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**"1,000 IDEAS & ACTIVITIES FOR LANGUAGE TEACHERS"**

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## **Drivers think they drive better than others**

[http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1002/100201-road\\_safety.html](http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1002/100201-road_safety.html)

### **Contents**

The Article	2
Warm-ups	3
Before Reading / Listening	4
While Reading / Listening	5
Listening Gap Fill	6
After Reading / Listening	7
Student Survey	8
Discussion	9
Language Work	10
Writing	11
Homework	12
Answers	13

2nd February, 2010

# THE ARTICLE

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1002/100201-road\\_safety.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1002/100201-road_safety.html)

Canadian researchers have found that most drivers think they are better than others behind the wheel. The team from Ottawa University interviewed nearly 400 motorists of all ages. They all had to answer questions about what they thought of their own driving skills. The question topics included how they react in different driving conditions, including terrible weather and congested roads. They then had to rate the skills of others on the road. The results were very similar across all age ranges – almost all of those interviewed believed their driving ability was better than that of other drivers. Older drivers in the poll were more confident in their ability than younger ones. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, males had the most confidence in their ability to handle a car.

Lead researcher Sylvain Gagnon believes the attitudes found in his survey could be dangerous. Mr Gagnon said that although confidence can be a good thing, it often has dangerous consequences. He stated: "If you think that you are a better driver, then perhaps you start behaving differently behind the wheel and do not pay as much attention as you should. This might explain why young men tend to have more accidents on the roads than other drivers." It is time for government road safety departments to start taking research such as this more seriously. Traffic accidents are a huge killer throughout the world. Very few drivers really think about how deadly their car can be in an accident. More regulation is needed as people buy more and more cars.

# WARM-UPS

**1. DRIVING:** Walk around the class and talk to other students about driving. Change partners often. Sit with your first partner(s) and share your findings.

**2. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

*researchers / drivers / driving skills / weather / congested roads / confidence / males / attitudes / dangerous consequences / paying attention / accidents / road safety*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

**3. ROAD SAFETY:** Complete this table about road safety with your partner(s). Change partners and share what you wrote. Change again and share again.

	How dangerous?	How to reduce the problem?
Speeding		
Drunk driving		
Driving on a mobile		
Ignoring red lights		
Ignoring safe distance		
Road rage		

**4. SAFETY:** Students A **strongly** believe things will get safer on the roads; Students B **strongly** believe the opposite. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

**5. MOTORISTS:** Who's most dangerous? Rank these and share your rankings with your partner: Put the most dangerous at the top. Change and share your rankings again.

- men
- women
- teenagers
- old people
- taxi drivers
- learner drivers
- sports car drivers
- foreign drivers

**6. DRIVER:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'drivers'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

# BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1002/100201-road\\_safety.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1002/100201-road_safety.html)

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| a. Drivers think they are better than people who do not drive.         | T / F |
| b. People had to answer questions and take a driving test.             | T / F |
| c. Some of the drivers had a race with each other.                     | T / F |
| d. Men were those who had most confidence in their ability to drive.   | T / F |
| e. A researcher thought his research could be dangerous.               | T / F |
| f. The researcher said confidence behind the wheel can be a bad thing. | T / F |
| g. People who have the most accidents are not young females.           | T / F |
| h. The article suggested governments need more rules.                  | T / F |

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article.

- |                 |               |
|-----------------|---------------|
| 1. found        | a. blocked    |
| 2. interviewed  | b. rules      |
| 3. skills       | c. survey     |
| 4. congested    | d. results    |
| 5. poll         | e. discovered |
| 6. attitudes    | f. all over   |
| 7. consequences | g. abilities  |
| 8. huge         | h. questioned |
| 9. throughout   | i. enormous   |
| 10. regulation  | j. beliefs    |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- |                                |                            |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. better than others behind   | a. handle a car            |
| 2. 400 motorists of            | b. driving conditions      |
| 3. how they react in different | c. ranges                  |
| 4. across all age              | d. is needed               |
| 5. their ability to            | e. attention as you should |
| 6. the attitudes found         | f. the wheel               |
| 7. it often has dangerous      | g. safety departments      |
| 8. do not pay as much.         | h. all ages                |
| 9. government road             | i. in his survey           |
| 10. More regulation            | j. consequences            |

Drivers think they drive better than others – 2nd February, 2010

# WHILE READING / LISTENING

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1002/100201-road\\_safety.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1002/100201-road_safety.html)

**GAP FILL:** Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Canadian researchers have found that most drivers think they are better than others \_\_\_\_\_ the wheel. The team from Ottawa University interviewed nearly 400 \_\_\_\_\_ of all ages. They all had to answer questions about what they thought of their own driving skills. The question \_\_\_\_\_ included how they react in different driving conditions, including \_\_\_\_\_ weather and congested roads. They then had to rate the skills of others on the road. The \_\_\_\_\_ were very similar across all age ranges – almost all of those interviewed believed their driving \_\_\_\_\_ was better than that of other drivers. Older drivers in the poll were more \_\_\_\_\_ in their ability than younger ones. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, males had the most confidence in their ability to \_\_\_\_\_ a car.

