



Staying Safe Around Trains

Lesson Plans
for Grade 5





Staying Safe Around Trains

Grade 5

Social Studies

U.S. and World Connections:

Aspects of Citizenship and Government in the U.S.

Estimated Time for Activity

1 hour

(including Student Assessment and Evaluation)

Learning Objectives:

Students will:

- ▶ Learn how laws have been developed to protect children from injuries on railroad tracks and property.

Teaching Activities:

Ask the students:

- What is a law?
- What are examples of laws?
- How are laws made?
- What is trespassing on railroads?

Trespassing is:

- Walking, playing or running on or beside railroad tracks
- Driving a bike, a car, an ATV, a snowmobile or any other vehicle on or beside railroad tracks
- Taking a shortcut across railroad tracks or railroad property
- Entering railroad yards at any time

Discuss railroad laws with the students:

Laws are created to protect people and people's property. Railroad laws protect people from being injured and killed by trains and protect property that belongs to the railroad companies. All railroad tracks in the U.S. are owned by private companies, just like a house or an apartment is owned by someone. You cannot go on someone else's property without their permission. If you do, it is called trespassing. Railroad police make sure that the laws are followed. They issue warnings, tickets and fines to ensure that people follow the laws.

Today's assignment is to learn about trespassing on railroad property and also about the laws that protect the property of the railroad companies and protect people from being injured and killed in incidents involving trains.





Staying Safe Around Trains

Divide the students into small groups. Each group will receive a copy of The Railroad Laws and Enforcement Fact Sheet to review.

Ask each group to do the following activities:

- ▶ Use a classroom dictionary and look up the words trespass, law enforcement, property, danger, protect and prohibit. Write out all the definitions.
- ▶ Use the worksheet to answer:
 - What is the model law for a “Railroad Trespass Prevention Act”?
 - How are state trespassing laws enforced?
 - Why are these important laws?

Have groups share their answers.

Student Assessment and Evaluation:

Have students write a journal entry from the point of view of a fined trespasser, or create a daily log entry of a railroad police officer. Have them include what their character was thinking or feeling.

Follow-Up Activities:

- 1) Invite a railroad police officer into your classroom to talk about how they enforce the laws and promote safety around railroad tracks and property.
- 2) Have students create a poster to show “trespassing” on the railroad tracks. Have students present their posters to the school and present railroad safety tips.
- 3) Have students divide a sheet of paper in half and list reasons for and against the following statements:
 - It’s okay to trespass over a railroad track if no trains are coming, in order to get to school on time.
 - Farmers can cross over train tracks if the tracks go through their land/fields.
 - Trespassing laws are a nuisance.
 - Discuss the above statements as a class and have students circle the views on their pages that best describes their position on each statement.
- 4) Have students write a newspaper article about trespassing on railroad tracks and property.
- 5) Have students create an ad that warns students about the danger of trespassing. Hang the ads in the hallway or other public places.
- 6) Fill in the class or school name on the *Safe Crossing Week* certificate and hang it on the wall.



Staying Safe Around Trains

Link to Home:

Distribute the *Safe Crossing Week* letter to parents/guardians, the *Railroad Safety* brochure, the *Safety at Railroad Crossings* parent tip sheet and the *Staying Safe Around Trains* activity booklet to the students.

Encourage the students to talk to their parents/guardians about how to be safe at railroad crossings and around tracks. What safety rule will you remember to tell?

Resources:

www.usa.safekids.org/rail – Railroad safety education.

www.cn.ca – CN is one of the largest freight railroads in North America. For more than 25 years, through its program *All Aboard for Safety*, CN Police officers speak annually to more than 300,000 children and adults about the importance of safety at railroad crossings and the danger of walking and playing on or near railroad tracks.

www.operationlifesaver.org – Railroad safety education for educators, students, parents, and drivers.

