On the road: traffic and driving

VOCABULARY PRACTICE
UPPER-INTERMEDIATE | B2

Name: _____ Date: _____

1 Match each precise term with its definition.

1 gridlock ____	**a** a situation where traffic is completely unable to move
2 hazard ____	**b** a potential danger on or near the road
3 defensive driving ____	**c** a driving style anticipating others' mistakes to avoid accidents
4 tailback ____	**d** a long queue of stationary or slow-moving traffic
5 lane discipline ____	**e** staying properly within one's lane rather than weaving
6 fatigued driving ____	**f** driving while dangerously tired
7 collision ____	**g** a crash between two or more vehicles
8 near miss ____	**h** an incident that almost caused an accident but did not
9 roadworthy ____	**i** in a safe, legal condition to be driven
10 verge ____	**j** the strip of land at the edge of a road

2 Choose the word with the most suitable connotation.

1 For traffic completely unable to move: gridlock / free flow.

2 For driving that anticipates others' mistakes: defensive driving / aggressive driving.

3 For staying properly within a lane: lane discipline / weaving.

4 For driving while dangerously tired: fatigued driving / alert driving.

5 For an incident that almost caused a crash: near miss / direct hit.

6 For a vehicle in a safe, legal condition: roadworthy / unsafe.

7 For a long queue of slow traffic: tailback / clear road.

8 For a potential danger on the road: hazard / safeguard.

3 Complete the driving collocations with one word.

1 traffic _____ (= complete standstill)

2 a _____ manoeuvre (= sudden, risky driving action)

3 _____ driving (= anticipating others' mistakes)

4 a _____ miss (= an incident narrowly avoided)

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5 _____ discipline (= staying properly in one's lane)

6 a road _____ (= a potential danger)

7 vehicle _____ (= legal, safe condition to drive)

8 a _____ of traffic (= a long, slow queue)

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4 Complete the case notes with words and phrases from the box.

collision | defensive driving | fatigued driving | gridlock | hazard | lane discipline | near miss | roadworthy | tailback | verge

Case A: The city centre experienced total 1 _____ during the evening event, with a 2 _____ stretching several kilometres.
Case B: Investigators concluded that 3 _____ was the likely cause, after the driver admitted having had almost no sleep before the journey.
Case C: A witness described a 4 _____ moments before the 5 _____ occurred, when another car swerved suddenly across two lanes.
Case D: Instructors emphasised 6 _____ techniques, including maintaining 7 _____ and treating every other vehicle as a potential 8 _____.
Case E: The vehicle was found not to be 9 _____, having failed its safety inspection, and was found abandoned on the 10 _____.

5 Read the text and answer the questions briefly.

Rethinking road safety

Traffic safety researchers increasingly argue that road design, not just driver behaviour, determines accident rates. Poorly designed junctions or unclear lane markings can turn ordinary lapses in concentration into serious collisions, whereas well-designed infrastructure can compensate for human error. Defensive driving training helps individual drivers reduce risk, but researchers caution that placing responsibility solely on drivers ignores structural factors such as fatigue among professional drivers working long shifts, or gridlock that increases frustration and encourages risky manoeuvres. A comprehensive approach to road safety, they argue, must therefore combine driver education with infrastructure investment.

1 What do researchers increasingly argue determines accident rates? _____

2 What can poorly designed junctions turn into serious collisions? _____

3 What can well-designed infrastructure do? _____

4 What do researchers caution about placing responsibility solely on drivers? _____

5 Give one structural factor mentioned. _____

6 What must a comprehensive approach to road safety combine? _____

6 Rewrite each sentence using the word in capitals. Do not change the meaning.

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1 The traffic was completely unable to move. GRIDLOCK _____

2 She drives in a way that anticipates other people's mistakes. DEFENSIVE _____

3 The car was not in a safe condition to drive. ROADWORTHY _____

4 They narrowly avoided a crash. NEAR MISS _____

OVER TO YOU

Write a 120-150 word account analysing the causes of a traffic problem, distinguishing driver behaviour from infrastructure factors.

[ ] Use at least twelve target expressions. [ ] Control connotation carefully. [ ] Avoid unsupported assumptions.

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ANSWER KEY

1 Precise terms

1 a 2 b 3 c 4 d 5 e 6 f 7 g 8 h 9 i 10 j

2 Connotation

1 gridlock 2 defensive driving 3 lane discipline 4 fatigued driving 5 near miss 6 roadworthy 7 tailback 8 hazard

3 Collocations

1 gridlock 2 risky 3 defensive 4 near 5 lane 6 hazard 7 roadworthiness 8 tailback

4 Case notes

1 gridlock 2 tailback 3 fatigued driving 4 near miss 5 collision 6 defensive driving
7 lane discipline 8 hazard 9 roadworthy 10 verge

5 Reading - suggested answers

1 Road design, not just driver behaviour.
2 Ordinary lapses in concentration.
3 Compensate for human error.
4 It ignores structural factors.
5 Any one: fatigue among professional drivers / gridlock increasing frustration.
6 Driver education with infrastructure investment.

6 Rewriting - possible answers

1 There was gridlock. 2 She drives defensively. 3 The car was not roadworthy. 4 They had a near miss.

Over to you

Answers will vary. Check lexical precision, appropriate connotation and separation of fact from inference.