



# Aqua Smart

## Activity Lessons for Water and Boating Safety

Check Out  
Our K-2 Grade  
Level Activities,  
pages 3-10

See 3-5 Grade  
Level Activities,  
pages 11-18

Now Includes  
6-8 Grade  
Level Activities,  
pages 19-26

*Riva  
The Otter*



Includes fun student activity lessons that teach how  
to be safe and wise when playing in and around water!



This **AquaSmart Activity Lessons for Water and Boating Safety** resource contains a variety of activities that teach children important lessons about water and boating. The activities are designed to cover multiple aspects of aquatic and boating safety as well as weather, buoyancy, pollution, and more.

The lessons encourage children to enjoy the water, but it also teaches them that it can be dangerous without the proper precautions. The activities present some essential rules and teach children how to make the right decisions. After learning these guidelines and thinking through different scenarios, children will know how to play in and around the water safely—and they'll know what to do if an accident does happen.

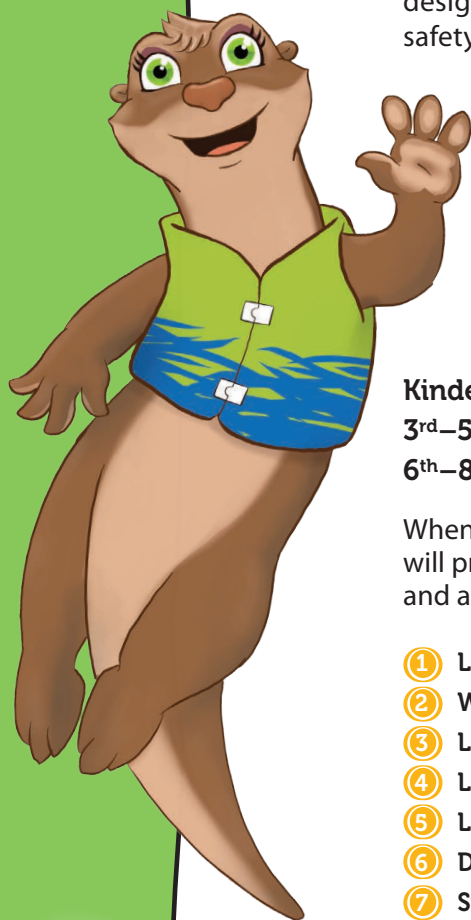
**Kindergarten–2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Level Activities . . . . . page 3-10**

**3<sup>rd</sup>–5<sup>th</sup> Grade Level Activities . . . . . page 11-18**

**6<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> Grade Level Activities . . . . . page 19-26**

When children learn safety lessons at an early age, the lessons will protect them even into adulthood. These AquaSmart lessons and activities can help save their lives and the lives of others.

- ① Learn to Swim!
- ② Wear a Life Jacket!
- ③ Learn to Float!
- ④ Learn to Rescue Safely!
- ⑤ Look Before You Leap!
- ⑥ Don't Overload Your Boat!
- ⑦ Stay With Your Boat!
- ⑧ Learn the Boating Rules of the Road!
- ⑨ Alcohol, Drugs and Boating Don't Mix!
- ⑩ Keep Our Waterways Clean!



For more information, contact:

California State Parks Division of Boating and Waterways (DBW)

[www.dbw.parks.ca.gov](http://www.dbw.parks.ca.gov)





# The Waterways of California

## The State of California

In California, the land ranges from desert to forest with short, wet winters and long, dry summers. Water shapes the land and is very important. Every living thing needs water to live. Most of the fresh water California uses comes from snow and rain in the mountains. Waterfalls

and streams flow into rivers and lakes. Rivers and lakes flow into canals. And canals are used to bring water to farmers and people in the cities. California is divided into four regions. Label the regions on the map and then answer the questions below.

- ① Draw a star on the map where you live.

\_\_\_\_\_ region

- ② Name three things that need water to live.

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- ③ Where does most of California's fresh water come from?

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- ④ Which California region do you think gets the least amount of water?

