EzLicence

Instructor Resource

Mock Test Guide

United Kingdom

Running a full test simulation that gives learners an honest, pressure-tested readiness check.

What Is a Mock Test?

A Mock Test is a full simulation of the official driving test, conducted by you, the instructor, from the passenger seat. The learner drives as though it's the real thing.

The purpose is to give the learner an honest, realistic assessment of their readiness before they sit the real thing. It gives you a structured record of their strengths and the gaps that still need work.

> The Mock Test is not a teaching session. Do not intervene unless safety demands it. Save all feedback for the debrief at the end.

Before the Session

The DVSA assesses every candidate against one national standard, set out in the examiner guidance in Annex A. That guidance lists every competency and how each one is marked. Working to the same list is what makes this assessment honest rather than a general impression.

Before the lesson:

- Read sections 1 and 11 of the DVSA examiner guidance (Annex A) so you know what is assessed and how faults are categorised.
- Bring a marking sheet you can write on during the drive. DVSA records the real test digitally and does not publish a blank form, so use the sheet from your own training provider, or set one out against the competencies in section 1.
- Check the DVSA show me, tell me question list so you can set one of each during the session.
- Plan a route around the learner's intended test centre. DVSA hasn't published official test routes since 2010, so build your own representative route.
- Send your learner the GOV.UK page on what happens during the test (Annex A) so they know what's being assessed.

> Fill in the marking sheet as you go, not from memory afterwards. A fault noted in the moment, with the location it happened, is far more useful to the learner than a vague summary at the end.

Duration and Format

A Mock Test session is booked as 1 hour. The drive on the real test lasts around 35 minutes, so a 35-minute mock drive gives you a close to one-for-one simulation of the real thing. How the rest of the time is used will vary depending on the learner and the route, but the table below gives recommended limits for each phase.

Total session time: 1 hour.

The Three Phases

Phase	What the Instructor Does	What to Look For / Why It Matters
1. Pre-Drive Brief (5 min)	• Explain the format: you will observe only. • Run the eyesight check. The learner reads a number plate at 20 metres, or 20.5 metres for an old-style plate. • Ask one tell me vehicle safety question before moving off. • Set the starting location.	• Confirm the learner understands no feedback will be given during the drive. • Check they are calm and ready.
2. The Drive (35 min)	• Direct the learner using examiner-style instructions only: "At the end of the road turn left", "Follow the road ahead". • Ask one show me question while the learner is driving. • Include a stretch of independent driving, following a sat nav or traffic signs. On the real test this runs for 20 to 35 minutes. • Record faults on the marking sheet as they occur. • Intervene only to prevent a genuine safety incident.	• Observe control, observation, and judgement across all manoeuvres. • Note the exact location and nature of each fault, not just a general impression. • Watch for repeated faults in the same competency. In a real test those escalate to a serious fault.
3. Debrief (15 min)	• Pull over safely and switch off the engine before beginning. • Walk through the marking sheet with the learner. Give specific, evidence-based feedback for every fault recorded. • State the result plainly against the DVSA standard: no serious or dangerous faults, and 15 or fewer driving faults.	• Watch for the learner's reaction to feedback. Overconfidence or anxiety after the result will affect their real test preparation.

Phase	What the Instructor Does	What to Look For / Why It Matters
	• Confirm an agreed plan for what to practise next.	
4. Travel and Admin (~5 min)	• Allow time for travel to the start point, parking, and any end-of-session admin. This is included in the 1-hour booking and should not be cut into debrief time.	• If the session is running long, prioritise the debrief. Shorten the drive before shortening the debrief.

What the Real Test Covers

Mirror the structure of the real test as closely as the route allows. A learner who's rehearsed the actual shape of the test is far less likely to be thrown on the day.

Element	How It Works
Eyesight check	The candidate reads a number plate from 20 metres, or 20.5 metres for an old-style plate. Failing it ends the test on the spot.
Tell me question	One vehicle safety question asked before driving off.
Show me question	One vehicle safety question asked while driving, such as operating the demister or washers.
General driving ability	Various road and traffic conditions, but never motorways. The drive lasts around 35 minutes in total.
Independent driving	20 to 35 minutes of the drive, following a sat nav, traffic signs, or a combination of both. The examiner sets the sat nav up. A wrong turning isn't a fault, and the examiner helps the candidate back on route.
Reversing manoeuvre	One of three exercises, selected by the examiner. See the next section.
Emergency stop	Included in roughly one test in seven. Set it every few mock tests so it isn't a surprise on the day.

