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## **Samoa drivers switch to left side of road**

<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/0909/090910-drivers.html>

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10th January, 2009

# THE ARTICLE

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0909/090910-drivers.html>

The Pacific island nation of Samoa has switched from driving on the right side of the road to the left. Samoa becomes the first country since the 1970s to do this. The change has been a success so far. It happened on Monday and in the first two days, there were no reports of accidents. The government gave Samoans a three-day holiday to prepare for the switch. Despite many people initially not wanting to change, there was a national celebration at 6 am Monday morning when the new driving rules became law. The change was very official. Just before the deadline, Police Minister Toleafoa Faafisi told drivers over the radio to stop driving. Then Samoa's Prime Minister Sailele Malielegaoi told his nation to drive to the other side of the road.

The government made the switch to bring Samoa in line with Australia and New Zealand, where around 170,000 Samoans live. One benefit of the new change for Samoans is that it is now cheaper to import cars with steering wheels on the right. This is good for the environment. The newer, imported cars are more modern and more environmentally friendly than the gas-guzzling, left-hand imports from America that are currently on the roads. Not everyone is happy with the change. Owners of Samoa's 500 buses have asked the government for money to change their door to the right side of the bus. Until this happens, bus passengers have to get off the bus and step into the middle of the road.

# WARM-UPS

**1. DRIVING:** Walk around the class and talk to other students about driving. Change partners often. Sit with your first partner(s) and share your findings.

**2. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

*the Pacific / islands / on the right / the 1970s / accidents / 3-day holidays / deadline / switches / benefits / environmentally friendly / being happy / passengers / buses*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

**3. SWITCHES:** Is it easy for you to switch to new ways of doing things? Complete this table. Show your partner(s). Change partners and share what you heard.

Switch	From ... to...	Easy to switch? Why (not)?
sides of the road		
left / right hand		
Internet browser		
Game console		
TV news station		
Sports team		

**4. DRIVING:** Students A **strongly** believe all countries should drive on the right side of the road; Students B **strongly** believe countries should choose which side of the road they want to drive on. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

**5. DRIVING LAWS:** Look at these driving laws and make new ones with your partner(s). Show them to other students. Vote on the best ones as a class.

- speed
- use of horn
- age of vehicle
- driving age
- environmentally friendliness
- seat belts / air bags
- alcohol
- eyesight

**6. DEADLINE:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'deadline'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

# BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0909/090910-drivers.html>

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| a. Samoan drivers have stopped driving on the left hand side of the road. | T / F |
| b. The change caused many accidents on the first day.                     | T / F |
| c. Samoans had a three-day holiday to get ready for the switch.           | T / F |
| d. The Samoan prime minister told drivers to switch sides of the road.    | T / F |
| e. Samoans now drive on the opposite side of the road to Australians.     | T / F |
| f. The switch to the right side of the road will benefit the environment. | T / F |
| g. Samoa's bus drivers are incredibly happy with the change.              | T / F |
| h. Bus passengers now need to be extra careful when getting off buses.    | T / F |

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article.

- |              |                     |
|--------------|---------------------|
| 1. nation    | a. until now        |
| 2. so far    | b. time limit       |
| 3. initially | c. in the region of |
| 4. deadline  | d. alight           |
| 5. stop      | e. plus             |
| 6. around    | f. occurs           |
| 7. benefit   | g. country          |
| 8. currently | h. cease            |
| 9. happens   | i. at first         |
| 10. get off  | j. presently        |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- |                            |                          |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. The Pacific island      | a. of accidents          |
| 2. the first country since | b. happy with the change |
| 3. there were no reports   | c. the deadline          |
| 4. there was a national    | d. import cars           |
| 5. Just before             | e. nation of Samoa       |
| 6. bring Samoa in line     | f. left-hand imports     |
| 7. it is now cheaper to    | g. celebration at 6 am   |
| 8. gas-guzzling,           | h. middle of the road    |
| 9. Not everyone is         | i. the 1970s to do this  |
| 10. step into the          | j. with Australia        |

Samoa drivers switch to left side of road – 10th January, 2009

# WHILE READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0909/090910-drivers.html>

**GAP FILL:** Put the words into the gaps in the text.

The Pacific island \_\_\_\_\_ of Samoa has switched from driving on the right side of the road to the left. Samoa becomes the first country \_\_\_\_\_ the 1970s to do this. The change has been a success so far. It happened on Monday and in the first two days, there were no \_\_\_\_\_ of accidents. The government gave Samoans a three-day holiday to \_\_\_\_\_ for the switch. Despite many people \_\_\_\_\_ not wanting to change, there was a national celebration at 6 am Monday morning when the new driving rules became \_\_\_\_\_. The change was very \_\_\_\_\_. Just before the deadline, Police Minister Toleafoa Faafisi told drivers over the radio to stop \_\_\_\_\_. Then Samoa's Prime Minister Sailele Malielegaoi told his nation to drive to the other side of the road.

