

P plate
Ready Indicator



Australian Government



**Australian
Automobile
Association**

P plate ready indicator: a tool for driving instructors

When learner drivers pass their driving test they often don't have the self-management skills and driving habits to drive safely on their own. This is often contrary to what they believe. Passing the test, for which they may have spent a year preparing, may convince them they are ready.

Wouldn't it be useful to have a way to show learner drivers that they may not be ready to drive on their own or, if they are ready, to be able to explain the real reasons why. Many supervisors too are very keen to know if their learner is ready.

This P plate ready indicator shows you a method for practically assessing the mental skills and driving habits required for safe P plate driving. You can use it as part of a Keys2drive free lesson. You could also build the ideas into normal driving lessons.

Learners become ready to drive on their own by gaining long, wide, and deep experience in P plate situations while on their L's. So the P plate ready indicator looks for the driver qualities that emerge from such experience. It's a simple approach, as such, it may lack some reliability but it makes up for this through its validity—it's more like P plate driving than a normal driving test. Used well, it will enable you to give the learner and supervisor very useful feedback.

Use the following four steps to conduct the exercise:

1. Ask the learner to choose a typical P plate journey.
2. Ask the learner to judge how they think they'll go at P plate ready driving.
3. Tell the learner that they have to find their own way and say how they're doing.
4. Say that afterwards you'll ask the learner to judge how they went before you give them feedback

There's more detailed information on what to do at each step on the next page. The in-car tool will talk you through the drive and let you record what you see. It's designed to be printed double sided so you only have one piece of paper to use and you can give it to the learner afterwards.

More information about the four steps

1 Choose a typical P plate driving journey

Here are some ideas for a short journey:

- Go to the cinema and on the way you need to stop at an ATM.
- Drive to sports training via a friend's place. On the way there, they call your mobile phone.
- Go to get takeaway from but have to pick up shopping from on the way.
- Go somewhere you've always wanted to go when you first get your licence.

Note: The journey you choose should require you to do at least one of the following soon after beginning the trip: change lanes, go ahead or right at a multi lane roundabout, zipper or highway merge.

2 Judge how you will go

On side one of the in-car tool you will see a place for the learner to record how they think they will go at showing you the qualities of a driver who has had long, wide, and deep experience. You could invite the supervisor to judge how the learner will go too. Use the following rating scale.

1	2	3	4	5
Far from ready	Getting close	Borderline	Just ready	Ready

3 You'll have to find your own way

Before you head off make sure you say something like the following:

'When we drive you will have to find your own way as if you're driving on your own. If you really need help please say so.'

'I need to know that you are aware of how well you are driving as you drive. So please tell me if ever you feel particularly worried by a situation and tell me every mistake you think you make. You can mention good points too. If you can talk about your driving as you drive, it's a good sign that you're ready to drive on your own.'

4 Review how you went

After the drive ask the learner to say how they drove and ask them if they wish to revise their P plate ready judgement. You then present your judgment and give them feedback.

Qualities that emerge from experience. Learner judges performance at:	Learner predicts	Learner revises
Long – has good driving habits and complies with all road rules even when experiencing typical P plate driving distractions.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Wide – Remains calm and safe when presented with different situations or ones requiring quick decisions.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Deep – Watches own driving, notices own mistakes or problems, and can fix mistakes without help from others.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

Do this	Ask the learner to also do one or two of these:	Look for signs of long experience	Make notes and record your judgement
<p>Drive for about five to ten minutes towards your planned destination.</p> <p>This part of the drive should require the learner to complete a reasonably complex lane change, or a merging or turning task.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjust the radio or CD Dip the mirror for night driving Move the sun visor to shade the driver's side window Adjust the climate in the vehicle Clean the windscreen 	<p>Use controls so:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> acceleration and braking is smooth path followed is that of an experienced driver combined actions flow <p>Habits are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mirror/s before indicators or brakes Indicators >2 sec before action Head-checks before altering position <p>Is safe and legal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complies with the road rules. Appears cautious whenever there is a possibility of another road user entering their crash avoidance space. 	<p>DI's judgement</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5</p>

Change the situation	Also ask the learner to:	Look for signs of wide experience	Make notes and record your judgement
<p>Create a different situation. Tell the learner there has been a change of plan. Head for a different destination.</p> <p>Consider changing your mind a second time and, get back on track.</p> <p>Require the driver to enter a street on the right by first making a left turn. Ask them how this can make them safer.</p> <p>After getting back to the street that was on the right, stop outside the tenth building on the opposite side of the street.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe events in the distance that could affect their safety, and then Judge another vehicle's CAS, or Judge their own CAS, or Slow to a speed without looking at the speedo. <p>Note: CAS means Crash Avoidance Space. In good conditions, equivalent to the distance the vehicle will travel in three seconds travel space.</p>	<p>When the situation changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signs of long experience remain. The learner appears calm, and quickly works out what to do. (That could involve them pulling safely into the kerb and thinking through the best thing to do.) 	<p>DI's judgement</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5</p>

Look for signs of deep experience	Make notes and record your judgement		
<p>Towards the end of the drive, question the learner's understanding of special P plate risks and ways to manage them. Do they mention and explain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passenger/s in car Use of mobiles and iPods Driving at night, particularly after 10 pm Feeling or being tired and driving Situations involving alcohol or drugs 	<p>Can self-assess: mentioned most mistakes during the drive.</p> <p>DI's judgement</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5</p>	<p>Can self-instruct: said how they could fix own mistakes without help.</p> <p>DI's judgement</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5</p>	<p>Can self-supervise: talked about thoughts and feelings towards risks and safety with little prompting.</p> <p>DI's judgement</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5</p>

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