

A Guide to Passing your Road Test

(you can do it!)

What to Bring

Make sure you have everything you need before you go into your exam station.

If you are over 18 or over:

- Proof of driving privilege
 - I brought my driver's permit
- Proof of Car Insurance
- \$40 cash
 - The road test itself doesn't cost anything for the first 2 tries.
 - Applying for a license is around \$32, but you want to make sure that you have enough. They do NOT take debit/credit cards, so bring cash or a check.

If you are under 18:

- Everything listed in the left column AND:
- Your completed [driving log](#), signed by your primary driving supervisor
- If this is your first test, the white course completion card

Good to know:

Get to the exam station **at least 15-20 minutes early**. You will have to pull up to the exam window and will probably have to wait in line for a while.

There, you'll provide proof of driving privilege + proof of car insurance to someone at the window. They will give you a slip of paper and tell you which "marked lane" to pull into. The lanes will look like numbered parking spots. You'll pull into your lane and wait for your instructor.

What to Know Beforehand

Here is a checklist of car equipment and driving habits that you need to be familiar and comfortable with beforehand.

Equipment Checklist

- Horn
- Fuel gauge
- Defroster
- Wipers
- Emergency Brake
- Hazard Lights
- Turn signal lights
- Lights: low/high beams
- Side mirror adjustments
- Seat Adjustments

Driving Checklist

- Parallel Parking
- 90 degree backup
- Left and right turns
- Making lane changes/merging into another lane
- Entering and exiting one-ways
- Uphill and downhill parking
- Stopping at a line, intersections, and stop lights

What to Expect

Before You'll pull into the DMV exam station 15-20 minutes before your appointment, with all your necessary driving materials, with your expert driving skills, ready for the test. For me, I had to pull into a window to get my materials checked out, and I was instructed to park in a numbered lane to wait for my instructor.

Pre-test When my instructor came, she asked for my materials to review. At this point, your instructor will probably test you on car equipment. From what I know, it is a series of casual questions, such as, "Can you show me where your hazard lights are?" or "Can you show me how to operate your wipers?"

After you've passed your equipment test, they'll ask you if you have any questions. Don't be afraid to clarify your questions at this point; your instructor won't be allowed to answer them during the test. After that, you'll be instructed to start on the exam course.

Exam On the exam course, your instructor will just tell you where to go. Don't stress out about it, **go slow**. The course speed limit is 30mph, but I probably went 20mph or even less. The directions are super easy, formatted as "go left" or "at the next intersection, take a right," etc.

Notes Don't worry too much. I missed a couple of turns, and my instructor was super nice about it and just kept directing me. I wasn't penalized or anything. So don't be nervous!

Tips and my advice

For a bit of background, I passed my road test on my first try in late June 2020. I started driving much later than the rest of my peers, and didn't get my permit until I turned 18. If you started "late" like I did, don't worry at all!