PowerPoint slides

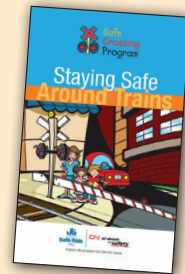
Railroad Safety
brochure for parents



Safety at Railroad Crossings
parent tip sheet for
children to take home



Staying Safe Around Trains
activity booklet for elementary
school children





Staying Safe Around Trains

Railroad Laws and Enforcement Fact Sheet

Railroad tracks are private property, no matter which railroad owns them. It is dangerous and illegal to be on or near any railroad tracks, except at designated crossings. Children, students and adults sometimes use the train tracks as a short cut to go to school or to the store or use it as a hangout with friends. The truth is you are not allowed to do any of these things — you are trespassing! Trespassing means going onto someone else’s private property without their permission — and it is against the law!

So, if train tracks are private property and you are not allowed to be on or near the tracks, how should you cross the tracks to get to the other side? Cross tracks **ONLY** at designated pedestrian or roadway crossings. Observe and obey all warning signs and signals at these locations. They include signs, flashing red lights, a ringing bell, and/or crossing gates that go up and down. Some grade crossings may only have stop signs or even just crossbuck signs. There are pavement markings such as a big white “X” and two thick white lines that are painted on the road along with yellow advanced warning signs that indicate there are train tracks up ahead and to proceed with caution.

When these warning devices activate, it means that a train is approaching and that you must stop. Trains have the right of way 100% of the time – over ambulances, fire engines, cars, the police and pedestrians. Whether you are walking, riding your bike or riding in mom or dad’s car, you must stop, wait for the train to go by and, more importantly, wait for the warning devices to completely shut off before you proceed across the train tracks. Before crossing, you must look both ways to make sure another train is not coming from the same or the other direction.

Crossing train tracks at any location, other than at designated pedestrian or roadway crossings, is dangerous and illegal!





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Model Law for a “Railroad Trespass Prevention Act”

Trespassing laws in the U.S. are made at the state level. Each state can determine what their law should be. A model law is an example developed by a national organization for states to consider in making their own laws.

The model law developed by the U.S. Department of Transportation for a Railroad Trespass Prevention Act states that:

Trespassing on railroad property – A person will be guilty of a misdemeanor if he/she knowingly enters or remains on railroad property without the approval of the railroad company except at a public or other authorized private crossing. This includes activities such as:

- Standing, sitting, walking, jogging, running, driving, or operating any type of vehicle, including a bicycle, motorcycle, snowmobile, car, or truck; or
- Doing any type of recreational activity, including bicycling, hiking, fishing, camping, cross-country skiing, or hunting.

If a person is convicted of trespassing, the person shall be fined \$100 or less, be put in prison for 30 days or less, or both.

Stowaways prohibited – A person will be guilty of a misdemeanor if he/she rides on the outside of or inside any type of train (including passenger cars and freight cars) without the approval of the railroad company. If a person is convicted, the person shall be fined \$1,000 or less, imprisoned for 6 months or less, or both.

The purpose of having these laws is to ensure that children, students, and adults are fully aware of the potential dangers associated with train tracks. These laws help reduce injuries and deaths and ensure the safe operation of all trains and mechanical devices and the work in railroad yards. Even if there is not a law specific to railroad trespassing, trespassing is illegal under the general trespassing law in your state.

Trains cannot stop quickly. It can take 1 mile or more (that’s about 20 football fields) for a train to come to a complete stop when traveling at 55 miles per hour.

Trains do not have steering wheels. An engineer cannot swerve the train out of the way to avoid a trespasser or vehicle that is on the tracks.

Remember: A train can come from either direction on any track at any time.

Crossing train tracks anywhere other than at designated pedestrian or roadway crossings is trespassing. It is extremely dangerous and illegal!

*IS THE TIME YOU SAVE WORTH YOUR LIFE?
ANY TIME IS TRAIN TIME!*





Staying Safe Around Trains

Grade 5

Language – English

Media Literacy

Estimated Time for Activity

1 hour

(for making advertisement)

Learning Objectives:

Students will:

- ▶ Research, write and illustrate a newspaper or magazine advertisement.

Teaching Activities:

Introduce railroad safety to the students

- Trains are fun to watch, but walking and playing near them is dangerous.

Design an advertisement for railroad safety

- Distribute *Staying Safe Around Trains* activity booklets or ask the students to make a list of railroad safety rules.
- Ask the students to design an advertisement to warn other students in their school about the dangers of trains. They may draw pictures or use photos of trains. (See list of resources for photos.)
- Once their work is completed, ask the students to present their ads to the other students. If there is an opportunity, display the ads in halls, cafeteria or community areas at the school.

