

All About Water Safety



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We must always stay **SAFE** near water.

Stay **A**way **F**rom the **E**dge



Let's learn how to be **SAFE** near water.

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1. Hidden dangers

Key message – our classroom is a familiar place but there were still dangers.

TASK

On your Post-it note – write down as many hidden dangers near water as you can think of.

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How many of these dangers did you come up with?

- **Vegetation** e.g. plants, cut grass and especially duckweed can make the surface of the water appear like solid ground.
 - **Hidden objects under the water** such as broken glass, metal and sharp rocks can lie beneath the surface.
 - **Cold water** can cause the body to shut down very quickly. This means you gasp for breath and quickly become exhausted. Your body temperature drops and you could lose consciousness. (See extension exercise 1 page 5.)
 - **Deep and untreated water** can be risky. It's quite difficult to tell how deep water is, especially in rivers. Canal and river water is not treated and may contain bacteria that can cause infection.
 - **Ice** may look thick enough to hold your weight, but you can never tell how strong it is.
 - **Hidden and slippery edges** can be dangerous. Plants can hide the edge and even where you can see it, it's easy to slip into the water.
 - **Currents** can be strong even in canals and can drag you under.
- Depending on your locality, the following may also apply:
- **Low bridges or overhanging trees** can knock cyclists off their bikes.
 - **Towpaths** can be hazardous so wear sensible shoes.
 - **Fishing rods and poles, mooring spikes/ropes, bollards, cyclists** etc. are all potential hazards on shared towpaths.
 - **Litter on the edge or towpath** could contain syringes etc. and so should be avoided.

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TASK 2

Rescue Stations

(Group leader to read this story)

Chris was fed up. Her mum was at work so she had to go to her grandad's house for the day.

He lived in a small house. There wasn't really room for Chris to play football in the tiny garden. But in any case, he didn't like her playing with balls in the garden because he said the flowerbeds would be ruined. What's more his computer was broken and she had seen all his DVDs. IT WAS DEAD BORING!

The trouble was, Chris' grandad thought she should spend the day reading. But Chris wasn't that type of girl. She wanted to be outside, playing football or exploring. Looking out of the window, she could see her grandad hard at work, weeding the front garden. Quietly, she slipped out of the back door. At the bottom of the garden, Chris opened the gate and on to the path.

Nearby was the canal. Chris knew it was an excellent place to explore, but her grandad would never let her go there unless he went too. She remembered the wide and straight towpath was perfect for dribbling a football. Chris ran along it, kicking the ball from foot to foot.

After a while Chris stopped to watch a family of ducklings swimming by the edge. One of the ducklings had something on its beak but Chris couldn't quite see what it was. She crouched on the edge and leant forward to get a better look.

As she reached forward, she knocked the ball into the water. Desperately, she grabbed a stick and reached out towards the football with it. Suddenly, she overbalanced and Chris found herself in the freezing water. "Help!" she shouted. "Help! Help!" But the edge was deserted and the football floated away.



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What did Chris do wrong?

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TASK 3 - Can you spot the dangers?



Stay Away From the Edge

canalriverexplorers.org.uk

Visiting a canal or river can be a great day out provided you follow the **SAFE** message. Can you spot the dangers in the picture? What changes would you make?

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1. Answers to potential hazards:

- Child running off because the parents have become distracted.
- Children playing too near the water's edge.
- Child swimming in canal.
- Children sitting on the edge of a bridge.
- Children swinging from tree over the canal.
- Child about to dive into a lock with strong currents and very deep water.
- A weir with fast running water.
- Fisherman with long pole which can trip people up.
- Objects in the water which may be sharp or trap your feet.
- Cyclist very close to the edge.

Remember the importance of following the SAFE message.

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PLENARY - What have you learnt about keeping SAFE near water?

What is the SAFE message?

In circle time, we will return to this topic to see how much you can remember.

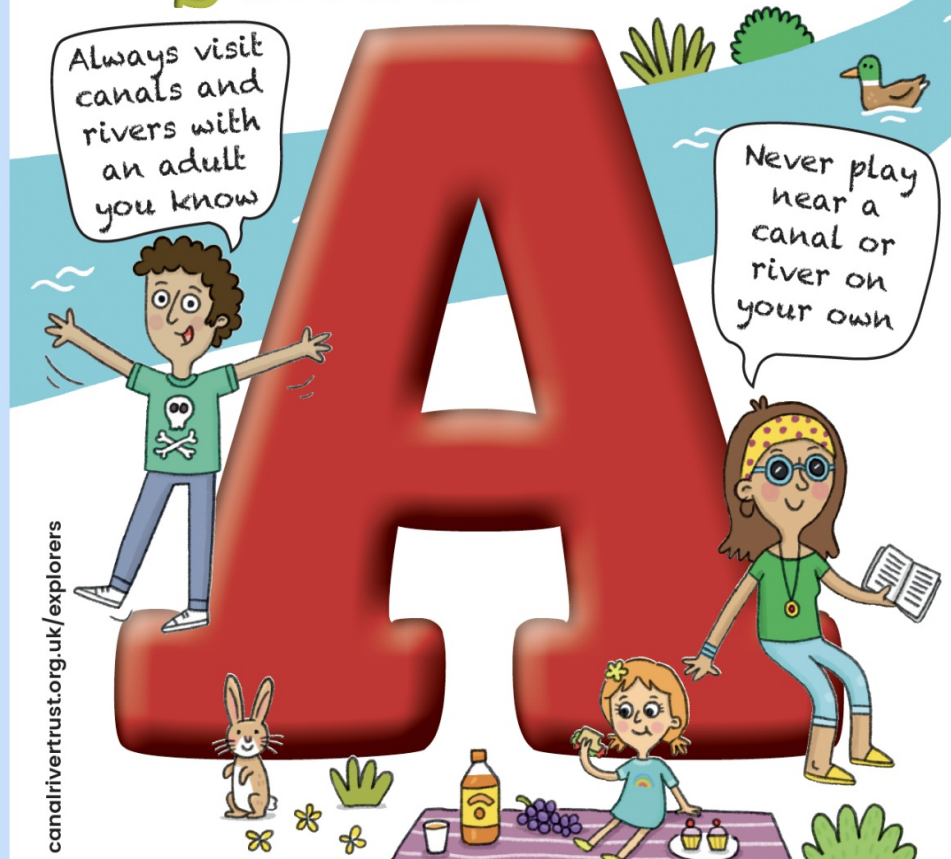


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Stay **SAFE** near water



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