*confident*  
*motorists*  
*ability*  
*behind*  
*terrible*  
*handle*  
*topics*  
*results*

Lead researcher Sylvain Gagnon believes the \_\_\_\_\_ found in his survey could be dangerous. Mr Gagnon said that \_\_\_\_\_ confidence can be a good thing, it often has dangerous consequences. He \_\_\_\_\_: "If you think that you are a better driver, then perhaps you start behaving differently behind the wheel and do not \_\_\_\_\_ as much attention as you should. This might explain why young men \_\_\_\_\_ to have more accidents on the roads than other drivers." It is time for government road safety departments to start taking research such as this more \_\_\_\_\_. Traffic accidents are a huge killer throughout the world. Very few drivers really think about how \_\_\_\_\_ their car can be in an accident. More \_\_\_\_\_ is needed as people buy more and more cars.

*seriously*  
*pay*  
*regulation*  
*stated*  
*attitudes*  
*tend*  
*deadly*  
*although*

## **LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps**

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1002/100201-road\\_safety.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1002/100201-road_safety.html)

Canadian researchers have found that most drivers think they are better \_\_\_\_\_ wheel. The team from Ottawa University interviewed nearly 400 motorists of all ages. They all had to answer questions about what they \_\_\_\_\_ driving skills. The question topics included how they react in different driving conditions, including \_\_\_\_\_ congested roads. They then had to rate the skills of others on the road. The results were very similar \_\_\_\_\_ – almost all of those interviewed believed their driving ability was better than that of other drivers. Older drivers \_\_\_\_\_ more confident in their ability than younger ones. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, males had the most confidence in their ability \_\_\_\_\_.

Lead researcher Sylvain Gagnon believes \_\_\_\_\_ in his survey could be dangerous. Mr Gagnon said that although confidence can be a good thing, it often has \_\_\_\_\_. He stated: "If you think that you are a better driver, then perhaps you start behaving differently behind the wheel and do \_\_\_\_\_ attention as you should. This might explain why young men tend to have more accidents on the roads than other drivers." It is time for government road safety departments to start taking research \_\_\_\_\_ seriously. Traffic accidents \_\_\_\_\_ throughout the world. Very few drivers really think about how deadly their car can be in an accident. More regulation is needed as people \_\_\_\_\_ cars.

# AFTER READING / LISTENING

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1002/100201-road\\_safety.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1002/100201-road_safety.html)

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'road' and 'safety'.

road	safety

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. GAP FILL:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• better</li><li>• answer</li><li>• topics</li><li>• terrible</li><li>• across</li><li>• handle</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• attitudes</li><li>• dangerous</li><li>• pay</li><li>• tend</li><li>• huge</li><li>• needed</li></ul>
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# STUDENT DRIVING SURVEY

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1002/100201-road\\_safety.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1002/100201-road_safety.html)

Write five GOOD questions about driving in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.



# DRIVING DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'motorist'?
- c) What makes a good driver?
- d) Do you think people's personalities change behind the wheel of a car?
- e) Who's the worst driver you know?
- f) What are the worst driving conditions you've experienced?
- g) What are the differences between male and female drivers?
- h) Do drivers get better as they get older?
- i) What's the thing that most annoys you about drivers when you are a pedestrian?
- j) Why do you think men think they're better drivers than women?

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# DRIVING DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Why might attitudes towards driving be dangerous?
- c) Is confidence behind the wheel a good or bad thing?
- d) What single thing would instantly increase road safety?
- e) Is driving getting safer or more dangerous?
- f) Do you think the speed of all cars should be capped?
- g) Is more regulation needed?
- h) If a driver kills someone because of dangerous driving, are they a murderer?
- i) What kind of driver are you (might you be)?
- j) What questions would you like to ask researcher Sylvain Gagnon?

# LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1002/100201-road\\_safety.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1002/100201-road_safety.html)

Canadian researchers have found that most drivers think they are better than others behind the (1) \_\_\_\_\_. The team from Ottawa University interviewed nearly 400 (2) \_\_\_\_\_ of all ages. They all had to answer questions about what they thought of their own driving skills. The question topics included how they (3) \_\_\_\_\_ in different driving conditions, including terrible weather and (4) \_\_\_\_\_ roads. They then had to rate the skills of others on the road. The results were very similar across all age ranges – almost all of those (5) \_\_\_\_\_ believed their driving ability was better than that of other drivers. Older drivers in the poll were more confident in their ability than younger ones. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, males had the most confidence in their (6) \_\_\_\_\_ to handle a car.

