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/red-car.webp>)

Lori: Good to see you! How was the drive?

Daniel: It wasn't too bad. We got stuck in traffic near Birmingham, so it was slow for a while, but everything else was smooth.

L: It's always bad around there. How long did it take?

D: It was a bit over four hours.

L: That's about average. Your car looks very futuristic. Is it electric or something?

D: No, it's a hybrid.

L: Huh... What's it like to drive?

D: It's nice! It uses the battery at low speeds, so it's really quiet to drive in the city. It's also extremely efficient, which is good for longer trips.

L: I'm thinking of getting a new car soon. I'm still driving my old Subaru, but it was second-hand when I bought it, and it's got over 200,000 kilometres on the clock, so it's starting to show its age. It's broken down three times this year already.

D: What are you thinking of getting?

L: I'm not sure. Part of me wants to get a bigger car, like an SUV or something, but then I know it'll be a nightmare to find parking, or driving around the small streets in the centre.

D: Yeah, plus those things go through fuel. They're expensive to run.

L: Anyway, I'll give it some thought.

Do you drive? What kind of car (<https://www.quora.com/What-are-the-different-classes-of-cars-and-what-do-they-exactly-mean>) do you have? In the dialogue, you heard these sentences. But, there's a word missing in each sentence. Can you remember the missing words?

We got _____ in traffic near Birmingham.

It was _____ when I bought it.

It's also extremely _____, which is good for longer trips.

It's _____ down three times this year already.

Here are the answers.

*We got **stuck** in traffic near Birmingham.*

*It was **second-hand** when I bought it.*

*It's also extremely **efficient**, which is good for longer trips.*

*It's **broken** down three times this year already.*

Do you know what these phrases mean? If you get stuck in traffic, you get in a traffic jam. 'Second-hand' means the same as 'used'. If you're buying a car, you can buy a new car, or you can buy a second-hand car, which has already been used. Second-hand cars are generally much cheaper than new cars.

If a car is efficient, it doesn't use so much petrol, so it's cheaper to run. Smaller cars and hybrids are generally more efficient, while bigger cars, like SUVs, use more petrol, so they're less efficient.

If your car breaks down, it stops working. Maybe there's a problem with the engine, and you can't drive it. Also, in the dialogue, you heard these questions.

How was the drive?

What's it like to drive?

What are you thinking of getting?

We're going to show you four answers. You have a job; match the question to the answer. There's one extra answer, which you don't need. Take a look!

I'd like to get a hybrid.

It was smooth.

It's a nightmare to park in the centre.

It's nice, but it goes through fuel.

Pause the video if you want more time to think about your answers! Ready? Here are the answers.

How was the drive? → *It was smooth.*

What's it like to drive? → *It's nice, but it goes through fuel.*

What are you thinking of getting? → *I'd like to get a hybrid.*

Let's look at one or two useful words here. 'Smooth' means 'without problems'. If you say 'the journey was smooth', you mean that everything happened as you expected, and you didn't have any problems.

If a car goes through fuel, it uses a lot of petrol, so it's inefficient and probably expensive to run. A 'hybrid' is a car which uses electrical power at low speeds, and a petrol engine—like a regular car—at higher speeds. Hybrids are quieter and can be more environmentally-friendly.

What about you? If you drive, can you make two to three sentences talking about your car, what kind of car it is, and what you like or don't like about it. If you don't drive, make two to three sentences about what car you'd like to have. Use the language from the dialogue and this section. Remember: you can always go back and review a section if you need to! Pause the video, and make your answer now.

How was that? Could you make a fluent answer? If so, great! Let's look at one more point about transport and driving.

4. Talking About Air Travel

(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/airplane-interior.webp>)

Lori: Are you doing anything? We need to book flights for our trip.

Daniel: Yeah... about that... I had a look the other day. They're really expensive.

L: Actually, I was looking, too. Direct flights are expensive, but I found a couple of cheaper options. The first choice is that we fly through Madrid. We can also go through Oslo, which is much cheaper, but there's a seven-hour layover.

D: Seven hours? What time would we get there?

L: About four in the morning the following day.

D: Eugh... What about the Madrid one? Which airline is it?

L: We'd fly Greenjet into Madrid, and then Prince Air for the second leg.

D: Greenjet? No way! I flew with them last year. They charge you for everything, and the seats are tiny. Besides, we need to take at least one checked bag, right?

L: I guess.

D: They charge 55 Euro if your bag is over 10kg. Plus, they don't serve food or drinks, not even water. You have to buy it.

L: Really? That's ridiculous! Shall we take the Oslo route, then?

D: I suppose. Why don't we have one last look, to see if we can find anything better?

L: Sure. When was the last time you flew somewhere? Where did you go?

In the dialogue, you heard these words and phrases to talk about air travel. Could you explain what they mean?

Direct flights are expensive.

There's a seven-hour layover.

We need to take at least one checked bag.

A direct flight means you take one flight to your destination. You don't stop or change planes in another city. If you don't fly direct, and you change planes, you might have to wait in the airport. This waiting time is called a layover. A 'checked bag' is a bag or suitcase that you check in, so that it flies in the hold of the plane. The opposite is hand baggage (<https://www.differencebetween.com/difference-between-luggage-and-vs-baggage/>), meaning bags which you carry with you.

In the dialogue, we talked about some of the disadvantages of flying with a specific airline. Do you remember what you heard? You heard:

They charge you for everything.

The seats are tiny.

They don't serve food or drinks.

What do you think that first sentence means? Many budget airlines offer cheap tickets, but you have to pay for extras. For example, you might have to pay to check in a bag, or you might have to buy food and drink on the plane. 'They charge you for everything' suggests that this airline has a lot of extra charges, which could make your ticket more expensive! Of course, not all airlines are like this. You could also talk about the advantages of a certain airline. For example, you could say:

The seats have lots of legroom.

Their staff are very helpful and polite.

The food is pretty good.

Can you guess what 'legroom' means? It's how much space you have for your legs and feet. If you're tall, you need a seat with lots of legroom.

Here's a question: which airlines do you think are the best or worst? Can you think of two to three advantages or disadvantages of the airline you chose? Try to make two or three sentences, and say them out loud. Pause the video and do it now!

For more practice on this topic, don't forget to watch our lesson on Airport English (<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/airport-english>).

Thanks for watching and hopefully you learned some useful phrases to talk about transport and driving in English!