



# GRADES 4-5 PEDESTRIAN SAFETY LESSON 1A: WALKING SAFELY NEAR TRAFFIC

## KNOWLEDGE BUILDING (15-20 MIN)

### Overview

The instructor will introduce inclusive definitions for “pedestrian” and “traffic,” discuss the importance of being a safe pedestrian and traffic safety rules, identify places for walking, and highlight important things to remember near driveways and at night.

While a “walking safely” lesson may seem simplistic for this age group, the safety issues presented are fundamental for all ages and should be reiterated. At this age, children are still developing the cognitive abilities required to understand and make safe pedestrian decisions. This occurs for different children at different rates and children may need more supervision as they learn and practice complex skills. Students at this age are also becoming more independent, may be responsible for supervising young siblings, and are inclined to be distracted by friends and technology. Parents/caregivers will make the decision about when their child is able to walk without supervision. These lessons encourage children to discuss complex decisions with adults.

If students have received prior pedestrian safety education and this lesson is intended as a review, the instructor may consolidate the lessons in various ways. For example, the concepts of Lesson 1 can be reviewed during a skill building activity or incorporated into Lessons 2 or 3. Instructors can use their discretion on how much time is needed and on which concepts to place emphasis. **Remember that skill building activities are essential to children applying what they learn. Please see lesson 1B for skill building activities to accompany this lesson.**

These lessons include a parent/caregiver tip sheet that may be sent home with students upon completion of lesson and skill building activities to encourage reinforcement of skill-building. Parent/caregiver tip sheets are available in multiple languages and can be accessed at [phila.gov/safe-routes-philly](https://phila.gov/safe-routes-philly).



## Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Explain reasons we walk places and identify common places to walk
- Recognize that people walk in different ways (e.g. using legs, with crutches or canes, in wheelchairs, etc.)
- Demonstrate understanding of appropriate pedestrian safety vocabulary
- Recognize safe practices near traffic such as walking on a sidewalk or side of the street facing traffic, being visible during low-light conditions, and when and where it's important to walk with an adult.

## Materials

### Appendix A: Visual Aids

- Walk Safely Scenarios:
  - Running
  - Playing a game
  - Walking ahead of an adult or sibling
  - Walking while distracted



# LESSON PLAN

## 1

### INTRODUCTION

- 1.** Why we need to learn about safety  
Ask students why it's important for them to continue to learn about walking safely. Responses could include:
  - a.** Their caregivers may be letting them walk some places by themselves
  - b.** They may be responsible for walking with younger siblings and need to help keep them safe
- 2.** Explain that everyone in the community has a role to keep streets safe. Drivers have a role, bicyclists have a role, and pedestrians have a role.  
*It is important to learn about walking safely so you can help keep Philadelphia's streets safe. As you are getting older, you must learn how to safely walk in lots of different situations.*
- 3.** Why it's good to walk  
*Discuss with students some good reasons to walk.*
  - a. Transportation**  
*Walking helps you get to where you're going.*
  - b. Health**  
*Walking is a great way for people of all ages to exercise! Walking is also good for your mental health. If you are feeling sad, angry, or stressed, a walk can help you destress and feel calmer. Walking and exercising also helps us focus better in school.*
  - c. Social**  
*Walking is a good way to have fun with your friends or family. Walking is a good activity to do outdoors.*

#### INSTRUCTOR NOTE:

Students could work in pairs before reporting to the larger group or complete a quick writing activity.

#### d. Being Green

*Driving is a big source of air pollution because cars use gasoline. When you travel while walking, you are taking care of the environment by not producing air pollution.*

- 4.** Review and discuss inclusive definitions for "pedestrian" and "traffic."
  - a.** A pedestrian is a person who walks. Walking can happen in different ways – using legs, a wheelchair, a cane or crutches, etc.
  - b.** Like pedestrians, cars, buses, trucks, bicycles, and other vehicles are also trying to get places. When they are on the road, these vehicles are called traffic.

