Automobile Timeline

Many of the features that make cars safer and easier to use did not exist until decades after the car was invented. Using the timeline below, place the automobile milestones in order from oldest to most recent. Tip: use a pencil!





First state-issued license plate







First car air conditioning



Windshield wipers are invented



First car heater



First seatbelts installed in cars

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First stoplight installed



First car radio



First car key

Timeline Answer Key

Check your answers using the key below. What did you get right? What did you get wrong? Did any of the answers surprise you? Read on to learn more about each of the automobile milestones listed in the timeline.





1902- Windshield wipers were invented by Mary Anderson. She got the idea while riding a streetcar while it was raining.



1903- The first state-issued license plates were issued by the state of Massachusetts.



1908- Rhode Island was the first state to issue driver's licenses.



1910- The first car key was used only to lock the ignition. Keys were not used to start cars until the 1940's.



1913- The first full service gas station was located in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.



1915- The first known stop sign was installed in Detroit, Michigan. It was a white square with black lettering.



1916- Rear view mirrors were widely used for the first time in 1916, but they appeared in racecars a few years earlier.



1917- The first car heaters were called "heater boxes."



1918- The first stop light was installed in New York City. It was only red and green, and was hand operated.



1929- The first car radios could only be listened to if the car was parked.



1939- Packard was the first car company to offer air conditioning in its cars.



1956- Seatbelts were first installed in cars in 1956, but were not legally required in the U.S. until 1966.