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### Map Legend



\_\_\_\_\_ region

\_\_\_\_\_ region

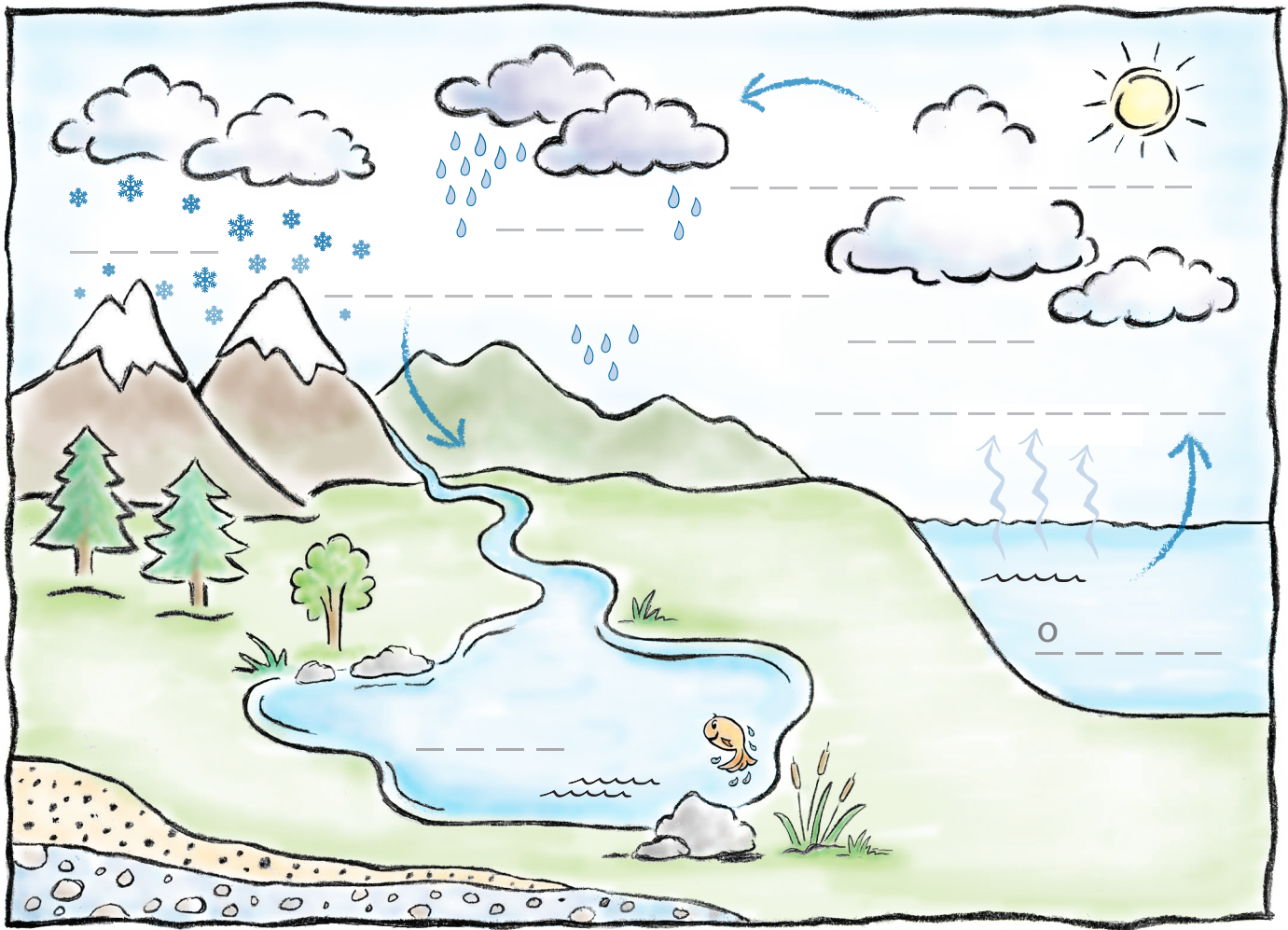
\_\_\_\_\_ region



# Water Cycle

## Water Goes Around and Around

The earth doesn't make new water; instead, the water we already have goes around and around in a cycle. The picture below shows how the cycle works. Label the main parts of the water cycle, or label the things you see in the picture. Then, draw something that needs water to live and add it to the picture below.



### Word Bank

lake

snow

cloud

rain

ocean

### evaporation:

The sun heats the earth's water and turns it into steam. It floats up in the air.

### condensation:

In the air, the steam gets cold, so it turns back into a liquid and forms clouds.

### precipitation:

When a cloud gets heavy, the water falls back to earth as rain, snow, sleet, or hail.





# Learn to Swim!

Lesson: Grade Level 6–8



## Learn to Swim Safety Word Match

Learning to swim is extremely important. It can keep you alive when you're playing in or near water, and it can help you save yourself if needed. Not only does it keep you safe, it also makes boating and water activities a lot more fun. Knowing how to swim makes you feel confident and powerful in the water. You should also learn to float properly; if you ever need to be rescued, it can help you stay calm and keep your head above water without getting tired.

Learn more about swimming as you draw a line to match up the water safety terms to the correct definition.

**accident**

- an artificial lake where water is collected as a water supply
- an event occurring by chance or unintentionally

**backstroke**

- an expert swimmer employed to keep other swimmers safe
- able to float in or rise to the surface of a liquid
- able to choose between right and wrong

**buoyant**

- a style of swimming on your back
- a learned skill to stay on the surface of water without sinking

**confidence**

- the ability to use one's knowledge effectively in doing something
- freedom from danger

**float**

- an upright position in water to stay afloat by calmly moving your arms and legs in wide downward circular motion
- belief in one's own abilities; a feeling of trust

**freestyle stroke**

- a floating board used in swimming, by a beginner, to help keep the head up while practicing the flutter kick
- body of water that has a continuous onward movement

