

Water Safety Activity Pack



Educator Notes

Key Stage 1

Learning Objective:

To understand how to have fun and stay safe around water.

Activities

Introduction: What is Water Safety?	Share what we like doing around water and what makes water dangerous.
Lesson 1: Stop and Think	Understand that water can look safe but still be dangerous.
Lesson 2: Stay Together	Learn the importance of staying with a grown-up around water environments.
Lesson 3: Float	Understand that floating helps you stay safe if you fall in the water.
Lesson 4: Call for Help	Never go into the water to rescue someone. Always get help and call 999.

This resource is aligned with:

- [National Water Safety and Swimming Education Pathway](#)
- [RSHE KS1 curriculum expectations \(personal safety\)](#)
- Water Safety Code messaging

1. Stop and Think

- What are the dangers?
- What has changed (weather, depth, current)?
- Is this a safe place to be?

2. Stay Together

- Always go with a trusted grown-up.
- Always tell someone where you are going.
- Never go near water alone.

3. Float

- If you fall in: lie on your back, gently move your arms and legs and tilt your head back so your ears are submerged.
- Stay calm and control your breathing.

4. Call 999

- Get help immediately.
- Do not enter the water to rescue someone.
- Shout and signal for help.



1 Stop and Think

2 Stay Together

3 Float

4 Call 999



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Canal & River Trust charity number: 1146792

Introduction: What is Water Safety?



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Ask children to identify places where they find water, such as swimming pools, rivers and the sea. Discuss what we might do in each place, such as swimming, walking, paddling, fishing or boating. Talk about why we learn to swim – to be healthy, to have fun and to stay safe.

Explain: Swimming pools are the safest places to swim because they have lifeguards, clear signs, safe entry/exit points and controlled conditions.

Key message: Always visit the water with a grown-up. Only swim in a safe, supervised place and listen to the grown-up looking after you.



Ask children what they might pack when spending time around water. Encourage them to think about safety as well as fun, such as a towel, sun hat, sunscreen, drinking water and suitable footwear.

Discuss why these items are useful and remind children that the right equipment can help us stay safe around water.

Tip: Use a real bag and objects to make the discussion more tactile.

Idea: Print the slide and ask children to draw and write their ideas.



Children explore a 'water bag' with items (towel, goggles, sun cream, etc.) and discuss safety vs not for safety items.

Other ideas could be: High-vis vest (for group visits), suitable footwear (sturdy with good grip) and a waterproof coat (weather changes quickly)

If someone is in trouble in the water, you can throw them an item that floats. They can hold onto this then raise one arm and shout for help. Emphasise they should always seek help from a grown-up and never enter the water.



Discuss how this child is staying with their grown-up, walking carefully and keeping away from the edge.

Explain that holding hands or staying close can help keep us extra safe.

Tip: You might like to use the Canal & River Trust's "Quack Quack Take Two Steps Back" picture book to talk more about staying away from the edge.



Discuss how this child is not staying with their grown-up and is running towards the edge of the canal. Ask children what could happen if he gets too close to the water. What could he do to stay safe?

Key message: Stay with your grown-up and keep a safe distance from the edge.

Lesson 1: Stop and Think



Educator notes:

Lesson 1 Stop and Think



Discuss how water can sometimes look calm, clean and safe, but there may still be hidden dangers. For example, the water could be deep, cold, moving quickly, or have hidden objects to get caught on.

Ask children: "Can we always tell if water is safe just by looking at it?"

Ask children: "How might dangers change?" (Water depth, current, weather)

Key message: Never assume water is safe. Stay with your grown-up and keep away from the edge.

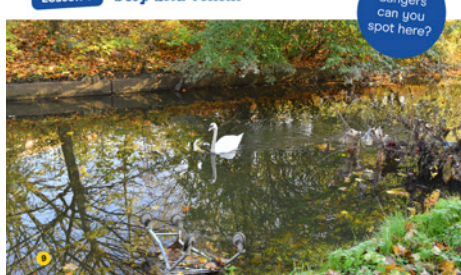
Lesson 1 Stop and Think



What are the dangers?

- Not staying with your grown-up – you could get too close to the water.
- Canal locks have very deep water – locks help boats move up and down between different water levels.
- Mooring posts and ropes can cause trips.
- Steep or slippery edges – you could slip and fall into the water.
- The water can be cold and difficult to get out of, even if it looks calm.

Lesson 1 Stop and Think



What are the dangers?