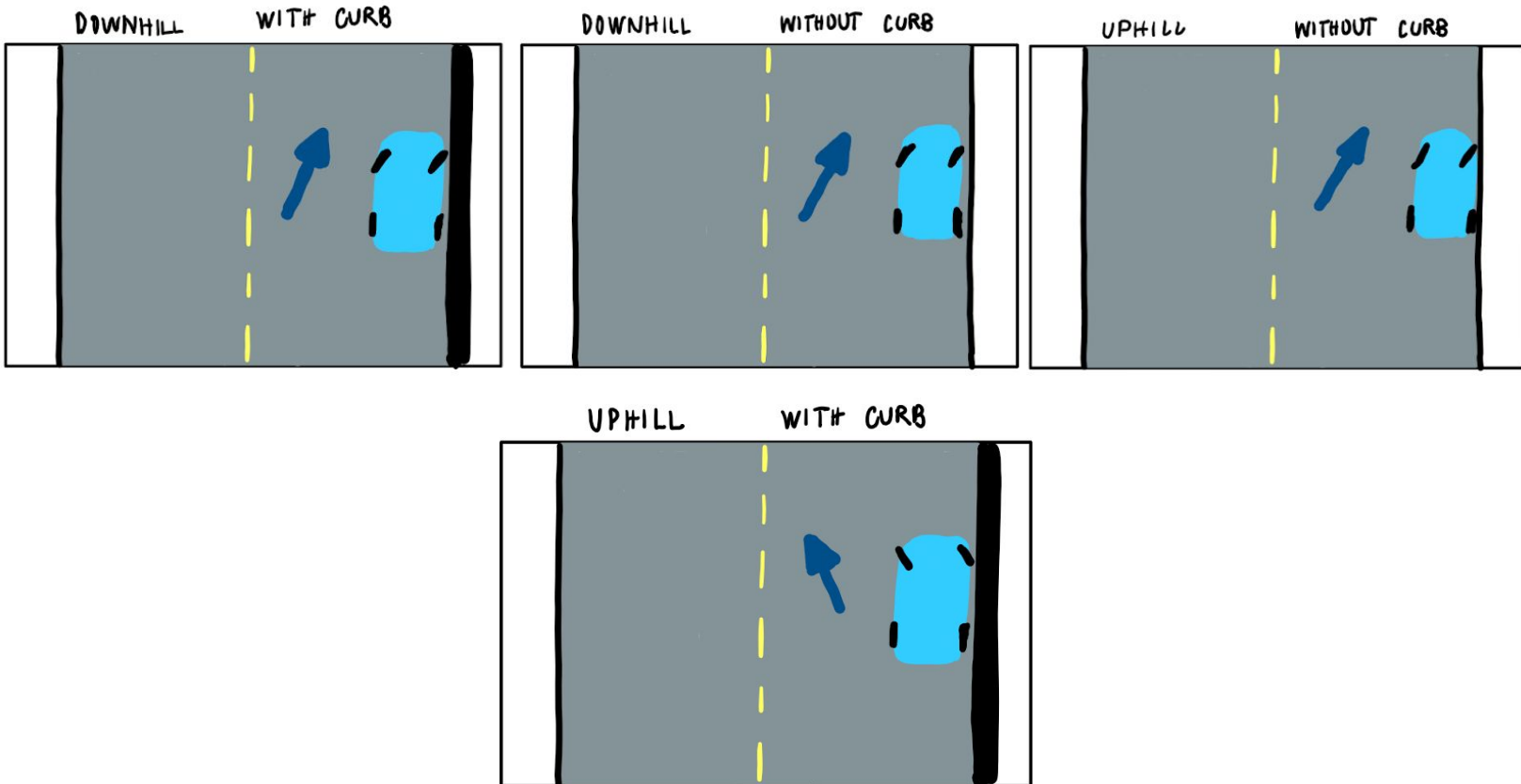
I passed my road test the first time, but it didn't take any kind of superhuman skill or brains to do so. All I did was make sure I was prepared and knew what to expect. You can pass your first try too!! I promise you! Here are a few things to keep in mind and some common mistakes:

- **Exaggerate it when you look!**
 - Turn your ENTIRE head to look both ways at EVERY intersection, stoplight, and turn. Look over your shoulder when merging. They will penalize you if you don't.
 - Probably the most important part of the exam. I did poorly on parallel park, but my driving instructor told me that the fact that I looked a LOT and OFTEN was a large part of why I passed.
- Stop all the way
 - At the stop sign, make sure you make a **complete** stop.
 - At a red stoplight, if you are turning right, you STILL need to make a complete stop before turning right.
- Parallel Parking
 - **Practice.** Practice enough so that you can do it perfectly 3-4 times in a row. Make sure you are less than 12 inches from the curb. During the exam, your biggest priority is to **not** hit the poles. IRL, those are real cars.
 - Ideally try to line it up in less than 3-5 maneuvers, but if you can't, readjust as much as you need to not hit anything.

- 90 degree backup
 - **Go slow** and look where you need to be. Readjust if you have to, it never hurts. Just don't hit the poles!

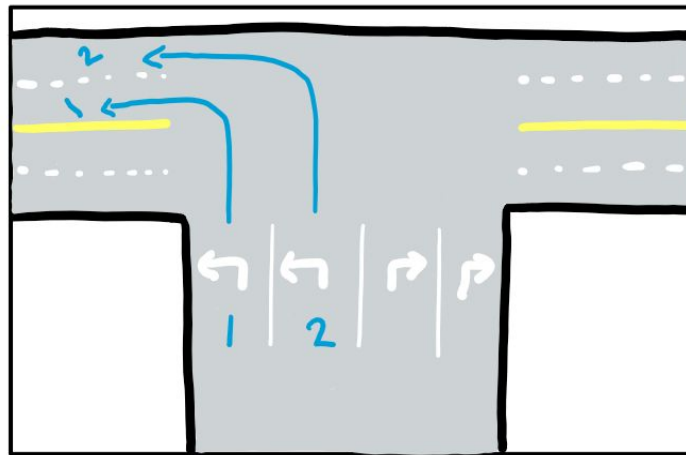
Helpful Graphics for Driving

- Uphill and downhill parking
 - Know which direction to turn your wheel.
 - Downhill with curb, downhill without curb, uphill without curb: park and turn all the way towards the shoulder.
 - Uphill with curb: park and turn all the way away from the shoulder.



