

Renting a Car: Pick-Up & Drop-Off

A1/A2 •
GENERAL
ENGLISH

60 minutes

Vocabulary

Reading

Listening

Speaking

Grammar

Lesson Objectives

- ✓ **Vocabulary:** Learn and use 14 essential car-rental terms across both stages of a rental — pick-up (reservation, IDP, one-way rental, unlimited mileage) and drop-off (rental agreement, full tank, damage, receipt).
- ✓ **Grammar:** Use the polite request patterns "I would like..." and "Can I...?" to make requests and ask permission at a rental desk.
- ✓ **Speaking:** Role-play a complete car pick-up in Rome and a car drop-off in Milan, then invent and act out a new rental problem.
- ✓ **Cultural Awareness:** Understand two practical realities of driving in Italy and Greece — the International Driving Permit (IDP) requirement and the ban on taking rental cars on ferries.

1 Warm-Up

Before you begin, think about your own experience with cars and road trips:

- Have you ever rented (hired) a car, either in your own country or abroad? What was the process like?
- What is the difference between renting a car and taking taxis or public transport on a trip? What are the advantages of each?
- If you rented a car in a foreign country, what documents do you think you would need to show?
- Imagine you are picking up a rental car at a busy airport. What is the first thing you would say to the agent at the desk?

2 Mix & Match: Picking Up a Car

Match each term (1–8) with its correct definition (A–H). These words appear throughout today's lesson.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Reservation ____ | A. Picking up the car in one city and leaving it in a different city. |
| 2. Pick-up ____ | B. Protection that covers the cost if you have an accident or the car is damaged. |
| 3. Drop-off / Return ____ | C. A booking for a car made in advance, before you arrive at the desk. |
| 4. One-way rental ____ | D. A small, fuel-efficient car — usually the cheapest rental option. |
| 5. Unlimited mileage ____ | E. To collect the rental car from the agency at the start of your trip. |
| 6. IDP (International Driving Permit) ____ | F. You can drive as many kilometers as you want, with no extra charge. |
| 7. Insurance ____ | G. To give the car back to the rental company at the end of your trip. |
| 8. Economy / compact car ____ | H. An official translation of your driving license, often required in Italy and Greece. |

3 Cultural Tip: Driving in Italy & Greece

If you are traveling from a country outside the European Union, car rental companies in Italy and Greece will usually ask to see an International Driving Permit (IDP) alongside your normal local driving license. Without one, some companies may refuse to give you the car — so it is always worth checking this before you fly.

It is also useful to remember that taking a rental car on a ferry between Italy and Greece is usually not allowed by rental companies. If your trip includes an island — for example, flying from Rome to a Greek island like Mykonos — you will normally need to drop the car off at the airport or port before you continue your journey by plane or ferry.

Quick Checklist Before You Travel

Bring an IDP: check whether your destination requires one alongside your regular license.

Plan your drop-off location: if part of your trip is by ferry or plane, return the car before that leg of the journey.

Ask about one-way fees: picking up and dropping off in different cities usually costs extra.

4 Language Focus: Polite Requests — "I would like..." & "Can I...?"

At this level, you don't need to understand these as complicated grammar tenses. Just learn them as polite "magic blocks" for making requests and asking permission at a rental desk:

Asking for something you want

Too direct: "Give me a car." / "I need a compact car." — grammatically fine, but sounds blunt at a service desk.

In English: Use the magic block *I would like* + noun or infinitive: "I would like to rent a compact car, please."

Asking for permission or extra options

Too direct: "I want to pay by credit card." / "Extend the contract." — sounds like a demand, not a polite question.

In English: Use *Can I...?* to ask for permission or check what is possible: "Can I pay with a credit card?" / "Can I extend the contract later?"

5 Role-Play: Picking Up & Dropping Off a Rental Car

Read (or act out) both scenes below with a partner or your tutor. One person plays the rental company Agent (role A), the other plays the Traveler (role B). Practice each scene 2-3 times, then swap roles.

SCENE 1 — PICKING UP THE CAR IN ROME

The traveler arrives at the rental desk at Rome Fiumicino Airport. They do not have a reservation.

Agent: Good morning! Welcome to Rome Fiumicino Airport. How can I help you today?

Traveler: Hello. I would like to rent a car, please. I don't have a reservation.

Agent: No problem at all. What size car are you looking for? A small economy car or an SUV?

Traveler: A small economy car is perfect, please.

Agent: Great. And how long will you need the vehicle for?

Traveler: I'm not sure yet. I am traveling to Rome and Mykonos. Can I extend the rental later?

Agent: Yes, you can extend it. Just call us 24 hours before your initial contract ends. Where do you want to drop off the car?

Traveler: I want to drop it off in Milan, please.

Agent: Perfect, that's a one-way rental. There is a small extra fee for that. Can I see your passport, driver's license, and credit card?

Traveler: Yes, here you go. Is full insurance included?

Agent: Yes, basic insurance is included, but I highly recommend full cover for an extra €15 a day.

Traveler: Okay, I will take the full insurance, please.

Agent: Excellent. Please sign here. Your car is in parking lot 3, space B12. Here are the keys.

Traveler: Thank you very much for your help! Goodbye.

SCENE 2 — RETURNING THE CAR IN MILAN

A week later, the traveler returns the same car at a rental desk at Milan Malpensa Airport (MXP).

Agent: Good morning! Welcome to Milan Airport. Are you here to return a car?

Traveler: Yes, good morning. I am returning this car.

Agent: Great. Can I please have your rental agreement paper and the car keys?

Traveler: Yes, here you go. Here are the keys and the paper.

Agent: Thank you. Did you pick up the car in Rome?

