

12. Starting and finishing an on-road journey (including doing a U-turn.)

National Standard reference: 3.1.1, 4.1.1, 4.2.1

Instructing points

Starting an on-road journey

- Check the road and wheel your cycle onto the road when it's clear.
- Start from a position where you can see clearly and be seen by traffic in front and behind, and which doesn't interrupt the flow of traffic. Normally start from a position that is parallel with the kerb. Where there are parked cars, this position will be at the edge of a space between parked cars.
- Get on your cycle ideally from the left, on the left side of the road.
- Check all around and, at the last moment, behind.
- Set off when there is time and space. People moving on the road have priority so you only start when it is clear.
- Scan ahead and check behind (normally over your right shoulder) regularly while riding straight ahead.
- Choose the most suitable riding position: primary ('Follow me') or secondary ('Pass me').


Ending an on-road journey


- Scan ahead to choose a suitable space to pull in next to the kerb.
- Look behind.
- If appropriate, signal left to communicate your intention to pull in to the left.
- Slow down with both brakes.
- Look over your left shoulder to check it is clear before pulling in next to the kerb.
- Look back again and then get off your cycle and move onto the pavement.


Performing a U-turn

- Check ahead to find a space wide enough for you to turn and then look behind.
- Slow down and perform a last check to ensure it's clear. Only perform a U-turn if there is space and time for you to do so, with no other road user in either direction. There is no need to signal.
- Signal, check and pull over to the left if someone is there. Wait until it is clear before performing your U-turn (stopped U-turn). This approach (stopping before the U-turn) can also be used in situations where extra checking is required.
- Check behind after doing the U-turn.

Additional resources

 [Video – Start on-road journey](#)

 [Video – Stop on-road journey](#)

 [Video – U-turn](#)

Activity ideas

It may be best to deliver these activities on a straight section of road (without junctions) where there are areas with and without parked cars.

The nature and complexity of activities should be rider-led.

When giving your demonstration, make sure that all riders can watch it in full. Ask open questions to draw out the instructing points around starting and stopping. You should also describe the secondary riding position. Ask the riders about any hazards they can see, and how they might respond. Introduce the idea of the 'four key skills'.

If there are parked cars, then consider starting with a straight section of road where a change in riding position is not normally needed.

Riders then attempt the activity (either on their own or with a partner) and observe each other's attempts (peer observation/review) rather than all being sent down to the start. You and any co-instructors should position yourselves at the points of highest risk. Give feedback to each rider when required.

Consider progressing the activity to include a U-turn. This enables your riders to perform a longer linked journey. Give an instructor demonstration first if required. Typically, an instructor will need to be positioned near to the U-turn.

Where there are two instructors, one will normally be positioned at the start (on either side of the road) and the other at the end/U-turn point (on the side of the road where riders would end their journey). When riders are observing instructor demonstrations or each other, the best place to observe may be on the pavement on the other side of the road, or in a gap between parked cars. Unless riders are cycling in pairs, ideally a single rider will be positioned in the starting position, with the next riders waiting for their turn on the pavement. You will need to agree on how you'll communicate that you're ready to observe riders' attempts. This could be a raised hand to indicate that you are ready. The riders must understand that they need to make their own independent decisions and checks when starting (your raised hand is not a signal for them to go!). As one rider sets off, the next rider can (on receiving your signal) then line up for their attempt.

The instructor at the end point gives quick feedback. They can also ask the rider who has just ended their journey to observe the next riders.

When necessary, gather the riders together to provide group feedback and to agree on what they can improve on for next time.

Sample questions to check understanding

- Q. Where is a good place to start from?
- Q. Who goes first, people using the road or people wishing to join the road?
- Q. What do you do if you are cycling along, and a road user catches up with you?
- Q. How can you ensure people behind have seen you?
- Q. What should you do when ending your journey?
- Q. Can you do a U-turn if there is traffic around you? Is there a signal for a U-turn?

Differentiation

Inclusion

Consider starting and finishing at or near to dropped kerbs if riders are using non-standard cycles such as hand-cranked cycles.

Extension

Simplify

Provide 'buddy riding' support or you can partner riders up if they are very nervous for their first attempts.

To make the exercise more manageable, you could start by asking riders to do 'stopped' U-turns and then move on to decision making with 'flowing' U-turns (where they can go if clear).

Challenge

Get riders to cycle longer distances with each attempt.

Cut down on instructor 'talk time' with each attempt – only prompt where necessary.

Risk benefit assessment

Risk

While it is tempting to use a very quiet road for these first on-road activities, doing so will not give riders a chance to learn how to interact with other road users.

Mitigation

Ensure there is some traffic for riders to interact with or consider moving to a busier site when riders are ready for this.

Benefits

Riders get more comfortable sharing the road with others which helps their development as the course progresses.