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# 1

## Road signs



All of these are road signs. Do you know them? Are they different in your home country? Why are they important? How can we respect them?



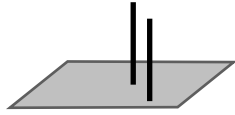
In front of you there's a red traffic light and a police officer who is telling you to go on. What will you do? Will you stop or will you go on?

These two signs inform you that the road you are driving on is going to narrow. Are they the same or different? When you see one or the other of them, do you have to behave the same way?



## 1. What road signs are for

Road signs help drivers not to make mistakes on the road: they remind them of the rules that everybody has to respect while driving in order not to make accidents and give you useful information to quickly find out the places that you are looking for. Road signs can be:



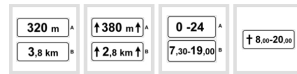
**VERTICAL** (positioned from top to bottom)



**HORIZONTAL** (parallel to the surface of the earth)



**BRIGHT** (with lights that turn on and off)



**COMPLEMENTARY** (so said because they are associated to other road signs)



In the *Road Code*, road signs are thus described:

### *Article 38, Road Sign System*

1. The road sign system includes the following groups:

- a) Vertical signs;
- b) Horizontal signs;
- c) Bright signs;
- d) Complementary signs and equipment.

2. Road users must respect the prescriptions notified by means of road signs though they

might be nonconforming with the other car circulation rules. The prescriptions given by means of traffic lights, except the yellow flashing one which signals danger, prevail over those given by means of vertical or horizontal signs that regulate the road right of way. The prescriptions notified by vertical signs, prevail over those notified by horizontal signs. In every case, police signalling prevails over any other type of sign.

8) Match the pictures with the right definitions.



(a)



(b)



(c)



(d)



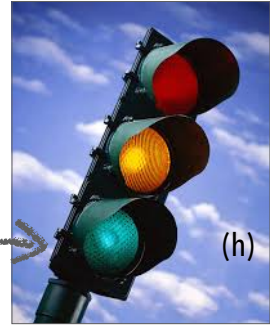
(e)



(f)



(g)



(h)

1. Horizontal road signs

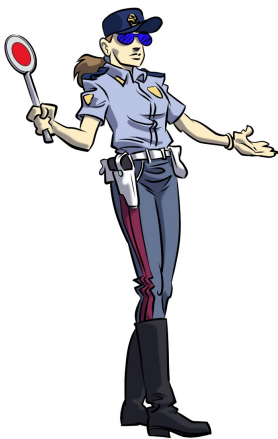
2. Vertical road signs

3. Bright traffic lights

4. Complementary signs

## 2. The hierarchy of road signs

By **hierarchy** we mean the greater, or lesser, importance that different road signs have: at the top, for importance, there are the hand signals made by Police Officers; in the second place, there are the bright signs, in the third place the vertical road signs or the horizontal ones. If the vertical signs give directions contrasting with those given by horizontal ones, the directions given by vertical signs prevail. If Police Officers are on duty in the road or street, their signals prevail over every other sign or signal, even if they request something different from bright signs, from vertical signs or horizontal ones.



1<sup>st</sup> place



2<sup>nd</sup> place



3<sup>rd</sup> place



4<sup>th</sup> place

### 3. The shapes of road signs

Road signs have three different shapes:











		<b>triangular</b> (like a triangle)
		<b>round</b> (like a wheel)
		<b>squared</b> (like a picture)

#### Triangular signs



Triangular signs warn drivers or pedestrians walking on the road that there is some kind of danger nearby (the danger is at 150 m from the sign). Danger signs are white-coloured with a red border; the black drawing in the centre of the sign shows the type of danger. Some drawings are easy to understand, others are quite stylized (that is, made with a few strokes) and therefore they are more difficult to understand.

#### Pictures easy to understand

		In this sign you can see a roe-deer
		In this sign a _____ is depicted
		In this sign a _____ is depicted
		In this sign _____ are depicted
		In this sign a _____ is depicted

#### Pictures difficult to understand

		Here is pictured a railroad crossing
		In this sign you can see a _____
		In this sign you can see a _____
		In this sign you can see a _____
		In this sign you can see a _____

