



MODULE 2 TEST DAY

A nervous candidate's guide to the big day



Give yourself a head start. Arrive early and park up in the bike-specific bays with the bike facing outwards

2010 Triumph 675 Street Triple

Passing your test is what it's all about.

Most new riders find the whole experience very intimidating. The fact that you are being assessed by a civil servant, who watches your every move and shows little or no empathy, can provoke mistakes even in the most laid back characters.

The key to a successful test is preparation. If you do it properly the current test, which came into force in April 2009, is actually easier and fairer than the one it replaced.

Basic format

Test times are strict, so ensure that you arrive at least 15 minutes early. It's vitally important to get off to a good start. At best you'll just annoy the examiner by being late; at worst (ie if you're more than five minutes late) your test will be cancelled.

Remember your documents. Again, your examiner will cancel your test if you don't have

ALL of the following up to date:

- Driving licence
- Photo ID
- CBT certificate
- Theory test certificate

Once you've made it through the door you're very much on your own; no one else can help you. If you're seen receiving any outside help the examiner may terminate your test.

The examiner will run through, in his own entertaining way, what you can expect and how the test will be conducted. The whole thing will last just under an hour. Here's how it stacks up:

- Briefing, radio/papers check, sight test: 5 mins
- Mod Two on-road assessment: 40 mins
- Debrief and result: 5 mins

Everyone agrees the first five minutes are the worst, so reduce the risk of a mistake by taking your time!

'Show and tell' questions

The examiner may ask you two of these questions at the start. Answers in italics.

1. Show me how you would check that the engine has sufficient oil.

The level check is by a dipstick or sight glass. For either, the level should be between max and min marks. For dipstick, remove and wipe clean, rest dipstick on the threads and remove again to check level against max/min marks. For sight glass, ensure glass is clean when checking. The bike should be upright on level ground and engine cold. (NB: If you happen to be taking your test on one of the few dry-sump, oil-in-the-frame bikes, usually with single-cylinder engines, explain that you check the level with a warm engine.)

2. Show me how you would check that you have a safe level of hydraulic fluid.

Identify reservoir (on right handlebar or above right pedal), check level against high/low markings. Bike upright on level ground.

3. Show me how you would check that the lights, brake lights and reflectors are clean and working.

Turn on ignition, operate light switch and brake lever/pedal, identify reflectors. Check visually for cleanliness and operation.

4. Tell me how you would check the condition of the chain on this machine.

Check for chain wear by pulling the chain back away from the rear sprocket in the three o'clock position. It should not come away. Check for correct tension (usually specified on a chain guard sticker) and rear wheel alignment (marks on swing arm). Tension should be adjusted as specified in the handbook. The chain should be lubricated to ensure that excessive wear does not take place.

5. Show how you check the operation of the front brake on this machine.

Wheel the machine forward and apply the front brake. Ensure the brake lever doesn't touch the handlebar when applied hard.

6. How would you check your tyres to ensure they are correctly inflated, have sufficient tread depth and that their general condition is safe for the road?

Correct tyre pressures are in the owner's manual and usually also printed on the swing arm. They should be checked using a reliable gauge. Tread depth must be at least 1mm, in a continuous band at least three quarters of the breadth of the tread, all the way around. There should be no lumps, bulges, cracks or tears, and no nails or screws embedded in the tyre. Tread wear indicators are located in the tread of the tyre.

7. How you would check the operation of the rear brake on this machine?

Wheel the bike forwards and press the brake pedal. Check for excessive travel on the pedal, and for unusual play or sponginess.

8. How would you check the steering movement before using the bike?

Handlebars should be free to move smoothly from full left lock to full right lock without any control cables being stretched, trapped or pinched and without any snagging between moving and fixed parts.

9. Show me how you would check the operation of the engine cut-out switch.

Start engine. Operate switch. Restart engine.

10. Show me how you would check that the horn is working on this machine.

Turn on ignition, press horn button.



No need to be dazzling right away. Just do the basic stuff well until you're relaxed

Preliminaries

After checking your eyesight the examiner will log details of your bike, examining the tyres and tax disc. It makes sense to have your bike and riding gear gleaming if you possibly can. He may ask two 'Show and tell' questions about the bike and its controls (see previous page).

