

Lesson 3: Crossing Intersections Safely

Time: approximately 40 minutes

This curriculum does not cover every possible scenario that a child may encounter as a pedestrian, but instead addresses the basic skills needed to be a safe pedestrian. Teachers should use their discretion as how to appropriately break material to accommodate their daily schedule. Studies have demonstrated that skill-building activities are the most effective way to promote student retention of pedestrian safety skills. While the “Activity” portion may be postponed to a future class period if needed, it is an essential component to this curriculum and all lessons should be complemented with the reinforcement of safe pedestrian behavior. More time can be spent on practicing the behavior if children are already familiar with the core material.

Lesson Objectives:

The objective of this lesson is to teach students simple skills for crossing intersections safely and to teach them several iconic traffic signals to aid in their understanding. At this age, it is important to emphasize that intersections are tricky places for children to cross because there is traffic approaching in several different directions and students cannot easily interpret driver behavior.

The students will be able to

- Demonstrate safe behavior while approaching and crossing an intersection

Applicable National Standards of Learning:

- Physical Education Standard 1: Demonstrates competency in motor skills and movement patterns needed to perform a variety of physical activities.
- Physical Education Standard 5: Exhibits responsible personal and social behavior that respects self and others in physical activity settings.
- Health Standard 5: Students will demonstrate the ability to use decision-making skills to enhance health.
- Health Standard 7: Students will demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors and avoid or reduce health risks.

Materials:

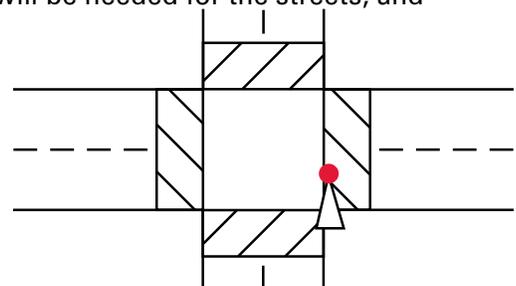
Cones, tape, yard stick, paper (red, yellow, green), and other materials to create intersection

Pictures of intersection, crosswalks, and traffic signals (without vocabulary)

Parent/Caregiver Tip Sheet

Preparation: Using the materials listed above, create a model intersection.

Use masking tape to create a 4-way stop. Eight long strips of tape will be needed for the streets, and several short strips are needed for the lane divides in the middle of the streets. Create street signs and traffic signals using paper, yard sticks, and cones. It may also be helpful to create crosswalks to emphasize safe crossing areas, but they are not mandatory and may be time-consuming.



Lesson Outline

Introduction: (5 minutes)

The teacher will

- Review steps to crossing the street
- Emphasize the importance of crossing the street with an adult or older sibling
- Define and discuss “intersections”

Discussion & Teacher Modeling: (10 minutes)

The teacher will

- Discuss and simultaneously model the steps to crossing intersections safely

1. Identifying a Safe Place to Cross and Taking an Adult’s Hand

2. Stop at the Edge

Sample Script

We have talked before about crossing roads and streets. Let’s review the rules for crossing the street by singing the “Crossing the Street” song.

[Teacher displays song from Lesson 2 and together, teacher and students sing the song to review.]

One of the most important parts of this song is to always hold an adult’s hand when crossing the street. Remember adults or older siblings are taller, and they can help keep us safe as we cross the road. This will be very important to remember as we learn more about crossing streets today.

When we crossed streets before, it was only one road. Today, we are going to learn to cross an intersection. An intersection is where two or more streets meet each other. ***[Display Materials 1. Intersection.]***

Let’s pretend that this is an intersection. You can see the two roads as they cross each other. You will also notice some street signs and a traffic light, or stop light, in the intersection. They help direct traffic. [There are also crosswalks painted across the road. These are special areas on the road that show where you should walk once you are sure the road is clear to cross.—***if it is not possible to create crosswalks on the model street, display Materials 2. Crosswalk.***]

Cars are going to be moving from the left, right, in front, and behind you. We will pretend that there are cars moving along our intersection, so we will be extra cautious when crossing.

