

Train Driver:

Morning, there! Name's Thomas, and I'm the driver of this sturdy K Class steam locomotive. Every day begins before sunrise. First, my fireman and I inspect the engine, making sure the boiler has enough water and that the machinery is in good working order.

Once that's done, the fireman starts shovelling coal into the firebox. It takes time to build enough steam before we can move. Without steam pressure, this great engine won't budge an inch.

Our job is to carry empty wagons into the coal mine sidings, where miners load them with freshly dug coal. When the wagons are full, we carefully pull the heavy train out of the siding (this train did not go into the mine, just the sidings) and along the railway to the depot, where the coal is unloaded and sent on to homes, factories, and ships.

Driving isn't easy. I must watch every signal, keep the speed under control, and listen carefully to the sounds of the engine. Too much steam can be dangerous, and steep hills mean hard work for both the locomotive and the crew.