

# Elderly Drivers

## Pre-Reading

### A. Warm-Up Questions

1. Should elderly people (over 70) be forced to give up their driver's licenses?
2. Why does aging sometimes make driving more difficult?
3. Who is a safer driver, an elderly person or a young teen?



### B. Vocabulary Preview

Match up as many words and meanings as you can.

Check this exercise again after seeing the words in context on page 2.

- |                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| ___ 1. reflex           | a) causing death   |
| ___ 2. errand           | b) getting older   |
| ___ 3. immobility       | c) to get in the way of something                                    |
| ___ 4. the magic number | d) the body's automatic response                                     |
| ___ 5. fatal            | e) the inability to move from place to place                         |
| ___ 6. interfere        | f) a short outing to complete a task (e.g., grocery shopping)        |
| ___ 7. initiate         | g) a specific number or amount that can be identified with something |
| ___ 8. unfit            | h) to start something  |
| ___ 9. aging            | i) the extension of a contract's expiry                              |
| ___ 10. mandatory       | j) not capable of doing what's required                              |
| ___ 11. renewal         | k) required  |

## Reading

### ELDERLY DRIVERS

*How old is too old to drive?*

1. Most elderly people outlive their ability to drive safely. **Reflexes**, eyesight, and hearing all decline with age. But driving gives people independence, and giving up the keys is not easy. After years of jumping in the car to run an **errand**, elderly people suddenly have to rely on public transit or other drivers to get them from A to B. **Immobility** in any form is life-changing.
2. Is there a certain age when driving is unsafe? Some people think that 70 is **the magic number**. According to research, drivers over 70 are much more likely to cause a **fatal** accident. In reality, we all age differently. A healthy 75-year-old may be a safer driver than his 16-year-old grandson!
3. Family members of elderly drivers are often the ones who recommend giving up the keys. **Initiating** a conversation like this is not easy. It may even be the hardest conversation you ever have with an aging parent. If medication could **interfere** with road performance, doctors or pharmacists may tell a patient to stop driving. Is it wrong to ask the doctor to “be the bad guy”?
4. Knowing when it’s time to have “the talk” can be a lifesaver. There are several signs that an elderly person may be **unfit** for driving. Your **aging** mom may forget to stop at red lights or stop signs. Grandpa may drive too fast or too slow. Getting lost often in a familiar city is also a sign that it’s time to quit driving. Some elderly drivers take it better than others and are happy to accept a ride. Others opt to keep their cars even though they promise not to drive them.
5. Should license **renewal** be tougher for elderly people? In some parts of the world, drivers are retested after a certain age. A vision test is usually part of this requirement. A medical evaluation may also be ordered. Sometimes they have to do a road test. Would we all be safer on the roads if **mandatory** retests existed for all drivers at the time of renewal?

*“Patience is something you admire in the driver behind you and scorn in the driver ahead.”*

—Mac McCleary

## Comprehension

Discuss these questions in pairs, and write the answers in your notebook.

1. What does the reading say about immobility?
2. Which physical abilities decline with age and interfere with driving?
3. Why might a doctor or pharmacist “be the bad guy”?
4. What are some signs that an elderly person is unfit to drive?
5. What do elderly people have to do at the time of license renewal in some countries?

## Vocabulary Review

### A. Chunking

Create five expressions by pairing the words that are commonly together in English. Write a sentence for each example.

**Word List**

- run      • accident    • an errand    • initiate      • a conversation
- a fatal    • A to B        • number      • the magic    • get from

#	Expression	Sentence
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

## Vocabulary Review cont.

### B. Commonly Confused Words

#### **Two Commonly Confused Words: Too and To**

(Okay, make that *three* commonly confused words.)

You already know that *two* is used for the number 2. You probably know the difference between *to* and *too*, too. The hard part is remembering to *write the right* homophone. Review these homophones regularly to make sure you use the correct ones in your writing. Fill in the blanks with the correct word (*to*, *too*, or *two*).

1. My grandma had \_\_\_\_ give up her license \_\_\_\_ years ago.
2. Are you going \_\_\_\_ drive, \_\_\_\_ ?  
I only have room for one more passenger.
3. You are driving \_\_\_\_ slowly. Someone is going \_\_\_\_ crash into you.
4. I'm \_\_\_\_ old \_\_\_\_ drive. I take the bus \_\_\_\_ church now.
5. I have a \_\_\_\_-year-old grandson, \_\_\_\_ . Let's take them \_\_\_\_ the park.