Trivia Game

Divide the class into 2 groups. Using the statements provided, give one group the first set of statements from the *Staying Safe Around Trains* activity booklet and give the second group the second set of statements. Ask each group to write out 5 questions based on the information they have received. Then ask each group to ask the other group their questions. The group that provides the most correct answers wins.

Student Assessment and Evaluation:

To develop higher level thinking, have the students provide reasons for each safety statement. For example, “Don’t count on hearing a whistle to warn you that a train is coming.” Why? The train may not sound a whistle, you may have earphones or earplugs on, there may be an object that interferes with the sound of the whistle, etc.



Staying Safe Around Trains

Follow-Up Activities:

- 1) Distribute the provided Word Search to the students and ask them to complete.
 - 2) Fill in the class or school name in the Safe Crossing Week certificate and hang it on the wall.
 - 3) Link to daily physical activity and physical education curriculum: *Station to Station*
- Trains visit each and every station in any order of the engine's (leader) choosing (not necessarily in the order of sequential numbers).
 - All train members perform the activity noted at that station, and a new engine takes the train to its next destination.

Object: Complete the circuit

Equipment: Station numbers with activities posted at each site around the playing area or gymnasium

How to Play:

- Divide the class into groups of 4-6.
- Each group makes a train, holding onto either hips or shoulders.

Activity Ideas: jumping jacks, squat jumps, knee raises, lunges, scissor jumps, burpees, sit ups, push ups, one foot hops, two foot jumps, crossover jumps, bicep curls, tricep extensions, side kicks, arm circles, and toe touches.

Link to Home:

Distribute the *Safe Crossing Week* letter to parents/guardians, the *Railroad Safety* brochure, the *Safety at Railroad Crossings* parent tip sheet and the *Staying Safe Around Trains* activity booklet to the students.

Encourage the students to talk to their parents/guardians about how to be safe at railroad crossings and around tracks. What safety rule will you remember to tell?



Staying Safe Around Trains

Resources:

www.usa.safekids.org/rail– Railroad safety education.

www.cn.ca/obie – Discover lots of stories, games, puzzles and fun things for kids to do on *Obie's Web site*. CN's *All Aboard for Safety* train, Obie, and his engineer, Max teach kids how to stay safe around railroad crossings and tracks in a fun and entertaining way. Kids may also join *Obie's Club* and print their own personalized certificate. Obie is based on an actual 6-foot high CN locomotive, called Little Obie, that has been promoting railroad safety at schools and community events and giving rides to thousands of children across the United States and Canada for more than ten years.

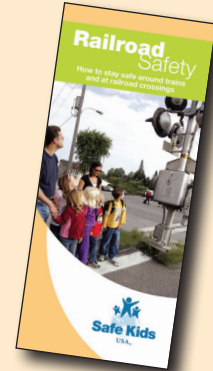
www.cn.ca – CN is one of the largest freight railroads in North America. For more than 25 years, through its program *All Aboard for Safety*, CN Police officers speak annually to more than 300,000 children and adults about the importance of safety at railroad crossings and the danger of walking and playing on or near railroad tracks.

www.operationlifesaver.org – Railroad safety education for educators, students, parents, and drivers.

www.cn.ca/photos – Photos of trains.

PowerPoint slides

Railroad Safety brochure for parents

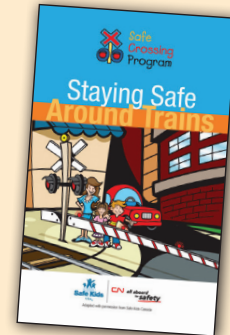


Safety at Railroad Crossings

parent tip sheet for children to take home



Staying Safe Around Trains activity booklet for elementary school children





Staying Safe Around Trains

Staying Safe Around Trains: Statements Part 1

Why do kids get injured by trains?