*law*  
*since*  
*prepare*  
*official*  
*driving*  
*nation*  
*initially*  
*reports*

The government made the switch to bring Samoa in \_\_\_\_\_ with Australia and New Zealand, where around 170,000 Samoans live. One \_\_\_\_\_ of the new change for Samoans is that it is now cheaper to import cars with steering \_\_\_\_\_ on the right. This is good for the environment. The newer, imported cars are more \_\_\_\_\_ and more environmentally friendly than the gas-guzzling, left-hand \_\_\_\_\_ from America that are currently on the roads. Not everyone is \_\_\_\_\_ with the change. Owners of Samoa's 500 buses have asked the government for money to change their door to the right side of the bus. Until this \_\_\_\_\_, bus passengers have to get off the bus and step into the \_\_\_\_\_ of the road.

*modern*  
*middle*  
*benefit*  
*happens*  
*imports*  
*line*  
*wheels*  
*happy*

## LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0909/090910-drivers.html>

The Pacific island nation of Samoa has switched from driving \_\_\_\_\_ of the road to the left. Samoa becomes the first country since the \_\_\_\_\_. The change has been a success so far. It happened on Monday and in the first two days, there \_\_\_\_\_ accidents. The government gave Samoans a three-day holiday to prepare for the switch. Despite many \_\_\_\_\_ wanting to change, there was \_\_\_\_\_ at 6 am Monday morning when the new driving rules became law. The change was very official. Just before the deadline, Police Minister Toleafoa Faafisi told \_\_\_\_\_ to stop driving. Then Samoa's Prime Minister Sailele Malielegaoi told his nation to drive to the other side of the road.

The government made the \_\_\_\_\_ Samoa in line with Australia and New Zealand, where around 170,000 Samoans live. One \_\_\_\_\_ change for Samoans is that it is now cheaper to import cars with steering wheels on the right. This is good for the environment. The newer, imported cars \_\_\_\_\_ and more environmentally friendly \_\_\_\_\_, left-hand imports from America that are currently on the roads. Not everyone is happy with the change. Owners of Samoa's 500 buses have asked the government for money to change their door \_\_\_\_\_ of the bus. Until this happens, bus passengers have to get off the bus and \_\_\_\_\_ of the road.

# AFTER READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0909/090910-drivers.html>

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'switch' and 'left'.

<b>switch</b>	<b>left</b>
---------------	-------------

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. GAP FILL:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• nation</li><li>• since</li><li>• reports</li><li>• initially</li><li>• law</li><li>• radio</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• in line with</li><li>• benefit</li><li>• newer</li><li>• happy</li><li>• door</li><li>• middle</li></ul>
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# STUDENT DRIVING SURVEY

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0909/090910-drivers.html>

Write five GOOD questions about driving in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.



## DRIVING DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'drivers'?
- c) What are drivers like in your country?
- d) What do you think of drivers in other countries?
- e) Do you think it's easy to drive on the other side of the road?
- f) What was the last big change your government made to driving laws?
- g) Are there many accidents in your country?
- h) What was the last deadline you had?
- i) Do you prefer being a driver or a passenger?
- j) What kind of driver are you (would you be)?

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## DRIVING DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Why did Samoa change sides of the road?
- c) What do you think the government did to prepare for this change?
- d) Why do some countries drive on the right and some on the left?
- e) Do you think it's easy for people to suddenly change their driving habits?
- f) What are the environmental benefits of this switch?
- g) Do you think the bus owners should get money from the government?
- h) What is the biggest cause of accidents in your country?
- i) What kind of road rage is there in your country?
- j) What questions would you like to ask Prime Minister Sailele Malielegaoi?

# LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0909/090910-drivers.html>

The Pacific island nation of Samoa (1) \_\_\_\_\_ switched from driving on the right side of the road to the left. Samoa becomes the first country since the 1970s to do (2) \_\_\_\_\_. The change has been a success so far. It happened on Monday and in the first two days, there were no reports (3) \_\_\_\_\_ accidents. The government gave Samoans a three-day holiday to prepare for the switch. Despite many people (4) \_\_\_\_\_ not wanting to change, there was a national celebration at 6 am Monday morning when the new driving rules became (5) \_\_\_\_\_. The change was very official. Just before the deadline, Police Minister Toleafoa Faafisi told drivers over the radio to stop driving. Then Samoa's Prime Minister Sailele Malielegaoi told his (6) \_\_\_\_\_ to drive to the other side of the road.

