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DRIVING TEST ADVICE

Learning to drive and ultimately attaining a full UK driving licence can be a major event in the lives of most people, and naturally everyone strives to pass their test first time. The investment of both time and money give genuine reason for you to ensure that you're going into your driving test fully prepared.

I've compiled the list of eight tips below to highlight some of the things you can do to help ensure that when your big day comes around, you are both ready and able to be successful.

Tip #1

First and foremost - don't be in a rush to take a test. Take as many lessons as you can and only apply for your test when you feel 100% safe and confident in your own ability, and your Instructor is of the opinion that you meet the required standard for an independent life on the road beyond the test. I can fully appreciate that the majority of learner drivers are eager to attain their full driving licence - I'm regularly asked by inexperienced learner, drivers not yet at the required test standard, if they can take a test for the 'experience' - this is absolutely not advised, and in my opinion any Instructor worth their salt will not present a candidate for test under these circumstances.

In many ways, passing the driving test is simply the beginning of your driving career. It's vital that you're fully prepared for this - regardless of the time it takes.

Tip #2

When you are at test standard, I would advise that you avoid booking a test that coincides with other important and potentially stressful events that may be going on in your life - events such as moving house or preparing for important examinations can have an adverse effect on your preparations for the driving test and vice-versa. This is advised but not always possible.

Furthermore, book your test for early in the day. By doing so it reduces the time you have available to worry about what's to come and also vastly reduces the chances of fatigue setting in.

Tip #3

Don't put yourself under any unnecessary stress, pressure or expectation by telling your friends the appointment date. It's good to tell close family (it's quite difficult for close family not to find out to be honest!) as even though you don't want the whole world to know, close family will provide you with the encouragement and support you need. In addition, your

Instructor should also available be at the end of the telephone to quell any last minute fears.

Tip #4

In the lessons leading up to the big day, ask your Instructor to concentrate on any aspect of your driving that you feel could benefit from additional practice - this will go a long way towards alleviating any concerns you have about that specific aspect of your driving.

Most Instructors will do this anyway, but you should in my opinion experience a 'test rehearsal', or as we Instructors refer to it, a 'Mock-Test'. This creates a realistic (as realistic as possible) environment and should be conducted in a manner similar to that you will experience on the big day - both Instructor and student should take this scenario fairly seriously as, whilst providing the student with an insight of what to expect, a mock-test can also highlight a potential issue which may not have been highlighted previously.

You could also conduct a type of 'virtual driving test' on yourself away from your practical driving time by looking at a map and imagining that you're driving each individual test route. Officially, the 'actual' test routes used are no longer available in the public domain, however there are likely to be many similarities to those used previously (which were, and still are available in the public domain) as the usable test area is, in theory, limited due to the distance you can travel before having to head back to the driving test centre. Researching the routes in this way will at least give you an opportunity to follow the directions from the driving test centre, and make a note of any potentially tricky areas (tight or complex junctions, roundabouts, one-way streets etc.) you may be required to deal with on the day - you'll likely also recognise certain areas from your practical lessons time. If you do have any concerns about any particular areas, you could then physically experience dealing with them during a lesson in the lead up to your test.

There are many digital maps available online (such as Google Maps, Windows Live maps etc.) which are ideal tools for this. Furthermore, because of advanced features such as 'street view' and 'birds-eye view', you could possibly even look at images of the actual hazard from the comfort of your own home. If you don't have access to a computer or smartphone to use the widely available digital maps, then you can, of course, simply use a traditional, printed 'A to Z' of your local area, which are available at most newsagents and service stations.

Tip #5

Driving test examiners are there simply to carry out their role as an observer. Be sure to drive in the same manner as you did during your lessons - whatever you do, don't try 'putting on a show' in an attempt to impress the examiner - doing so will likely end in heartache and disappointment. By being yourself and driving in the same manner during your test as you did to get you to test standard then you'll be giving yourself a genuine chance of success as there's no such thing as a perfect drive. If you make a mistake, put it to the back of your mind and concentrate your efforts on the task in hand - the mistake isn't necessarily going to result in test failure. From there on whatever happens on the day, happens on the day!

Whilst on the subject of examiners, I would advise you not to read anything into the examiners demeanour. You will likely experience a certain silence in the car throughout your test - this silence is more or less only broken by the examiner giving instructions, directions or during minimal chit-chat, so don't take the lack of conversation personally!

Having a conversation may actually distract you from the task in hand.

Tip #6

Ensure that you have a good night's sleep the night before your test - you owe it to yourself to be at your best. Don't worry if you find that your mind is working overtime initially - this shows that you're human!

Tip #7

If you find that the nerves have taken hold on the morning of your test, avoid using pills to help calm them - doing so will likely slow your reactions which in turn may have a detrimental effect on your overall performance. I find that by taking a deep breath, holding it for a count of ten before slowly breathing out again (repeat as necessary), it can help to relax you. Also, I would advise against having a heavy meal beforehand as this can both make you feel full and uncomfortable, as well as lethargic.

Tip #8

Finally and simply put - 'POSITIVE MENTAL ATTITUDE'

This approach is vital. Both you and your Instructor must TRULY believe that you are more than capable of passing the test and that ultimately the end result will be a pass. In truth, if you don't truly believe that you're more than capable of passing, then you possibly shouldn't be taking the test . . .

Taking the driving test with a half-hearted 'I think I might pass' approach may actually produce a pass, however this approach will also have a very taxing effect on your nerves.

So there you have it!

These are just some of the useful, and in some cases important pieces of advice that will help make the pursuit of your full UK driving licence as straight forward and stress free as possible. If you're not a student of Chris Chambers School of Motoring, then I would certainly advise you to speak with your own Instructor who in turn will pass on their own advice based upon their own experiences.

Finally, best wishes and 'Safe Driving for Life'

Chris Chambers DSA ADI

Owner / Proprietor | Chris Chambers School of Motoring

