

Driving Instructor

Teach teenagers to drive from the passenger seat. Cheap to start, and calm is the whole job.

TYPICAL PAY

\$46,800

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$30k to \$93k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

up to 1 year

after high school

DEMAND

Moderate

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

**Driving schools, high schools,
training cars, community colleges**

How you get there

- 1 Meet the basics** Now
 Most states require you to be at least 21, hold a license for several years, and have a clean driving record with no serious violations.
- 2 Background check** 2 to 6 weeks
 Fingerprints and a criminal record check, because you sit alone in a car with minors.
- 3 Instructor training course** 1 to 6 weeks
 A state approved course covering teaching methods, traffic law and in-car instruction. Texas, for example, licenses instructors through its Department of Licensing and Regulation.
- 4 Written and driving exams** 1 day
 A knowledge test on traffic law and teaching, plus a demonstration of your own driving.
- 5 Get licensed and start** Weeks
 The state issues your instructor license or certificate. In New York the Department of Motor Vehicles licenses both driving schools and their instructors.

Pros and cons

- + Weeks to qualify, and often no cost to you at all
- + Hours that fit around another job or study
- + A licensed role, so not anyone can undercut you
- Mostly part-time and paid per lesson, which is why the low end is so low
- Evenings and Saturdays, which is exactly when your friends are free
- Real physical risk sitting beside an inexperienced driver

Optional boosts

Commercial driver training. Motorcycle safety instructor. State teaching certificate. Adaptive driving instruction.

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Self-Enrichment Teachers (25-3021.00)
 Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation: driver education and safety
 New York State Department of Motor Vehicles
 American Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/us/careers/driving-instructor>

Good to know

There is a second brake for a reason

Training cars are fitted with dual controls so the instructor has their own brake, and sometimes a clutch, on the passenger side. Instructors use it rarely, and every single time it matters.

Graduated licensing changed the job

Every state now phases teenagers in through a learner stage with supervised hours and passenger limits before a full license. That staged system is why paid behind-the-wheel instruction became a n...



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