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EA04. Describing a Traffic Accident

Student Name: _____ Student ID Number: _____

Instructor: _____ Level: _____ Date: _____

For media links in this activity, visit [the LLC ESL Tutoring website for Upper Level SDLAs](#). Find your SDLA number to see all the resources to finish your SDLA.

Section 1: Introduction

In Traffic Accidents: Part 1, you learned about the steps you need to take after you've been in a car accident. Now that you know what to do if you are in a traffic accident, you will learn how to describe a car accident. When describing car accidents, we use a lot of specific words to describe the type of accident as well as the results of the accident. It is very important to be able to describe an accident accurately for a police report. In addition, it is always helpful if you are able to tell your friends about an accident you were in or witnessed.



Section 2: Vocabulary

Read the passages on the next page about traffic accidents. Write the **bold-faced** words and phrases from each passage in the appropriate space below. The first one has been done for you as an example.

Accident Vocabulary

Types of Accidents

Describing an Accident

Results of an Accident

Speeding





Passage 1:

On a summer afternoon, on I-25 south of Raton, New Mexico, I was driving along very slowly in fog after a thunderstorm. I could only see about 100 feet ahead of me, and hail covered the road like little marbles, making it very slippery. A man in a Cherokee passed me in the left lane **speeding**. Suddenly there was a huge log in his lane. He **lost control** and swerved into my lane in front of me. I **slammed on my brakes**, but he hit my left front fender and I spun around and ended up in the ditch on the right side of the road. He **sideswiped** another car that was in the far right lane and ended up at the hospital with some **serious injuries**. Thankfully there were no **fatalities**. My car was pretty much **totaled** after the **collision**, but thankfully his insurance paid for me to get a new one fairly quickly. I had **whiplash** for a few days, but I'm OK.

Passage 2:

I was going north on Bandera with my wife and two kids in the car after one of my kid's soccer games. We decided to eat lunch at a restaurant that was on the right side of the road, and I needed to change lanes, so I put on my blinker, and I looked over my shoulder to see if it was clear. I didn't see anybody coming, so I changed lanes. I really needed to get over two lanes, so I looked again while I still had my blinker on. I didn't see anybody coming. I changed lanes one more time. All of a sudden, I heard a **screech**, and a car **rear-ended** us. Immediately after the **wreck**, I checked to make sure everybody in my car and in the other car were okay. I felt really silly because I changed lanes right in front of this guy. But I didn't see him, so I don't know if he was speeding or why I didn't see him. The police must have thought we were both **at fault** because his insurance and mine split the cost of the repairs. His car was only **damaged** a little – I think his front fender and headlights were broken. My whole back **windshield was shattered** and the back end of the **car was crumpled**.

Adapted from: FinalProject_Accidents_AdultEd.pdf

Section 3: Describing an Accident

Part 1: Past Progressive and Simple Past

When you describe your accident, it is not only important to know relevant vocabulary, but it is also important to be able to use the past progressive and simple past verb tenses together correctly. Look at the charts below to understand how and when to use these two verb tenses.





Forming the Simple Past and Past Progressive:

Simple Past

Irregular Verbs:

I spoke / He saw / They went / We knew

Regular Verbs: verb + -ed

I worked / He danced / They laughed / We used

Past Progressive

Past form of “be” + verb-ing

I was speaking.

You were speaking.

He/she/it was speaking.

They were speaking.

We were speaking.

Using the Simple Past and Past Progressive:

Simple Past

Focuses on finished actions

I read a book last night.

One action happened after another

She came home, switched on the computer, and checked her emails.

Past Progressives

Focuses on the duration of actions

I was reading a book last night.

Actions happening at the same time

She was checking her emails while her brother was watching TV.

Simple Past + Past Progressive

Interrupted Actions – The simple past interrupts the past progressive action.

I was reading my book when the electricity went out.

She was checking her emails when the computer shut down.