#### MAKE IT INCLUSIVE!


- Point out that the key to being a safe pedestrian is to use multiple senses and be alert to cues in the street environment. These cues can be things a student sees, hears or touches. They can even be smells!
- Reiterate that students have different abilities for sensing these cues, which may affect their approach. For example, a student with little or no vision may rely more on what they hear or touch, while a student with difficulty hearing may rely more on what they see.

## 2

# MAIN LEARNING ACTIVITY – HOW AND WHERE WE WALK

## 1. How We Walk

*Today, we're going to review ways to keep you safe when walking.*

-  **a.** [Display Visual Aid: Walk Safely Scenarios]  
Facilitate student discussion about the rules for walking safely, being sure to include the following:
  - i.** Walk, don't run if there are lots of people around or if you are near the road.
  - ii.** Don't play around with friends or push. Someone could get hurt.
  - iii.** If you're walking with a younger sibling, make sure they stay close to you.
  - iv.** Pay attention to what's around you. Don't let toys, phones, friends, or anything else distract you.
- b.** Remind students to discuss with their parent or caregiver when to walk with an adult.  
*Talk with your parent or caregiver about when you can walk independently and on which streets. As you get older and have more walking experience, you will be better equipped to walk many places. As you are still learning, you can benefit from walking with adults who can demonstrate and explain more complex situations.*

## 2. Where We Walk

- a.** Review the importance of walking on a sidewalk whenever one is available.  
*The sidewalk is the safest place to walk because you are separated from moving cars.*
- b.** If the sidewalk is broken or closed because of construction, it is unsafe to walk on that side of the street. An adult can help you cross the street to a sidewalk that is safe.

### INSTRUCTOR NOTE:

**While sidewalks may be a common place to play for children, sidewalks that are narrow or have no buffer from traffic can be unsafe for play.**

### DID YOU KNOW?

The City has a 311 number where citizens can call in and report issues of missing or inadequate sidewalks. Encourage families to use this avenue to make walking easier in Philadelphia, and learn more at <https://www.phila.gov/311/pages/default.aspx>

- c.** Discuss with students where they should walk if there is no sidewalk on either side of the street.  
*Some streets and alleys may not have sidewalks. These streets are less safe because there is no separation between you and moving cars. If there is no sidewalk available, try changing your route to find a street with a sidewalk on it. If you must walk on a street with no sidewalk, there are some things you should always do to make it safer.*
  - i.** Explain that students should walk on the side of the street.  
*Walk close to the grass or buildings and away from the street. Make sure that there is enough room on the side of the road to stay a safe distance from cars.*
  - ii.** Explain that students should always walk facing traffic when walking on a street with no sidewalk.  
*Walk on the side of the street facing traffic so you can see drivers and quickly move if a car gets too close. If your back is to oncoming traffic, you will have less time to react.*
  - iii.** For one-way streets that don't have sidewalks, students should be encouraged to walk on the side of the road with the fewest visual obstructions, to ask an adult to help them decide on which side of the street that is, or to find a safer street to use.  
*Remember, whenever possible, choose a route with a sidewalk. It's better to take the time to safely walk somewhere than to take a shorter path that might be unsafe.*



### 3

## MAIN LEARNING ACTIVITY – WHAT TO REMEMBER WHEN WALKING NEAR TRAFFIC

1. Remind students to be careful as they walk, especially near driveways and alleys.  
*As you are walking on the sidewalk, you may notice places where cars cross over the sidewalk.*

- a. Define “driveways” and “alleys.”
  - i. **Driveways** are places cars cross the sidewalk to enter or exit a street.
  - ii. **Alleys** are small streets that might look the same as driveway.  
*In Philadelphia, some alleys are shared by cars and pedestrians and some alleys are just for pedestrians.*
- b. Discuss why it is important to pay attention around driveways and alleys.  
*When you are walking, even if you are on a sidewalk, you need look out for driveways and alleys because this is a place where pedestrians and cars use the same space. No matter what type of alley you are crossing, it is important to practice safe behaviors and be alert for other pedestrians and vehicles, including cars and bicycles.*
  - i. Drivers are focusing on many things when they enter or exit a driveway. They are usually looking to find a gap between moving cars so they can enter or exit the driveway. This might keep them from noticing you.
  - ii. Sometimes, drivers cannot see pedestrians because of parked cars, cars moving in the road, trees, and buildings.