Before taking you on the road the examiner will explain what he wants you to do: 'Follow the road ahead at all times unless I ask you to do otherwise, or unless road signs indicate otherwise. If I want you to turn I'll ask you in plenty of time: "Turn right at the end of the road," or, "Take the next turning on the left," for example. To clarify, I will repeat the instruction twice. Sometimes I may ask you to pull over at the side of the road. Do you understand?'

Once you've said yes, the test will begin.

Basic principles

Everyone gets nervous, but once you've completed the first couple of junctions, or gone

through the gears, those nerves will disappear. Remember you can't pass your test in the first couple of minutes – but you can easily fail if you try to impress the examiner with how quickly you can pull out of junctions, for example, before you are really comfortable. So in the early stages, when nerves are at their highest, just do the simple stuff well to establish yourself on the road.

Always ride for yourself, and make safe progress. Don't wait for the examiner, or look for opportunities for both you and him to pull out of junctions or overtake at the same time. It's up to him to keep in contact with you, not the other way around. If you make it through the traffic lights and he doesn't, DON'T slow down and wait for him – you'll fail your test for lack of making progress. Examiners are good at keeping up with learners riding within the speed limits, and if he wants you to pull over he'll ask you over the radio. Otherwise, just keep to the last instruction and enjoy the brief period of being out of sight. It may relax you!

Mod 2 nerve-calmers



EYESIGHT CHECK

You need to be able to read a number plate 20.5 metres away or the whole deal's off. You've already done it in CBT, so relax



THAT TRICKY FIRST MOVE

Position yourself for the turn out of the centre (in this case left), make good observations and you're off. The examiner will follow closely



THE PARKED CAR

At some point the examiner will ask you to stop a car's length behind a parked car and invite you to pull away. Give it a very wide berth; a car's width isn't too much





Double yellows are fine if he asks you to stop on them

Pulling over

You could be asked to pull over several times in a few minutes. The examiner might want to see a specific junction, or to regain a clear view of you. Whatever the reason, he'll be checking to see that you have a safe and competent method, so don't just slam on the brakes and chuck it anywhere near the kerb. Take your time and use plenty of observation, with mirror and shoulder checks in the direction you'd like to move.

If it's safe you must indicate to pull over, and be careful where you decide to stop. Foot on the road or foot on the kerb is fine, as long as you stop

smoothly, parallel to the kerb and out of the way of general traffic. Make sure you're not blocking someone's driveway as they try to reverse out, and don't stop opposite the only parked car in the whole bloody road! Avoid also bus stops, hatched areas, zig zag lines, clearways or red routes.

It's fine to pull over and stop on double yellows if the examiner has asked you to. He's not trying to catch you out; you're only stopping for a brief moment. Just make sure it's where you are comfortable bearing in mind the size of the road and the traffic, and that you can wait safely in clear view of other road users.



Once the examiner's invited you to pull away, take as long as you need before it's safe

Pulling away

Again, take your time. It's amazing how many riders assume, after being pulled over, that it's safe to go when the examiner changes to a friendly and sometimes unexpected, 'OK, pull away whenever you are ready.'

However his tone of voice changes, don't read anything into it. He's not trying to help you, he's not your best mate, and he's not telling you it's safe to go. You are the one who decides when it's safe, whether that's ten seconds or two minutes. Your attitude should be: 'I'm not going to be rushed. I'll take as long as I want before I pull away.'

Make sure you observe fully before pulling away. Don't pull away and then, having already moved, have one more shoulder check – it doesn't make sense! The whole point of looking is to

decide if it's safe to go or not. Doing it the wrong way round tells the examiner you weren't sure it was safe in the first place. It will also make you wobble, and he has to fail you. Remember, it's observe first, then signal, then manoeuvre – not go, check, crash!



Pre-move lifesaver: the correct procedure

2010 Triumph 1050 Sprint ST



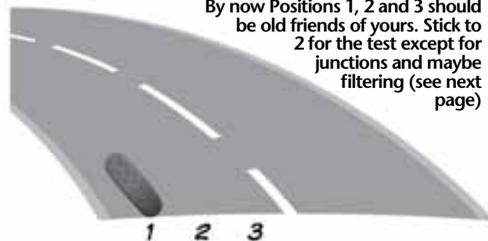
If it all goes quiet, just keep riding. He's watching to see how you respond to the constantly changing situation

General progress

You may hear nothing over the radio for a prolonged period. It's not that the radio has stopped working, it's just that the examiner has nothing to say. He wants to see how you read the road ahead, how you follow and lead other traffic, and how you act on road signs.