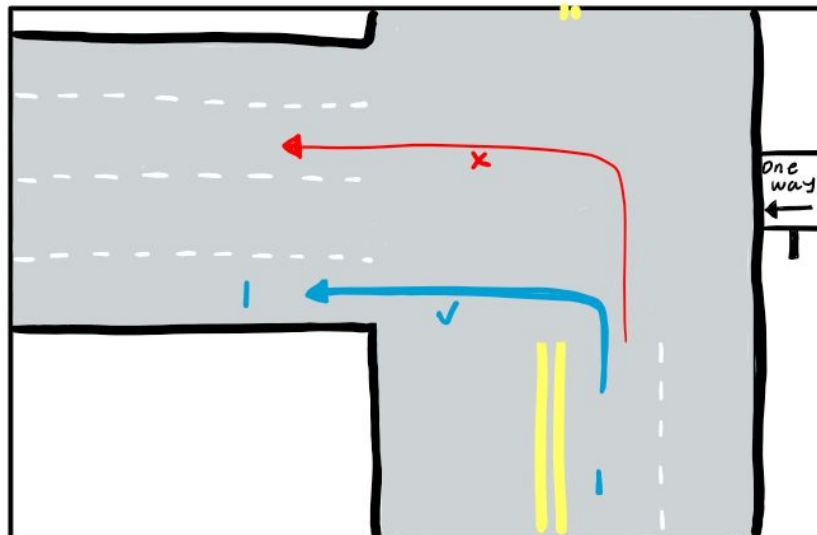
- Turning into the CORRECT LANE

- They may ask you to take a left. There may be two left turn lanes. If you are in the inner left turn lane, you NEED to turn into the inner left lane. If you are in the outer left turn lane, you NEED to turn into the outer left lane.
- Don't turn from the outer left lane into the inner left lane. (2 → 1 in the picture)



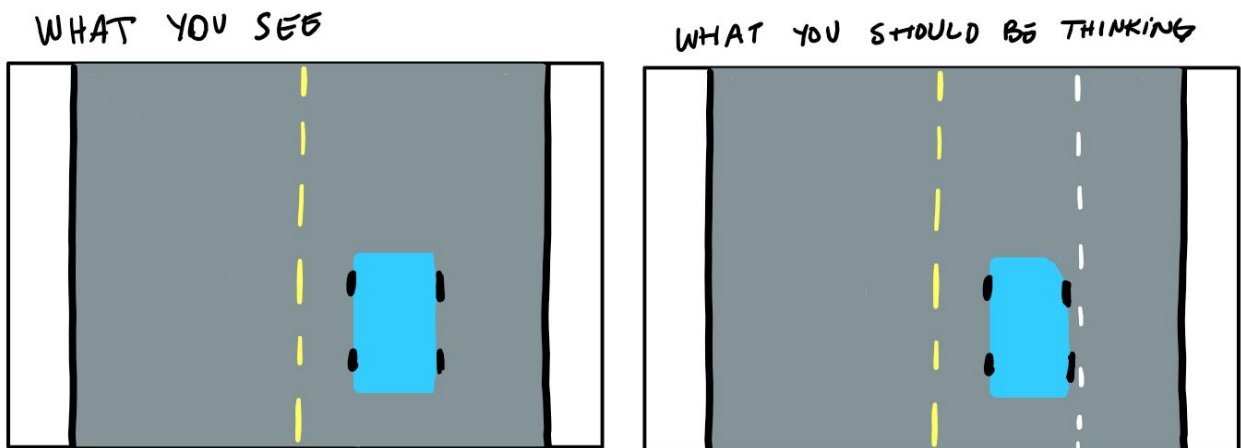
- Turning into and off of one-ways

- If you are turning left into a one-way, you'll need to turn into the **leftmost** lane on the one-way. A common mistake is to turn into the closest available lane.



- Unmarked lanes

- The road will be wide enough for 4 cars. You will have to get used to driving in an unmarked lane (no lines). Pretend like there are lines on the ground. This will help when you merge (details below).



- Merging into lanes

- Literally look everywhere before you merge: In your rearview, then side, then over your shoulder BEFORE you merge.
- If the driving instructor asks you to take a right, but you are in the left lane, you need to merge into the right lane, even if there is no line. Pretend that there is.

If you know how to do everything listed in this document, you should be set. Everything I knew is listed here and I passed my first try. Do your best and don't worry.

Also--don't just practice these things for your test. These are traffic laws and driving habits you should be following at ALL times, like turning into the correct lane, looking over your shoulder before you merge, etc. Use this as a guide for learning or reviewing these things, not just for your test, but for whenever you drive. Good luck and drive safe!

Resources I looked at

- Dashcam videos of people that [passed](#) and [failed](#).
 - This is the most helpful resource I used. I made sure to listen to the feedback the examiners gave at the end.
- Road test [checklist](#) for MN exams
- Another guide I looked [at](#)