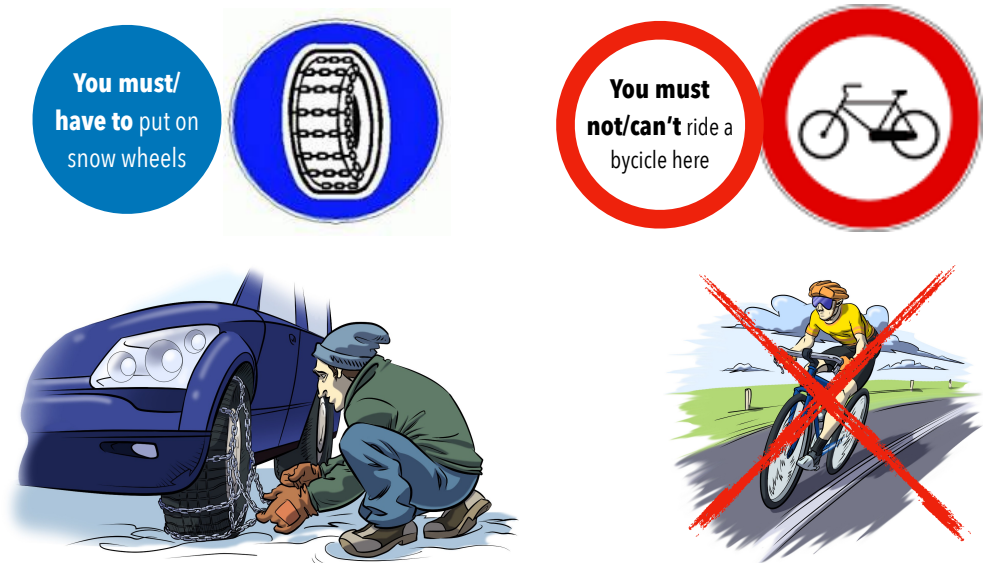
9) Draw arrows to connect definitions, pictures and explanations.

<p><b>A. TRAFFIC CIRCLE (GYRATORY TRAFFIC).</b></p>	 1	<p>a) It forewarns drivers about a stretch of road where the circulation is a dual-track type on the same roadway, after a one-way road</p>
<p><b>B. SIMMETRICAL NARROWING</b></p>	 2	<p>b) It is used to pre-signal the passage of bicycles and similar means (ex: push scooters)</p>
<p><b>C. CHILDREN</b></p>	 3	<p>c) It forewarns drivers about a symmetrical shrinkage of the roadway which makes car circulation dangerous.</p>
<p><b>D. WANDERING DOMESTIC ANIMALS</b></p>	 4	<p>d) It pre-signals places frequented by children such as schools, public gardens, playing fields</p>
<p><b>E. CYCLE CROSSINGS</b></p>	 5	<p>e) It forewarns about a stretch of nearby road with common crossing of domestic animals.</p>
<p><b>F. WANDERING WILD ANIMALS</b></p>	 6	<p>f) It pre-signals a railway crossing provided with barriers or semi-barriers.</p>
<p><b>G. TWO WAY TRAFFIC</b></p>	 7	<p>g) It pre-signals a nearby stretch of road with likely crossing of wildlife.</p>
<p><b>H. RIGHT TURN</b></p>	 8	<p>h) It forewarns drivers about a railroad crossing without barriers.</p>
<p><b>I. RAILWAY CROSSING WITH BARRIERS</b></p>	 9	<p>i) It forewarns drivers of an intersection between two or more streets regulated by traffic circle (gyratory traffic).</p>
<p><b>L. RAILWAY CROSSING WITHOUT BARRIERS</b></p>	 10	<p>l) It forewarns a dangerous turn.</p>



## Round signs

Round signals, which have the shape of a wheel, give an order: an order is a command to which you have to obey. The word "order" is the same, in meaning, as the word "prescription" and round signs, in the Road Code, are called "prescription signs". The orders given by prescription signs can be *affirmative* (you must do what is depicted in the sign), or *negative* (you must not do what is depicted in the sign).



An order which tells you what you **MUST/ HAVE TO DO** is called an **OBLIGATION**

An order which tells you what you **MUST NOT/CANNOT DO** is a **PROHIBITION**

Prohibition signs are white-coloured with a red border; obligation signs are blue-coloured.

11. Separate prohibition signs from obligation signs: put the obligation signs into the sack on the left; put the prohibition signs into the one on the right.





Round signs show what **you have to do** , but in some cases they notify that you can **choose between two possibilities**.



You **must** go straight on.



You **can** turn right or left.



## Prohibitions and obligation for all citizens

There are other PROHIBITIONS and OBLIGATIONS always effective, not only while circulating in a road or street.

Article 54 of the Italian Constitution reminds us all that:



*All citizens have a duty to be faithful to the Republic and to comply with its Constitution and laws.*

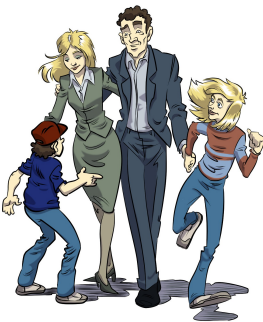
- According to you, which things does every citizen **HAVE TO** do and which ones **CAN** he/she do? (See examples given in Italian in the text).