**kickboard**

- a style of swimming, also known as the crawl, in which the swimmer faces downwards and moves their arms alternately in strokes while kicking

**lifeguard**

**reservoir**

**responsible**

**safety**

**skill**

**swift current**

**tread water**

List some fun things you can do in the water if you know how to swim:

\_\_\_\_\_

List two skills that help keep you safe in or out of the water:

\_\_\_\_\_





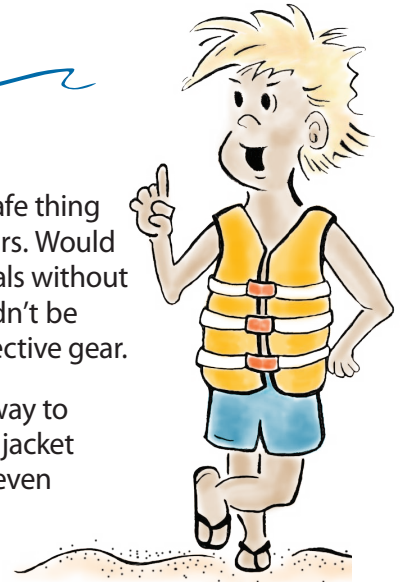
# Wear a Life Jacket!

Lesson: Grade Level 6–8

## Be Smart and Safe—Wear a Life Jacket

When you're on a boat or near the water, always wear a life jacket. It's the smart and safe thing to do, just like wearing safety equipment for most sports and many professional careers. Would a baseball player step up to the plate without a helmet? Would a scientist mix chemicals without wearing gloves and goggles? Of course not—it would be foolish. Plus, a batter wouldn't be allowed to bat with a bare head, and the lab has rules requiring everyone to wear protective gear.

It's the same way with wearing life jackets around water. It's an easy, common-sense way to stay safe, and sometimes the law requires it. If you're under 13, you have to wear a life jacket on a moving boat. And anyone waterskiing or riding a jetski must wear a life jacket—even grownups—just like you have to buckle your seatbelt in the car.



### What protective gear would you need for these activities?

- |                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| ① Scuba diving: _____     | ⑥ Fixing wires on telephone poles: _____ |
| ② Playing hockey: _____   | ⑦ Fighting in a war: _____               |
| ③ Water skiing: _____     | ⑧ Welding or forging: _____              |
| ④ Playing football: _____ | ⑨ Constructing a building: _____         |
| ⑤ Mountain biking: _____  | _____                                    |

What's another sport, job, or activity that requires safety equipment? \_\_\_\_\_

**Imagine you work at a life jacket company.** Your job is to design a life jacket for middle schoolers—a jacket so awesome, it makes them want to wear life jackets whenever they're around water. Draw your design here.

What cool features could you add?

What would your life jacket look like?





# Learn to Rescue Safely!

Lesson: Grade Level 6–8

## A Good Safety Plan Covers the Main Points

Everyone should learn basic water rescue skills because an accident could happen any time you're near water. If someone falls into the water, there are four ways you can try to save the person.

**1** First, try to **reach** the person. Hold out your hand if the person is close enough, or find something long and strong, like a rope, an oar, or a pole.

**2** If you can't find anything, or the person is too far to reach, then look around for something that floats very well, and throw it. You could throw an inner tube, a life preserver, a life jacket, or even an empty ice chest.

**3** If you can't reach or throw, find an adult to row out to rescue the person. The adult could use a boat, a raft, a surfboard, or even an air mattress.

**4** If you can't reach, you can't throw, and you can't find an adult or anything to row, then call 911 for help.



**Safety First**

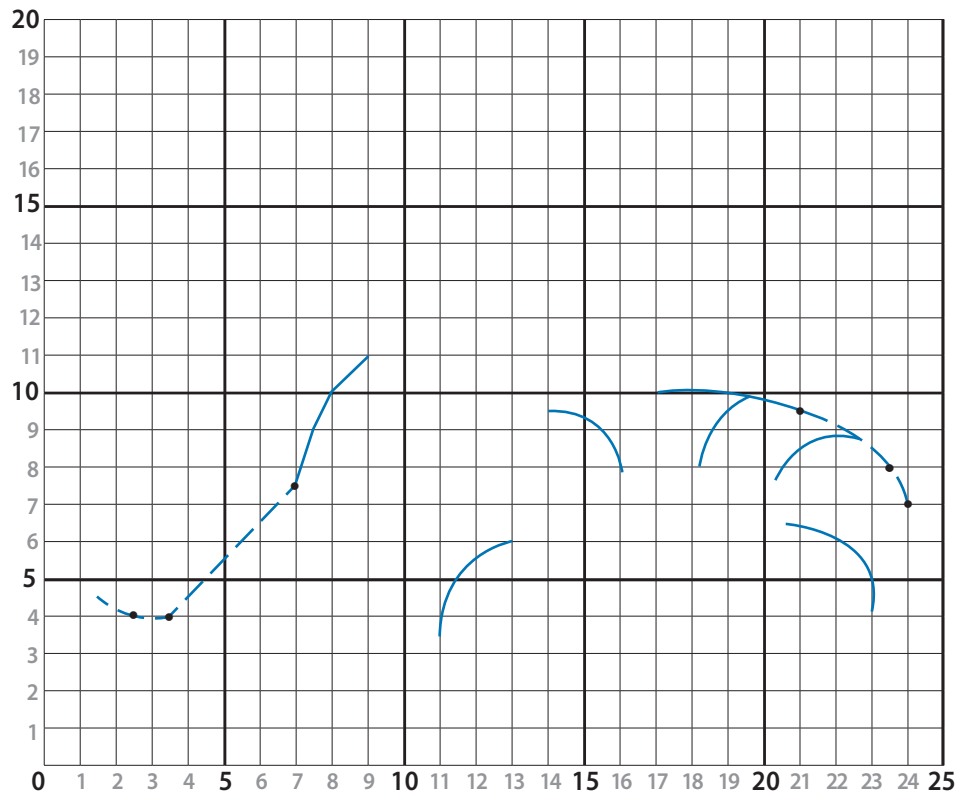
**① Plot the points on the graph** using the coordinates provided. Then, connect the points to see what's revealed! The crossed-out coordinates have been plotted for you.

