

## 4-year-old joyrider (Wed 9 Feb)

### WARM UPS

**CHAT:** Talk in pairs or groups about driving / being four years old / the things little kids get up to / joyriding / underage driving / hot milk / Formula One...

To make things more dynamic, try telling your students they only have one minute (or 2) on each chat topic before changing topics / partners. Change topic / partner frequently to energize the class.

**CAR BRAINSTORM:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with cars. Share your words with your partner / group and talk about them.

**DANGER KIDS:** Talk to your partner / group about all the naughty or dangerous things you got up to as a kid. Change partners / groups and share the funniest / most shocking / most unbelievable stories with your new partners / group

**MY DRIVING HISTORY:** Talk to your partner about your driving history – the first lesson / driving experience / near misses or accidents / epic journeys / the cars etc. If you cannot drive, you have probably been driven, so you can talk about driving too!

**QUICK LEARNERS:** If a 4-year-old can learn to drive a car to the nearest store, what other 'hidden talents' might they have? Discuss which of the following a 4-year-old might be capable of - and of the possible damage!:

- a. Ordering things online using a credit card
- b. Starting up a chainsaw
- c. Deleting computer files
- d. Using a microwave oven
- e. Handling a gun
- f. Riding a motorbike
- g. Ordering delivery pizza on the telephone
- h. Take the dog for a walk
- i. Telling the neighbours your financial situation and other secrets
- j. Make the baby's lunch

### PRE READING EXERCISES

**WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionaries, or a search engine, to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... of the words 'joy' and 'ride'.

**TRUE / FALSE:** Predict from the headline whether these statements are true or false:

- a. Most people can't remember the first time they got behind the wheel of a car. T / F
- b. A four-year-old boy drove a car by himself. T / F
- c. He wasn't tall enough to see over the steering wheel. T / F
- d. He stole the car. T / F
- e. He drove 7 kilometers at an average speed of 23 kph. T / F
- f. He learnt to drive by watching his mother. T / F
- g. Amazingly, he caused no damage on his drive. T / F
- h. The boy was arrested by the police for underage driving. T / F

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

- |     |                      |                          |
|-----|----------------------|--------------------------|
| (a) | remember             | hardly                   |
| (b) | got behind the wheel | notice                   |
| (c) | shakily              | commotion                |
| (d) | solo                 | get to                   |
| (e) | barely               | unaware                  |
| (f) | toddler              | unsteadily               |
| (g) | reach                | recollect                |
| (h) | attention            | unaided                  |
| (i) | oblivious            | sat in the driver's seat |
| (j) | fuss                 | pre-schooler             |

**PHRASE MATCH:** Match the following phrases based on the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- |     |                        |                                    |
|-----|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| (a) | remember the first     | attempt                            |
| (b) | they got behind the    | into gear                          |
| (c) | have                   | the fuss he had caused             |
| (d) | first solo driving     | two parked cars                    |
| (e) | started the            | time                               |
| (f) | an average             | memories of                        |
| (g) | put the car            | underage driving                   |
| (h) | colliding into         | wheel of a car                     |
| (i) | arrested for           | ignition                           |
| (j) | He seemed oblivious to | speed of seven kilometers per hour |

**DEFINITIONS:** Match the following words with the **most likely** definitions (Please think about the headline!):

(a) **get behind the wheel** (v)

- (i) drive a car
- (ii) fully support and be in favor of wheels

(b) **shakily** (adv)

- (i) performed nervously and unconfidently, not smoothly or perfectly
- (ii) driving a car at dangerously high speeds

(c) **solo** (adj)

- (i) doing something alone
- (ii) when somebody is way below average height for their age group

(d) **a spin** (n)

- (i) a very naughty little boy or girl
- (ii) a short drive somewhere in the car

(e) **toddler** (n)

- (i) somebody who cannot drive very well
- (ii) a child of 2 or 3 years old

(f) **ignition** (n)

- (i) the part of the car where you put in the key to start the engine
- (ii) the part of the brain that enables small children to learn very quickly

(g) **accelerator** (n)

- (i) another name for the brake pedal on a car
- (ii) a pedal on a car that makes the car go faster when pressed

(h) **lap** (n)

- (i) a name given to an underage driver
- (ii) your leg space above the knees that small children sit on when you are sitting down, and on which people place their bags on the train

