

SUBJECT 1 (科目一) · CHINA · ENGLISH EDITION

Chinese Driving Test Study Guide

How the theory exam actually works, what to study, the 12-point demerit rules, and six practice questions explained in English.

100 questions in the exam	45 minutes on the clock	90% correct needed to pass	1,955 questions to practise
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1. The exam at a glance

Item	Detail
Questions	100 - a mix of multiple choice and true/false statements
Time limit	45 minutes
Pass mark	90 out of 100 (90%)
Where	Computer terminal at a Vehicle Management Office (车管所) or authorised test centre
Languages	Offered in English and other foreign languages as well as Chinese; availability varies by city
Part of	Four subjects: 1 theory, 2 field skills, 3 road driving, 4 safe and civilised driving theory
Attempts	Many offices allow two attempts per appointment; failed attempts mean paying and rebooking

Rules differ between cities. Confirm the current requirements with your local 车管所 before you book.

2. Getting a licence as a foreigner

If you already hold a foreign licence, most applicants still sit Subject 1. The usual path:

- A valid visa or residence permit (usually three months or longer) plus passport.
- Accommodation registration from your local police station or hotel.
- An official Chinese translation of your foreign licence, if you are converting one.
- A medical examination (Certificate of Physical Conditions) at an approved hospital.
- Pass the Subject 1 theory test, then collect the licence (often within a week).

Theory-test exemption: Belgium, the United Arab Emirates, France and Serbia have mutual recognition agreements with China, so licence holders from those countries may convert without sitting Subject 1. Source: english.shanghai.gov.cn, September 2026.

3. What the exam covers: five topic areas

Topic category	Questions	Share
Road Traffic Conditions & Regulations	1201	61%

Topic category	Questions	Share
Driving License & Vehicle Management	312	16%
Motor Vehicle Basic Knowledge	200	10%
Traffic Safety Violations & Penalties	164	8%
Traffic Accident Handling	78	4%
Total practice set	1955	100%

Road traffic conditions and regulations is nearly two thirds of the bank, so it is where study time pays off first.

4. The 12-point demerit system

You start each cycle with 12 points. Violations subtract them; reach zero and you must redo safety education and the theory test to get them back.

Points	Typical violations
12	• Driving after drinking alcohol. • Escaping after a traffic accident causing minor injury or death (not constituting a crime). • Driving on highway reversing, retrograde, or crossing the central dividing band. • Driving a motor vehicle without license plates or using forged/altered plates. • Driving school bus/heavy truck/medium bus over speed limit by 20%+, or other passenger vehicles by 50%+ on expressways.
9	• Deliberately blocking or defacing motor vehicle license plates. • Driving a motor vehicle that does not match the permitted vehicle type on your license. • Fatigue driving: driving continuous medium/heavy trucks or school buses for more than 4 hours without resting (or resting less than 20 mins). • Driving on expressways exceeding the speed limit by 20% to 50%.
6	• Violating traffic light signals (running red lights). • Driving a motor vehicle while your driver's license is suspended or temporarily withheld. • Failing to avoid or yield to school buses as required by regulations. • Illegal driving or stopping on the emergency lane of expressways.
3	• Failing to yield to pedestrians in a crosswalk. • Driving a motor vehicle while making or answering handheld phone calls. • Failing to maintain a safe following distance when driving on expressways. • Driving a motor vehicle on highways exceeding the speed limit by less than 20%.
1	• Driving a motor vehicle without carrying your driver's license or vehicle driving license. • Failing to wear a seat belt in accordance with regulations. • Failing to use lighting/signals as required (e.g. high beams in city streets). • Driving a motor vehicle exceeding the authorized passenger capacity or load limit by less than 10%.

5. How to study: three passes

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|-----------|---|
| 01 | Work through each topic once
Start with road traffic rules, then signs, vehicle basics, penalties and accident handling. Answer every question, including guesses. |
| 02 | Read every explanation you got wrong
The explanation names the rule - a red fork light closes the lane, a green arrow releases it. The same rules repeat across questions. |
| 03 | Sit timed mocks until you are consistent
Take full 45-minute simulations until you score 95% or better several runs running, then book the appointment. |

6. Practice questions with answers

Taken from the 1,955-question practice set. Answer first, then read the explanation.

- A** Crosswalk
B Pay attention to pedestrians [CORRECT]
C Pay attention to children
D School zone

Explanation: Pay attention to pedestrians: Used to warn vehicle drivers to slow down and pay attention to pedestrians. Pay attention to pedestrians: Used to warn vehicle drivers to slow down and pay attention to pedestrians. Crosswalk: Indicates that the area is a crosswalk. Motor vehicle drivers should pay attention to pedestrians and stop to let pedestrians pass when encountering pedestrians entering the crosswalk.

- A** Right [CORRECT]
B Wrong

Explanation: Concentration is the basis for careful driving. Only by driving with full concentration can you detect various situations on the road in time. Careful observation can give the driver a more comprehensive and accurate understanding of the surrounding traffic environment, road conditions, and the dynamics of other vehicles and pedestrians. Preventive prevention is to predict possible dangerous situations in advance and

- A** within 5 years
B within 10 years
C lifelong [CORRECT]
D within 20 years

Explanation: The law clearly stipulates that if someone escapes in an accident and constitutes a crime of traffic accident, his driver's license will be revoked, and he will not be able to re-obtain a motor vehicle driver's license for life. "Road Traffic Safety Law" Article 101, Paragraph 2: If you escape after causing a traffic accident and constitute a crime, the motor vehicle driving license will be revoked by the traffic man

7. Practise online

Practise all 1,955 questions free in your browser. No app download and no account: the free tier covers the first 10 questions of every topic plus one timed mock exam. Full access unlocks every question, unlimited mock exams and answer explanations. kemuone.pages.dev

About this guide: Kemu One is a study aid. Its questions are English study translations prepared for practice; the official exam is set in Chinese and its question set is published by the traffic authority. Exam facts checked against public sources including english.shanghai.gov.cn (September 2026). Always prepare against the current official material for your city.