- Debris in the water – you could hurt yourself or get caught up in it.
- The edge may be difficult to see – you could get too close to the water.
- Water can look shallow – it may be much deeper than it appears.
- Leaves and grass can be slippery – you could slip and fall.
- Uneven ground near the water – watch where you are walking.

Lesson 1 Stop and Think



What are the dangers?

- Snow and ice on the towpath – you could slip and fall.
- The canal is frozen over – ice can break easily and you could fall into very cold water.
- Snowy or icy steps – you could slip or lose your footing.
- Bridges can be slippery – take care and stay with your grown-up.
- Cold water can be dangerous – it can be difficult to stay calm and get out.

Key message: Never walk on the ice!

Lesson 1 Stop and Think

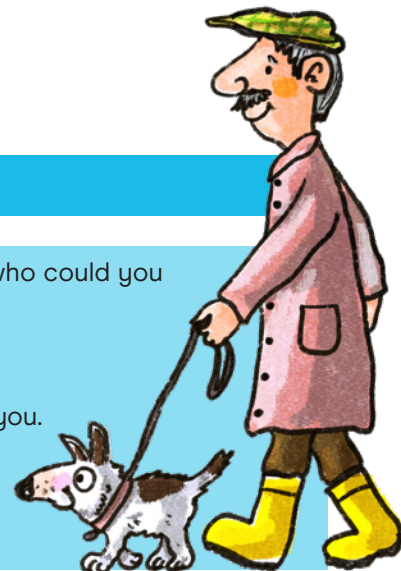


What are the dangers?

- The river is moving quickly. If you fall in, it can be difficult to get out.
- The water is going to be very cold, even on a hot day.
- Branches and roots can be sharp or uneven – you could hurt yourself or trip into the water.
- The ground may be muddy or slippery.

Lesson 2: Stay Together

Educator notes:



Discuss: When you go somewhere near water, who could you go with?

- Your grown-up or family.
- A teacher or another trusted grown-up.
- With a group, with grown-ups looking after you.

Remember: Always stay close to the grown-up who is looking after you near water.



Set up a simple pretend water area in the classroom, hall or outdoor space. A blue blanket, sheet or large piece of blue fabric can represent the water. Use cones, cushions or skipping rope to mark a safe distance from the water's edge. **Remind children that this is pretend water and that they must never practise these actions near real water.**

Use the three scenes to role-play making safe choices. Encourage children to stop, think and choose what to do next.

Scene 1 – A child spots a duck on the water.

Ask: “What would you do if you saw a duck?” Children can practise staying with their grown-up and watching the duck from a safe distance. Use a toy duck or picture to represent the duck.

Scene 2 – A ball rolls towards the water.

Ask: “Should we run after the ball?” Roll a soft ball towards the pretend water and ask children to practise stopping, staying back and telling their grown-up rather than going near the water.

Scene 3 – A boat passes by on the canal.

Ask: “What should we do when a boat comes past?” Use a toy boat or paper boat on the blue blanket. Children can practise moving away from the edge, staying with their grown-up and watching from a safe distance.

Key message: Stop, stay back and tell your grown-up. Never go near the water to retrieve something or get a closer look.



In the classroom, hall or playground: Ask children to walk in pairs or small groups to make a Water Safety Train. Make sure children have space to move safely and explain that they must stay together, walk carefully and listen for the commands. Call out the commands and ask children to remember and demonstrate the correct action:

- “Together!” – hold hands or link arms.
- “Edge” – take two steps back (carefully).
- “Problem” – stop and think.
- “Grown-up” – point to the nearest grown-up.
- “Emergency” – shout for help

Practise the commands several times, gradually changing the order to see if children can remember the actions.

Key message: When we are near water, stay together, listen to your grown-up and keep a safe distance from the edge.

Lesson 3: Float

Educator notes:



Lesson 3 Float

Floating means staying on top of the water instead of sinking underneath it.

What things are good at floating?

How could we make a ball of clay float?

Have you ever practised floating in a swimming pool?



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Remember to stay SAFE near water
Stay Away from the Edge

Explain that floating means staying on top of the water rather than sinking underneath it. Ask children to suggest objects they think will float and why.

“Things float when the water can push up against them enough to stop them sinking.

Our bodies can float too. When we relax and lie back, the water pushes up against us and helps us stay on the surface.”

Classroom activity – Can we make clay float?

Fill a bowl or tray with water. Give children a small ball of modelling clay and ask them to predict what will happen when it is placed in the water. Let them test it – the ball will usually sink.

