*warning of a speed trap: tell people
* provoke (v) to cause a reaction, especially a negative one
* victim surcharge: an extra amount of money that someone paying a fine after being found guilty of committing a crime has to pay, to help people who have been affected by crime

Crazy driving laws

Should a driver be punished for warning of a speed trap ahead? David Williams investigates some cases in which the police appear to have overreacted.

Michael Thompson provoked sympathy and disbelief in equal measure when he was fined £175, ordered to pay £250 costs and a £15 'victim surcharge' after being found guilty of wilfully obstructing a police officer in the course of her duties.

deserve
The crime meriting such severe punishment? The semi-retired man simply did what many motorists often do and warned oncoming drivers that there was a police speed trap around the corner, by flashing his headlamps.

Thompson insisted he was performing his 'civic duty' by warning fellow motorists and one solicitor at court criticized the prosecution as a waste of taxpayers' money.

In words that resonated with many of Britain's 34 million motorists, the solicitor said the driver should be praised for his actions.

Not everyone was as sympathetic, however. On national radio phone-ins many criticized his actions; had he not prevented speeding drivers from getting their just deserts?

It turns out that Thompson is in good company; numerous driver prosecutions and penalties have been at least as contentious.

In December 2003 Sarah McCaffery was stopped by police who thought she was using her mobile phone while making a left turn in her Ford Ka.

evil, bad
In fact, she was doing nothing more sinister than eating an apple. Police nevertheless issued her with a £30 ticket, saying she was not in proper control of her car. The 23-year-old from Hebburn, in the North-East, decided to fight back and appealed, but was nevertheless convicted by magistrates.

judge (for crimes that are less serious)
Stranger still was the case of a man fined for blowing his nose. When Michael Mancini found himself stuck in a queue of traffic with a runny nose, he instinctively reached for his handkerchief.

*merit (v) deserve, worth
*socilitor (v) lawyer
*prosecution (n) hành hình
*contentious: causing , involving, or likely to cause disagreement and argument
*in good company: sympathizing
* misdemeanor: an action that is slightly bad or breaks a rule but is not a crime

The simple act of pulling out a tissue and blowing his nose earned him a £60 fine because he was 'not in proper control of his vehicle'.

Policeman Stuart Gray also handed out three penalty points, even though Mancini had the handbrake on at the time.

sự vụ trên có tính tương đồng với vụ
The case echoes that of salesman Keith Pemberton, from Cheshire, who was fined £60 for eating a sandwich at the wheel in March 2007.

Company director Gary Saunders was stopped in the same city for laughing while driving in 2009, but escaped with a ticking-off.

Motoring, clearly, is not a laughing matter – but justice can prevail. Mr Mancini took his protest to court and the public prosecutor in Ayr decided not to prosecute. 'I knew it would cost me hiring a lawyer but it was worth it out of principle,' said Mr Mancini.

cáp, mút
Kevin Story was spotted by police munching a chocolate bar on the M3 and issued with a fine for 'not being in control of his vehicle'. Police later gave him a break and said the fine would be quashed as it was 'inappropriate'.

Hampshire's Assistant Chief Constable Colin Smith said: 'We accept that the issue of a fixed penalty ticket, while intended to promote road safety, was inappropriate action by a well-meaning policeman.

'Officers usually deal sensitively and with common sense. If we are found to be over-zealous, we are more than happy to admit that officers are human and sometimes make mistakes.'

The Automobile Association (AA) advises drivers stopped by police to be courteous and not to challenge them. It says that nine times out of 10 no action will be taken.

'In the light-flashing case, the driver said the police officer did not let him off with a warning because he "challenged" him,' says Edmund King, of the AA.

'We urge drivers to keep their cool and police not to overreact to minor misdemeanours. It would save everybody an awful lot of time and money.'

Classification

Questions 9–13

Look at the following statements and the list of people or organizations in the box below. Match each statement to the correct person/organization A–E. You may use any letter more than once.

9 Errors are sometimes made by enthusiastic police officers. .....
10 Taking people to court for less serious motoring crimes is a misuse of public money. .....
11 Motorists should keep calm and be polite to police to avoid action being taken. .....
12 It is a driver's public obligation to warn other drivers of speed traps. .....
13 The police should not make too much of relatively small crimes. .....

A Michael Mancini
B The AA
C Michael Thompson
D Assistant Chief Constable Colin Smith
E A solicitor for Michael Thompson

Crime and the law

1 The following words are all related to crime and the law and appear in the text. Use a dictionary to check the meanings and then complete the summary of the text.

appealed convicted court guilty justice lawyer magistrates penalty prosecution solicitor

One example of crazy driving laws was the case of Michael Thompson who was found (1) _____ of warning other motorists about speed traps. He received a heavy (2) _____ from (3) _____ although his (4) _____ thought the case was a waste of taxpayers' money. A similar case was that of Sarah McCaffery who, even though she (5) _____ , was (6) _____ of eating whilst driving. However, (7) _____ prevailed when another motorist, Michael Mancini successfully managed to avoid (8) _____ when he hired a (9) _____ and took his case to (10) _____ .

Unit 3 Articles

Complete the gaps using an appropriate article.

Articles are often **0** *a* difficult area for students of English as **1** _____ foreign language. **2** _____ most important thing to remember is that **3** _____ definite article is used where both people in **4** _____ conversation know what they are referring to. For example, **5** _____ first time something is mentioned, there is no shared knowledge, so we use the indefinite article **6** _____ / _____ . **7** _____ second time something is mentioned, however, both people have shared knowledge of it, so we use **8** _____ definite article **9** _____ . This is true when **10** _____ noun is know which one they mean, so we use **13** _____ definite article.
There are **14** _____ few other rules. The indefinite article is used in some fixed expressions such as **15** _____ *lot* and **16** _____ *few*, and to mean 'per', eg *70 miles* **17** _____ *hour*.
Another common use of the definite article is in superlatives, eg **18** _____ *best tea in the world*.
Finally, be careful with geography. Most place names and names of people do not need an article, but expressions like **19** _____ *Republic of Indonesia*, that follow the pattern of *The Republic/Kingdom/State*, etc. *of* ... need **20** _____ definite article.

Collocations

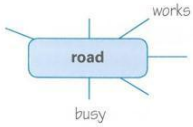
Words that are often used together are called collocations. Complete the gaps in the diagram using the words in the box.

~~accident~~ air ~~busy~~ fumes heavy jams lights main rage safety users ~~works~~

Check that you know whether the word comes before or after the word in the box.

1 *Traffic accident* 2 *Busy road* 3 *Road works*





LIVEWORKSHEETS