

EPISODE 43

LEVEL B2

READING COMPREHENSION



A DRIVING LESSON

I can still remember my first steps in driving. When I was 16 my father gave me a couple of lessons on country roads. It was his task to teach me how to **start a car**, how to turn, **reverse** (= drive backwards) - generally how to keep the car on the road, which was more difficult than I had thought. For me it was quite hard to coordinate my movements - you have to look ahead and at the same time push pedals in order to **accelerate** (= go faster), **brake** (= go more slowly or stop) or **change gear**.



However, after my Dad's lessons, I was not that green when I started attending a driving course. But then came another challenge: driving on a real road, with other cars on neighbouring **lanes** (= one of the parts of a road for cars). There I learnt how to **overtake** (= go faster than another car), even **swerve** (= turn suddenly to avoid hitting sb) and of course, how to park my car. And, surely enough, I passed my **driving test** on the first attempt. My father was really proud! And with time I got the hang of other skills indispensable for driving and now I'm quite an independent driver who can **fill the car up** (= fill the car with petrol) and doesn't panic when I need to **change a wheel** on my car. I have done it twice already!

More contexts for the new words:

- Can the effects of their decision be **reversed**? (= to change the order of a process, events or a situation to be the opposite of what it was)
- The decline of her health seemed to suddenly **accelerate**. (= happen at a faster rate)



EXERCISE 1

Decide if the sentences below are true or false. Correct the false ones.

1. You can fill a car up at a petrol station.
2. When you swerve, you turn very rapidly.
3. 'Accelerate' and 'brake' are synonyms.
4. When you reverse, you change into lower gear.
5. A lane is the white line painted on the road.
6. The usual reason for changing a wheel is that there's a hole in it.



EXERCISE 2

Match the question halves, then answer the questions.

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Do you know how to change | a. to fill a car up in Poland? |
| 2. Have you taken a driving | b. test? How did it go? |
| 3. How much does it cost | c. a tyre? |

ENGLISH IN USE



I wouldn't be surprised if you asked me a question about one of the structures used in today's lesson, namely why there is '**when I started attending a course**' used and not '**when I started to attend a course**'?

Well, to be honest, it's quite a matter of choice since both options are acceptable and grammatically correct. They mean exactly the same; the only factor that may influence your choice can be the tense of the whole clause, e.g. '**it was starting getting dark**' doesn't sound as good as '**it was starting to get dark**'.

'Start' can be used with infinitives or gerunds without any difference in meaning, so you may say both of these:

*They are planning to **start building** a house next year.*

*They are planning to **start to build** a house next year.* (but again here, '-ing' would be better because of the structure of the rest of the sentence)

IDIOM CLOSE-UP



*A/ The school authorities decided to **PUT A BRAKE ON** students smoking cigarettes.*

B/ It's good they finally did something to tackle the problem.

When you **put a brake on** something, you prevent it from developing or making progress.

PHRASAL VERBS CLOSE-UP



1. A PILE-UP is a crash involving several cars.

*There was a massive **pile-up** on the motorway.
Have you heard of the **pile-up** in Aleje Jerozolimskie?*

2. A TAILBACK is a long line of traffic that is moving very slowly.

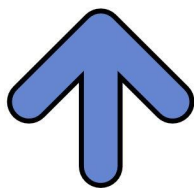
*The accident has caused a 10-mile **tailback**.
Sorry for being late – I got held up in a **tailback** on the Siekierkowski Bridge.*



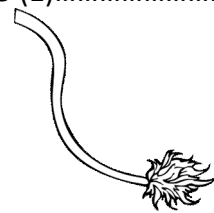
EXERCISE 3

Complete the news report. Use the pictures to help you.

The new ring road around the city is blocked again by a massive pile-(1).....

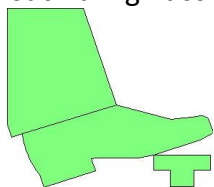


, which has caused a five-kilometre (2).....



back.

Drivers are fed up with such a high accident rate in the area and are asking the local police to



put a (3)..... on the motorists' speeding and reckless driving – the chief causes of the problems.

NEWS



TUNNEL OPENED

The citizens of Warsaw are celebrating as the city's authorities have finally opened Dźwigowa Street, a major **thoroughfare** connecting the northern and southern parts of Warsaw. The street was first closed for traffic over a year ago, when a water pipe burst open and flooded a stretch of the road running in a tunnel. The water pipe was **promptly** repaired, the tunnel was re-opened, only to be closed down soon again due to another flooding – this time, it turned out that the **water table** was too shallow to have the tunnel dug there in the

first place. And then the road was closed for a year or so. Luckily, all the **roadworks** are now over, and you can get from Włochy to Bemowo in ten minutes instead of an hour. Enjoy it, before they close the road again!

GLOSSARY

- **thoroughfare** – a main road through a place
- **promptly** – quickly
- **water table** – the level below the Earth's surface where water is found
- **roadworks** – repairs that are done to the surface of a road.

KEY TO EXERCISES

Ex. 1

1. True
2. True
3. False – they are opposites
4. False – you drive backwards
5. False – it is the area between white lines
6. True

Ex. 2

1. c
2. b
3. a

Ex. 3

1. pile-up
2. tailback
3. brake