

motorway Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary 8th Ed.
motor-way [motorway motorways] BrE ['mɔʊtəweɪ] * NAmE ['mɔʊtərweɪ] *

noun countable, uncountable

(in Britain) a wide road, with at least two lanes in each direction, where traffic can travel fast for long distances between large towns. You can only enter and leave **motorways** at special ↑**junctions**

• **busy/congested motorways**

- Join the motorway at Junction 19.
- Leave the motorway at the next exit.
- A nine-mile stretch of motorway has been closed.
- a **motorway service area / service station**
- The speed limit on motorways should be enforced.

compare ↑**interstate**

Culture:

roads and road signs

The US road system is the largest in the world, mainly because of the long distances between cities. The distance between ↑**Boston** and ↑**San Francisco**, for instance, is more than 3 000 miles/ 4 827 kilometres. The US began to build the ↑**interstate** highway system in 1956. By 2004 it had more than 42 000 miles/(67 578 kilometres) of road. The interstate system greatly helped the country's economy, but it also hurt the economies of many small towns not on an interstate. Interstates running north to south have odd numbers and those going from east to west have even numbers. They often have only two or three **lanes** in each direction through the **countryside** but may have eight or more each way through cities. The New Jersey Turnpike, for instance, has 14 lanes each way near New York City.

Other major roads in the US are called **superhighways**, **freeways**, **expressways**, **thruways** or **parkways**. There are also many county and local roads, called variously **arterial roads**, **feeder roads** or **farm roads**. Some states have **tollways** or **turnpikes**, on which drivers must pay a **toll**.

Interstate **highways** are marked with red and blue signs showing an 'I' followed by the road's number. Other US **highways** have red, white and blue signs. Some state roads, like those in ↑**Louisiana** and ↑**Texas**, have signs in the shape of the state. Since 1995 states have been able to set their own speed limits. This is usually 65 or 70 mph/105 or 112 kph on interstate roads but lower on other main roads.

In Britain the fastest and most direct routes between major cities are by motorways, which usually have three lanes of traffic in each direction and a speed limit of 70 mph/112 kph. Each motorway is identified by the letter 'M' and a number. Main roads other than motorways are called **A-roads** and are numbered A6, A34, etc. Some A-roads are **dual carriageways** with two or more **lanes** each way. Most A-roads now follow a **bypass** round towns. Narrower roads which have only one **lane** in each direction are called **B-roads**. Most roads have **white lines** and **Catseyes**™ (= objects sunk into the ground that reflect a car's lights) down the middle. Only a very few roads have **tolls** but Britain's first toll motorway, the M6 Toll opened in 2003 as an alternative to the heavily used M6 near Birmingham. Narrow country roads below B-road standard may be known locally by the name of the place they go to, e.g. Orston Lane.

In Britain the ↑**Highway Code** describes the many signs placed beside roads. Red circular signs give instructions that must by law be obeyed. These include 'no overtaking' signs and signs about speed limits. Red **triangular** signs give warnings about possible dangers ahead, e.g. slippery roads. Direction signs to major towns are blue on motorways and green on other roads; signs to smaller places are white. Old-fashioned **signposts** can still be seen in some country areas.

In the US red road signs, like 'Stop', must be obeyed. Signs that indicate danger, as in areas where rocks might fall, have a yellow diamond shape. Arrows indicating bends in the road are shown in green circles on white signs. Many other US road signs are now similar to those in Europe.

In Britain there is pressure from both business and private road users for more and better roads, despite the damage to the environment and increase in pollution that this may cause. People who are against the building of new roads regularly challenge proposed routes of new motorways or bypasses. If they fail, **environmentalists** set up protest camps along the route of the new road. Recently, experts too have cast doubt on the wisdom of building more roads, saying it simply encourages greater use of cars. In the US there are few protests against road-building. People generally want more roads to make their journeys faster and more convenient

Example Bank:

- He sang as he rattled down the motorway.
- She was driving along the motorway.
- We were on the motorway to London.
- the M25 London orbital motorway
- Five people were killed in a motorway pile-up.
- He doesn't like motorway driving
- I left the motorway at the next exit.
- Motorway police stopped the van.
- The M25 motorway goes all the way around Greater London.
- The accident happened on a motorway slip road.
- The traffic on the motorway was solid.
- There are plans to build a new four-lane motorway.
- We stopped at a motorway service station.
- You can hear the roar of motorway traffic from here.

