# Kent gives winter gritters playful names

LEVEL B1



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## I. WARM-UP

1. What is the funniest name you've seen online recently?
2. What do you do to stay safe on icy days?
3. If your school team changed its name, what would you pick?

## II. KEY VOCABULARY

- **gritter** — a truck that spreads salt or grit on roads to stop ice forming
- **nickname** — a fun or informal name for a person or thing
- **pun** — a joke that plays with similar sounds or double meanings
- **fleet** — a group of vehicles owned or used together
- **icy** — covered with ice, or very cold and likely to freeze
- **safety** — the state of being protected from danger or harm
- **spread** — to put something over a wide area
- **slippery** — smooth and hard to hold or stand on because it is wet or icy

## III. READING

In Kent, road-gritting trucks have been given playful new nicknames. The idea is simple: make people smile and notice winter safety. Gritters spread salt on roads to stop ice forming and reduce skids. They are busy when temperatures drop and streets turn icy and slippery.

Some names are puns on famous stars, like Taylor Drift and Gritney Spears. Others mix chilly words with pop culture to catch the eye. A catchy nickname makes a plain vehicle easy to spot and remember. The fleet will head out during cold spells and before snow.

If drivers see a gritter, they should slow down and give it space. A funny name can start a serious habit: plan your route and drive gently.

*Reading text adapted from reporting by* **BBC News:** *"Taylor Drift or Gritney Spears... Kent's new...". Original article linked at* theenglishwire.com.

## IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Where have road-gritting trucks been given playful nicknames?
2. What do gritters spread on roads to help prevent ice?
3. Give two example names mentioned in the text.
4. When are the trucks most active, according to the text?
5. Why are playful names used for the gritters?

## V. DISCUSSION

1. What name would you give a gritter near your school? Why?
2. Do jokes and puns help you remember safety messages? Give an example.
3. What winter travel tips would you share with friends or family?
4. Should funny names be used for other public vehicles? Which ones?



## VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

### Should have

Use should have + past participle to give advice or express regret about a past action. Form: should have + V3; negative: shouldn't have.

*"We **should have planned** our route before the snow."*

*"Drivers **shouldn't have sped** past a gritter in icy weather."*

## VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

**Complete each sentence with should have + past participle.**

1. That van driver (give) ___ the gritter more space.
2. Students (check) ___ the forecast this morning.
3. My friends (not/ride) ___ their bikes on the icy road.
4. Our class (wear) ___ boots during yesterday's snow.
5. The team (leave) ___ earlier, before the roads froze.

# Teacher's Notes

**TEACHERS ONLY**

These notes are designed to help you get the most out of this lesson. Please do not share this page with students.



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## I. LESSON GUIDE

- Timing: 8–10 minutes warm-up, 8–10 minutes vocabulary, 10–12 minutes reading, 8–10 minutes comprehension, 8–10 minutes grammar, 10–12 minutes discussion.
- Pre-teach or check: gritter, pun, icy, slippery. Show a photo of a gritter and elicit what it does before reading.
- Reading and discussion: First read for gist, then scan to find the two example names and what gritters do. Run a quick class vote for the best name, then in pairs students invent one for a local vehicle and share.
- Differentiation: Lower-level pairs underline context clues for vocabulary; higher-level pairs write a one-sentence winter safety slogan to go with a nickname and present it.

## II. DISCUSSION FACILITATION TIPS

1. Give 60 seconds to brainstorm, then do a quick vote; push for a reason, not just the joke.
2. If answers stall at “yes”, ask for a real post, sign, or meme that stuck in their mind.
3. Elicit three concrete tips (clothes, routes, phone checks) and rank them by usefulness.
4. Split the class: one group for, one against; then swap sides and add one new idea.

## III. EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

**Writing:** In pairs, write a 60-word social post announcing a new gritter name and one safety tip.

**Design:** Create a sticker or mini-poster for a gritter with its nickname and a clear winter warning.

## IV. ANSWER KEY OVERVIEW

**Comprehension questions:** short factual answers from the text.

**Grammar exercise:** Should have

**Discussion:** open-ended. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

# Answer Key

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## IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Where have road-gritting trucks been given playful nicknames?
   **In Kent.**
2. What do gritters spread on roads to help prevent ice?
   **Salt.**
3. Give two example names mentioned in the text.
   **Taylor Drift and Gritney Spears.**
4. When are the trucks most active, according to the text?
   **During cold spells, when temperatures drop and before snow.**
5. Why are playful names used for the gritters?
   **To make people smile and draw attention to winter safety.**

## V. DISCUSSION

**Open answers.** Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

## VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Complete each sentence with should have + past participle.

1. That van driver ___ the gritter more space. **should have given**
2. Students ___ the forecast this morning. **should have checked**
3. My friends ___ their bikes on the icy road. **shouldn't have ridden / should not have ridden**
4. Our class ___ boots during yesterday's snow. **should have worn**
5. The team ___ earlier, before the roads froze. **should have left**

## VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

**Key point:** Use should have + past participle to give advice or express regret about a past action. Form: should have + V3; negative: shouldn't have. (Examples constructed.)

*"We **should have planned** our route before the snow."*

*"Drivers **shouldn't have sped** past a gritter in icy weather."*