

Inadequate use of mirrors is not only a very common reason to gain minors in the driving test, it also leads to many driving test failures.

There are three mirrors you need to use. The main interior mirror and the two external side mirrors. The main mirror is completely flat and gives you an exact view out of the back as though you were looking. To adjust this mirror you will need to make sure your seat is in the correct position, then using your thumb and forefinger, grip the plastic surrounds and move the mirror so as you can see clearly out the rear window with as little of the interior as possible.

Unlike the main mirror, the two side mirrors have convex glass. The glass bends slightly outwards. The reason for this is to give you a wider viewing angle of the rear.

For an ideal view out of each mirror, the part of the mirror closest to you, you will need to see a slight amount of the rear of the car. If you can see the end of the road in the mirror, the end of the road should be along the central horizon of the mirror.

Using your mirrors

Generally every time you change direction or speed then you will need to look in your mirrors. If you are changing direction, use the main mirror first followed by the side mirror of the direction you intend to go. If you are slowing down or stopping, look in the main mirror to establish how close the car behind is. The reason being, if the car behind is very close to you, then you may slow down earlier to give the car behind more time to react.

Tips to avoid common driving test mistakes

Forgetting to look in the appropriate mirrors before signaling.

Looking in your mirrors warns you of any dangers from behind. Persistently forgetting to look in the appropriate mirrors will result in a test fail.

Using the mirrors but not acting on what was seen.

If for example you are taking a left turn and see a cyclist riding alongside your car and failing to slow down or stop to let the cyclist pass.

Looking in the side mirror first and then the main mirror.

The main mirror gives an exact life size image of what's behind. This needs to be checked first.

Not taking a secondary look in your mirror.

A final glance in the left mirror is essential before taking a left turn. Especially look out for cyclists.

Looking in your mirrors too much.

Your main attention should be on the road ahead. Look in your mirrors when changing speed or direction. Frequent checks should be made in normal driving but don't over do it.

Not looking in your mirrors before moving off.

The minimum checks you need before moving off is the main mirror, right mirror and the right side blind spot.

Not looking in your main mirror before braking.

By looking in the main mirror before braking gives you an idea how close the car is behind. If the car is very close, slow down earlier giving him more time to react.