Challenge children to change the shape of the clay to make it float. Encourage them to experiment with a boat or bowl shape, spreading the clay out so it can sit on the surface of the water.

Ask: “What changed? Why do you think the clay floats now?”

If appropriate, link this to real life by discussing how boats are designed to float, even though the materials they are made from may be heavy.

Safety: Use a shallow bowl and supervise the activity. Remind children that being able to float in a swimming pool does not mean it is safe to enter other bodies of water.

Key message: Some things float and some things sink but shape can make a difference.

Lesson 3 Practise Floating

If you fall into water, floating helps you stay safe.

Roll onto your back.

Tip your head back and look up, so your ears are underwater.

Gently move your arms and legs.

Breathe slowly.

Then call out for help.

Practise this in a safe space.



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Stay Away from the Edge

Explain that if someone unexpectedly falls into water, floating on their back can help them stay on the surface while they catch their breath, then they can call for help.

Practise the actions together in a safe, dry space, such as the classroom, hall or playground.

- Roll on your back.
- Tip your head back and look up - your ears will be submerged.
- Gently move your arms and legs, this will help you float - your legs might drop lower in the water but that's ok.
- Breathe slowly using calm breaths.
- Call loudly for help: “Help! Help!”

Everyone can float, although it may look different for different people.

Explain that real floating should only be practised in water with a qualified swimming teacher or other grown-up supervision.

Idea: If the weather is dry, children could draw around each other in the floating position using chalk on the playground. They could write key words around their shape - ask them to recall what they can remember. Float, tip, breathe, shout, help.

Key message: Float, breathe and call for help.

Lesson 4: Call for Help



Educator notes:

Lesson 4 Call for Help

What should you do if you see somebody else in trouble in the water?

- First, stop and think. Never enter the water to rescue someone.
- Phone 999 and shout for help. Tell a grown-up what has happened.
- Tell the person to float on their back.

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Stay Away From the Edge

Explain that trying to rescue someone from the water can be dangerous. Even strong swimmers can get into trouble, so children should never enter the water or reach into the water to rescue someone. Practise the following sequence together:
Stop and think – stay calm. Never enter the water – do not try to rescue the person yourself.
Call 999 – in an emergency, call 999. Shout for help and immediately tell a grown-up.
Float – tell the person to float on their back.

Key message: Don't go in – call for help. Never put yourself in danger trying to rescue someone else.

Lesson 4 Call for Help

What happens when we call 999?
The emergency operator will ask questions:

- What service do you require – police, fire, ambulance or coastguard?
- Where are you?
- What has happened?

In a canal or river emergency, ask for the fire service.

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Stay Away From the Edge

Explain that when we call 999, an emergency operator will answer and ask some questions so they can send the right help.

- What service do you require? – For someone in trouble in or near water, this will be the Fire and Rescue Service.
- What's happened? – Explain what you can see, using simple facts.
- Where are you? – Give the location or describe where you are. Look for signs, landmarks or other useful information.
- Reassure children that they should answer the questions calmly and follow the operator's instructions. They should not hang up until the operator tells them to.

Let children practise making a pretend 999 call with a partner. Emphasise that it doesn't matter if they forget to ask for the fire service. The most important thing is to say what's happened and where they are.

Key message: Stay calm and listen carefully.

Lesson 4 Call for Help

Look out for the landmarks.

How would you describe this location to the emergency operator?

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Stay Away From the Edge

Explain that bridges and locks along the canal often have numbers. These numbers can be useful landmarks to help the emergency services find you quickly in an emergency.

Ask children to look out for other things that could help someone find their location, such as buildings, signposts, road names and other landmarks. Let children practise describing this location as a role play.

Key message: Look around you. Spot landmarks and remember where you are.

Lesson 4 Call for Help - Let's Try

You are walking beside the canal with your family. You see that someone has fallen into the water. They're in trouble. What should you do?

- Should you call 999?
- Should you jump in?
- What should you tell the emergency operator?
- What could you say to the person in the water?

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Stay Away From the Edge

Encourage them to explain why each action is safe or unsafe. Reinforce the sequence:

- Stay back – never jump into the water.
- Get help – tell a grown-up straight away.
- Call 999 – explain that someone is in trouble in the water.
- Tell the operator where you are – use a landmark.
- Talk to the person – from a safe distance, calmly encourage them to float on their back and call for help.

Ask children: "What are the three most important things to remember?"

Finish by repeating the simple message:

Don't go in. Get help. Call 999.