

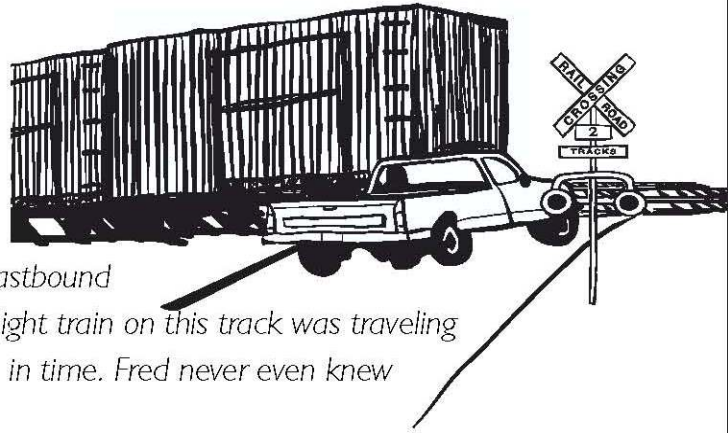
Could This Collision Have Been Prevented?

Patience Is a Lifesaver

Fred tapped his fingers impatiently on the steering wheel. This had to be the longest train in six states. It was so long he could not see the end of it in either direction.

Fred was not a patient man. Though he was young, he had big plans for his life, and he was always in a hurry to put them into action. This train seemed almost like it was deliberately trying to thwart his plans.

At last he saw the end of the train. Before the red lights had even stopped flashing, he shifted into gear and peeled into the ungated crossing as soon as the last car cleared. It was the last move Fred ever made. He had forgotten about the eastbound track behind the one he could see. The freight train on this track was traveling at 60 miles per hour and it could not stop in time. Fred never even knew what hit him.



1. Could this collision have been prevented? If so, how?

2. People's personality traits often affect their driving. How could Fred have benefited from knowing this?

3. Take a guess: What is a typical stopping distance for a train traveling at 60 miles per hour?

- (a) 3 miles
- (b) .6 miles
- (c) 1.4 miles

Answers:

1. If Fred had paid attention to the railroad crossing sign indicating that there were two tracks, he might have suspected a second train. If he had waited until the red lights stopped flashing, he certainly would have been safe.
2. If Fred understood that he was an impatient driver, he might have been alert to his tendency to let impatience put him in unsafe situations. Perhaps he would have made a conscious choice to keep impatience out of his driving decisions.
3. 1.4 miles, farther than most train engineers can even see. Modern high-speed train engineers have a saying: "If I can see it, it's dead."