Traveler: Yes, I picked it up at Rome Fiumicino Airport last week.

Agent: Perfect, a one-way rental. Did you fill up the gas tank?

Traveler: Yes, the tank is full. I stopped at a gas station 5 minutes ago.

Agent: Excellent. Did you have any problems with the car during your trip?

Traveler: No, no problems. The car was very good.

Agent: Wonderful. Please wait one moment. I need to check the car for any new damage or scratches.

Traveler: Okay, no problem. I will wait here.

Agent: (Checks the car for a minute, then returns.) Everything looks perfect. There is no new damage. Your total is paid, and I will email you the final receipt.

Traveler: Thank you very much! Where is the airport terminal?

Agent: Just walk through those glass doors and follow the signs for "Departures." It is a 5-minute walk.

Traveler: Perfect. Thank you for your help. Goodbye!

Agent: You're welcome! Have a safe flight! Goodbye.

6 Comprehension Check: True or False?

Based on the dialogue, decide if each statement is True or False.

- 1 The traveler has a reservation before arriving at the desk in Rome. (True / False)
- 2 The traveler chooses an SUV. (True / False)
- 3 The traveler can extend the rental by calling 24 hours before the contract ends. (True / False)
- 4 A one-way rental has no extra fee. (True / False)
- 5 In Milan, the agent finds new damage on the car. (True / False)
- 6 The traveler returns the car with a full gas tank. (True / False)

7 Mix & Match: Returning a Car

Match each term (1–6) with its correct definition (A–F).

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| 1. Return ____ | A. Marks or broken parts on the car, usually from an accident. |
| 2. Full tank ____ | B. The area in the airport where you go to catch your flight. |
| 3. Damage / Scratches ____ | C. To give the car back to the rental company. |
| 4. Rental agreement ____ | D. The paper (or email) that shows you paid. |
| 5. Receipt ____ | E. The gas/fuel tank has 100% petrol — it is completely full. |
| 6. Departures ____ | F. The paper/contract for the car. |

8 Fill in the Blanks

Use the words from the box below to complete each sentence. Word box: *keys · full · return · receipt · departures*

- 1 I want to _____ my car because my vacation is finished.
- 2 Here are the car _____. I am leaving the car in parking lot 3.
- 3 Before you give the car back, please make sure the gas tank is _____.
- 4 The agent will email the final _____ to my phone.
- 5 Where is the airport terminal? I need to go to _____ for my flight to Rome.

8B Find the Word: Synonyms in the Roleplay

Look back at the roleplay script in Part 5. Find a word or short phrase that means the same as each definition below.

- 1 extra money you must pay (Scene 1) → _____
- 2 included, comes with it automatically (Scene 1) → _____
- 3 to suggest something is a good idea (Scene 1) → _____
- 4 a specific numbered parking spot (Scene 1) → _____
- 5 a place where you buy petrol (Scene 2) → _____
- 6 signs that show you which way to go (Scene 2) → _____

8C Sentence Rephrasing: Key Word Transformation

Complete the second sentence so it means the same as the first, using the word given. Use between **one and eight words**, including the given word.

1. I want to rent a car.

LIKE

I _____ to rent a car.

2. Is it okay if I pay by credit card?

CAN

_____ pay by credit card?

3. There is no more room for petrol in the tank.

FULL

The tank is _____.

4. There are no new marks on the car.

DAMAGE

There is no new _____ on the car.

5. I need a paper that shows I paid.

RECEIPT

I need a _____.

9 Authentic Listening — Watch & Analyze

Free English Lesson - Renting A Car - How To Rent A Car in English — Twominute English · 2:51

Twominute English makes short, purpose-built spoken-English lessons for learners. This one presents several short rental-desk dialogues covering car sizes, daily prices, fuel policy, payment, and reservations — great extra practice alongside the Rome and Milan scripts you just read.

Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p3GVk5Jk74g>

As you watch, note down: which words and phrases from today's Key Vocabulary sections you also hear in the video, and any new car-rental phrases the speakers use that weren't in our role-play.

10 Watch & Reflect: Synthesis Questions

- 1** Language: Write down at least two phrases from the video that also appeared in today's Rome or Milan dialogue.
- 2** Comprehension: According to the video, what different daily prices are mentioned for a mid-size car and for an SUV?
- 3** Your Take: Which is more useful for you to remember today: the polite request phrases ("I would like..." / "Can I...?"), or the vocabulary for returning a car? Why?

11 Roleplay Variation: A New Problem (Production)

Scenario

You are returning your rental car, but this time something is not quite right. Invent ONE new problem — for example, the gas tank is not full, the car is a different size than you reserved, or you notice a scratch you are sure you did not cause. Role-play the conversation with your tutor or partner: explain the problem politely and find out what happens next.

- Clearly state your problem (e.g. "The tank is not full" / "This isn't the car I reserved" / "I noticed a scratch when I picked it up").
- Use at least one polite request phrase from the Language Focus section (I would like... / Can I...?).
- Use at least three vocabulary terms from today's lesson (e.g. rental agreement, insurance, damage, receipt, one-way rental).
- Reach a clear resolution by the end of the conversation (e.g. a fee is waived, a form is signed, a manager is called).

"Hi, I'm here to return my car, but I need to mention something first..."

12 Wrap-Up

Key Expressions to Remember

PICK-UP VOCABULARY	DROP-OFF VOCABULARY	POLITE REQUEST PHRASES
Reservation Pick-up One-way rental Unlimited mileage IDP Insurance Economy / compact car	Return Full tank Damage / Scratches Rental agreement Receipt Departures	I would like to rent a compact car, please. I would like to return it in Milan. Can I pay with a credit card? Can I extend the contract later?