

## Cars

by Karen Richardson

**Level:** Intermediate**Aim:** Students learn vocabulary related to cars and participate in discussions about cars.**Time needed:** 90 minutes (approx)

## Overview

This approximately 90 minute lesson is written for a general-English group at intermediate level. However, it can easily be adapted to suit the level and type of group you are teaching. With a lower level general- English group you could focus on simpler language such as colour, shape, and age of car; with a technical English group you could focus on the more technical aspects such as fuel consumption, horse power, engine size, etc; with a Business-English group you may prefer to concentrate on the reason for the popularity of certain models, or on production processes.

Whatever your group's requirements, cars are a very popular small talk topic and this lesson is certain to get your learners talking.

## Warmer

Ask the learners how they came to the lesson.

## Brainstorm vocabulary

Prepare one A4 sheet of paper per pair of learners. Write a car-related topic in the centre of each paper. E.g. if you have 10 learners, you could write:

- parts of the car
- types of car (makes and models and styles)
- verbs and adjectives used in connection with cars and driving
- advantages of cars
- disadvantages of cars

Allow each pair one minute to write as many words (related to what's written in the centre of the paper) onto the sheet in front of them. After one minute all the papers are passed around clockwise to the next pair and the process repeated.

After each pair has had each sheet of paper once give a further minute for self-corrections and then ask for feedback.

## Language work: Collocations

Hand out the question sheet. Ask the students to fill in what they consider to be the most appropriate verbs in the gaps. Explain that there is more than one possible answer for many of the questions. Discuss and correct before moving onto the next stage.

## Group questions

In small groups, learners ask and answer the questions on their sheets. Tell them to make a note of any interesting answers. Ask for feedback.

## Discussions

In new groups learners talk about their first car. Ask for feedback.

## Variations, extensions and tips

Play appropriate music at the beginning and/or end of the lesson or during the brainstorming activity. For example, *In my car* by Madness, or *Drive* by The Cars, or anything which includes car vocabulary (*Mustang Sally*, *Little red Corvette*, etc.)

Adapt the vocabulary stage for the amount of learners in your class. E.g. if you have fewer learners, put advantages and disadvantages onto one sheet. If you have more learners, separate verbs and adjectives and so on.

Pin the brainstormed vocabulary mind maps onto the classroom wall. You could even use A3 or flipchart paper and increase and improve the vocabulary as the course progresses.

For lower levels, write the verbs needed for the question sheet gap fill on the board. The learners should decide which gap they fit into and write them in.

Cut up pictures of cars from glossy magazines. Group learners by cutting up the pictures and asking them to sit with the learners with the other pieces of their

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'puzzle'. Collect the pieces and redistribute them to make new groups for the stage when learners talk about their first car.

Make notes of things the learners say during the free speaking stages. Write down both incorrect and surprisingly good language use. Use these for a correction slot or for homework.

Pin up glossy car adverts around the classroom walls as discussion prompts.

Record and watch a TV commercial for a new car – first with the sound off, then again with it on. You can sit learners back to back and get one to explain to the other what is going on.

*Key:*

*Suggested answers:*

1. *use / drive / need*

2. *had / owned*

3. *learn*

4. *allow / trust*

5. *bought / hired*

6. *fill up*

7. *check*

8. *serviced / washed / cleaned / polished*

9. *had*

10. *change*

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Write in fitting verbs to complete the questions.

- 1) Do you ..... your car every day?
- 2) How long have you ..... your car?
- 3) When and where did you ..... to drive?
- 4) Who do you ..... to drive your car?
- 5) Have you ever ..... a new car?
- 6) How often do you ..... with petrol or diesel?
- 7) How often do you ..... the air-pressure in the tyres?
- 8) How often do you have your car .....?
- 9) Have you ever ..... a flat tyre?
- 10) Can you ..... a wheel (or tyre)?

Now use these questions to talk to others in the group about their cars.

Note down any interesting or unusual answers.