Your job is to make progress at the correct speed, and anticipate the actions of other road users. He'll expect you to be checking your mirrors when it's safe, and keeping an eye out for traffic speeding up behind you. Don't just ride with a fixed stare ahead; acknowledge that traffic might emerge from side roads and check these out accordingly.

Remember to dominate your lane, not ride in the gutter. As long as you're happy with the road surface and grip, stay in the centre of your lane (Position 2 below). Nearer to the kerb (Position 1) would be used to effect a left turn and nearer to the centre line (Position 3) to effect a right turn.



By now Positions 1, 2 and 3 should be old friends of yours. Stick to 2 for the test except for junctions and maybe filtering (see next page)



Waiting in a queue is a good time to gather your wits and treat yourself to a few words of encouragement



A classic trap for the unwary candidate: turning right out of a one-way street into a two-way. Position yourself to the right like this or you'll fail

One-way streets

Chances are that if you're in a one way street you'll be asked to turn right at the end. Don't position yourself as for a normal two-way road, only to find your examiner rolling up alongside, positioned to the far right of the road. He's right, you're wrong, you fail. Make sure that, if you're asked to turn right on a one-way street, you position the bike correctly.

Filtering at 10-15mph is fine. But wait to be asked, and stick to the outsides of queues



Filtering

In most parts of the UK you are not expected to filter during your test. Occasionally, if an examiner is running late, he may ask you to filter for a short while. He'll expect you to do this at no more than 10-15mph, and without causing any danger to yourself or other road users. Once the traffic flows again he'll expect you to abandon any filtering and just follow the line of traffic.

Using your mirrors

It's good to keep an eye on the examiner in your mirrors, and let him see that you know where he is, as well as any other traffic behind you. If he's quite a way back, move your elbows in at the same time, so it's really obvious from some

distance that you're checking what's behind you.

Always use your mirrors before you make a substantial change in direction or speed, and back this up with a shoulder check of any available lane before you act.

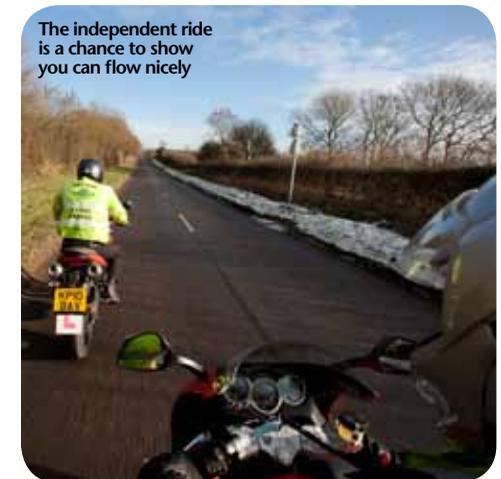
Independent riding

You'll get ten minutes during the test where you'll have to follow road signs for yourself, and navigate your way safely through traffic. The examiner will clearly explain what he wants you to do, telling you to follow signs to a certain place. Or he may show you a map of where he wants you to go.

It's preferable to follow the correct course, but it's more important to show you're safe and competent on the open road, when riding 'for yourself'. As long as the examiner can follow you and can see that your general riding and awareness of others is safe and acceptable he should be happy.

If you take a wrong turning, don't worry or behave erratically, just follow the road and act on the next signs for your given destination. Once the examiner has seen enough, he'll resume giving you instructions over the radio.

The independent ride is a chance to show you can flow nicely





At junctions the examiner's looking for confidence, good timing and observation, and sound decision-making

Junctions

If you're really nervous you might be better off stopping securely at the first couple of junctions, showing the examiner you are safe and competent, rather than making a complete arse of yourself by wobbling nervously into the path of other traffic. Once you've settled down you can relax and show how well you can ride. You'll get plenty more junctions to go at!

Approaching

This is the time to show that you are in control, and that you cannot be tempted to rush anything.

The examiner needs to see clearly your use of the Observe, Signal, Manoeuvre, Position, Speed, Look system (p??). A lifesaver when turning right from a major road into a minor road is mandatory, as there is an available lane for traffic to potentially overtake you. The left turn lifesaver is optional, depending on the activity to your left with cyclists or pedestrians (pp??). Generally, you might not do one on an open, empty road – but in a complicated urban situation you certainly would.