If I am walking on a sidewalk and come to an intersection, I usually have already found a safe place to cross. The safest place to cross an intersection is at the crosswalk or the corner of the intersection. Even if there is not a painted crosswalk, crossing at the corner is safe because drivers expect to see people cross here.

Watch as I walk toward the intersection. I am on the sidewalk and I stop before I get to the intersection. I am also going to make sure that I hold an adult’s or responsible, older sibling’s hand to cross the intersection.

Before I cross the intersection, remember that I need to stop at the edge/curb. This is the place where the sidewalk ends and the street begins.

Lesson Outline

Sample Script

3. Look and Listen for Traffic

When I reach the edge, I am going to look and listen for traffic. I will look left-right-left. Who remembers why I need to do this?

- *To see if cars are coming from both directions*

Let's pretend that I look left. It is clear. Then, I look right. It is clear. Last, I look left again. Uh oh! A car is coming! What should I do?

- *Stop and wait!*
- *Start over and look left-right-left until all directions are clear*

I just modeled what I should do if I am crossing only one street, but I am crossing an intersection. Cars are coming from four or more directions.

Are there any other directions that are important for me to consider when crossing an intersection?

- *Not only left and right, but also in front and behind*

Why do we need to consider these directions also?

- *To see if cars are turning onto the street where we want to cross*
- *Cars sometimes change their directions by turning*

It is important to make sure all four directions are clear before crossing the street. Just be patient, keep your head up, and keep watching in all directions for cars to make sure it is safe to cross.

4. Look for Traffic Signals

That's not all that I need to look for though.

Intersections often have signs and signals that the drivers look at to know when it is their turn to drive their car across the intersection. They also have signals that pedestrians should look at to know when it is their turn to cross.

Let's look at some of these signs and signals so we will know when it is our turn to cross.

What traffic sign is this and what does it tell me? **[Display Materials 4. Look for Traffic Signs and Signals: Stop Sign.]**

- *Stop signs tell cars that they need to stop and see if it is clear to continue. Once the car has come to a stop and checked all directions for other cars, they may cross the intersection.*

Great! What does this traffic signal do? **[Display Materials 4. Look for Traffic Signs and Signals: Stoplight.]**

- *Stoplight colors tell cars when they need to slow down, stop, and go.*

Finally, what does this traffic signal tell us? **[Display Materials 4. Look for Traffic Signs and Signals: Pedestrian Signal.]**

- *Pedestrian signals tell us when it is our turn to cross.*

(continued)

Lesson Outline

4. Look for Traffic Signals (continued)

Sample Script

Excellent! Let's talk about the different things you might see on a pedestrian signal.

- Sometimes, you will see a red hand on the pedestrian signal. This means "Don't Walk" and it is not safe to cross. You should stop at the edge of the sidewalk and wait until the next "Walk" signal.
- Sometimes, you will see a pedestrian signal that is white and looks like a person walking. This means "Walk" and it is our turn to cross. This does not always mean that traffic has stopped and that it is safe. We need to be sure we still look in all directions and listen for traffic when we cross with the "Walk" pedestrian signal.
- If the pedestrian signal has numbers, they are counting down to zero, telling us how many seconds we have to cross the street. Don't worry though. If the "Walk" pedestrian signal is showing, there is time to cross safely, so never run across the intersection just to beat the clock.
- If you start crossing while the "Walk" signal is showing and it turns into a flashing red "Don't Walk" with or without countdown numbers, keep walking. You will have enough time to cross. Do not turn around and go back.
- If the "Don't Walk" red hand signal is flashing before you begin to cross, but there are still countdown numbers, DO NOT begin to cross. There is not enough time to make it across the street safely.

Remember that even if all the signals say it is our turn to cross, only the adult you are walking with can decide if it is really safe. You need to keep your head up, looking and listening for traffic at all times to make sure you are safe.

If the signals change before we've decided that it is safe to cross, don't worry. Just wait until it is our turn to cross with the "Walk" signal. It won't be long, and it is better to be safe.

Watch as I look at the street signs and decide when it is best to cross the street. ***[Teacher has student helper/assistant display Materials 4. Look for Traffic Signs and Signals: Pedestrian Signal, and if appropriate, count backwards, as she demonstrates crossing the model intersection.]***

I see the pedestrian signal is red. I am stopped and waiting at the edge. Now, I see that the pedestrian signal has a white walking signal. I will first check left-right-left and in front, behind, in front. If it is clear, I will begin to cross the intersection.

