

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 traffic signals to aid in their crossing behavior. 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:

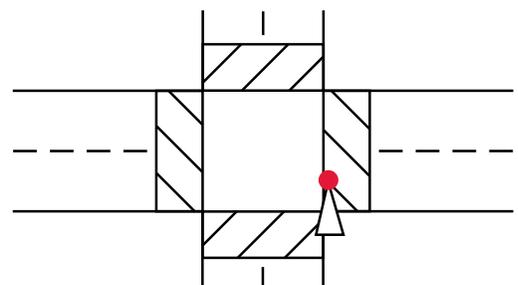
Cones, tape, yard stick, paper (red, yellow, green), and other materials to create intersection

Pictures of crosswalks and traffic signals (without vocabulary word)

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
- Define and discuss “intersections” using prefixes

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

2. Stop at the Edge

Sample Script

We have talked before about crossing roads and streets.

When we crossed streets before, it was only one road. Today, we are going to learn to cross an **intersection**.

Let’s look at the word intersection. Do you notice any smaller words within this large word?

- “Intersect”

The word “intersect” is made from two prefixes. Let’s look at what these two prefixes mean. “Inter” means “between,” and “sect” comes from another prefix meaning “to cut.” If we put these parts together, we can get a pretty good idea of what the larger word “intersection” means. What do you think the definition of “intersection” might be?

- *A place where two or more things cross or meet each other.*

That’s right! An intersection is where two or more roads meet each other.

Let’s pretend that this is an intersection. You can see the two roads as they cross over each other. You will also notice some street signs and a traffic light, or stop light, in the intersection. There are also crosswalks at the end of each road. These are special, painted 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, use the Materials: Crosswalk picture to familiarize children.]***

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 end of the sidewalk before it opens into the street.

Watch as I walk toward the intersection. I am on the sidewalk and stopping before I get to 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*

Why do I need to look left again after already looking that way first?

- *Cars move quickly. We look left again because we are stepping into the street with cars coming from the left first.*

I just modeled what I should do if I am crossing only one street, but I am crossing an intersection.

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 Signs and 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 signs and 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 the 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, it may cross the intersection.*

(continued)

Lesson Outline

4. Look for Traffic Signs and Signals
(continued)

Sample Script

Great! What does this traffic signal do? **[Display the Materials 4. Looking 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 tells us? **[Display the Materials 4. Looking for Traffic Signs and Signals: Pedestrian “Walk” Signal.]**

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

Let’s talk about the different things you might see on a pedestrian signal.

I might see a red hand on the pedestrian signal. What do you think it means?

- *This means that it is not safe to cross. You should stay at the edge of the sidewalk and wait until the next white “Walk” signal comes on.*

If the pedestrian signal has numbers while the red hand is showing, what do you think that means?

- *They are counting down to zero, telling us how much time is left to cross the street before the signal changes.*

Sometimes, you will see a signal that is white and looks like a person walking on the signal. What do you think it means?

- *This is the “Walk” portion of the signal. This means that it is our turn to cross.*

Should we immediately step into the street when we see the “Walk” signal?

- *NO!! This does not always mean that traffic has stopped and that it is safe. We need to be sure we are still looking and listening for traffic when we cross with the white “Walk” signal.*

If the pedestrian signal has numbers while the white “Walk” signal is showing, what do you think this means?

- *They are counting down to zero, telling us how much time we have to cross the street.*

If the pedestrian signal was white when you started crossing and it turns into a “Don’t Walk” red flashing hand or a red hand with numbers counting down, what should you do?

- *Continue crossing. There will be enough time to cross. Do not turn around and go back.*

(continued)

Lesson Outline

Sample Script

4. Look for Traffic Signs and Signals (continued)

Don't worry though. There is plenty of time to cross, so never run across the intersection just to beat the clock.

Remember that even if all the signals say it is our turn to cross, only you can decide if it is really safe. Other adults, crossing guards, and crossing signals are there to help keep us safe. You still 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 time to cross again. 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 the Materials 4. Looking for Traffic Signs and Signals: Pedestrian "Walk" Signal and Pedestrian "Don't Walk" 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 "Walk" 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.

5. Cross Quickly and Safely

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. Notice how I am not walking at a diagonal. This will help me get across in a short amount of time.

And what will I do if it is raining or snowing? I will be especially careful, because drivers may find it harder to see me and may not be able to stop as quickly. I will wear bright-colored clothing and reflective material, look not only left and right but also in front and behind, and cross only when I'm sure it's safe and I see the white "Walk" signal.

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

Lesson Outline

Activity Options:

The students could...

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

Closure: (5 minutes)

The teacher will

- Review the steps for being safe while crossing an intersection

Sample Script

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. The teacher should allow the student to verbalize all movements to encourage internalization.]

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.”

- 1) Allow all students to line up across a large field or auditorium from the teacher.
- 2) The teacher will call out “Red Hand” for students to freeze at the “edge” of the street.
- 3) He/she will then call out “Walking Man” for the students to begin walking—For this age level, the teacher should emphasize looking left-right-left, behind and in front before moving, moving in a straight line, walking at all times, and paying attention to when the teacher is counting down. [Counting down will make children want to move faster. This is a great opportunity to emphasize that they have plenty of time to cross the street. There is no need to run.] If they do not do these things, they are out!
- 4) The first student or students to reach the teacher at the “other side of the intersection” is declared the “Crossing the Intersection Champ”!

[If time, the teacher can also have this older group of students buddy up with a younger group of children (perhaps grade level pairings of K, 1st and 4th & 2nd, 3rd and 5th). The older children can demonstrate safe behavior while teaching and modeling the younger children.]

Let’s review all that we have learned today.

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

- Find a safe place to cross. Cross at the crosswalk.
- Stop at the edge.
- Look left-right-left and in front-behind-in front. Listen for traffic.
- Look for traffic signs and 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.
 - Using a measuring tape, measure the rope or string in to the nearest eighth, quarter, or half unit (i.e., eighth inch, half inch, quarter centimeter)
 - 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.
 - Students can also use equivalencies to convert units of measure between customary and metric units (changing yards to feet to inches or millimeters to centimeters to decimeters to meters, etc.).

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)
 - Individually or in small groups, students 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 may 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) and, if available, use technology (cameras, microphones, etc.) to develop a two- to three-minute public service announcement (PSA) about pedestrian safety. Students should remember to include all appropriate vocabulary and key safety rules.
- If possible, the recorded PSAs can be broadcast on the school's morning show or over the school's broadcast system.

Materials

Pictures of crosswalks and traffic signals

Parent/Caregiver Tip Sheet