And now comes your first tip. Many riders on their test get to grips with the basics of turning, but are so wrapped up with the OSMPSL routine that they forget to look for the speed limit change signs at the mouth of the junction. This can lead to hesitancy and, more often than not, riding at the wrong speed for the road (whether too fast or too slow, the result is the same). The answer is to expect the signs, and make the turn at a speed where you can pick out what is, after all, the bleeding obvious all around you.

Approaching STOP junctions

Without doubt you will come across some STOP junctions. It is quite amazing how many riders don't see the road markings or the sign, and ride out slowly without stopping. Yes, you've passed the theory test – but the examiner still wants to

see how you apply your Highway Code knowledge on the road. So, *even if* you're in a queue, *even if* you can see it's clear, you must stop at a STOP junction. Let the examiner see your wheels come to a halt, and your left foot go down to the floor.

Deciding

Some junctions will be very tight with little or no visibility; others will have excellent views all around. However tricky or straightforward each one is, it's up to you to decide whether it's safe and appropriate to keep going – or whether it's better to decide, in plenty of time, to stop and reassess from behind the Give Way line.

The examiner is expecting both possibilities. There's no point throwing yourself out onto a busy main road when you're unsure just to try and get a test pass. All you're doing is putting undue pressure on yourself. You have to be 100 per cent sure that it is safe for you to pull out. If, for whatever reason, you aren't, you must stop. The consequences for getting it wrong are too great. Remember, the examiner is asking himself: 'Do I trust this person on a Fireblade tomorrow?'

Moving off

When turning out of junctions, don't worry about lifesaver checks if you've managed to keep it moving, and you were aware of following traffic beforehand. Concentrate instead on potential impact areas with fast-moving traffic on the road you intend to join. Most examiners appreciate that it's better to check the road ahead when you've kept moving, and to introduce shoulder checks if you've had to stop. This makes sense; when you are stationary, it's possible for bicycles, motorbikes or cars to squeeze up alongside you and try to pull out in either direction. Show the examiner that you are aware of this by demonstrating good overall observation before you pull away.



Give parked cars a wide berth – as if all their doors are about to fly open

Overtaking

Parked cars

Examiners are constantly failing people for ‘shaving’ parked cars when the rider could have been further out. Make sure you’re a safe distance from all solid objects to allow for their movement, or the movement of others. It’s crazy to try to stay in your lane, teetering just inside the central dotted line, when you could easily occupy the other lane (oncoming traffic permitting). That dotted line is not a cliff, so ride over it.

Picture where you would be sitting if you had to drive your car past the same scenario. You might easily be near the centre of the opposite lane. So long as there’s no oncoming traffic or junction to the right, this is the safest place to be. Once you see oncoming traffic, sacrifice your position back to your side of the road and reduce your speed appropriately.

