



BTW Lesson Plans

Preparing for In-Car Instruction

In-car lessons should reflect local driving environments and the rules of the road. The success of the in-car lessons will depend upon the completeness and accuracy of the route plans and lesson objectives. A concurrent, integrated plan of instruction and in-car lessons gives students practice with lessons recently taught in the classroom. Refer to the In-Car Lessons sheet provided in this curriculum and plan to involve student observers.

Long delays between classroom instruction and behind-the-wheel instruction will require additional time in the car to review classroom instruction. It is also important to have procedures, techniques, and route selections clearly written to avoid potential legal issues. Program administrators should have copies of the routes and lesson plans on file.

Tips for Successful In-Car Instruction

- Select a drive route appropriate to the individual lesson objectives and student-driver's ability. Be prepared with an alternate route in case of detours or other traffic problems.
- At the beginning of each session, make sure the student driver and observer(s) understand the objectives of the lesson; do a quick review of the preceding session.
- Check to make sure each student is issued a traffic education permit (TEP).
- Be calm and patient, but be alert at all times. Do not become distracted from the instructional task. The teacher must maintain the highest level of care at all times to ensure the safe operation of the vehicle.
- Headlights must be used at all times. Mirrors should be adjusted for the driver's use.
- Sit so the instructor's left hand can be quickly placed on the steering wheel if necessary.
- Never leave students unsupervised in a vehicle with the motor running.
- As with any instructional setting, food and beverages should not be consumed in the vehicle. Some instructors put all student cell phones and hand-held devices in the trunk during the BTW instruction.
- Read the traffic environment ahead, to the sides and behind while observing the student driver's behavior and ask the student to verbalize the need to change direction or speed.
- When giving directions, first provide students with the path of travel and then state the action to take. For instance: "At the second intersection, prepare to turn left."

- Give directions four to six seconds before the maneuver and always check mirrors before giving directions. The novice driver will take more time to process information than an experienced driver.
- Avoid the use of terms with possible double meanings. Instead of saying “right” to indicate a correct response to a question, say “that’s correct.” It may be helpful to point in the direction you want the student to go.
- Demonstrate what and how to do something to save time. Demonstrations may be as simple as assisting with steering, using the instructor brake, using a drawing or magnetic board, or as elaborate as changing seat positions and actually demonstrating the appropriate actions.
- For each new maneuver, coach the novice driver through two or three practice trials, then allow practice without specific assistance or direction.
- If a mistake is made, have the student repeat the maneuver and verbally coach him/her, step by step, through the process.
- If a lengthy discussion or explanation is needed, move to a safe place to stop and park the vehicle. Use a legal parking area or parking lot. Do not park or stand on the roadway shoulder or impede traffic flow.
- Never allow a novice driver to drive “blindly” into a dangerous situation. Take control or give specific directions prior to entering the high risk driving area. Ensuring student safety is the teacher’s foremost concern.
- Involve the student driver in the evaluation of his/her performance. Complete the Student Driving Log on the back of the TEP immediately after each drive. It is very important to maintain accurate records for each student.

Driver education programs offering the required six hours of in-car instruction will have 12 half-hour lessons. Adapt and adjust the in-car lessons to accommodate longer drives, additional time and to involve student observers in the lesson.

Title—The title should link the classroom and the in-car activities so any person would be able to look at the lesson and understand the information used to introduce the in-car objectives and procedures. This will also help to insure consistent terminology and descriptive phrases.

Preparation—Make a list of any special vehicle requirements, route challenges, cones, tape measure, or other assessment tools needed for this lesson.

Student Activities—This should identify all the directions, maneuvers, and procedures required of the student to perform the lesson. The directives should be in enough detail to allow any parent, jurist, lawyer, instructor, or administrator to take a novice driver through the lesson.

Instructor Comments—This area is for the instructor to list procedures, diagrams, specialized techniques, and temporary adjustments to the route. This information should be written in a manner that is easily understood by any reader.

Conclusions—This should provide some ideas or lesson review comments, suggestions for improvement, and how this lesson links to the next lesson.

Comments and Drawing Area—Each lesson plan should have a designated area for instructor comments and an area that can be used to draw intersections or demonstrate techniques. The drawings may be directly related to the topic areas or may be left blank for instructor use during the lesson.

Instructional Strategies—This area should list the strategies used to facilitate student learning and involve the observer in the lesson.

Discussion Questions—These questions and answers may be used to initiate problem-solving discussions with the observer and the driver.

Evaluation Procedures—This should explain how the oral and written assessments are accomplished based on local program protocols. Assessment information should be written in such a manner that is easily understood by parents and school administrators.

Route Map—This is especially helpful for new instructional staff, and allows program administrators to locate an instructional vehicle in emergencies.

Development Date—The route plan should have a lesson plan development date to indicate revisions. This would document procedures and technique refinements and help with future changes and modifications.

Be sure to review the In-Car Lessons and other documents in the Behind-the-Wheel folder in the Montana Teen Driver Education and Training Curriculum.