Fault Assessment

The DVSA marks three categories of fault. Use the same language in your debrief so the learner recognises it on test day.

Fault Category	Effect	When It Applies
Dangerous fault	Immediate fail	Involves actual danger to the learner, you, the public, or property.
Serious fault	Immediate fail	Potentially dangerous, or a repeated driving fault in the same competency that has become a habit.
Driving fault	Noted; 16 or more means a fail	Not potentially dangerous on its own, but a pattern of them points to a readiness gap.

> The pass standard is no dangerous faults, no serious faults, and 15 or fewer driving faults. If your learner picks up a serious or dangerous fault in a Mock Test, that's the conversation to have about readiness. They should not book a real test until they can complete a full mock drive without one.

Manoeuvres to Include

The DVSA selects one reversing exercise on the day, so rotate through all of them across your learner's mock tests rather than rehearsing a favourite.

The three reversing exercises

- Parallel park at the side of the road.
- Park in a parking bay, either driving in and reversing out, or reversing in and driving out. The examiner says which.
- Pull up on the right-hand side of the road, reverse around two car lengths, and rejoin the traffic.

Pulling over and moving away

Separate from the reversing exercise, the test also asks the candidate to pull over and pull away. Set all three:

- A normal stop at the side of the road.
- Pulling out from behind a parked vehicle.

- A hill start.

An emergency stop may also be set, in roughly one test in seven.

Road and traffic conditions

Alongside the manoeuvre, aim to cover a representative cross-section of what the test can throw at them:

- Roundabouts, both mini and multi-lane.
- Junctions and crossroads, turning left and right, including emerging into busy traffic.
- Pedestrian crossings, including zebra, pelican and puffin crossings.
- Traffic lights, including filter lanes and advanced stop lines.
- Meeting and passing traffic on narrow roads with parked cars.
- Hill starts and moving off at an angle.
- Dual carriageway or higher-speed sections where the route permits.
- Normal stops at the side of the road, and moving off safely from them.

> ***Vary the route every time you run a Mock Test. Familiarity with a fixed route inflates the result and can mask gaps that would show up on an unfamiliar road.***

Running a Mock Test in London

London is the hardest place in the country to pass a practical test, and pass rates at London test centres sit consistently below the national average. The bar is effectively higher here, which makes an honest Mock Test more valuable, not less.

Build these into your route wherever the learner's test centre allows. They're the things that catch London candidates out.

What to Include	Why It Matters
Bus lanes and bus gates	Operating hours vary street by street. Entering one during its hours is a serious fault and an instant fail. Make the learner read the sign rather than guess.
Yellow box junctions	Common across inner London and a frequent source of faults. The learner must not enter unless their exit is clear.
Cyclists and advanced stop lines	Cyclists filter on both sides in heavy traffic. Mirror and blind spot discipline before every manoeuvre is assessed hard here.

What to Include	Why It Matters
Red routes	Stopping is prohibited on TfL red routes. This limits where the pull up on the right manoeuvre can be set and where you can pull over for the debrief. Plan both in advance.
20mph limits	Much of inner London is 20mph. Both exceeding the limit and driving well under it without reason are marked, the latter as undue hesitation.
Floating bus stops	Where a cycle lane runs behind the bus stop, pedestrians cross it to board. Learners routinely miss them.
Low Traffic Neighbourhoods	Modal filters and restricted access points change regularly. Check your route still runs before the session rather than finding out mid-drive.
Gyratories and one-way systems	Multi-lane, fast-changing lane discipline. The single most common place for a serious fault on positioning.
Pedestrian volume	Far higher than anywhere else in the country, and unpredictable. Tests anticipation and planning rather than reaction.
Trams, in south London	Around Croydon, Wimbledon and Beckenham. Tram lanes, crossings and priority rules are unfamiliar to most learners.

> Congestion Charge and ULEZ zones aren't part of the assessment, but they do affect route planning and cost. Factor them in when choosing where to run the session.

After the Session

- Debrief the learner using your marked-up sheet. Go through every fault recorded, not a general summary.
- Give the learner their copy of the marked sheet to take home as their written record.
- Set a follow-up lesson plan that targets the specific faults identified.
- If the learner completed the drive with no serious or dangerous faults and 15 or fewer driving faults, discuss booking their real test.