**② What rescue "reach" item is revealed by plotting and connecting these coordinates listed on the below?**

<del>(7, 7.5)</del>	(6.5, 10)	(17, 18)
<del>(3.5, 4)</del>	(7.5, 10.5)	(16, 17.5)
<del>(2.5, 4)</del>	(8.5, 11.5)	(15.5, 17)
(1.5, 4.5)	(15, 17.5)	(9, 11)
(1, 6)	(15.5, 18)	<b>stop and connect</b>
(5, 9.5)	(16, 19)	

**③ What rescue "throw" item is revealed using the coordinates below?**

<del>(21, 9.5)</del>	(20, 2.5)	(10.5, 7)	(17, 8)	(17, 5)	(14, 7)	(19, 5.5)	(15, 5)	(12, 8.5)
<del>(23.5, 8)</del>	(18, 2)	(12, 8.5)	(19, 8)	(15, 5)	(15, 7.5)	(20, 4)	(14.5, 3.5)	(13.5, 8)
<del>(24, 7)</del>	(14.5, 2)	(14, 9.5)	(21, 7)	(13.5, 5.5)	(17, 8)	(20, 2.5)	(14.5, 2)	(14, 7)
(24, 6)	(13, 2.5)	(17, 10)	(20, 6)	(13, 6)	<b>stop and connect</b>	<b>stop and connect</b>	<b>stop and connect</b>	<b>stop and connect</b>
(23, 4)	(11, 3.5)	<b>stop and connect</b>	(19, 5.5)					
(21.5, 3)	(10, 5.5)	<b>stop and connect</b>						





# Look Before You Leap!

Lesson: Grade Level 6–8

## Hidden Hazards Challenge

Always look for dangers before you jump into the water. There could be rocks, garbage, or other hidden things that could hurt you if you land on them. The water could be shallower or colder than you expect. Even if the water looks calm, there could be a strong undercurrent beneath the surface.

Don't jump in if you can't tell how deep it is or if you can't check for hazards. Don't jump if you see a sign that says "No Swimming" or "No Diving." Never jump off bridges, rocks, or cliffs. And never swim in a canal; the water moves quickly, and the sides of the canal are slippery, so it's very hard to climb out. Plus, swimming in a canal is against the law.

To stay safe, stick to areas designated for swimming. And even then, look before you leap. Look in the word search for the dangers listed in the Word Bank.

### Word Bank

currents	canal
debris	rocks
garbage	shallow
hazards	cold
hidden	slippery
cut	illegal
scrape	steep
break	gross
bridges	trouble
cliffs	waves
injury	undercurrent
sharp	litter



o a u n d e r c u r r e n t a s c q  
b s c r a p e e f r o c k s y l t h  
r c u r r e n t s c a n a l u i l a  
e g a r b a g e s s o p a t b p a z  
a t d e b r i s g e r l e r c p f a  
k s h a l l o w u a a t d o a e c r  
a h b z a r d c h r s e n u e r l d  
b r i d g e s s u i s t m b g y i s  
m h i d d e n t c t n a e l a r f a  
w a v e s r i l l e g a l e l d f r  
m l i t t e r k i n j u r y p a s e







# Don't Overload Your Boat!

Lesson: Grade Level 6–8

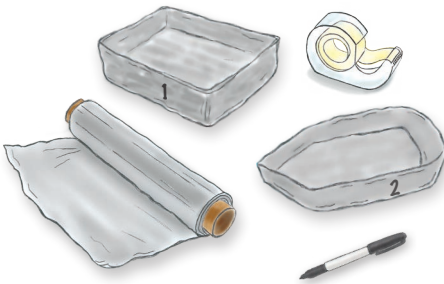
## Does it Float Your Boat?