All Italian citizens ...

- \_\_\_\_\_ pay taxes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ do military service.
- \_\_\_\_\_ donate blood
- \_\_\_\_\_ comply with the laws..
- \_\_\_\_\_ get married and have children.

Article 30 of the Italian Constitution states that:

*It is a duty... of all parents to support, provide schooling and educate their children, even though they were born outside marriage.*



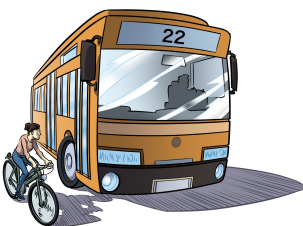
- According to you, what do parents **have to** do and what **can** they do (if they decide to?).

Parents in Italy ...

- \_\_\_\_\_ send their children to school until they are 16.
- \_\_\_\_\_ give their children some weekly pocket money.
- \_\_\_\_\_ enroll their children into a sports society.
- \_\_\_\_\_ nourish their children.
- \_\_\_\_\_ take them on holiday to the seaside.

- Against atmospheric pollution, what do we **have to** do and what **can** we do?

- ✓ At home, heating \_\_\_\_\_ reach a maximum of 20 degrees.
- ✓ When we throw away rubbish and garbage, we \_\_\_\_\_ sort/differentiate waste collection.
- ✓ In town, we \_\_\_\_\_ drive an electrical car.
- ✓ We \_\_\_\_\_ circulate by bicycle only.
- ✓ We \_\_\_\_\_ use public transport.



## Square and rectangular signs

Square or rectangular signs give information. They are called indication signs because they give people circulating on the road useful information about driving or about interesting places, services or road facilities.

Square or rectangular signs may be of several different colours:



green for  
Motorways



blue for  
extra-urban roads



white for  
urban roads



yellow for  
temporary signs



brown for tourist  
location



orange per  
schoolbuses or taxis



red for  
SOS signs



black for  
industrial areas

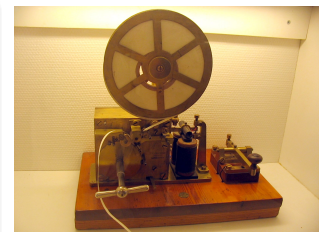


### Curiosities: SOS

What does that mean? The 3 letters SOS are the universal signal to ask for help, but they don't have any meaning. It is the transcription of the signal for help in the Morse Code, used in transmissions by telegraph, which consists of three dots, three dashes and three dots.

(... — — — ...)

This signal was introduced by the German government in 1905 and then, during the second International Radiotelegraphic Conference in Berlin in 1906, it was recognized as International Signal. It became effective on 1st July 1908.



... — — — ...  
S O S

## A quiz for driving license

Try to answer the following questions about road signs , taken from quizzes for the Driving Licence. Decide if these five statements are True or False and then cross out T (vero=true) or F ( falso=false).

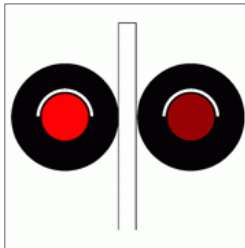
**Question n. 1 -**  
Traffic light signals and traffic police signals



The traffic lights in the picture indicate a track reserved to motorcycles

T  F

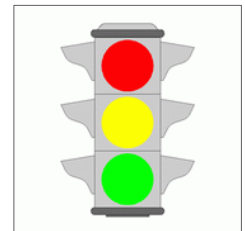
**Question n. 2 -**  
Traffic light signals and traffic police signals



The lights in the picture are positioned on the top one of the distance panels of a rail crossing

T  F

**Question n. 3 -**  
Traffic light signals and traffic police signals



If you meet a traffic light like the one you see in the picture, you are allowed to pass on when it is off, but paying the utmost attention

T  F

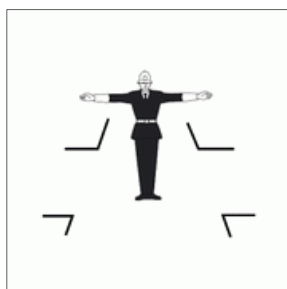
**Question n. 4 -**  
Traffic light signals and traffic police signals



The green light which is on in the picture allows pedestrians to cross the road

T  F

**Question n. 5 -**  
Traffic light signals and traffic police signals



When the traffic warden is positioned with both arms open towards our driving direction, as can be seen in the picture, we can turn left or right but we can't go straight on

T  F

Soluzioni: 1.F, 2.F, 3.V, 4.V, 5.F