(i) **oblivious** (adj)

- (i) to have no idea about what is happening all around you
- (ii) to want to live a very fast and exciting lifestyle

(j) **fuss** (n)

- (i) the emotion you experience when you go to the video store when it is closed
- (ii) lots of unnecessary excitement and/or arguing over a small and unimportant matter

## GAP FILL

### 4-year-old joyrider (Wed 9 Feb)

**BNE:** Most people can remember the first time they got \_\_\_\_\_ the wheel of a car and slowly but shakily drove those first few hundred meters. One little boy may not have \_\_\_\_\_ of his first solo driving attempt because he is only four years old. Yes, \_\_\_\_\_ tall enough to see over the steering wheel, a four-year-old boy took his mother's car for a spin yesterday in Michigan, USA. The unnamed post-toddler woke up in the \_\_\_\_\_ of the night and decided he wanted to watch a video. He took his mother's car key, got into the car, \_\_\_\_\_ the ignition, and drove 400 meters to the video rental store, at an average speed of seven kilometers per hour. He wasn't tall enough to reach the accelerator, but knew how to put the car into \_\_\_\_\_ from having watched his mother while sitting on her lap as she drove. He also managed to stop the car. On his return journey he attracted the attention of the police. He reversed home, \_\_\_\_\_ into two parked cars as well as the police car that tried to stop him. The police officer thought the car was driverless as he couldn't see anybody steering. The boy was not arrested for underage driving, but taken home for a glass of hot milk. He seemed \_\_\_\_\_ to the fuss he had caused. His reaction was, "The video store was shut".  
Next stop Formula One.

*middle memories gear behind oblivious started colliding barely*

**DISCUSSION:** Ask each other the following questions:

What naughty things did you get up to when you were small?

What are your earliest memories?

What are your earliest memories of getting behind the wheel of a car?

Do like driving, or being a passenger?

What should be the legal driving age?

The boy drove while underage. What should happen to him or his mother?

Were / Are you a quick learner?

Can you remember the first time you studied English / got on a bicycle / used a computer / went to the movie theatre / spoke English to a native speaker ...?

Are you oblivious to a lot of what happens around you? What kind of things are you oblivious to (pain / current affairs / being talked about behind your back / financial problems...)?

Is it OK to drive a car with a child sitting on your lap?

Do you like hot milk?

What do you drink before going to bed?

Would you like to drive a Formula One car?

Teacher / Student additional questions

## INTERNET / WEB LINKS:

The full story from local Michigan newspaper:

<http://www.mlive.com/news/grpress/index.ssf?/base/news-20/1107877629316620.xml>

About joyriding an the law for kids:

[http://www.lawforkids.org/laws/view\\_law.cfm?id=7&topic=](http://www.lawforkids.org/laws/view_law.cfm?id=7&topic=)

More on kids and joyriding:

<http://www.acjnet.org/youthfaq/joyriden.html>

Legal driving ages around the world:

<http://www.2pass.co.uk/driving-age.htm>

## HOMEWORK

**LETTER TO HIS MUM:** Write a letter to the boy's mother about the dangers of driving with a child seated on one's lap.

**CHILD SAFETY:** Create a child car safety information sheet for parents.

## FULL TEXT

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**BNE:** Most people can remember the first time they got **behind** the wheel of a car and slowly but shakily drove those first few hundred meters. One little boy may not have **memories** of his first solo driving attempt because he is only four years old. Yes, **barely** tall enough to see over the steering wheel, a four-year-old boy took his mother's car for a spin yesterday in Michigan, USA. The unnamed post-toddler woke up in the **middle** of the night and decided he wanted to watch a video. He took his mother's car key, got into the car, **started** the ignition, and drove 400 meters to the video rental store, at an average speed of seven kilometers per hour. He wasn't tall enough to reach the accelerator, but knew how to put the car into **gear** from having watched his mother while sitting on her lap as she drove. He also managed to stop the car. On his return journey he attracted the attention of the police. He reversed home, **colliding** into two parked cars as well as the police car that tried to stop him. The police officer thought the car was driverless as he couldn't see anybody steering. The boy was not arrested for underage driving, but taken home for a glass of hot milk. He seemed **oblivious** to the fuss he had caused. His reaction was, "The video store was shut". Next stop Formula One.