

Travelling

Reading

Read through this rather long text over the next day or so, noting some of the key words concerned with **trains, boats, cars, coaches** and **planes**. As you read, note down the details of each of the six journeys described.

Travel Broadens the Mind

June 29th ... June 30th ... July 1st. And **they're off**. **Suitcases packed**. Notes left for the milkman. **Arrangements made** for the budgerigar to be looked after. They're all off.

Uncle Bill and Auntie Jane are **on the quayside** at the **cross-channel port** of Dover – the first stage of their Mediterranean **cruise** – ‘the **voyage** of a lifetime’ their **travel agent** called it. They’ve been through **customs** (half an hour’s delay while suitcases were emptied in search of missing **passports**) and they’ll be **embarking** soon. When they **go aboard**, Bill will finally be allowed to take those **boarding cards** out of his mouth.

Granny’s at **the coach station** armed with her special old-age pensioner’s **season ticket** – a kind of **awayday, runabout, extended period, half-price ticket** rolled into one. Today she’s off on a **one-day sightseeing excursion** to Stonehenge, Blackpool Tower and Canterbury Cathedral.

Julia’s with her boyfriend **at the airport**, kicking their **cases** through the **departure lounge** of what they hope is **Terminal 3** and the right place to be for the **package holiday charter flight** that their **tour operator** assured them would be leaving sometime this morning. To their right, the **1st class passengers** are sipping champagne cocktails; to their left, those in **economy** and **tourist class** are drinking coffee from the machine and, under their feet, those **on stand-by**, are looking hopefully up from their sandwiches.

Mum and Dad are already **on the open road**. They decided to make an early start on their **touring holiday** through the Loire valley. ‘Your turn to **drive** now. Come on, let’s get moving. **Switch on**, then. OK, it’s **all clear**. **Pull out**, there’s **nothing coming**. Well, **take the handbrake off**. Right, **indicate**. Come on, **drive away**. At last! Right, **keep over**. **Keep to the right**. **Change gear**, then. Come on, **accelerate!**’

‘**Porter!**’ ‘Sir?’ ‘How much?’ ‘50p.’ ‘No thanks; I’ll manage my own **luggage**.’ Uncle Mac is about to **board** the 10.40 **inter-city express** to Glasgow for a fortnight’s holiday back in the homeland. ‘Do I have to **change**?’ ‘No, it’s a **through train**, sir, **non-stop** all the way.’ It looks as if quite a few expatriates have had the same idea. The **compartments** all look full – especially the **non-smokers** – and the **buffet car** already sounds like Glasgow on the night of a Celtic-Rangers football match.

My brother’s on the **slip road** of the M1 **motorway** at **Junction 14**, a **rucksack** on his back containing **sleeping bag**, biscuits and a change of underwear. He’s been there for an hour and a half with his homemade sign saying ‘Anywhere’, trying to **thumb a lift**. There are no **hostels** or **transport cafés** in sight. The rucksack is getting heavier and the sky is getting darker. It’s not much of a life sometimes, **hitch-hiking**.

Oh dear. Granny's coach has got **stuck** in a **traffic jam**, a **queue** of cars as far as the eye can see. OK, so central Birmingham is **on the direct route** from Blackpool to Canterbury. But during **the rush-hour**? With thousands of **commuters heading** for home? Not a good plan. After all, what are **bypasses** and **ringroads** for? 'Right, you can **overtake** this one. There's no **speed limit** here. Oh, a **diversion**. You'd better **turn off** the **main road**. **Pull across** to the middle. Now **keep in the right lane**. I mean the left lane. I mean ...'

Crashes at take-off, mid-air collisions, flight recorders never recovered, no **survivors** ... 'This is your **captain** speaking' wakes Julia's boyfriend up. Another nightmare over. The **stewardess** is smiling down at him. '**Fasten your seat-belts**, please.'

Uncle Bill and Auntie Jane have settled into their **cabin**, **unpacked** their things and have gone up **on deck**. The sea is calm, the sunset is out of this world, and Uncle Bill is beginning to feel just a little bit **seasick**. They are due to **set sail** in half an hour.

Traffic is still **crawling** along behind and in front of Granny's **coach**. You can see the casualties by the side of the road, in **lay-bys** and on the **grass verges – bonnets up, overheated engines, steaming radiators**. The **guide** is into his second hour on the history of Canterbury Cathedral. 'Toilets 1 mile!' the cry is heard. There is great happiness.

'Right, here's a **garage**. 'Essence' must mean **petrol station**. We'd better **pull in**. Come on, **slow down**. Now, what's French for '**fill up the tank**' and '**top up the battery**' and ... ?'

Brother got a **lift** half an hour ago – for five miles. He was dropped at the next **exit** off the motorway and is now trying his luck on a **minor road**. There's a **four-star hotel** on his left (**full board** £35 a night for a **single room**), a **guesthouse** on his right (£15 per person for **bed and breakfast**) and a long road ahead of him.

Granny's having her **packed dinner** and gazing at the silhouette of Canterbury Cathedral against the night sky. No matter. She can sleep on the **return journey** (**reclining seats** and **air-conditioning** on the coach), and tomorrow's another day. There's a **trip** to the local brewery; that sounds much better.

Uncle Mac is sitting on his cases in the **corridor** outside the **guard's van**, surrounded by a ring of miniature bottles of scotch.

Julia's plane has **landed**. Her boyfriend's wondering whether to try and save something from the bottles of **duty-free spirits** he's just dropped. Julia's more interested in the **connecting bus** that's supposed to take them to their final **destination**.

Uncle Bill is **on the bridge** with the **captain**, asking him if there's any chance of being **put ashore** before the sea gets any rougher.

'Well, it's about time we found a bed for the night, don't you think? You see that **motel** on the left? There! There, where I'm pointing! There, the one with the ... Hey, **pull up!** Pull up! Oh dear, **pull over**. I wonder what the French is for 'I'm sorry, we appear to have dented your bumper'.