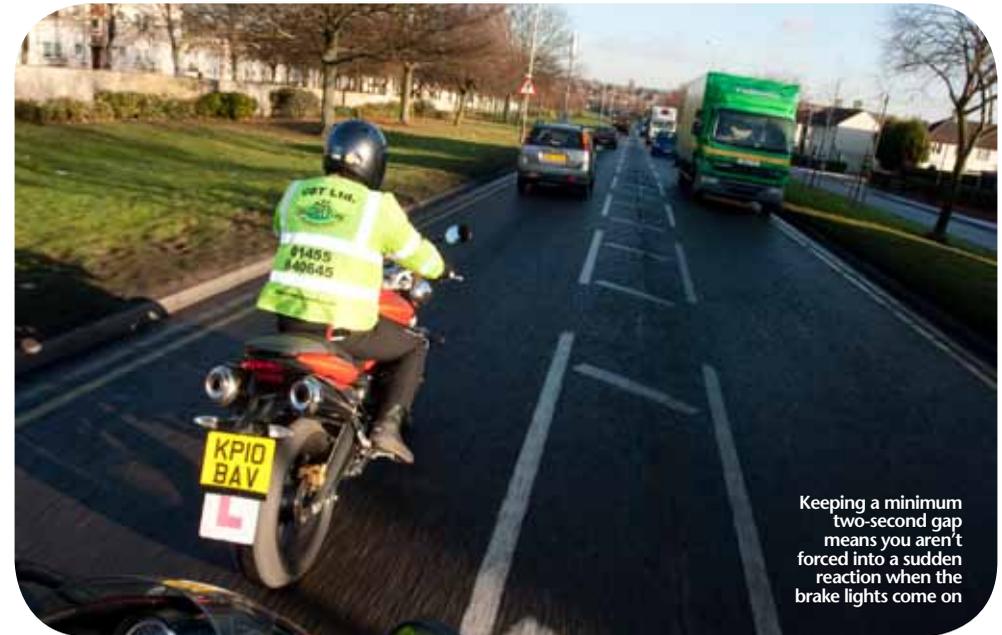
Moving cars

As a general rule you’ll just follow traffic but occasionally a slower vehicle will force a decision. You have to show the examiner that you can make good progress and, where appropriate, that you can overtake safely.

Just ask yourself some basic questions before going for it: Is it safe? Is it legal? Is it worth it?

Only overtake if the vehicle in front is well below the speed limit. Give it reasonable time to build up speed before you decide – there may eventually be no need. This will also give you time to assess safety by looking for oncoming traffic, judging the view ahead and checking emerging junctions. You have to be 100 per cent sure that the move is safe.

Checking for other vehicles looking to overtake too is essential, so use your mirrors and lifesaver. Once you’ve got past, don’t hang around waiting for the examiner – he can look after himself. If you wait for him you’ll fail for lack of making progress.



Keeping a minimum two-second gap means you aren’t forced into a sudden reaction when the brake lights come on

Following distance

The two second rule is an excellent guide, but it’s a minimum. There may be times on your test when three or four seconds would be better, if you need to take in all the road signs and markings passing around and under you, and relate them to the examiner’s instructions.

Many riders miss vital road markings, especially in town, then get confused about lane selection. Lane discipline and selection is essential to pass, so if by hanging back a little more than two seconds you’ll read the road ahead better, do so.

The examiner is looking to see that you don’t get drawn in too close to any situation. Most examiners allow for the occasional moment when you get a little too close in slower traffic, as long as you recognise the danger and act accordingly very quickly. So if you suddenly find yourself too involved with that bus, do something about it and back off immediately. You may still be OK.

There’s one other scenario when extending the two second rule might help: a fast bend ahead. Well before you approach, let the car you’re following pull three or four seconds ahead (as long as you keep it in sight). This will help you to go round smoothly and safely, because the car will give you plenty of warning of any hazards ahead. And if you have to stop on the bend you’ll have double the distance in which to do it.



It’s the same deal on dual carriageways



Whether it's a mini or a giant spiral roundabout, the big thing is to get your approach right

Roundabouts

Roundabouts are there to keep the traffic flowing and, as hesitancy is a common failure point, examiners will give you several sizes and types to deal with.

Approaching

Your job is to make safe progress so, once you've heard the instruction, see if there's a chance to vary your speed smoothly and safely on the approach, with a view to keeping moving in the direction you've been given. What hacks examiners off more than anything is people who don't read the road signs or the road ahead, and always brake at the same point on approach, regardless of traffic conditions. So respond to what's in front of you.

The golden rule when entering (or leaving) any roundabout is to check the available lanes, and select yours well in advance. The examiner will always give plenty of notice so it should be easy to pick out your route. The one thing he doesn't want to see is erratic lane-changing, with hurried observations as you try to figure out which lane goes where. This comedic style will certainly and deservedly result in a fail!

Try as you might, even with the most professional approach, sometimes you will have to stop. This is not a fail – it's good judgement! If you can keep moving on 80 per cent of your roundabouts, fine. Even the best riders have to stop for around 20 per cent. Once you do stop, remember to check around you before pulling away, because whilst you're stationary anything can happen.

Mini roundabout approach

You mustn't ride over the painted centre of a mini roundabout, so set yourself up on approach by dominating your road position – there's only space for one vehicle at a time on the roundabout.

If you move to the right of your lane on approach you'll be inviting traffic up the inside of you, as well as heading straight for the painted surface in the middle. If you then bring the bike back to the middle you'll be moving left and indicating right at the same time. This won't impress the examiner or the impatient car driver who hurriedly took up the space offered. So, when you're asked to turn left or right, don't just move straight away – ask yourself if you should change position, and when it would be safe to do so. Sometimes doing nothing can be the safest bet of all.

