

# May I drive the family car now, please?

With a driving licence, you can drive various types of vehicles on public roads. But before you can get this document, you must be legally old enough; you must take code and driving lessons and pass a driving test.



5 The legal age to take a driving test and obtain a full driving license varies: in the UK and Ireland, you must be at least 17 years old. In Canada, depending on the Province, you must be 16, 17 or 18.

10 In many states in the US you needn't wait until you're 16 to drive, you may obtain a learner's permit when you're 15 so you can drive with a parent while you learn to drive. When you're 16, you can take the driving test: if you pass, you obtain your licence, and independence!

15 If you have an accident while driving, you and your parents are responsible for the hospital and damages on the car. The CD player, radio, and passengers are all distractions when driving. You mustn't text on your mobile phone because it is another distraction and it's illegal. You must pay \$20 to \$400 for a first offense, so park before reading or sending a message.

20 It's illegal and extremely dangerous to drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs. You must be 21 to drink. A police officer can give you a test that measures the quantity of alcohol in your blood. The limit is 0.8% alcohol in your blood. You sometimes must go to an alcohol education programme. Some states have a Youth Drunk Driver Visitation Programme: you must visit an alcohol recovery center, a hospital  
25 emergency room to see persons injured in drunk-driving accidents, or the morgue to view victims of drunk drivers. The judge can also suspend your licence. So, be smart and don't drink and drive!