



**Title:** Wear It!

**Subject:** English/Language Arts

**Grades:** 3 – 5

**Concept:** Students create informational documents about safety practices while fishing and boating.

**Learning Objectives:**

- Interpret print, web, and video materials to determine safe boating practices.
- Prepare materials to effectively communicate safe boating practices and to persuade people of their importance.
- Demonstrate an understanding of methods for effective and persuasive communication of ideas.

**Teacher Background:**

Each year, the Coast Guard sponsors the “Wear It” campaign to spread information about safe and responsible boating practices, with specific emphasis on the use of life jackets. Students may submit public service announcements (PSAs), boating safety videos, or other informational media designed to educate people about safe practices. Students can practice communicating information to an audience through writing and speaking as they learn about boating safety.

In this lesson, students research safety considerations while fishing and boating. Then, students create a poster or a pamphlet designed to educate their peers about the responsibilities of anglers and boaters to maintain safety on the water. In addition, students evaluate the effectiveness of the Coast Guard’s “Wear It” campaign, and work in groups to design effective “Wear It” promotional materials.

**Materials:**

- Short video clips of [rowing](#) and [kayaking](#)
- For each group:
  - Computer with Internet access
  - Materials from the “Wear It” campaign
  - A selection of materials to produce a poster or pamphlet, including:
    - Poster board
    - 11 x 14-inch paper
    - Pencils

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- Rulers
- Markers
- Scissors
- Boating magazines to cut for photos of boating-related activities
- Glue

**Vocabulary:**

- Communicate
- Persuade
- Personal flotation device (PFD)

**Timing:**

1. Approximately two 45-minute class periods
  - Lesson: 45 minutes
  - Activity: 30 minutes
  - Wrap-up: 15 minutes

**Lesson:**

1. Tell students that the Coast Guard and other boating safety groups have the job of communicating with the public about safe and responsible boating practices. Explain that in this lesson students will learn about writing and creating materials that **communicate**, or provide information, and **persuade**, or encourage people to do something.
2. Divide the class into small groups. Provide each group with a selection of 3-4 boating safety materials to study. If you have computers with Internet access, students may choose their own materials from the “Wear It” campaign website ([www.safeboatingcampaign.com](http://www.safeboatingcampaign.com)). Have students divide a paper into a two-column chart to take notes on each material, with the headings “What information is communicated?” and “How is the information communicated?” Encourage students to use bulleted lists in each column to summarize the main points.
3. After students have evaluated all the materials and completed their charts, bring the class back together. Create a master 2-column chart on the board using the same headings as noted above. Call on students to read main points from their lists and summarize the points on the master chart. The “What information is communicated?” column should contain all the relevant information about safe and responsible boating practices, including:
  - a. Always wear a lifejacket, making sure that the life jacket fits correctly.
  - b. Be sure everyone on board the boat is wearing a life jacket.
  - c. Wear clothing that protects you from wind, sun, and exposure to water, such as a wetsuit bottom, gloves, glasses or goggles, and a hat.

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- d. Wear sunscreen.
- e. Never stand or sit on the edge of a boat while it is moving.
- f. Maintain a safe speed.
- g. Maintain a safe distance from other boats.
- h. Pay attention and look around for other people, objects, or wildlife in the water and take early action to avoid collisions.
- i. Refuel on land to avoid oil and gas spills.
- j. Avoid shallow water and shoreline areas whenever possible.
- k. Respect wildlife by staying far away.
- l. Watch other boats and watercraft really well when going from one body of water to another.
- m. Read and follow all posted safety and wildlife information.

The “How is the information communicated?” column should contain a summary of methods for writing persuasive, informative materials, including:

- a. Use language familiar to the audience.
  - b. Clearly describe the action steps that the audience should take.
  - c. Include information that motivates the audience to take action.
  - d. Be careful to express information and emotions in a way that persuades but does not frighten or offend.
4. Ask students to share materials that they thought were most effective and least effective at communicating boating safety information and persuading the audience to follow safety guidelines. Encourage students to describe specific points that they thought helped or hindered each material’s ability to communicate and persuade.

**Activity:**

1. Divide the class into groups of 3-4. Tell students they will design a poster or pamphlet to communicate information about safe and respectful boating practices using the guidelines developed in the lesson.
2. Have students plan a design on scrap paper. Have them identify the audience, the main points they want to communicate, and the actions they want people to take after reading their material (what people will do).
3. Provide the class with a selection of materials to create their poster or pamphlet.

**Wrap-up:**

1. Display posters and pamphlets in the class and allow students time to view each other’s work.
2. Create a rubric to assess each group’s product according to the accuracy and completeness of information conveyed (first learning objective).
3. Create a rubric to assess each group’s product according to its effectiveness of presentation of information (second learning objective).

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4. Allow each group to perform a self-assessment of their own product and to assess one other group's product according to the guidelines provided in part 3 of the lesson description.
  5. Finally, have each group develop written answers to the following questions.
    - a. What materials worked best at communicating information? What methods did they use that were effective?
    - b. What materials worked best at persuading people to take action? What methods did they use that were effective?
    - c. What did you learn about using words and pictures to communicate with an audience?
- Assess the quality of each group's answers (third learning objective).
6. Collect students' work to send to the "Wear It" campaign.

**Extensions:**

1. Communications: Students write, direct, and record a public service announcement (PSA) or boating safety video to submit to the "Wear It" campaign.
2. Science and Technology: Students research different materials used to construct a life jacket and/or how the materials and designs of life jackets/personal floatation devices (PFDs) have changed over time. Essential guiding questions might include, "Why are life jackets made of certain materials?" and "Why are life jackets designed as they are?"

**Standards:**

English Language Arts

- Communication Skills: Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.
- Reading for Perspective: Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.
- Communication Strategies: Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.
- Developing Research Skills: Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA)

- Responsible users of fish, wildlife and the outdoors, respect the rights and property of others.

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