

# Water Safety Classroom Session

## Teacher Lesson Plan

### Introduction

#### Session Focus/Theme

Water Safety: Inland Waterways

#### Recommend Key Stage 3

11-14-year-olds

#### Curriculum Subject Focus

Personal, Social, Health & Economic (PSHE)

#### Timings or Duration of Lesson

45 minutes

### Preparation

Resources – Water Safety PowerPoint presentation with embedded video: ‘James’ Story’.  
Teacher notes – This classroom session allows students to think about the dangers of inland waterways. It has been designed to encourage students to think about responsibility and consequences around water safety. It has also been created to raise awareness of ‘cold water shock’.

### Other Cross-curricular Links

- English – Spoken language and comprehension.
- Geography – use basic geographical vocabulary to refer to:
  - key physical features, including river, vegetation, season and weather.
  - key human features, including reservoir, canal and lock.

### Key Vocabulary

- Reservoir, lock, accident, risk, drowning, cold water shock, dangers, unsupervised, depth, currents
- Key Message – ‘Float to Live’, get help, stay away from the edge, respect the water

### Pupil Learning Objective

- I know about the dangers of inland waterways and understand how to stay safe.
- I know what to do in an emergency, including ‘Float to Live’.

## Teacher Expectations

By the end of the lesson pupils will;

Know...	Understand...	Be able to...
<p>Some of the main dangers of inland waterways</p> <p>How responsible behaviour can prevent water accidents</p>	<p>Why this age group is particularly vulnerable to accidents in the water</p> <p>The dangers of cold water shock, even in warm weather</p>	<p>React more clearly and confidently in an emergency waterway situation</p> <p>Make more sensible choices related to inland waterway safety</p>

## Expected Progress

Pupils should understand the dangers of entering a reservoir, canal or other inland waterway. They will become aware of cold water shock and how to react if they see someone in difficulty in the water.

## Introduction

Use slides 1-3 of the presentation to introduce the topic.

Ask the class two open questions:

- **Why are you more likely to drown as a young person, particularly from age 15 upwards?** [more likely to be risk takers, influenced by peer pressure, alcohol, or overly confident of swimming ability]
- **What is a life-changing injury?** [so serious they result in some form of permanent disability or long-term health problem]

Emphasise the following points:

- These facts are based around inland water and does not include coastal situations.
- Many of these accidents and deaths are caused by people not having the correct information and not realising the dangers.

## Watch 'James' Story'

Watch the short video 'James' Story' (slide 4) – ask pupils to watch closely and pick up as much detail as possible.

Explain that although this is a sad story that's not the reason you've shown it to them. James' parents wanted to make the film so that others could learn from it.

Ask them questions about the video to ensure they have picked up on the following facts:

Question	Fact
What was the weather like on the day?	It was a hot day.
What were James and his friends doing?	James and his friends climbed onto a raft which drifted out into the middle of the reservoir.
Where were James' parents? Did they know where he was?	James' parents were out walking the dog, they didn't know where James was.
Was James familiar with the reservoir?	Yes, James had gone to the reservoir many times before.
How did James die?	He died from cold water shock.
Was anyone else injured or hurt?	His friends were all fine.
How long was James in the water for?	James was in the water for an hour.

## Activities

What	How
Challenge (Slide 4)	Ask pupils discuss the question ' <b>Is there anything James or his friends could have done to prevent his death?</b> ' in small groups. Facilitate a class discussion once they've had a few minutes to talk amongst themselves.
Awesome Challenge (Slide 5)	Using slide 5, ask the group ' <b>If you had witnessed the incident, what could you have done to help?</b> '. Discuss as a whole class or put them into small groups to discuss first.  Use the feedback as an opportunity to introduce the following sequence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you get into trouble in the in the water, Float to Live. Lean back and use your arms and legs to help you float, then get control of your breathing before calling for help.</li> <li>• If you see someone in trouble in the water, call 999 and ask for the fire service.</li> </ul>

### Float to Live

- Fight your instinct to thrash around.
- Lean back, extend your arms and legs.
- If you need to, gently move them around to help you float.
- Float until you can control your breathing.
- Only then, call for help, swim to safety or continue floating until help arrives.

### Cold water

Cold water shock is triggered in water temperatures lower than 15°C. The average temperature of UK and Irish waters is 12°C. So even in the summer, the water temperature is cold enough to cause cold water shock, which can steal the air from your lungs and leave you helpless in seconds.

<p><b>Optional Challenge</b></p>	<p>Divide the classroom in five zones (could use groups of tables, corners of the room plus the middle). Ask pupils to think about James' death and how it could have been prevented. Each zone should reflect a different opinion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• James</li> <li>• His parents</li> <li>• The school</li> <li>• His friends</li> <li>• Something else</li> </ul> <p>Ask pupils to stand in the zone that best represents their individual opinion. Facilitate a class discussion around the issues of drowning prevention.</p>
<p><b>Mega Challenge (Slides 6 – 8)</b></p>	<p>Either in small groups or as a whole class, ask pupils, other than cold water shock, what additional dangers do they think exist around inland water. Reveal the list (slide 7) to see how many they came up with.</p> <p>Get pupils to think about how they know where it is safe to swim. Show them the images on slide 8 and see if they can identify safe and unsafe places from the images provided. Focus on the Sparth Reservoir sign:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do they think?</li> <li>• Is it confusing?</li> <li>• Would they think it was safe or unsafe?</li> <li>• When do they think it would be safe to swim there?</li> </ul> <p>Use this as an opportunity to discuss the difference between swimming unsupervised vs. as part of an organised event.</p> <p>For more information on Open Water Swimming visit:  <a href="#">Canal &amp; River Trust: Open water swimming</a>  <a href="#">RNLI: Open Water Swimming Safety Advice And Tips</a></p>

## Plenary

Ask five or six questions to check understanding. Provide opportunity for pupils to ask follow-up questions.

1. In the UK, how many people die from drowning because of an accident in or around water? [400 people]
2. Why are teenagers especially at risk?
3. If someone is having difficulty in the water, what would you do?
4. What do we mean by 'Float to Live'?
5. 1000's of people are left with life-changing injuries after accidents in water – What sort of things might have caused the injuries?
6. When would be the best opportunity to swim in open water? [At an organised event].

## Assessment for Learning

The pupils can be assessed through discussion analysis and participation.

## Home Learning

- Create a social media campaign for 11–14 year-olds including #RespectTheWater. It should be designed to encourage responsible behaviour and sensible choices near and on the waterways. They could focus on cold water shock, float to live or hidden objects.
- Visit: [www.nationalwatersafety.org.uk](http://www.nationalwatersafety.org.uk) for more information.