YOU TRY:

Look at the reading passages in **Section 2** again and make a list of all the verbs in the simple past and past progressive

Simple Past

Past Progressive

Part 2: Answering Wh-Questions

When you are describing a car accident, it is important to be very detailed. It is best if you answer all the **Wh-questions** in your description to be sure you include all the necessary information. Look at reading passage 1 in **Part 1** again and notice how it includes information that answers the wh-questions below. Also notice the use of the simple past and past progressive in the answers.

Wh- Question	Reading Passage 1 Description Description/ Answers
Who was involved in the accident?	<i>The narrator, a man in a Cherokee, and another car that <u>was</u> sideswiped <u>were</u> involved in the accident.</i>
Where did the accident happen?	<i>The accident <u>happened</u> on I-25 south of Raton, New Mexico.</i>
When did the accident happen?	<i>The accident <u>happened</u> on a summer afternoon.</i>
What was the weather and road conditions?	<i>The person <u>was driving</u> in fog after a thunderstorm.</i>
How did the accident happen?	<i>The accident <u>happened</u> when a man in a Cherokee <u>was speeding</u>, <u>lost</u> control and <u>swerved</u> into a different lane.</i>
Whose fault was it?	<i>The man in the Cherokee <u>was</u> at fault.</i>
What injuries occurred?	<i>The man in the Cherokee <u>suffered</u> some serious injuries, and the narrator <u>got</u> whiplash, but there <u>were</u> no fatalities.</i>
What car damage occurred?	<i>The narrator's car <u>was</u> totaled after the accident.</i>





Part 2 (continued): Answering Wh-Questions

Think of a car accident you were involved in. If you have never been in a car accident, think of an accident you have seen on TV or in the movies, or one you have read about in a book. Complete the chart below with information from the accident. Remember to use the new vocabulary from **Part 1**, and be sure to use the past progressive and simple past when possible.





Wh- Question	Your Accident Description Description/ Answers
Who was involved in the accident?	
Where did the accident happen?	
When did the accident happen?	
What was the weather and road conditions?	
How did the accident happen?	
Whose fault was it?	
What injuries occurred?	
What car damage occurred?	





Section 4: Student Self-Assessment

Complete this table BEFORE meeting with a tutor.

Communication Skill	I can't do this YET. 	I can do this WITH help. 	I can do this WITHOUT help. 	I can TEACH this to a classmate. 
I can categorize vocabulary used to describe car accidents.				
I can use the past progressive and simple past verb tenses accurately when describing a car accident.				
I can include necessary information when describing a car accident.				

Here are some words/phrases I need to practice.

Good Job!

Now make an appointment

with a tutor on the LLC ESL Tutoring Website

www.mtsac.edu/llc/passportrewards/llctutoring








Section 5: Practice with a Tutor!

Meet with a tutor, and share this activity with the tutor. The tutor will ask you questions to check your understanding. You may also ask the tutor any questions that you might have.

Grading Rubric

Possible Points	Need Practice  (0-1 Point)	Good Job  (2-3 Points)	Excellent Work  (4-5 Points)
Content	Not enough information provided in responses and often does not use correct vocabulary.	Provides most important information in responses and some of the time uses correct vocabulary.	Provides all necessary information in responses and most of the time uses correct vocabulary.
Skill: Speaking	More than 6 mistakes saying words; needs guessing more than 3 times.	Not more than 5 mistakes saying words; needs guessing on 1-2 words or sentences.	Not more than 2 mistakes saying words; needs no guess about meaning.
Oral Fluency	Speaks mostly in phrases, individual words; many pauses.	Sometimes speaks in complete sentences; several pauses.	Speaks in complete sentences; a couple pauses okay.

*Students must receive at least 10 points to move on

Possible Points: _____ / 15

Tutor Comments:

Congratulations! Keep going.

You have successfully completed this SDLA and are ready to continue to the next.

Work on this more.

You have not yet mastered this SDLA. It is recommended that you complete it again.

Tutor Signature: _____

Date: _____