All boats need to be balanced safely. An overloaded boat or unbalanced boat can turn over or capsize, even when there is no wind or rough water. In this activity, you will play with buoyancy and balance by designing five tin foil boats and loading them up with pennies. You'll see that some boats are easier to sink than others, and you'll find the best way to load a boat safely. You need aluminum foil, tape, a permanent marker, a large container full of water, and a bunch of pennies.



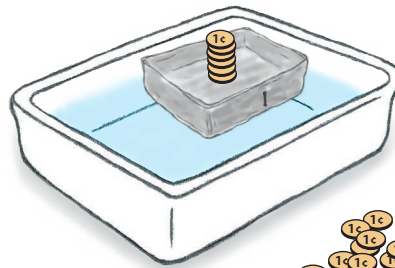
### Build and Test the Boats

① Use the foil to construct five boats of different sizes, shapes, heights, and amounts of foil. Fold up the sides so the boats don't leak. Tape the sides if you need to. Using the marker, number the boats 1-5.



② Which boat do you think will hold the most pennies? Why?

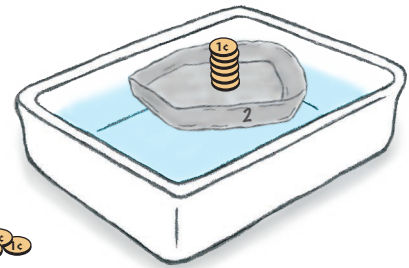
③ Carefully add the pennies to the first boat, building a single stack in the middle of the boat until it sinks. Dry the pennies, then repeat with the next boat.



Record the penny capacity of each boat before it sinks or capsizes:

1: \_\_\_\_\_ 2: \_\_\_\_\_ 3: \_\_\_\_\_ 4: \_\_\_\_\_ 5: \_\_\_\_\_

④ Which boat held the most pennies? Why?



### Balance and Sink the Boat

⑤ Take the winning boat and think of other ways the pennies can be dispersed in the boat to hold more weight. Draw or write down different arrangement of pennies that you think will cause the boat to **capsize**:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

and ways that you think will maintain the boat's **equilibrium**:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



⑥ So now, try your experiment with different arrangements, using the same number of pennies, until the boat capsizes. Where did you put the pennies and why did that sink the boat?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



⑦ Try to sink the boat using the *fewest* pennies possible. How many pennies did you need and where did you put them?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

⑧ Now try to fit as many coins as you can. Try five different arrangements. Which method balanced the most pennies and why didn't the boat tip over?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

⑨ Based on your experiment, is **counterbalance** important to maintain stability in a small boat? Yes No

What is the best way to load a boat safely?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

