

Lesson 1: Walking Safely Near Traffic

Time: approximately 20-25 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 to 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 remind students about the basic concepts of sharing spaces with cars and other motorized traffic. At this age, it is important to emphasize that students should never walk near traffic without an adult or older sibling.

The students will be able to

- Explain reasons we walk places and identify common places to walk
- Define and use appropriate pedestrian safety vocabulary
- Recognize and demonstrate safe practices near traffic such as walking with an adult, walking on a sidewalk or side of street, and wearing reflective gear and to make sure to carry a flashlight

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 6: Values physical activity for health, enjoyment, challenge, self-expression, and/or social interaction.
- Health Standard 1: Students will comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention to enhance health.
- Health Standard 7: Students will demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors and avoid or reduce health risks.

Materials:

Vocabulary Cards (with appropriate definitions)

Pedestrian, Traffic, and Driveway Situational Pictures

Chart paper and markers

Safe and Unsafe Scenario Cards

Parent/Caregiver Tip Sheet

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.

Lesson Outline

Discussion & Demonstration: (10-15 minutes)

The teacher will

- Identify locations to which we walk
- Define “pedestrian”, “vehicle” and “traffic”
- Discuss traffic safety rules and simultaneously show traffic pictures to demonstrate procedures for walking near traffic

Sample Script

Today, we are going to begin a new unit of study. For the next several days, we are going to discuss how to walk safely near traffic.

Raise your hand if you remember learning how to walk safely in kindergarten and first grade.

Why do you think it is important for us to review this information again?

- *Because we want to always stay safe*

Raise your hand if you have...

- Walked to school, a friend’s house, the store, library, park, etc.

Great! It looks like everyone in this class has been a pedestrian. Who can tell me what the word “pedestrian” means?

- *A pedestrian is a person who walks (or travels on foot).*

[Teacher displays “pedestrian” vocabulary card with word and definition.]

Now, who can tell me why it is good to walk places?

- *It is good for you (exercise).*
- *It is good for the environment (no air pollution).*
- *It is good for your neighborhood (less traffic).*
- *It is fun!*

Walking is good for many reasons, but we need to be sure we are safe. Usually, we are not the only people trying to get around.

How else do we get places we need to go?

- *Car*
- *Bus*
- *Bicycle*

All of these things that move us from one place to another are called “vehicles.” **[Teacher displays “vehicle” vocabulary card with word and definition.]**

There may be traffic also. Who can tell me what the word traffic means?

- *Traffic is the movement of vehicles including cars, trucks, buses, motorcycles and bicycles.*

[Teacher displays “traffic” vocabulary card with word and definition.]

Great! As we know, we have to be careful near traffic so we do not get hurt.

Let’s review the steps for walking safely near traffic.

Lesson Outline

Sample Script

1. Use a Sidewalk

Raise your hand if you live on a street where there is a sidewalk. Give me thumbs up if we have sidewalks near our school.

If there is a sidewalk, is it best to use it or walk on the street?

- **USE IT!**

Some streets do not have sidewalks. What do you do if a street does not have a sidewalk?

- *Walk on the side of the street while staying away from traffic*

2. Face the Traffic

That's not all! There is a specific side of the street where we should also always walk. Everyone hold up your left hand.

[Teacher models and guides students to correct answer, if appropriate.]

Remember that is the side of the street where we always want to walk!

Why do you think we should walk on the left side rather than the right?

- *We walk on the left side facing traffic so that we can see oncoming cars and drivers.*

[Teacher displays the Materials 2. Walk on the Left Side Situation (a picture of child walking on left side of road facing a car with large smiley face over it and picture of child on right side of road facing away from traffic with large red X over it.)]

3. Walk Safely

Let's close our eyes now and imagine we are walking on the sidewalk. We can hear traffic zooming past us. Let's think about how we should be walking near that traffic.

Think on your own about an important safety rule we might need to remember when walking near traffic. When you think of one, raise your hand. I'm going to write the rules you create on this chart paper.

[Teacher writes as students brainstorm ideas. Depending on student ability levels, the teacher may have to guide students toward the example rules listed below. If there are time constraints or other concerns, the teacher can display the chart below rather than brainstorm together.]

(continued)

Lesson Outline

Sample Script

3. Walk Safely *(continued)***Safe Behavior when Walking Near Traffic**

1. Walk, don't run.
2. Don't play around with friends or push.
3. Stay close to a parent, adult, or older sibling.
4. Stay away from traffic and busy roads.
5. Be aware of your surroundings. Don't let toys, phones, MP3 players, or anything else distract you.

Now we're going to look at some pictures of people walking near traffic. When I hold up a picture, give me a thumbs-up if the person is following the rules or a thumbs-down if the person is not following the rules. If it is thumbs-down, I'm going to ask you how each person could improve.