## Discussion

1. Are you a "backseat driver"? This is a passenger who always comments on how others drive. Do backseat drivers keep the roads safer or make them more dangerous?
2. Why is "coordination" an important skill for drivers?  
Is this something we lose or gain as we age?
3. How do you feel about mandatory retests for the elderly?  
What would a driving refresher course look like? Should drivers who have numerous accidents have to retake the test, too?
4. Do drivers get more nervous with age?  
Why is confidence important for drivers?

## Listening

Fill in the blanks as you listen to the recording.

### ELDERLY DRIVERS

*How old is too old to drive?*

- Most elderly people outlive their ability to drive safely. \_\_\_\_\_, eyesight, and hearing all decline with age. But driving gives people independence, and giving up the keys is not easy. After years of jumping in the car to run an \_\_\_\_\_, elderly people suddenly have to rely on public transit or other drivers to get them from A to B. \_\_\_\_\_ in any form is life-changing.
- Is there a certain age when driving is unsafe? Some people think that 70 is \_\_\_\_\_. According to research, drivers over 70 are much more likely to cause a \_\_\_\_\_ accident. In reality, we all age differently. A healthy 75-year-old may be a safer driver than his 16-year-old grandson!
- Family members of elderly drivers are often the ones who recommend giving up the keys. \_\_\_\_\_ a conversation like this is not easy. It may even be the hardest conversation you ever have with an aging parent. If medication could \_\_\_\_\_ with road performance, doctors or pharmacists may tell a patient to stop driving. Is it wrong to ask the doctor to “be the bad guy”?
- Knowing when it’s time to have “the talk” can be a lifesaver. There are several signs that an elderly person may be \_\_\_\_\_ for driving. Your \_\_\_\_\_ mom may forget to stop at red lights or stop signs. Grandpa may drive too fast or too slow. Getting lost often in a familiar city is also a sign that it’s time to quit driving. Some elderly drivers take it better than others and are happy to accept a ride. Others opt to keep their cars even though they promise not to drive them.
- Should license \_\_\_\_\_ be tougher for elderly people? In some parts of the world, drivers are retested after a certain age. A vision test is usually part of this requirement. A medical evaluation may also be ordered. Sometimes they have to do a road test. Would we all be safer on the roads if \_\_\_\_\_ retests existed for all drivers at the time of renewal?

# Answer Key

**LESSON DESCRIPTION:**

Students read about elderly drivers. The lesson includes vocabulary review exercises, comprehension questions, and discussion questions.

**TEACHING TIPS:**

See *Discussion Starters Teaching Guide* (<https://esllibrary.com/courses/72/lessons/>) for a variety of ways to use the reading.

**LEVEL:** Int

**TIME:** 1.5–2 hours

**TAGS:** discussion, driving, elderly, controversial, health, transportation

## Pre-Reading

**A. WARM-UP QUESTIONS**

Answers will vary. Have students work in small groups or as a class.

**B. VOCABULARY PREVIEW**

- |      |      |      |      |       |       |
|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|
| 1. d | 3. e | 5. a | 7. h | 9. b  | 11. i |
| 2. f | 4. g | 6. c | 8. j | 10. k |       |

## Reading (and/or Listening)

Read individually, in small groups, or as a class. Discuss the quote. You can also play the listening as your students read along. A gap-fill version of the reading is available on page 5. Help your students with vocabulary and expressions that they are unfamiliar with.

## Comprehension

1. The reading says that immobility in any form is life-changing.
2. Physical abilities that decline with age and interfere with driving include eyesight, reflexes, and hearing.
3. A doctor or pharmacist might “be the bad guy” if he or she advises an elderly person to stop driving due to medication interfering with road performance.
4. Not stopping for red lights or stop signs, driving at an improper speed, or getting lost often are all signs that an elderly person may be unfit to drive.
5. In some countries, elderly people have to have a vision test and/or a medical evaluation before they can renew their license. They may also have to do a road test.

*(continued on the next page...)*

## Answer Key cont.

### Vocabulary Review

#### A. CHUNKING

Sentences will vary.

1. run an errand
2. a fatal accident
3. initiate a conversation
4. get from A to B
5. the magic number

#### B. COMMONLY CONFUSED WORDS

Please see our blog post for more tips on teaching *to*, *too*, and *two*: <http://blog.esllibrary.com/2013/06/20/teaching-tips-on-to-too-and-two/>

1. to, two
2. to, too
3. too, to
4. too, to, to
5. two, too, to

### Discussion

Answers will vary.

Can be done individually or in small groups or pairs.

### Listening

1. Reflexes, errand, Immobility
2. the magic number, fatal
3. Initiating, interfere
4. unfit, aging
5. renewal, mandatory

#### SPELLING NOTE:

This lesson shows the American spelling of the word *License*.  
Most other English-speaking countries spell it this way: *Licence*.  
Make it a challenge for your students to find this word in the lesson and see if they know the alternate spelling.