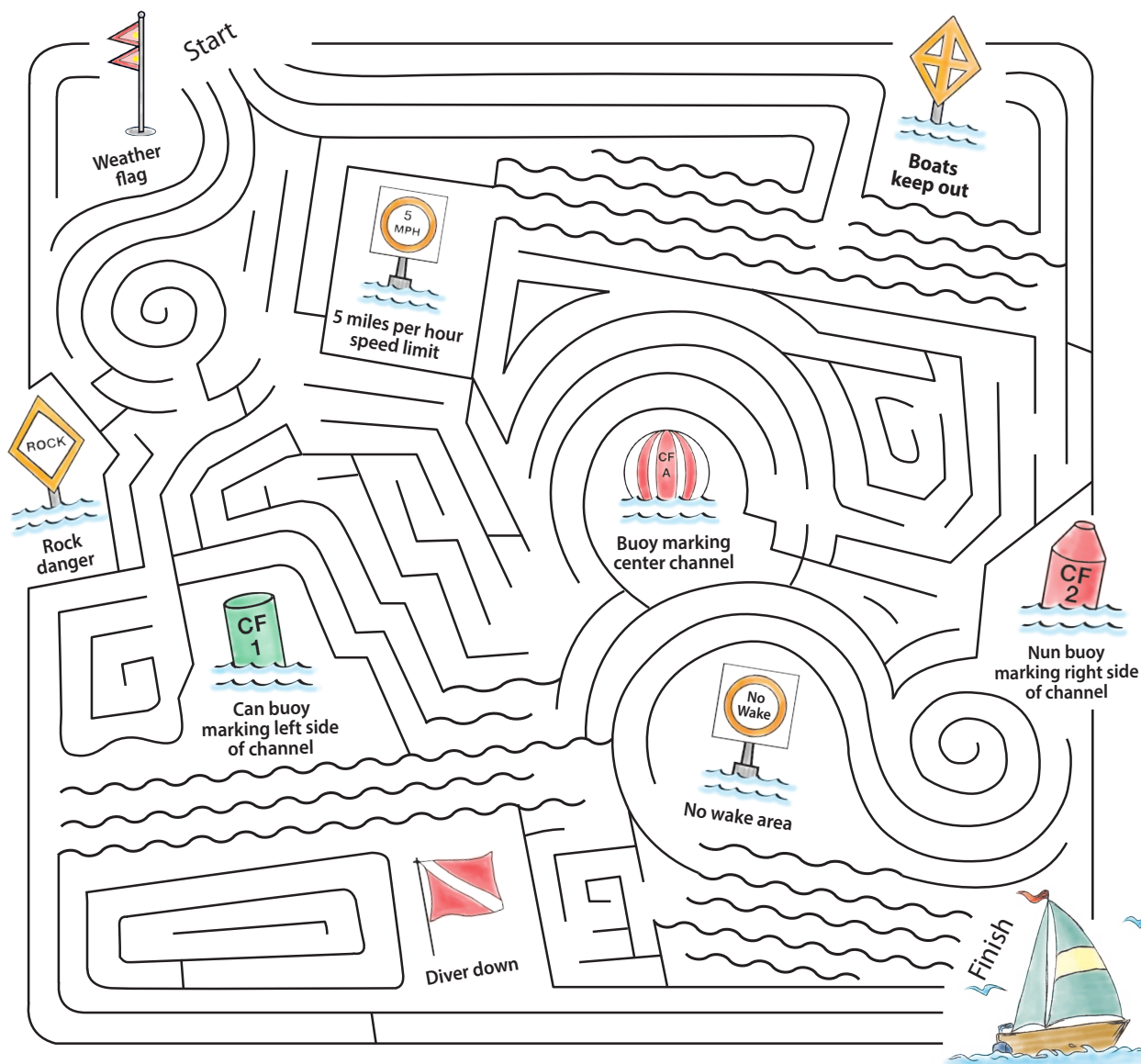


# Learn the Boating Rules of the Road!

Lesson: Grade Level 6–8

## An Amazing Navigational Voyage!

California waterways have navigation signs to guide boaters and keep them safe, just like there are signs on the side of the road for cars. The signs direct traffic and provide important information. For example, a diamond warns about a danger, like rocks, a wreck, or a shallow area. A circular sign means you're in a controlled area and you have to follow the instructions inside the circle, like a speed limit or a rule against making a wake. A green can-shaped buoy marks the left side of a channel, a red nun buoy marks the right side, and a red-striped spherical buoy marks the center. As you navigate your way through this maze, you'll learn to recognize some basic navigational signs.



If you see a rectangular flag with a diagonal stripe, what is below the water? \_\_\_\_\_





# Alcohol, Drugs and Boating Don't Mix!

Lesson: Grade Level 6–8

## It Can Be a Dangerous Path

Boats can be dangerous if you aren't careful, but if you follow the basic guidelines to keep yourself safe, they can be great fun. Alcohol and drugs, however, are never safe when you're boating. If you're under the influence on a boat, you'll be in danger no matter what other rules you follow. Read along the sentence paths and fill in the blanks from the word bank to see how drugs and alcohol affect your body, mind, and boating skills.

### Word List

risks	multiply
judgment	driver's license
illegal	brake
boat	peripheral (edges of what you see)
movements	temperature
dizzy	

**The Law:** It's \_\_\_\_\_ to operate a boat while under the influence of drugs or alcohol, just like driving a car.

\_\_\_\_\_ seem like great ideas. You're more likely to take \_\_\_\_\_ and get into life-threatening situations.

**Reflexes:**

\_\_\_\_\_ and something darted across the road, it would take you longer to step on the \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ make it difficult for your body to control its \_\_\_\_\_, so sun

\_\_\_\_\_ ability to focus. **Balance:** Alcohol and other drugs mess with your

balance on a \_\_\_\_\_ can be dangerous.



\_\_\_\_\_ and wobbly. Being hot and tired makes

\_\_\_\_\_ **Vision:** Alcohol and other drugs mess up your

\_\_\_\_\_ the effects of drugs and alcohol. Wind and noise can make you feel

\_\_\_\_\_ your brain struggles to process information, and your body

\_\_\_\_\_ getting a \_\_\_\_\_ once you're old enough. **Brain:** Drugs and alcohol affect your brain,

**Boating Environment:**

Wind, noise, sun, and waves can

Alcohol and other drugs slow your reflexes. You don't notice things as quickly,

If you got caught operating a boat under the influence, you would have a hard time



# Keep Our Waterways Clean!

Lesson: Grade Level 6–8

## Imagine a Pollution Plague in the Future

We need to protect our environment and keep our waterways clean because people, plants, and animals depend on safe water to survive. Plastic is one of the worst and most common pollutants. Some types of plastic take hundreds of years to decompose. Other types decompose more quickly, but they release toxic chemicals as they do. Write a science fiction news report describing what life could be like in 200 years if pollution continues to fill and poison the ocean. Each paragraph has been started for you; finish it with a short blurb about a crazy event or horrifying discovery. Then, list some solutions to the problem in the last paragraph.