- **[Display Materials 3. Walk Safely Situation A (a picture of student running on sidewalk)]**—(Thumbs Down) Never run near traffic.
- **[Display Materials 3. Walk Safely Situation B (a picture of students acting silly near traffic)]**—(Thumbs Down) Never play around traffic because someone could get hurt.
- **[Display Materials 3. Walk Safely Situation C (a picture of student walking far ahead of father)]**—(Thumbs Down) Never walk without a parent, adult or older sibling. Walk closely to them at all times.
- **[Display Materials 3. Walk Safely Situation D (a picture of student walking on the sidewalk, on the left side of the road, holding an adult's hand)]**—(Thumbs Up)

4. Beware of Driveways

Great! As you are walking, you may come to a driveway. Remember that even though we are on the sidewalk and off the street, this is one area where pedestrians and cars share space together.

Raise your hand if you have a tip about how to be safe before you step into a driveway? (Suggested answers below)

- *Stop before you get to the driveway.*
- *Check cars that may be parked in the driveway. If there is a person inside or the back white lights are on, DON'T MOVE! Stop and wait until you know the car is not moving.*
- *Look left, right, and left again to make sure cars aren't coming.*

If there is no one in the car, the lights are not on, and all directions are clear, it is safe to cross. Walk with your head up, looking for traffic as you cross.

Lesson Outline

5. Dress to be Seen

Activity Options:

The students could...

- Dramatize safe and unsafe scenarios while reviewing safety rules (5-10 minutes, *see sample script*)
- Practice safe walking around school grounds to reinforce appropriate behavior (10-20 minutes)
- Take a supervised walk through a nearby neighborhood with parent volunteers to practice and reinforce safe walking behavior (20-30 minutes)

Sample Script

Last, it is really important for you to always consider what you are wearing when you are a pedestrian. Sometimes when you get up early in the morning or if you leave a friend's house in the evening, it is dark outside. When it is dark, it can be very hard for drivers to see you.

The best way to be seen when it is dark outside is to wear bright-colored clothing, reflective material and to carry a flashlight. Reflective materials are shiny and become brighter when light hits them. You should put reflective materials on your clothing when it is dark outside so drivers can see you. Often your shoes have reflective materials already on them. ***[Teacher displays "reflective materials" vocabulary card with word and definition. Teacher should find a student wearing shoes with reflective materials on them to demonstrate to the class.]***

ACTIVITY OPTION A:

Now, it's your turn! You are going to act out some different scenarios of what you might encounter when you are a pedestrian walking near traffic.

Everyone stand up. I am going to put you in groups ***[teacher places students in groups of 2-3, depending on size of class]***. In your group, you are going to pretend you are pedestrians walking near traffic. I am going to give you a scene to act out. You have to act out the scene and then tell us whether you were safe or unsafe. If you were being unsafe, we are going to help brainstorm how you could improve to be safer next time. ***[Teacher distributes 1 card per group with either a safe or unsafe scenario printed on it (examples provided below). Groups are given several minutes to brainstorm the scene and then about 1 minute to act it out. The class will then analyze the scene. If the students were being safe, they can clap or give thumbs-up. If the students were being unsafe, they can give thumbs-down and then provide suggestions for how to fix the behaviors.]***

(continued)

Lesson Outline

Activity Options: *(continued)*

Closure (if time): (5 minutes)

The teacher will

- Review safety rules for pedestrians while walking near traffic or driveways

Sample Script

Examples of Scenario Cards:

- Several children are walking down the street. One child is holding a ball. He/she accidentally drops the ball into the road. Another student runs out into the street to retrieve the ball.
- Several children are walking down the street. They are pushing and shoving each other back and forth into the road.
- A child is walking down the street ahead of his/her parents. He/she is not paying attention to the parents calling out behind.
- Several children are walking down a sidewalk. They approach a driveway. All children stop before they get into the driveway, look for cars, and look left-right-left for traffic.

Let's review all that we have learned today.

First, we reviewed some important words.

Raise your hand if you remember one of our words and its definition.

- *A pedestrian is a person who walks.*
- *Traffic is the movement of vehicles.*
- *Reflective materials are shiny and become brighter when light hits them. You should put reflective materials on your clothing when it is dark outside so drivers can see you.*

Finally, we learned how to be safe when walking near traffic.

Raise your hand if you remember some tips for being safe near traffic.

- *Walk, don't run.*
- *Don't play around with friends or push.*
- *Stay close to a parent, adult, or older sibling.*
- *Stay away from traffic and busy roads.*
- *Be aware of your surroundings. Don't let toys, phones, MP3 players, or anything else distract you.*

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.

Art

- Students can draw pictures of the safe and unsafe scenarios they acted out in the “Activity” portion of the lesson above. For an added challenge, the students should fix any unsafe scenario by also drawing a safer option on the back.

Writing

- Directions
 - Students can write directions for a pedestrian walking to or from a place near their home or school.
 - Students can include time order words (first, second, then, after that, last, etc.).
 - Students can also include tips for staying safe while walking within their directions. (Example: “Next, turn left onto Main Street. Remember to stay on the sidewalk or on the left side of the street!”)

Dramatic Play & Art

- Students can create pedestrian and traffic stick puppets from cardstock paper and Popsicle sticks. They can also create a backdrop scene of a street with or without sidewalks and driveways.
- Students can demonstrate safety rules by putting on a Puppet Show that dramatizes being safe while walking near traffic.

Materials

Vocabulary Cards

Pedestrian, Traffic, and Driveway Situational Pictures

Safe and Unsafe Scenario Cards

Parent/Caregiver Tip Sheet