> ***A learner who consistently passes Mock Tests is ready to book their real test. Trust the result.***

Mock Test Checklist

Use this page as your quick-reference for the session.

Before the Session

- ☐ Read DT1 sections 1 and 11 (Annex A)
- ☐ Bring a marking sheet you can write on during the drive
- ☐ Check the show me, tell me question list and pick one of each
- ☐ Plan a route around the learner's intended test centre
- ☐ Send the learner the GOV.UK page on what happens during the test

Pre-Drive Brief (5 min)

- ☐ Explain that you'll observe only, with no feedback during the drive
- ☐ Run the eyesight check at 20 metres, or 20.5 metres for an old-style plate
- ☐ Ask one tell me question

During the Drive (35 min)

- ☐ Give examiner-style directions only, no coaching, hints, or corrections
- ☐ Ask one show me question while driving
- ☐ Include around 20 minutes of independent driving, sat nav or traffic signs
- ☐ Record every fault on the marking sheet as it happens
- ☐ Intervene only if there's a genuine safety risk
- ☐ Set one of the three reversing exercises:
  - ☐ Parallel park at the side of the road
  - ☐ Bay park, drive in and reverse out, or reverse in and drive out
  - ☐ Pull up on the right, reverse two car lengths, rejoin traffic
- ☐ Set the pull over and move away exercises:
  - ☐ Normal stop at the side of the road
  - ☐ Pulling out from behind a parked vehicle
  - ☐ Hill start
- ☐ Cover a representative range of conditions:
  - ☐ Roundabouts, mini and multi-lane
  - ☐ Junctions and crossroads, left and right turns
  - ☐ Pedestrian crossings
  - ☐ Traffic lights, filter lanes and advanced stop lines
  - ☐ Meeting traffic on narrow roads with parked cars
  - ☐ Hill start and moving off at an angle
  - ☐ Dual carriageway where the route permits
  - ☐ London specifics: bus lanes, box junctions, red routes, 20mph limits
- ☐ A different route from last time

Debrief (15 min)

- ☐ Pull over safely and switch off the engine before starting
- ☐ Walk through every fault on the marking sheet
- ☐ Give specific, evidence-based feedback, not general impressions
- ☐ State the result against the DVSA standard: no serious or dangerous faults, 15 or fewer driving faults
- ☐ Agree a follow-up practice plan with the learner

After the Session

- ☐ Give the learner their marked-up sheet to take home
- ☐ Set a follow-up lesson plan targeting the faults identified
- ☐ If ready, discuss booking the real test

Travel and Admin (~5 min)

- ☐ Build travel, parking, and admin time into the 1-hour booking
- ☐ Running long? Protect the debrief time and shorten the drive first

Annex A

DVSA Test Requirements

Official government source

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency publishes the guidance its own examiners follow when carrying out driving tests, known as the DT1. It sets out every competency assessed on the car driving test, how examiners mark it, and what separates a driving fault from a serious one.

Two sections matter for a Mock Test. Section 1, Car driving test, covers what is assessed: the eyesight check, vehicle safety checks, the manoeuvring exercises, the emergency stop, and every on-road competency. Section 11, Guide to assessment and marking, covers how it is marked: how faults are identified and recorded, the definitions of a driving, serious and dangerous fault, low and high risk, and what happens at the 16th driving fault.

> Read both sections before you run your first Mock Test, and go back to section 11 whenever you are not sure how a particular fault should be marked. It is the same standard your learner will be measured against on the day.

Carrying out driving tests: examiner guidance (DT1)

Authority: Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency

The full manual.

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/guidance-for-driving-examiners-carrying-out-driving-tests-dt1

Section 1: Car driving test

Authority: Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency

What is assessed on the car test, competency by competency. Go here first.

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/guidance-for-driving-examiners-carrying-out-driving-tests-dt1/1-car-driving-test

Section 11: Guide to assessment and marking

Authority: Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency

How faults are identified, recorded and categorised. This is the section to use when you are deciding whether something you saw was a driving fault or a serious one.

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/guidance-for-driving-examiners-carrying-out-driving-tests-dt1/11-guide-to-assessment-and-marking

Driving test: what happens during the test

Authority: Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency

The learner-facing explanation of the test format, the manoeuvres, independent driving and how faults affect the result. Worth sending to your learner before the session.

https://www.gov.uk/driving-test/what-happens-during-test