

Staying Safe in and Around Water

Lesson Overview

During this lesson, students will practice their relationship and critical thinking skills to identify how to stay safe during activities that take place in, on, and around water.

Overall and Specific Expectations

- A1: A1.4, A1.5, A1.6
- B3: B3.1, B3.2
- D1: Gr. 8 - D1.2
- D2: Gr. 4 – D2.2, Gr. 8 – D2.2
- D3: Gr. 1 - D3.1, Gr. 6 - D3.2

Learning Goals

- I can behave responsibly and follow safety rules and procedures to avoid injuries and keep myself and others safe during outdoor education activities.
- I can use my relationship, self-awareness, and critical thinking skills to analyze situations, identify risks, and make safe choices while participating in outdoor education activities.

Materials

- Sample water safety slogans (included in the Action section of the lesson)

- [Student Resource: Staying Safe in and Around Water - Self-Check \(primary\)](#)
- [Student Resource: Staying Safe in and Around Water - Self-Check \(junior\)](#)
- [Student Resource: Staying Safe in and Around Water - Self-Check \(intermediate\)](#)
- [Student Resource: Water Safety Campaign Plan Student Resource \(Junior/Intermediate\)](#)
- [Teacher Resource: Water Safety Slogans - Safety Tips](#)

Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education

Activities

- [Canoeing](#)
- [Canoe Tripping](#)
- [Flat Water Kayaking](#)
- [Kayak Tripping](#)
- [Paddle Rafting](#)
- [Swimming \(Instructional in Lakes, Ponds, Rivers\)](#)
- [Swimming \(Leisure in Lakes, Ponds, Rivers\)](#)
- [Swimming \(on Watercraft and Land-based Trips\)](#)

Tools and Resources

- [Disability-Centred Safety](#)
- [First Aid Plan and First Aid Emergency Response](#)
- [Sample Curricular Medical Information and Acknowledgement of Elements of Risk Form](#)

Other

[Risk Management](#)

Assessment for Learning

At the beginning of the lesson, work with students to co-create criteria for assessing knowledge and skills needed to apply safety rules and procedures during outdoor education activities. For example, success criteria might include:

- I can identify the safety risks when I am playing in, on, and around water.
- I can describe safety rules and procedures to follow to keep myself and others safe during outdoor education activities that occur in, on, and around water.

After the activity, review the co-created criteria with students, and have them complete the *Student Resource: Staying Safe in and Around Water - Self-Check*.

Assess students' responses during the class discussions throughout the scenario and the skit/illustrations (Primary) / Water Safety Campaign Plan (Junior/ Intermediate). Use the co-created criteria to assess student learning and offer feedback. If needed, provide feedback to individual students or the entire group, to clarify or reinforce their understanding of safety rules pertaining to activities in, on, and around water, and answer any remaining questions.

Minds On

Primary/Junior/Intermediate

Explain to students that one of the essential things needed for life is water. We drink it, we bathe in it, and we can have fun in it. Have students generate answers to the following question: "What are some ways we can enjoy being in, on, or around water?"

Possible answers:

- We can swim in it.
- We can use it with sand to make shapes and objects at the beach.
- We can go canoeing or boating or water skiing.
- We can go fishing.

- We can splash it on us to cool down when we are hot.
- We can run through it using a sprinkler.

Action

Primary/Junior/Intermediate

Explain to students that not all bodies of water have the same characteristics. Swimming in a pool is different from swimming in a lake; wading in a stream is different from wading in a river or at the edge of the ocean. Along with enjoying outdoor education activities in, on, and around water, they also need to know how to stay safe.

Provide students with water safety slogans that help communicate tips for being safe in, on and around water.

Sample Water Safety Slogans:

- “Swim as a Pair in an Adult’s Care”
- “Look Before You Leap”
- “Think So You Don’t Sink”
- “Reach or Throw, Don’t Go”
- “Don’t Just Pack It; Wear Your Jacket”
- “Lakes, Rivers, Streams or Yards, Watch for Water, Be on Guard”
- “Know the flow before you go”
- “Dark is deep; clear is near”

(List: American Red Cross, 2021)

Using a **Think/ Pair/ Share strategy**, have students interpret the meaning of some or all of the slogans and the safety tip it is meant to communicate (for example, Look Before You Leap - you don't know what's under the surface or how deep the water is so make sure you know how deep the water is and check for people below before you jump). Consider selecting the most relevant slogans for different divisions (that is, Primary, Junior or Intermediate). Invite students to share their responses with the class. Use student responses to clarify and extend student understanding of how to be safe in and around water.

Have students complete the *Student Resource: Staying Safe Around Water - Self-Check* to assess student understanding of how to be safe in and around water before moving onto the consolidation.

Consolidation

Primary/Junior/Intermediate

Share this acronym with students as an example of a water safety message that helps someone be safe.

S.A.F.E.:

- S = SPOT – spot the dangers
- A = ADVICE – follow safety signs and advice
- F = FRIEND – stay close to a friend or family member
- E = EMERGENCY – shout for help and know the emergency number to call

(S.A.F.E. acronym: Speedo, 2026, Ensuring Water Safety with the SAFE code)

Primary

Have students create and perform a skit or rewrite lyrics to a song that educates their friends about safety around water. Alternatively, have them draw a picture to illustrate one of the safety rules.

Junior/Intermediate

Provide each group with the *Student Resource: Water Safety Campaign Plan*. Use the following scenario to have students create a plan for a water safety campaign by identifying a weekly tip to share over the six weeks, the order they will share them in, and why they are focusing on those tips.

Scenario: It is June and school will soon end. It will be time for vacation, adventure travel and summer fun at beaches, pools, rivers, lakes and streams. Use your knowledge of safety in, on and around water to plan a water safety awareness campaign to share with family, friends and your community. Your campaign will be six weeks long, each week sharing a different water safety tip.

Decide on the six tips you will share and how you will share them.

Notes to Teachers

Remember to check school board policies and procedures applicable to any outdoor education activity.

A variety of assessment strategies have been identified in the Assessing for Learning section of each activity. Please note that these assessment strategies have been provided as a means for teachers to gather information to determine what students already know and can do, to inform instruction, scaffold learning, differentiate instruction in response to their students needs, and help students keep track of their progress in achieving the learning goals. These are not meant to be used for formal assessment and evaluation purposes.

References

- American Red Cross. (2021). [Water Safety for Kids](#).
- Speedo. (2026). [Ensuring Water Safety with the SAFE code](#).