**The Pollution Plague** *reported by:* \_\_\_\_\_

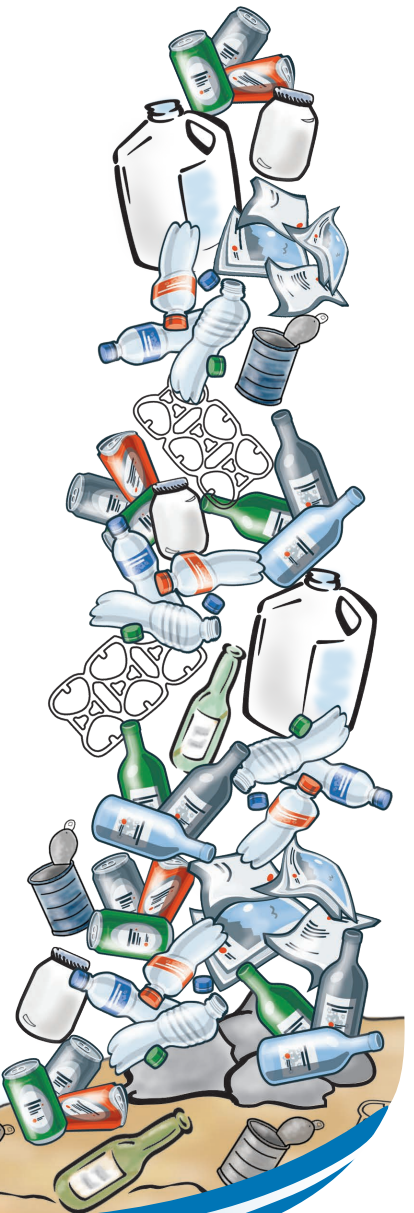
Over the past 200 years, pollution has filled the ocean and changed the world forever. "My great-grandpa used to go fishing at the shore," said one young girl. "But I took my brother there last week, and as soon as he touched the water, \_\_\_\_\_

Seabirds and marine animals get entangled in the ocean trash, which makes it difficult for them to move, breathe, or eat. As a result, \_\_\_\_\_

When ocean creatures accidentally eat plastic, it can poison or choke them. Other times, it makes their stomachs feel full, so they stop eating. Last week, scientists found \_\_\_\_\_

A few ocean species have survived—and they've found a new way to travel. Floating debris creates gigantic rafts, and sea creatures living in them can reach faraway destinations well beyond their native habitats. A wild band of angry \_\_\_\_\_ recently reached the California beaches and immediately \_\_\_\_\_

Californians, concerned about agricultural crops and seafood affected by pollution, have suggested solutions to clean up the environment by \_\_\_\_\_



## Page 19

List some fun things you can do in the water if you know how to swim:

Answers will vary.

List two skills or safety tips that help keep you safe in or out of the water:

swim, float, wear a life jacket, swim where it is safe, etc.

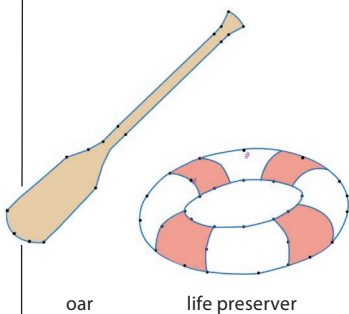
accident	• an artificial lake where water is collected as a water supply	lifeguard
	• an event occurring by chance or unintentionally	
Backstroke	• an expert swimmer employed to keep other swimmers safe	reservoir
	• able to float in or rise to the surface of a liquid	
buoyant	• able to choose for oneself between right and wrong	responsible
	• a style of swimming on your back	
confidence	• a learned skill to stay on the surface of water without sinking	safety
	• the ability to use one's knowledge effectively in doing something	
float	• freedom from danger	skill
	• an upright position in water to stay afloat by calmly moving your arms and legs in wide downward circular motion	
Freestyle stroke	• belief in one's own abilities; a feeling of trust	swift current
	• a floating board used in swimming, by a beginner, to help keep the head up while practicing the flutter kick	
kickboard	• body of water that has a continuous onward movement	tread water
	• a style of swimming, also known as the crawl, in which the swimmer faces downwards and moves their arms alternately in strokes while kicking	

## Page 20

1. CO<sub>2</sub> (air) tank, wet suit, mask
2. head gear, knee & elbow pads, gloves, padded pants
3. life jacket, sunscreen
4. helmet / head gear, teeth and shin guards, gloves, padded shoulder gear
5. helmet, protective clothing, shoes, gloves
6. hard hat, safety glasses / goggles, rubber gloves, work boots, safety harness
7. combat vest, clothing, and boots; combat helmet and protective eyewear; combat pack and weaponry
8. eye and face safety shield helmet; fire-resistant gloves, clothing, and shoes; ear muffs or plugs
9. hard hat, safety glasses / goggles, work gloves, work boots, ear plugs

Other sport, job, or activity answers will vary. Life jacket designs and styles will vary.