Lead researcher Sylvain Gagnon believes the (7) \_\_\_\_\_ found in his survey could be dangerous. Mr Gagnon said that although confidence can be a good thing, it often has dangerous consequences. He stated: "If you think that you are a better driver, then perhaps you start behaving differently behind the wheel and do not (8) \_\_\_\_\_ as much attention as you should. This might explain why young men (9) \_\_\_\_\_ to have more accidents on the roads than other drivers." It is time for government (10) \_\_\_\_\_ safety departments to start taking research such as this more seriously. Traffic accidents are a huge killer throughout the world. Very (11) \_\_\_\_\_ drivers really think about how deadly their car can be in an accident. More (12) \_\_\_\_\_ is needed as people buy more and more cars.

## Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- |     |                |                 |                 |                  |
|-----|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 1.  | (a) wheels     | (b) wheeled     | (c) wheeling    | (d) wheel        |
| 2.  | (a) motorists  | (b) motors      | (c) motoring    | (d) motor        |
| 3.  | (a) reenact    | (b) react       | (c) retract     | (d) relate       |
| 4.  | (a) congestion | (b) congests    | (c) congested   | (d) congest      |
| 5.  | (a) interviews | (b) interview   | (c) interviewed | (d) interviewing |
| 6.  | (a) able       | (b) ability     | (c) capable     | (d) can          |
| 7.  | (a) fortitude  | (b) latitude    | (c) altitude    | (d) attitudes    |
| 8.  | (a) pay        | (b) payee       | (c) payment     | (d) pays         |
| 9.  | (a) fend       | (b) tend        | (c) trend       | (d) lend         |
| 10. | (a) avenue     | (b) street      | (c) track       | (d) road         |
| 11. | (a) small      | (b) little      | (c) few         | (d) tiny         |
| 12. | (a) regulation | (b) regulations | (c) regulate    | (d) regulatory   |

Drivers think they drive better than others – 2nd February, 2010



# HOMework

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find out more about road safety. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

**3. DRIVING:** Make a poster about driving. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

**4. BETTER:** Write a magazine article about who are better drivers – men or women. Include imaginary interviews with a male and female driver.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

**5. LETTER:** Write a letter to your country's leader. Ask him/her three questions about road safety. Give him/her three suggestions on how to make the roads safer. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

# ANSWERS

## TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F      b. F      c. F      d. T      e. F      f. T      g. T      h. T

## SYNONYM MATCH:

- |                 |               |
|-----------------|---------------|
| 1. found        | a. discovered |
| 2. interviewed  | b. questioned |
| 3. skills       | c. abilities  |
| 4. congested    | d. blocked    |
| 5. poll         | e. survey     |
| 6. attitudes    | f. beliefs    |
| 7. consequences | g. results    |
| 8. huge         | h. enormous   |
| 9. throughout   | i. all over   |
| 10. regulation  | j. rules      |

## PHRASE MATCH:

- |                                |                            |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. better than others behind   | a. the wheel               |
| 2. 400 motorists of            | b. all ages                |
| 3. how they react in different | c. driving conditions      |
| 4. across all age              | d. ranges                  |
| 5. their ability to            | e. handle a car            |
| 6. the attitudes found         | f. in his survey           |
| 7. it often has dangerous      | g. consequences            |
| 8. do not pay as much.         | h. attention as you should |
| 9. government road             | i. safety departments      |
| 10. More regulation            | j. is needed               |

## GAP FILL:

### Drivers think they drive better than others

Canadian researchers have found that most drivers think they are better than others **behind** the wheel. The team from Ottawa University interviewed nearly 400 **motorists** of all ages. They all had to answer questions about what they thought of their own driving skills. The question **topics** included how they react in different driving conditions, including **terrible** weather and congested roads. They then had to rate the skills of others on the road. The **results** were very similar across all age ranges – almost all of those interviewed believed their driving **ability** was better than that of other drivers. Older drivers in the poll were more **confident** in their ability than younger ones. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, males had the most confidence in their ability to **handle** a car.

Lead researcher Sylvain Gagnon believes the **attitudes** found in his survey could be dangerous. Mr Gagnon said that **although** confidence can be a good thing, it often has dangerous consequences. He **stated**: "If you think that you are a better driver, then perhaps you start behaving differently behind the wheel and do not **pay** as much attention as you should. This might explain why young men **tend** to have more accidents on the roads than other drivers." It is time for government road safety departments to start taking research such as this more **seriously**. Traffic accidents are a huge killer throughout the world. Very few drivers really think about how **deadly** their car can be in an accident. More **regulation** is needed as people buy more and more cars.

## LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - d    2 - a    3 - b    4 - c    5 - c    6 - b    7 - d    8 - a    9 - b    10 - d    11 - c    12 - a

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