

## Automotive English: The Car's At The Garage

If you have a car, you might have a garage. A garage is a special building or a special 'room' in your house where you can park your car when you're not using it. Often, the garage is for more than the car: it's for everything that you own, but don't know where to put. My parents' garage doesn't even have room for the car in it, that's how much 'other stuff' is in the garage.

But 'the garage' has another meaning connected to cars: the garage is where you take the car when it has a problem. The garage is where mechanics work. When you say your car is 'in the garage,' the car is at your house. But when you say the car is 'at the garage,' then the car isn't working right!

There are a lot of reasons to take your car to the garage, and we're going to talk about a few of them. A good, general phrase to learn for your car is 'break down.'

*Break down* can be both a noun: "I had a breakdown last night." Or, it can be a verb "I hope my car doesn't break down on the trip." In both cases, it means the same thing: the car isn't working. A break down means that your car won't start, won't drive, won't take you anywhere. If only a light is broken, or if the stereo doesn't work right, then you don't have a breakdown. Then you only have a problem with your car.

Cars aren't the only things that can break down. Any complicated system can have a breakdown: a computer network can break down, or there can be a breakdown in the financial system. And a person can have a 'nervous breakdown,' too. That's a bad situation in which they feel like they just can't keep going. . . Let's hope it never happens to you!

Does your car break down often? Have you ever had a break down at a very bad time? Does your car spend a lot of time at the garage instead of in the garage? What can you do to make sure that a breakdown doesn't happen?