- ▶ A train going 55 mph can take a mile or more to stop! It takes longer than 10 minutes.
- ▶ A train can come from either direction on any track and at any time. Trains do not always run on a schedule.
- ▶ Trains only run on tracks. The engineer cannot swerve to avoid a crash like a car driver can.
- ▶ Railroad bridges and tunnels do not have room for you to stay safe when a train goes by. Do not play on railroad bridges or explore train tunnels.
- ▶ Trains that are standing still look quiet – but they can move at any time. Never play around or climb on train cars.
- ▶ Headphones hide the sound of a train. Take them off when you are walking near traffic and railroad crossings.



Staying Safe Around Trains

Staying Safe Around Trains: Statements Part 2

Safety Rules

- ▶ Always cross at a railroad crossing. A crossing has a sign or gates.
- ▶ Just like crossing the street – stop and look both ways before crossing train tracks. Listen for the warning bell and watch for the flashing lights.
- ▶ Sometimes, engineers blow the train’s whistle to warn people. Don’t count on hearing a whistle to warn you that a train is coming.
- ▶ If a train is going by, stand at least 15 feet (that’s about 10 giant steps) back from the tracks when a train is passing.
- ▶ Never try to get across the tracks if a train is coming. It is too dangerous.
- ▶ If one train goes by, look both ways again before crossing. Make sure another train is not coming on another track. Many crossings have more than one track for trains to ride on.
- ▶ When you cross the tracks, always step over the rails (the metal parts). Stepping on the rails can make you slip and fall.
- ▶ Always walk your bike across the tracks to make sure your tires don’t get caught. Make sure you wear your helmet when you ride your bike.



Staying Safe Around Trains

Word Search

V K F O G P Z H Z Q C F N C T
R O L B Z N W A L K R S M Z D
R O K P P R I I C G N V T V R
P L T X C S T S I C F R D O E
A N Q B J O U E S K R Z Y L P
E A B P V R W L V O H F T U W
E V I T O M O C O L R S G I W
S N R G F M N T D X I C A A X
L L E B Y G R C O H G T R W I
H W E G I A K H W B E R Q B R
T T N S I I H Y R J K A V O F
X B I N U A B E J A A C D R V
O U G D M Z O V T S I K Q W M
E E N L I S T E N A Y L L R P
A G E O O P I C R E G H S L F

BELL

CROSSING

ENGINEER

GATE

LISTEN

LOCOMOTIVE

LOOK

RAILS

SIGN

STOP

TRACK

TRAIN

WALK

WHISTLE





Staying Safe Around Trains

Grade 5

Physical Education

Personal Safety

Estimated Time for Activity

1 hour

(including Student Assessment and Evaluation)

Learning Objectives:

Students will:

- ▶ Be able to identify 5 ways they can protect themselves from being injured by a train.

Teaching Activities:

Can You Beat the Train?

The objective of this exercise is to see if you can cross the railroad tracks before a train arrives. There are two parts to this exercise:

- 1) Determine how long it takes to cross the tracks.
- 2) Determine how long from the time you can see a train until it arrives where you are crossing.

Step 1: How long does it take to cross the tracks?

- Using masking tape, mark a start and a finish line, 20 feet apart.
- Put the students in pairs.
- Have one student run from the start to the finish line.
- Have the second student time how long it takes.
- Then ask the students to switch roles.
- Each student should know the amount of time it took them to run from start to finish.
- Tell the students that the distance between the lines is about how far it is across the train tracks.
- Ask a few students to tell how long it took them to cross. (Answers should be between 1–2 seconds)
- Now mention that on a real track the students would have to cross over two rails. So, ask every one to add 5 seconds to their time.
- Then tell the students that tracks sit on small rocks, called ballast, that are often oily and slippery. So, tell them to add another 5 seconds to their time. Ask a few students to give their time.
- The students should have a total of 11–12 seconds.





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Step 2: How long does it take the train to come?

- Now say a train is coming down the track. It seems to be a very long way – say 400 yards – that is 4 football fields.
- Now in the 11 or 12 seconds it took you to run across the tracks, the train would have traveled 600 yards.
- Ask the students: What would have happened to you?

