



Karen in America

上一期，Karen与我们分享了初到美国第一周的故事。本期，Karen将讲述她在美国学车以及考驾照的经历。对于大多数中国人来说，在本土考驾照已经不是一件易事，更何况是在美国这样一个无论从国情还是交通状况都和中国有差异的国家。那么，我们一起来看看，Karen在美国学车时，又发生了什么有趣的故事吧。

Learning to Drive

Getting a driver's license in America has another use besides allowing the holder to drive. I want to have a driver's license as my photo identification. This is the way it is in America, where there is no such thing as a government-issued ID card. A driver's license is valid for identifying who you are. I want to have one so that I do not need to worry about losing my passport when travelling in the country. So, this is another reason why I need to learn driving.

I have to pass a driver's test, including a knowledge test and a road test before I can obtain a driver's license. In America, every state has its own traffic regulations. For instance, the highway speed limit in Pennsylvania is 65 miles per hour whereas in its neighboring state, West Virginia, the speed limit will reach 70 mph. However, the majority of the road signs are similar in different states. Also, a driver's license is recognized in other states as well.

Driving in Pittsburgh, where I am living, is not easy. The city is known for its hilly roads. It's a bit like Chongqing or Hong Kong, where steep roads and sharp curves abound. As a beginner taking driving lessons on the road, I have to coordinate my foot on the brake and my hands on the wheel when I am on an incline. The big challenge for me is driving through a narrow two-way street, on both sides of which cars are parked back to back. Since some of the roads

are narrow, I feel intimidated when a giant bus from the opposite direction makes a wide turn. It is like a gigantic monster pouncing on me.

Oh, let me backtrack to the time when I studied for the knowledge test. This process is similar to preparing for a driver's written test in China. I have a driver's manual which tells me everything that a driver should know. The knowledge test in America is simple. I think the questions are set to make everyone pass instead of tricking the examinees. After I pass the knowledge test, I receive a learner's permit

which allows me to drive on the road in the company of a licensed driver. So I practice, practice and practice with my instructor, including parallel parking, which is part of the road test. It is also a difficult part for many students.

On the exam day, a blue-eyed young examiner sat in the car with me. I was in and out of the parallel parking zone in two minutes. I had only practiced the move 100 times. I then slowly drove along several designated roads. In 15 minutes, the test was over.

"Congratulations! Not many people pass on their first try," said a middle-aged clerk at the counter where I posed for my new license photo. That was how I got my American driver's license. 🍀

