

'Vehicle Technology'

Learning Outcomes

- Students will be aware of the variety of new vehicle technologies constantly being introduced
- Students will be able to assess the relevance of these new advancements to them as a new driver
- Students will know where to go to find out more about vehicle technology to assist them in making informed decisions when purchasing their first car

Background Information

It will not be long now before the students of Year 11 will be booking their driving lessons and thinking about getting a car. The activities in this lesson plan are designed to encourage students to discuss a variety of issues related to 'new versus old' car ownership, and the vehicle technologies available. They will also be able to link the safety features and other devices currently available, both to their own driving, and to the cost of insurance premiums.

Part 1: Discussion

This discussion provides a 'starting point' for the lesson to establish if they are aware of the rapid advancement of vehicle technology, what it is, what it does and if they think it is generally something people consider, or should consider, when selecting a car.



Part 2: What is 'Vehicle Technology'?

This is a research and investigative exercise to raise awareness of the variety of technologies currently on the market, what they are for, and where you might look to assess their effectiveness. Students should be encouraged to think about whether the technology is just a 'gadget' and possibly a 'fad', or whether it effectively assists the driver with the driving task or is an essential safety feature likely to reduce the potential of a collision or severe injury.

srsCULTURE support resource 11.7.8 in your curriculum bundle provides some brief information on the vehicle technologies listed. The following websites will also be useful (though there are many more, such as car manufacturer websites, University research sites, car magazine and programme sites, consumer protection sites, such as Which Car etc)

www.rosipa.com
www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk
www.euroncap.com
www.thatcham.org

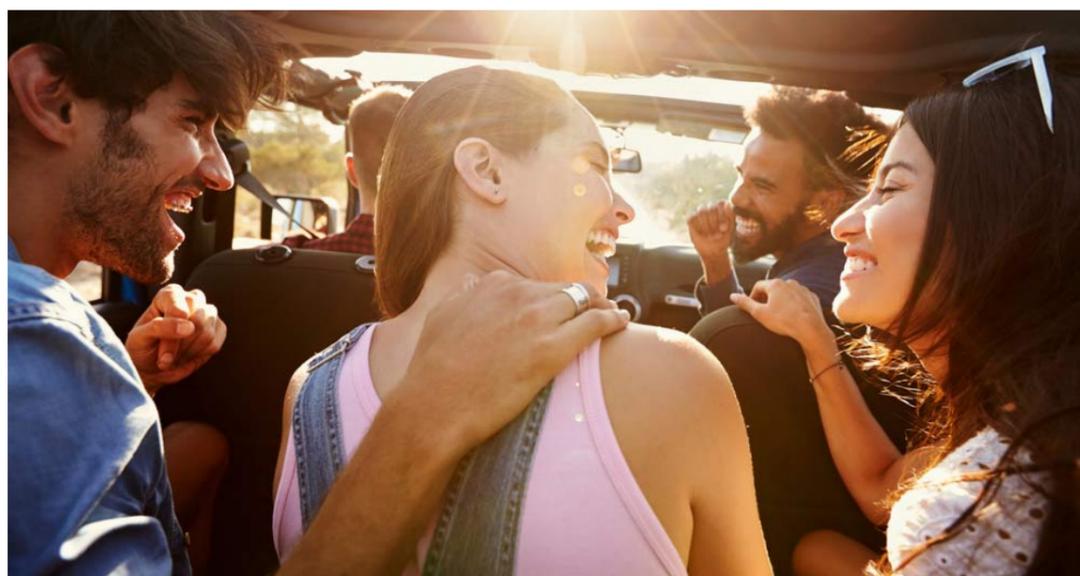
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Part 3: How Might New Vehicle Technologies affect Young Drivers?

1. Some driving instructors are better than others at teaching their pupils how to properly use the technologies available on the car they are learning in.

Students having some knowledge and awareness already will mean they can ask relevant questions and discuss any safety features during their driving lessons.

Some of this may become irrelevant however, when they get their first car as personal experience demonstrated to me. My son learnt to drive with a driving instructor, in a brand-new car, with loads of gadgets and safety features. In particular, it had power steering, ABS, Brake Assist and ESC. His first car however, in which he and I went out practising between lessons, was a 1.0 litre Vauxhall Corsa – good value, low mileage, excellent condition for its age – but old! It didn't have power steering even! It handled completely differently to his driving instructor's car. It handled completely differently to my car, as I discovered when I drove it – it had been a long while since I had driven a car without power steering, or ABS. Luckily, his driving instructor was also an 'old car fanatic' and took him out on several occasions in the Corsa, explaining the different approaches he needed to make, the different braking techniques and time and distance allowances. In many ways this seems to have made him a better driver, understanding the vehicle rather than relying on the technologies to keep him safe or get him out of difficulties. He has moved on now to a car with much more modern technology. Being aware of the differences is the key!



2. Another investigative exercise. Factors students could consider when exploring insurance premiums are:

Their age and gender
Where they live
Make and model of the car
Year
Colour
Any modifications
Where it might be kept (roadside or garaged)
Who else will drive it
Safety features and technologies
'Black Box' fitted

Part 4: Plenary (Whole class)

You could finish off by asking the students where 'vehicle technology' and 'safety features' might now come in a list of their personal parameters for buying their first car.

Passengers

As a passenger in a car we have just as much responsibility to ride safely. In fact, as a passenger we have an important role to keep the driver of the vehicle focused, not distracted. So, next time you are a passenger in a car, whether it is with your parents or friends, think about how you can do your part to reduce the chances of becoming involved in an accident.