### INSTRUCTOR NOTE:

This is another opportunity to emphasize the importance of walking with an adult. At this age, crossing driveways and alleys may be complex. Children can benefit from adult supervision until they gain the skills to do so independently

- c. Ask students how to cross driveways and alleys safely. Responses should include:
  - i. Stop before you start to cross the driveway.
  - ii. Look and listen for cars that may be parked in the driveway. If you see a person inside the car, if the lights are on, or if you hear the engine, DON'T MOVE! Stop and wait until you are sure the car is not moving. If you are walking with an adult, they can help you figure out if the car is going to move soon.
  - iii. Look both ways and listen to make sure cars aren't entering the driveway from the street. Drivers are often looking for other traffic and might not see you so be careful!
  - iv. If all directions are clear, it is safe for you and the adult walking with you to cross. Walk with your head up, looking for traffic as you cross.
2. Discuss why it's important for students to make sure that drivers can see them.  
*It's easy for you to know when a car is coming because you can see and hear it getting closer. It is not always easy for drivers to see you. Drivers are paying attention to other things on the road, like other cars and traffic signals. Sometimes, drivers are unable to see pedestrians, especially small children. Rain, clouds, and darkness also makes it harder for drivers to see.*
  - a. Discuss how wearing light or bright colored clothing will make it easier for drivers to see you when you are walking at night or in low-light conditions.  
*It can be hard for a person driving to see you because you might blend in with other surroundings in the dark. Light or bright colored clothing contrasts with your surroundings and can make you more visible.*

- b. Reflective materials and flashlights can also help drivers see pedestrians at night or in bad weather.
- i. Reflective materials are shiny and become brighter when light hits them.  
*Some shoes or backpacks or jackets have reflective material. Do any of you have reflective material on something you own?*

3. **Assess for understanding:** Have students write a letter to someone important to them on the safety lessons they learned today, and have them ask that person to join them in their commitment to being a safe pedestrian, cyclist, and/or driver.

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:**

People who drive should always make sure they're paying attention to their surroundings, yet too often when pedestrians are hit by cars, the news headline places blame on the pedestrian (e.g. in road, wearing dark clothing, etc.). When discussing being visible as a pedestrian, avoid language that places blame.

4

## WRAP UP

1. Review safety rules for walking near traffic, ensuring students understand the following rules:
  - a. Talk to your parent or caregiver to understand when you can walk independently and on which roads.
  - b. Parents or caregivers can always help you make safe decisions while walking.
  - c. Walk safely – don't run or play.
  - d. Always use the sidewalk.
  - e. If you must use a street or alley with no sidewalk, walk close to the grass or buildings and face traffic so you can see drivers and their actions.
  - f. Always pay attention and be careful near driveways and alleys.
  - g. If you are walking at night, wear bright colors, reflective materials, or carry a flashlight.
2. Choose one or two of the following questions to ask students verbally or have them write a short response:
  - a. What is one thing we learned today?
  - b. How will you use what you've learned today outside of school?
  - c. How can you explain what we learned today to a friend or family member?

## APPENDIX A: Visual Aids



# Walk Safely

## Scenario A



# Walk Safely

## Scenario B





# Walk Safely

## Scenario C



# Walk Safely

## Scenario D







# GRADES 4–5 PEDESTRIAN SAFETY LESSON 1B: WALKING SAFELY NEAR TRAFFIC

## SKILL BUILDING ACTIVITIES (10–30 MIN)

It is important for children to practice safe pedestrian behaviors that they learned during the knowledge building lessons for them to develop motor skills and replicate these behaviors in their everyday life. Research indicates that knowledge-building alone does not transfer to behavior change. For students to develop safe pedestrian behaviors they need to be given the opportunity to practice specific skills. Ideally, the practice opportunities will be performed in a real context (i.e. outside of a classroom or gym), but any practice opportunity is better than none.