motorway**motorway** S2 /'məʊtəweɪ \$ 'moutər-/ BrE " AmE " noun [countable]*British English* a very wide road for travelling fast over long distances, especially between cities ⇒ **expressway**, **freeway**, **highway**, **interstate**

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COLLOCATIONS■ **verbs**

- **drive on/along/down the motorway** He was driving along the motorway at a steady sixty miles an hour.
- **get on/off the motorway** We got on the motorway near Watford.
- **join the motorway** (=get on the motorway) Traffic will be diverted through Hamilton before joining the motorway.
- **leave the motorway** A few miles further on they left the motorway.
- **turn off the motorway** (=leave the motorway) We forgot to turn off the motorway and ended up in London.

■ **adjectives**

- **busy** The motorway is always busy around Birmingham.
- **a major motorway** Two of Britain's major motorways pass through Nottingham.
- **a six-lane/eight-lane etc motorway** There are plans to build a new six-lane motorway through the area.

■ **motorway + NOUN**

- **motorway driving** Is motorway driving included in the driving test?
- **motorway traffic** the constant noise of motorway traffic
- **a motorway crash** Six people were killed in a motorway crash.
- **a motorway pile-up** (=when several cars on a motorway crash into each other) a news report of a motorway pile-up on the M25
- **a motorway junction** (=a place where you can join or leave the motorway) Their stores are all situated near major motorway junctions.

■ **phrases**

- **a stretch/section of motorway** This stretch of motorway is always very busy.

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THESAURUS■ **types of road**

- **road** a hard surface for cars, buses etc to drive on: They're planning to build a new road. | My address is 42, Station Road.
- **street** a road in a town, with houses or shops on each side: She lives on our street. | We walked along the streets of the old town. | Oxford Street is one of Europe's busiest shopping areas. | He was stopped by the police, driving the wrong way down a one-way street. | Turn left on Main Street (=the street in the middle of a town, where most of the shops are – used in *American English*). | These days the same shops are on every high street (=the street in the middle of a town, where most of the shops are – used in *British English*).
- **avenue** a road in a town, often with trees on each side: the busy avenue in front of the cathedral | He lived on Park Avenue.
- **boulevard** a wide road in a city or town – used especially in street names in the US, France etc. In the UK, streets are usually called **avenue** rather than **boulevard**: the world-famous Sunset Boulevard in Los Angeles.
- **lane** a narrow road in the country: a winding country lane
- **cul-de-sac** a short street which is closed at one end: The house is situated in a quiet cul-de-sac in North Oxford.
- **track** *especially British English*, **dirt road** *American English* a narrow road in the country, usually without a hard surface: The farm was down a bumpy track.
- **ring road** *British English* a road that goes around a town: The airport is on the ring road.
- **bypass** *British English* a road that goes past a town, allowing traffic to avoid the centre: The bypass would take heavy traffic out of the old city centre.
- **dual carriageway** *British English*, **divided highway** *American English* a road with a barrier or strip of land in the middle that has lines of traffic travelling in each direction: I waited until we were on the dual carriageway before I overtook him.
- **freeway/expressway** *American English* a very wide road in a city or between cities, on which cars can travel very fast without stopping: Take the Hollywood Freeway (101) south, exit at Vine Street and drive east on Franklin Avenue. | Over on the side of the expressway, he saw an enormous sedan, up against a stone wall.
- **motorway** *British English*, **highway** *American English* a very wide road for travelling fast over long distances: The speed limit on the motorway is 70 miles an hour. | the Pacific Coast Highway
- **interstate** *American English* a road for fast traffic that goes between states: The accident happened on Interstate 84, about 10 miles east of Hartford.
- **toll road** a road that you pay to use: The government is planning to introduce toll roads, in an effort to cut traffic congestion.
- **turnpike** *American English* a large road for fast traffic that you pay to use: He dropped her off at an entrance to the New Jersey Turnpike.

motorway

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