Staying Safe Around Trains

Ask the students to brainstorm a list of safety practices for staying safe around trains. The list should include:

- Always cross at a railroad crossing. Public crossings have a sign and some crossings have gates.
- Just like crossing the street – stop and look both ways before crossing train tracks. Listen for the warning bell and watch for the flashing lights.
- Sometimes, engineers also blow the train’s whistle to warn people. Do not depend on hearing the whistle to warn you that a train is coming.
- If a train is going by, stand at least 15 feet back (that’s about 10 giant steps) from the tracks when a train is passing.
- Never try to get across the tracks if a train is coming. It is too dangerous!
- If one train goes by, look both ways again before crossing. Make sure another train is not coming in either direction. Many crossings have more than one track for trains to ride on.
- When you cross the tracks, always step over the rails (the metal parts). Stepping on the rails can make you slip and fall.
- Always walk your bike across the tracks to make sure your tires don’t get caught. Don’t forget to wear your helmet when you ride your bike.
- Never wear headphones when you are near railroad tracks.

Student Assessment and Evaluation:

Place the following words separately on small pieces of cardstock. Ask students to volunteer to come up in front of the class, draw out a word, and speak for 30 seconds about that topic and how it relates to train safety. The student must present for 30 seconds. Reminder: students should volunteer for this activity, and have a safe atmosphere to present in. Word list: bell, signs (or have pictures of the 4 signs), engineers, flashing lights, whistle, tracks, bike, pedestrian, driver, headphones, cars, speed, gate, 15 feet, 1 mile, non-moving trains.



Staying Safe Around Trains

Follow-Up Activity:

- 1) Link railroad and pedestrian safety. When teaching your lessons on pedestrian safety, remind the students that the safety rules for crossing the street are the same as at highway-railroad crossings.
- 2) Have students decide which safe practice listed from *Staying Safe Around Trains* would be most important for the following: a pedestrian, a driver and a cyclist. Ask them to write a reason why they believe that statement is most important. Partner students up and have them debate who is most correct and why.
- 3) Fill in the class or school name on the *Safe Crossing Week* certificate and hang it on the wall.

Link to Home:

Distribute the *Safe Crossing Week* letter to parents/guardians, the *Railroad Safety* brochure, the *Safety at Railroad Crossings* parent tip sheet, and the *Staying Safe Around Trains* activity booklet to the students.

Encourage the students to talk to their parents/guardians about how to be safe at railroad crossings and around tracks. What safety rule will you remember to tell?

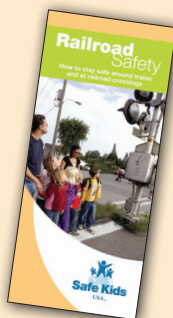
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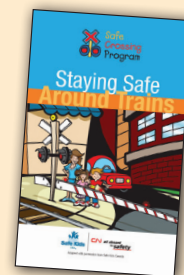
Railroad Safety
brochure for parents



Safety at Railroad Crossings
parent tip sheet for
children to take home



Staying Safe Around Trains
activity booklet for elementary
school children



Hey, kids!

Always look both ways before crossing train tracks. Trains cannot stop quickly! They are big and heavy. Did you know that it takes a train the distance of 20 football fields to stop? Visit Obie's website to learn more.

www.cn.ca/obie

Can you find the matching shape?



Once upon a time, there was a little locomotive named Obie.

He lived in the rail yard in a town called Memphis.

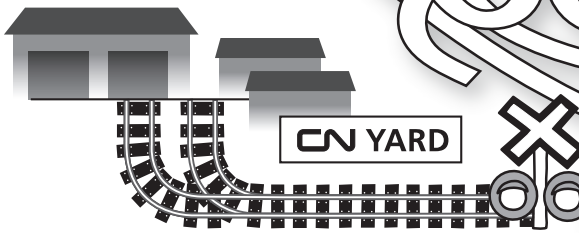
Obie was a happy little locomotive, always ready and willing to take on any job he was given. But Obie couldn't help but notice that he really wasn't like all the other locomotives.

To read the rest of this story, visit www.cn.ca/obie

Obie's Stories



Which track will lead Obie to the yard?