Going round

In practical terms it's best to stay on the leftmost available lane when turning in any direction. This demonstrates correct lane discipline and, with luck, keeps some of the traffic around you at a safe distance. So approach smoothly, select your lane, and use good observation to flow onto and through the roundabout.

Even if you think you have the wrong lane, or the roundabout is so big that you just don't know where your lane will lead you, stay with it. Don't flinch, don't doubt yourself and exit wherever it takes you safely. You are better off going the wrong way smoothly and safely than erratically changing lanes to stay on what you thought was the right route.

Leaving

Indicate your intention to leave the roundabout if other road users have time to understand it, and the examiner can notice. If you're leaving a mini roundabout when turning right there's no need to switch your indicator from right to left. You've got enough to do just making the turn! What you must do, though, is a lifesaver to the right, because you are still turning right off one road into another, and we all know how car drivers turn right on mini roundabouts!

Dual Carriageways

It's quite possible that the examiner will only allow you to ride from one junction to the next. This can wrong-foot people who take too long to get up to speed. They can end up being asked to leave before they've finished accelerating, so don't hang about.



He wants to see that you recognise a dual carriageway speed limit (70mph) and are happy to accelerate up to that speed if the traffic conditions allow. If you sit in the nearside lane with slower traffic at 55-60mph when the outside lane is available you will fail – either for not knowing the speed limit or for not being confident enough to ride up to it. Either way the examiner will be asking himself whether he trusts you on the open road on a big bike – and the answer will be a resounding NO. You'll still be expected to reach the speed limit even if it's raining, so just trust your tyres and allow for a greater following and stopping distance.



Joining

Make sure you indicate to join the carriageway, using plenty of observation to judge the speed of the traffic and where you intend to join in. You have to ensure a safe gap between you and the traffic in the nearside lane.

Making progress

Once onto a dual carriageway, establish yourself in the nearside lane and evaluate whether you need to make better progress by using the outside lane to overtake. Make sure that you use plenty of mirror checks and a right lifesaver before deciding to move into the outside lane. You must indicate your intended move in plenty of time.

You're looking for faster traffic arriving behind you. If you pull out and traffic has to slow substantially or brake to accommodate you, the examiner will see this as a serious fault, and fail you. So if faster traffic is approaching, delay your overtake until it has passed. Only indicate and go when it is 100 per cent safe.

Having safely moved into the outside lane, accelerate up to the speed limit and maintain a safe distance from all vehicles. Only stay in the outside lane while overtaking. Once the advantage of using this lane has been exhausted, you must show lane discipline and safely move back into the inside lane. Failure to show lane discipline will also result in a fail.

Leaving

The examiner will give you plenty of notice when he wants you to take the next exit. Make sure you indicate, and maintain your speed where possible, leaving most of your slowing down for the slip road, having checked for vehicles behind you.

Quite often there are no speed limit signs after leaving a dual carriageway. If this happens in your case it's still the national speed limit (60mph), so ride accordingly.

You might only have a mile to show you know what the speed limit is, and aren't scared of it. So get going!





When it's safe, hit the speed limit. When it isn't, don't. On this road the examiner would expect 60mph



During your test, keep in or around Position 2 on the approach to bends

Making progress

Many riders get the impression that the test is all about making progress: you have to get up to speed at all costs or you'll fail. This just adds pressure to an already nervous situation.

It's more accurate to say that you should make appropriate speed safely, without inconveniencing other road users. What does this mean?

To take an example, at one point in the day 30mph might be safe in a high street – in which case you would be expected to recognise this, and ride accordingly at 30. But 20 minutes later, perhaps after it's started raining, or with delivery lorries parked on either side of the road, or with pedestrians looking to cross and traffic looking to pull out from side roads, the situation has changed. This time you may feel 15-20mph is appropriate until the situation improves.

This is the correct thing to do. There are times when you should get a move on and times when you should rein it all in and ride at a speed where you can cope comfortably with the unexpected.

All the examiner wants to see is that you are safe, confident and competent. He wants to pass you (he wants to pass you!) if you can show that you are not a major risk to yourself or others. At the same time, he doesn't want to issue a pass certificate one day and see you in the local paper next week wrapped round a bus!

So if your test takes you past the local school at 3.30pm, with parked cars on either side of the road, and parents and kids milling around, don't go blasting through at 30mph shouting, 'Get out of my way, I'm on my test!' In situations like this, the principle of making progress is trumped by courtesy and safety.