The government made the switch to bring Samoa in (7) \_\_\_\_\_ with Australia and New Zealand, where around 170,000 Samoans live. One (8) \_\_\_\_\_ of the new change for Samoans is that it is now cheaper to import cars with steering wheels on the right. This is good for the environment. The newer, (9) \_\_\_\_\_ cars are more modern and more environmentally friendly than the gas-(10) \_\_\_\_\_, left-hand imports from America that are currently on the roads. Not everyone is happy with the change. Owners of Samoa's 500 buses have asked the government for money to change their (11) \_\_\_\_\_ to the right side of the bus. Until this happens, bus passengers have to get off the bus and (12) \_\_\_\_\_ into the middle of the road.

## Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- |     |               |                |                 |                 |
|-----|---------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1.  | (a) having    | (b) have       | (c) had         | (d) has         |
| 2.  | (a) this      | (b) these      | (c) the         | (d) switch      |
| 3.  | (a) by        | (b) of         | (c) to          | (d) at          |
| 4.  | (a) initials  | (b) initialed  | (c) initially   | (d) initial     |
| 5.  | (a) laws      | (b) lawfully   | (c) law         | (d) lawyer      |
| 6.  | (a) nations   | (b) nation     | (c) nationality | (d) national    |
| 7.  | (a) line-out  | (b) line up    | (c) lining      | (d) line        |
| 8.  | (a) benefit   | (b) beneficial | (c) benefits    | (d) beneficiary |
| 9.  | (a) importing | (b) imported   | (c) imports     | (d) importer    |
| 10. | (a) guzzle    | (b) guzzles    | (c) guzzled     | (d) guzzling    |
| 11. | (a) mirror    | (b) fuel tank  | (c) door        | (d) engine      |
| 12. | (a) step      | (b) stair      | (c) ladder      | (d) tread       |

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# HOMework

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find out more about Samoa. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

**3. DRIVING:** Make a poster about differences in driving around the world. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

**4. THE OTHER SIDE:** Write a magazine article about Samoa's new driving law. Include imaginary interviews with one person who agrees with it and another who disagrees with it.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

**5. LETTER:** Write a letter to Prime Minister Sailele Malielegaoi. Ask him three questions about his decision. Give him three suggestions on what he can do to improve road safety. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

# ANSWERS

## TRUE / FALSE:

a. T      b. F      c. T      d. T      e. F      f. T      g. F      h. T

## SYNONYM MATCH:

- |              |                     |
|--------------|---------------------|
| 1. nation    | a. country          |
| 2. so far    | b. until now        |
| 3. initially | c. at first         |
| 4. deadline  | d. time limit       |
| 5. stop      | e. cease            |
| 6. around    | f. in the region of |
| 7. benefit   | g. plus             |
| 8. currently | h. presently        |
| 9. happens   | i. occurs           |
| 10. get off  | j. alight           |

## PHRASE MATCH:

- |                            |                          |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. The Pacific island      | a. nation of Samoa       |
| 2. the first country since | b. the 1970s to do this  |
| 3. there were no reports   | c. of accidents          |
| 4. there was a national    | d. celebration at 6 am   |
| 5. Just before             | e. the deadline          |
| 6. bring Samoa in line     | f. with Australia        |
| 7. it is now cheaper to    | g. import cars           |
| 8. gas-guzzling,           | h. left-hand imports     |
| 9. Not everyone is         | i. happy with the change |
| 10. step into the          | j. middle of the road    |

## GAP FILL:

### Samoa drivers switch to left side of road

The Pacific island **nation** of Samoa has switched from driving on the right side of the road to the left. Samoa becomes the first country **since** the 1970s to do this. The change has been a success so far. It happened on Monday and in the first two days, there were no **reports** of accidents. The government gave Samoans a three-day holiday to **prepare** for the switch. Despite many people **initially** not wanting to change, there was a national celebration at 6 am Monday morning when the new driving rules became **law**. The change was very **official**. Just before the deadline, Police Minister Toleafoa Faafisi told drivers over the radio to stop **driving**. Then Samoa's Prime Minister Sailele Malielegaoi told his nation to drive to the other side of the road.

The government made the switch to bring Samoa in **line** with Australia and New Zealand, where around 170,000 Samoans live. One **benefit** of the new change for Samoans is that it is now cheaper to import cars with steering **wheels** on the right. This is good for the environment. The newer, imported cars are more **modern** and more environmentally friendly than the gas-guzzling, left-hand **imports** from America that are currently on the roads. Not everyone is **happy** with the change. Owners of Samoa's 500 buses have asked the government for money to change their door to the right side of the bus. Until this **happens**, bus passengers have to get off the bus and step into the **middle** of the road.

## LANGUAGE WORK

1 - d    2 - a    3 - b    4 - c    5 - c    6 - b    7 - d    8 - a    9 - b    10 - d    11 - c    12 - a

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