The Safe Routes Philly Pedestrian Safety Skill Building Activities listed below provide three options for skill-building activities at increasing levels of real-world context:

- **Dramatize safe and unsafe scenarios:** In a classroom or virtual setting
- **Practice safe walking around school grounds:** Outside of the classroom, but on school grounds
- **Take a supervised walk through a nearby neighborhood with parent volunteers:** On nearby neighborhood roads

Each activity option includes details on space, time, materials and staff support required.

Prior to the activity, the instructor should review the Lesson 1 Knowledge Building materials and provide a brief review for students and model any behaviors/ body movements that will be part of the Skill Building activity.

These lessons include a parent/caregiver tip sheet that may be sent home with students upon completion of lesson and skill building activities to encourage reinforcement of skill-building. Parent/caregiver tip sheets are available in multiple languages and can be accessed at [phila.gov/safe-routes-philly](https://phila.gov/safe-routes-philly).



## SKILL BUILDING INSIDE

| ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION  | DETAILS  |
|---|--|
| <b>Dramatize safe and unsafe scenarios while reviewing safety rules</b><br><br>(10 minutes) | <b>LOCATION:</b> Classroom, gymnasium, or online<br><br><b>MATERIALS:</b> None<br><br><b>STAFF SUPPORT:</b> No additional staff support needed.<br><br><b>INSTRUCTIONS:</b> Instructor asks students to brainstorm different safety scenarios they might encounter when they are walking near traffic. Instructor should encourage students to identify more complex scenarios. Students should divide into groups to demonstrate each scenario. |

## SKILL BUILDING OUTSIDE

| ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION  | DETAILS  |
|---|--|
| <b>Practice safe walking around school grounds to reinforce appropriate behavior</b><br><br>(10-20 minutes) | <b>LOCATION:</b> On school grounds<br><br><b>MATERIALS:</b> None<br><br><b>STAFF SUPPORT:</b> Adult volunteers (1 adult for every 6-8 students)<br><br><b>INSTRUCTIONS:</b> Students should practice walking on a sidewalk without pushing or playing, listening to an adult's instructions, crossing driveways, walking when there is no sidewalk (on the left side of the street facing traffic), etc. Remind students of the reasons why they must practice safe behaviors. |



## SKILL BUILDING NEAR TRAFFIC

| ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION   | DETAILS   |
|--|---|
| <p>Take a walk through a nearby neighborhood with parent volunteers to practice and reinforce proper walking behavior</p> <p>(20-30 minutes)</p> | <p><b>LOCATION:</b> Outside</p> <p><b>MATERIALS:</b> Walking field trip permission slips, signed by all students' guardians</p> <p><b>STAFF SUPPORT:</b> Adult volunteers (1 adult for every 6-8 students)</p> <p><b>INSTRUCTIONS:</b> Students should practice walking on a sidewalk without pushing or playing, listening to an adult's instructions, crossing driveways, walking when there is no sidewalk (on the left side of the street facing traffic), etc. Remind students of the reasons why they must practice safe behaviors.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> While the ultimate goal of this activity should be to reinforce proper safety behavior, adults may opt to play an "I Spy" game or hold a mini scavenger hunt to hold student attention and reinforce previous knowledge in other subject areas.</p> <p><b>VARIATION:</b> Walk on a one-way street and discuss with students how to decide where to walk. Remind students that adults can help them know the safest side to walk, especially on one-way streets with no sidewalks.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Given the time and staffing commitment, this activity may be most beneficial at the end of all 3 knowledge lessons.</p> |