Here's another reason not to rush up to the speed limit without thinking: in a busy situation you can give your brain too much to take in, which means you stop looking for the speed limit and other road signs. Instead, you tend to focus on the Tarmac and the car in front. So ride at a speed where you can see the big picture – whether it's road signs or markings on the road.

And of course once you've seen them, act on them. If you clock a triangular warning sign, or the word SLOW written on the floor, show the examiner you've seen an approaching hazard and adjust your speed accordingly.

What about proper corners?

If your test takes you out of a built-up area and onto roads with bends, above all ride at a speed that ensures you can stop for any obstruction.

On the approach to a bend, the examiner will expect you to maintain your central lane position (Position 2). Don't complicate things by moving to Position 1 or 3 to increase your forward cone of vision (Chapter 6) – this will only scare the examiner! Remember these guys are civil servants who don't need any heart-stopping moments to interrupt their carefully planned day. They just want to see a safe, competent ride.

If you can't see enough of the road ahead when approaching a corner, simply slow down. There's enough roadside furniture on the way into every bend to indicate whether it deserves a little bit of respect. The examiner doesn't mind if you go into a bend a little slower than he'd expect – as long as when you recognise this, and you know you are not going to run wide, you drive out assertively to get back up to speed. So: in slower, out faster.



It's best to leave the whoops and backward somersaults 'til you're round the corner

The end of the test

The hour will fly past – it's like you've been abducted by aliens!

Many riders finding themselves back at the test centre think their test has been cut short. Don't assume anything's wrong; it's just that you've been concentrating so hard for so long that it can all be a bit of a blur. It's normal to be unable to remember what route you took beyond the first three junctions.

Throughout the test you'll have felt every mistake you made – every wobble, wrong gear, mis-timed observation, hesitant move and doubt over the speed limit. Just remember the examiner isn't looking for the best rider in the world; he just wants to make sure that you are safe and competent. He may judge some of the mistakes to be unimportant. Others he may not have seen.

For example, if he asked you to turn right at the end of the road and you did it in too high a gear

with a bit clutch control to compensate, he may not have even recognised this from 50 feet back, behind two cars. All he's concerned with is: 'Did you make the turn?'

So don't worry or think you've got it wrong. Instead, stick with your basic rule: if you haven't crashed yet, keep going. Besides, all you have left is a question to test your riding knowledge.

When the examiner gives you the result, whether you pass or fail, he'll also explain the result and the errors he noted. You are allowed up to 15 minor errors before you fail, as long as they are not the same error repeated more than three times. Any serious error means a fail and possible immediate termination of the test.

If you fail, you'll have to wait at least ten working days before you can re-test.

If you pass, we suggest that you book yourself in for some advanced training within six months.

Well done. Welcome to motorcycling!

End-of-test questions

The examiner may ask you one of these questions at the end. Answers in italics.

1. What advice you would give to a pillion passenger?

Make sure you are wearing the correct clothing, including an approved crash helmet. Sit facing forwards with your feet on the footpegs at all times. Hold on, either to me or grab rail. Don't do any arm signals. Don't fidget. Look where we are going to anticipate acceleration, braking or cornering. Lean with the bike into the corners.

2. How would you change the bike for a passenger?

Adjust the tyre pressures, suspension settings and headlight according to the manufacturer's advice (owner's manual). Fold the footpegs down. Adjust the mirrors up, as the back may squat.

3. How would you change your riding style with a passenger?

Use more throttle in each gear to attain the same rate of acceleration as normal. Brake earlier for

hazards and increase following distances to compensate for extra weight. Corner more slowly in case I have to stop.

4. How is the extra weight on the back going to affect the handling?

Acceleration will be slower. On a powerful bike the front could go very light. Stopping distances will increase. The centre of gravity is higher, so it is wise to go into corners more slowly. The weight distribution will shift rearwards, so the front wheel may feel a little bit vague.

5. What would affect your balance?

Wind; drink or drugs; a poorly maintained machine; additional weight; a badly worn road.

6. Which brake would you use on a slippery surface?

The rear. If the front wheel locks under braking I am liable to lose the front.

7. What do you legally need on a bike to take a pillion?

A pillion seat unit and footrests.



'No hand signals darling, I promise.'