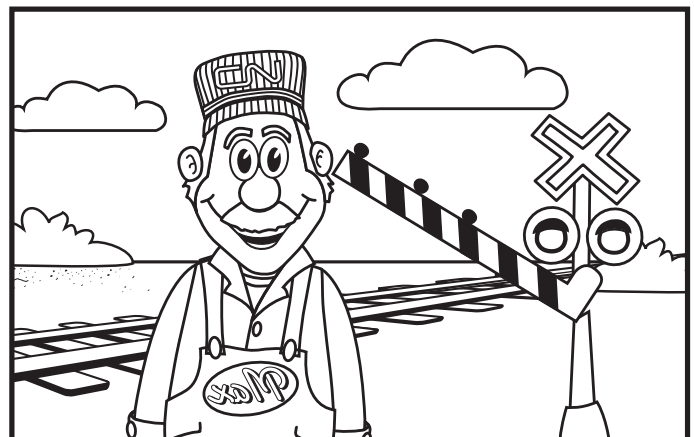


Obie's safety rules!

- Never play near railcars or climb on them.
- When you cross the tracks, always step over the rails (the metal parts). Stepping on the rails can make you slip and fall.
- Remember, trains cannot stop quickly!

Spot the differences

Can you spot the five differences between these two drawings of Max?



Hey, kids!

Obie's special place on the web is packed full of fun. Obie and his engineer, Max, have collected stories, games – and tons of other cool stuff – just for you. As you play, you'll learn how to stay safe around railroad crossings and tracks. Come play!

www.cn.ca/obie

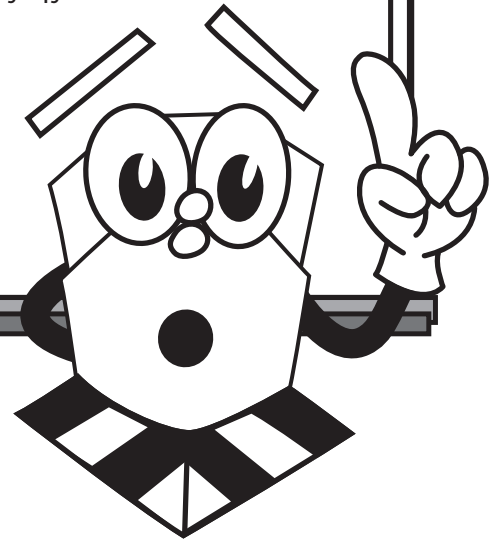
Find out what Obie says

23 1 12 11 9 14 7 15 18 16 12 1 25 9 14 7

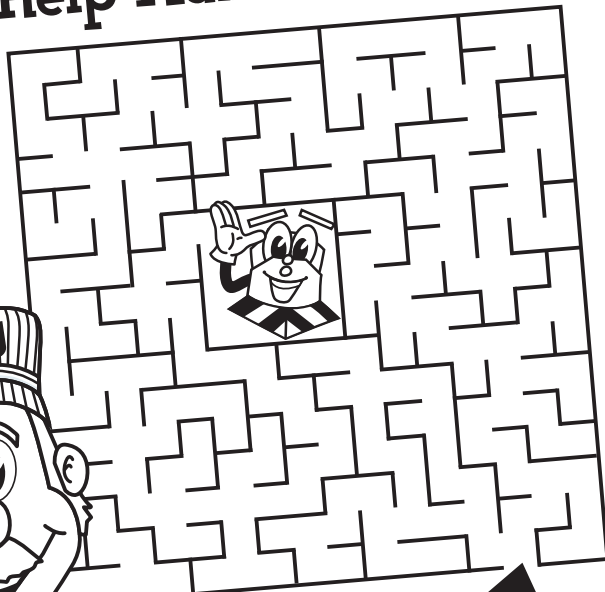
15 14 20 18 1 3 11 19 9 19

4 1 14 7 5 18 15 21 19

a = 1	i = 9	r = 18
b = 2	k = 11	s = 19
c = 3	l = 12	t = 20
d = 4	n = 14	u = 21
e = 5	o = 15	w = 23
g = 7	p = 16	y = 25



Help Max find Obie!



Obie's safety rules

- Always walk your bike across railroad tracks
- Listen for warning bells and train whistles, and obey the signs and signals
- Look both ways before crossing tracks
- Never wear earphones when you are near railroad tracks or crossings

Find the word!



BE	LISTEN	SAFE
BUS	LOOK	STOP
CROSS	MAX	TRAIN
FUN	OBIE	
GIZMO	ROADS	