Lesson Outline

5. Cross Quickly and Safely

Activity Options:

The students could...

- Practice safely crossing an intersection and demonstrate understanding by playing “Red Hand, Walking Man” game (20 minutes, *see sample script*)
- Practice crossing intersections on a neighborhood road near school grounds to reinforce appropriate behavior (10-20 minutes)
- Take a supervised walk in a nearby neighborhood with parent volunteers to practice and reinforce proper behaviors when crossing intersections (20-30 minutes)

Closure: (5 minutes)

The teacher will

- Reiterate the steps for being safe while crossing an intersection

Sample Script

As I cross, I am going to keep my head high, make eye contact with drivers so I know they see me, and watch for cars in all directions. I will also move straight across the street. I am not walking at a diagonal. This will help me get across in a short amount of time.

Did I make it safely across the street? YES!!!

ACTIVITY OPTION A:

Now, it’s your turn! A few of you are going to get the chance to show me how to cross this intersection.

[Teacher will allow several students to demonstrate crossing an intersection using the steps above. The teacher should call out what is happening on the road and give the students verbal cues to help them cross the street safely.]

Great work! Let’s practice all together by playing one of my favorite games, “Red Light, Green Light.” Since we have learned a new traffic signal though, we are going to call my game “Red Hand, Walking Man.”

- Allow all students to line up across a large field or auditorium from the teacher.
- The teacher will call out “Red Hand” for students to freeze at the “edge” of the street.
- He/she will then call out “Walking Man” for the children to begin walking—For this age level, the teacher should emphasize looking left-right-left before moving, moving in a straight line, and walking at all times (not running). If they do not do these things, they are out!
- The first student or students to reach the teacher at the “other side of the intersection” is declared the “Crossing the Intersection Champ”.

Let’s review all that we have learned today.

Raise your hand if you can tell me the steps to crossing an intersection.

- Identify a safe place to cross and take an adult’s hand.
- Stop at the edge.
- Look and listen for traffic.
- Look for traffic signals.
- Cross quickly and safely.

After the review, it is highly recommended that teachers take students to a safe environment outdoors to reinforce the learned behaviors. Parent and other adult volunteers may be necessary to make this first-hand experience more valuable and safe for the children.

Suggested Cross-Curricular Connections:

These optional activities are included to extend the lesson into other areas of learning. Most activities presented may be completed within a 20-minute time period.

Math

■ Measurement

- Students can use string or rope to measure the distance straight and diagonally across a familiar and safe street (or across the model street created by the teacher). Cut the rope or string to reflect the straight distance and the diagonal distance.
- Allow students to estimate the lengths of the two strings in feet, yards, and/or inches.
- Using a measuring tape, measure the rope or string in to the nearest whole or half unit (i.e., inch, half inch, etc.)
- Compare and contrast the two measurements to decide which length is shorter, encouraging students to take the shortest route to get out of the street.
- For an added challenge, students can use common referents to make comparisons between the lengths (i.e., comparing the measurement in feet with the measurement in yards).

Writing

■ Acrostic Poem (a poem in which the first letter of each line forms a word or message when read in sequence; see example below)

- Students and teacher can develop an acrostic poem to a key word discussed within the unit (i.e., intersection, pedestrian, traffic, etc.)
 - People
Experts at walking safely
Depend on signs and signals to help
Easily walk near traffic
Stay on the sidewalks or
Take the left side of the street
Remember all of the safety rules
Improve their walking each time they practice
Always cross at the crosswalks
Never forget to take an adult's hand
- Students can illustrate key points of the poem and/or create a classroom book of the acrostic poem to describe safe practices

Drama

- Students can work in small groups (2–3 students each) to develop a one- to two-minute skit or speech about pedestrian safety. Students should remember to include all appropriate vocabulary and key safety rules.
- If possible, students can perform these skits for other classrooms or on the broadcast of the school's morning show (if applicable).

Materials

Pictures of intersections, crosswalks, and traffic signals

Parent/Caregiver Tip Sheet