## Page 21



oar

life preserver

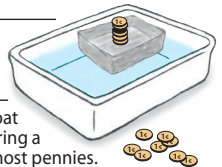
## Page 22

o a u n d e r c u r r e n t a s c q  
b s c r a p e e f r o c k s y l t h  
r c u r r e n t s c a n a l u i l a  
e g a r b a g e s s o p a t b p a z  
a t d e b r i s g e r l e r c p f a  
k s h a l l o w u a a t d o a e c r  
a h b z a r d c h r s e n u e r l d  
b r i d g e s s u i s t m b g y i s  
m h i d d e n t c t n a e l a r f a  
w a v e s r i l l e g a l e l d f r  
m l i t t e r k i n j u r y p a s e



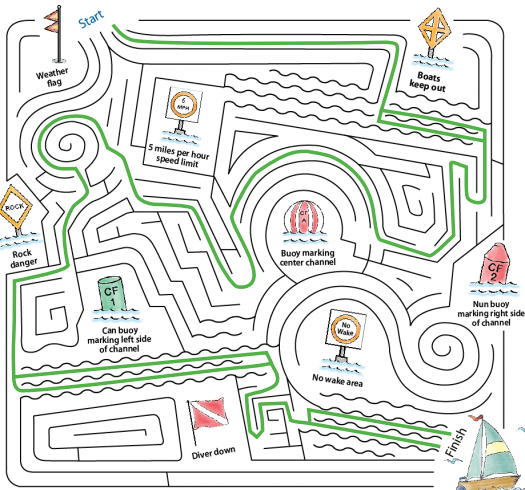
## Page 23

2. and 3. Answers will vary.
- 1: \_\_\_\_ 2: \_\_\_\_ 3: \_\_\_\_ 4: \_\_\_\_ 5: \_\_\_\_
4. Answers will vary slightly. A foil boat with a wide and flat bottom, covering a larger surface area, will hold the most pennies.
5. Unevenly stacking pennies on one side, one half, or leaning up against one side will sink the boat. Pennies arranged evenly and balanced throughout the boat will balance the boat.
6. Pennies were arranged on one side or one half of the boat. The load of pennies was unbalanced, making the boat tip over. Adding too many pennies will eventually make the load too heavy and sink.
7. Quantity and unbalanced coin placement will vary.
8. The boat with pennies arranged evenly and balanced throughout the boat, fit the most pennies. The boat remained stable because the weight of pennies was distributed evenly. The boat with coins will float if it weighs less than the amount of water it displaces.
9. ☒ Carefully load people, gear, and items in the boat so the weight is distributed equally and balanced.



## Page 24

If you see a rectangular flag with a diagonal stripe, what is below the water? A diver is below the water.



## Page 25

Answers are listed in the sentence order they appear.

**The Law:** illegal, driver's license  
**Brain:** judgment, risks  
**Reflexes:** movements, brake  
**Boating Environment:** multiply, temperature  
**Vision:** peripheral  
**Balance:** dizzy, boat

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Narratives will vary.

The Division of Boating and Waterways offers FREE boating and safety curriculum and publications.

Our AquaSmart lesson plans and student activities align with California's curriculum standards for grades K-2, 3-5 and 6-8. To learn more, visit [www.dbw.ca.gov/AquaSmart/curriculum.html](http://www.dbw.ca.gov/AquaSmart/curriculum.html)







## Wear a Life Jacket!

Today's life jackets may not be what you think—many are lightweight, comfortable, and come in many sizes, styles, and shapes for every person and every sport.

The U. S. Coast Guard requires recreational vessels (boats, canoes, rafts and standup paddleboards) to have a wearable life jacket for each person aboard. These life jackets must be:

- U. S. Coast Guard approved
- The proper size for the intended wearer
- In good and serviceable condition
- Properly stowed (readily accessible)

Under California law, **every child under 13 years of age** on a moving recreational vessel of any length must wear a Coast Guard-approved life jacket.

### If a life jacket fits properly...

- It will help keep your head above the water.
- If it's too big, the life jacket will ride up around your face.
- If it's too small, it will not be able to keep your body afloat.
- Life jackets designed for adults will not work for children!

### Try it on for size

- Check the manufacturer's label to ensure that the life jacket is a proper fit for your size and weight.
- Make sure the jacket is properly fastened.
- Hold your arms straight up over your head.
- Ask a friend to grasp the tops of the arm openings and gently pull up.
- Make sure the arm openings are snug and the life jacket does not ride up over your chin or face.
- For the best fit, try the life jacket in shallow water under safe and supervised conditions.

For more information on life jackets and boating and water safety, visit:

[www.dbw.parks.ca.gov](http://www.dbw.parks.ca.gov)

▶ Type 1  
Offshore  
Life Jacket



▶ Type 2  
Near-Shore  
Buoyant Jacket



▶ Child  
Life Jacket



▶ Vest-Type  
Life Jacket



▶ Manual  
Inflatable



▶ Belt Pack  
Inflatable

A life  
jacket can  
save your  
life, but  
only if you  
wear it!



STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
California Natural Resources Agency  
California State Parks  
DIVISION OF BOATING AND WATERWAYS  
[www.dbw.parks.ca.gov](http://www.dbw.parks.ca.gov)