

Climbing – Challenge by Choice

Lesson Overview

During this lesson, students will understand the importance of communicating during height-based and rock climbing activities and behaving responsibly to build trust in a group, and evaluating risks in order to make decisions in situations involving challenges.

Overall and Specific Expectations

- PPL 10: 1, 1.5; A3, A3.1
- PPL 20: 1, 1.5; A3, A3.1
- PPL 30: 1, 1.5; A3, A3.1
- PPL 40: 1, 1.5; A3, A3.1

Learning Goals

- I can behave responsibly and apply appropriate safety rules and procedures that maximize my safety and that of others during outdoor activities.
- I can think critically to analyze situations, evaluate my choices and make safe decisions in a variety of situations.

Materials

- Eye mask (optional)

- [Student Resource: Climbing – Challenge by Choice - Exit Card](#)

Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education

Activity

[Climbing \(Outdoor Rock Climbing\)](#)

Tools and Resources

- [Concussions](#)
- [Disability-Centred Safety](#)
- [First Aid Plan and First Aid Emergency Response](#)
- [Outside Activity Providers](#)

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. Consult the *Student Resource: Climbing ? Challenge by Choice - Exit Card* for suggested criteria.

After the activity, review the co-created criteria with students, and then have them complete their *Student Resource: Climbing ? Challenge by Choice - Exit Card*.

Collect and review students' completed *Student Resource: Climbing ? Challenge by Choice - Exit Card*. Use the co-created criteria to evaluate student learning and offer feedback. If needed, provide feedback to individual students or the entire group, to clarify or reinforce their understanding of climbing safety, and answer any remaining questions.

Minds On

Have students think of a situation in which they trusted a person who did not respect that trust. How did that make them feel?

Have students think of a situation where they trusted someone and that trust was respected. How did that make them feel?

Action

Students will perform a trust fall activity, in which they form a circle and take turns catching a person standing in the middle of the circle. Before starting this activity, discuss consequences of not taking the task seriously or failing to catch the person. Help students make connections between trust and betraying a trust and how they would feel in that situation, and the potential for injury.

Before beginning the activity, review the following communication protocol for establishing and maintaining trust:

- Five ways to establish a relationship of trust/action:
 - Ask for trust.
 - Prepare to accept the responsibility associated with asking for someone's trust.
 - Ask permission to perform the action.
 - Give someone permission to perform the action.
 - Recognize that the action is finished and that trust is no longer required.
- Basic communication protocol to establish and maintain trust:
 - When the student in the middle is ready to fall, they say, "Ready to fall."
 - The members of the group forming the circle answer, "Ready to catch."
 - The student in the middle says, "I'm falling."
 - The group members forming the circle answer, "Let yourself fall."

- All students remain quiet when the student in the middle lets themselves fall, in order to hear any communication.
- Once the student in the middle is finished, they say, "I've fallen."
- The group members say, "You did it!"
- Each student may choose the opportunity to be the student in the middle or not.
- For larger groups consider creating more than one circle and stand between each and circulate to supervise participants' application of safe behaviours and procedures.

When everyone understands the activity protocols, have students work in groups of 6–7 to perform the trust activity. One student stands in the middle of the circle with their eyes closed and arms crossed over their chest. The other students form a circle, bracing their feet one in front of the other, with their arms extending forwards to push gently on the student in the middle. The student in the middle keeps their feet still and allows themselves to fall in the circle. Have a group try the task. Provide feedback to make sure the instructions are understood and the task is done safely.

Make it clear that each member of the group can choose whether or not they want to have a turn in the middle. Have students name a number of factors that may influence the person's decision, such as:

- Previous experience
- Lack of trust in other group members
- Fear of falling/physical fear

All students have different lived experiences and, as such, each person will have a different level of confidence and state of mind. It is important to respect everyone's choice to participate or not. Ask: "How can we build trust and support in the group so that all participants might build their confidence and courage to try the activity?"

Consolidation

Guide a whole-class discussion using the following questions.

- What factors made this activity safer?

- What made it easier or harder to trust your classmates?
- What elements of this activity can we use in our climbing activity?
- Why does communication play such an important role in safety during climbing?

After the discussion, have students complete the *Student Resource: Climbing ? Challenge by Choice - Exit Card*.

Notes to Teachers

Each group must be carefully considered before implementing a trust activity in which there is a possibility of a real fall or harm. An activity like this should never be a first choice with a new group of students; it is a significant activity for creating and/or reinforcing trust bonds in a group for the purpose of performing more complex, collaborative tasks. An activity like this should be taught and supervised by a teacher

Here are a few other tips:

- Use multi-purpose mats and ensure there is enough space between the mats and any walls or equipment so students cannot fall into them.
- Make sure all students are standing on the floor at all times; do not let the students allow a fellow student to fall from any point higher than the ground. The goal of a “trust fall” is not for students to show they can catch someone. These are communication activities that build full trust in the group.
- The teacher must always be present and make sure students can hear instructions throughout the activity. Stop the activity if there is a problem or lack of communication or if a group of students tries to work too quickly.

Variations of this activity without falling can be used as precursors to trust falls (for example, the Mouse Trap Trust Sequence Activity). These activities can have a perceived medium to high risk but are low risk when facilitated under supervision and/or monitoring.

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