SAFETY
SAFETY

QUICK NOTES

Safety should be part of EVERY lesson, but these are a few modules that can stand on their own—and make things fun! In addition to physical safety, it is our job as educators to create an environment that feels safe emotionally. That means a “No Tolerance Policy” for bullying or hateful language. It also means providing youth with the skills and support to work through conflicts and disagreements. At Bike Works we use the V.O.M.P. method (p. 174) for conflict resolution. It empowers youth to share their feelings, take responsibility for their actions, think about where the other person is coming from and make a plan for the future. By practicing and using this type of framework we help youth work through their own conflicts, without always asking a staff member to resolve issues. There are many conflict resolution methods out there, and we encourage you to use whatever works for you. The important thing is to practice conflict resolution before there is a conflict. That means introducing these models and working through scenarios when youth are working well together. In addition to the activities below there are a million great safety activities online, in particular at the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration site: www.nhtsa.gov. Remember, if we don’t model what we are teaching, we are teaching something else.
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ABC QUICK CHECK

An easy to remember bike safety check for every ride!

LESSON TIME
5 min

STUDENT AGE
all

STUDENT LEVEL
beg

STAFF LEVEL
1

GOOD FOR GROUP
yes

TOOL KIT
none

LESSON
Before EVERY ride run through the ABC Quick Check and “Head to Toe” (p. 168) to be sure everyone is ready to go.

A ir
Pinch the side of the tires; they should be firm.

B rakes
Make sure brakes work and aren’t rubbing the tires.

C rank/chain
Make sure the bike pedals smoothly and the chain is tight.

QUICK releases
Quick-release levers and/or axle bolts (on wheels) should be tight.

CHECK
Listen for any strange noises or looseness.
You know your bike. Does anything feel “off”?

VERSIÓN EN ESPAÑOL:
“Si seguro quieres viajar, llantas, frenos y cadena tienes que revisar.”

MATERIALS
Kids and bikes!

RESOURCES
None
An easy to remember personal safety check for every ride!

**HEAD TO TOE**

**LESSON**

Before EVERY ride run through the ABC Quick Check (p. 167) and “Head to Toe” to be sure everyone is ready to go. Encourage youth to check each other and themselves!

**HEAD**  
Start at the top. Is your helmet on? Is it strapped? Does it fit properly? (p. 169)

**EYES**  
Do you have sun-glasses on? These cut down on glare and also keep out wind and bugs!

**BODY**  
Do you have sunscreen on? Don’t forget the tops of your ears!

**HANDS**  
Do you have riding gloves on? These are a great way to save skin on hands if someone is to fall. If you are able, keep a stash of gloves for youth to borrow.

**TOES**  
Are your shoes tied? Are all your laces tucked in? No “Bunny Ears!”

**MATERIALS**

Kids and bikes!

**RESOURCES**

None
HELMET FITTING: EYES, EARS, MOUTH

An easy to remember helmet fitting technique.

LESSON
Have students check their own helmet and each other’s before EVERY ride.

EYES
Helmet should sit level on your head and rest low on the forehead, one to two finger widths above the eyebrows. A helmet pushed up too high will not protect the face or head well in a fall or crash.

EARS
The straps should be even, form a “Y” under each earlobe, and lay flat against the head.

MOUTH
The buckled chin strap should be loose enough so that you can breathe. There should be enough room so you can insert a finger between the buckle and chin. It should be tight enough that if you open your mouth, you can see the helmet pull down on top.

MATERIALS
Kids and helmets!

SOURCE
Bicycle Coalition of Maine
Seattle Children's Hospital
Community Education Program
Lesson

1. Start by talking to youth about their biking habits. Do they wear a helmet when they bike? Do other people they know wear helmets? Why do students think people wear helmets? Why not? (Be careful about getting into story-telling about people who have been in a crash. The idea is to stress that wearing a helmet is important, not to scare youth away from riding.)


3. Set up the demonstration as a way to show how effective helmets can be. Here are a few statistics from the NHTSA:

   • Helmets are 85–to 88–percent effective in reducing head and brain injury.

   • Wearing a bicycle helmet is the single most effective way to reduce head injuries and fatalities resulting from bicycle crashes.

   • A properly worn bicycle helmet cushions the head when it hits a hard surface such as a road or sidewalk, even from hard impacts on grass and dirt. The inner portion of a helmet is a crushable liner that absorbs and reduces the force of impact to the head.

   • Always wear the proper helmet for bicycling; there are varying types of helmets for different sports. Each helmet is designed based on the particular sport. There are some helmets designed for multi-sport use; make sure the helmet label reads the helmet is suitable for bicycling.

Materials

Helmet
Large honeydew melon
Markers
Ladder or high place to drop stuff from (like a playground structure)
Tarp
Paper towels
Knife for cutting up melon (or extra, pre-cut melon)

Source

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Continued on p. 171
4. Prepare the melon! Give it a name, draw a face and hair! Get silly!

5. Properly fit the helmet on the melon.

6. Stand on a chair or ladder and drop the melon (helmet side down) onto the tarp.

7. What happened? The melon most likely did not break because the helmet absorbed the force of the fall. If it does brake, note that we can be injured even when wearing a helmet!

8. Drop the melon without the helmet next.

9. What happened? Most likely, the melon broke. If the melon did not break, it was bruised. Look for a soft spot on the melon and explain that this will be a larger bruise in a few days. Explain that the same happens with a head. Brain bruises are called ‘concussions.’

10. Mention that a helmet should be replaced once it has been in a crash. In addition, any time a youth hits their head on a ride, they should tell an adult—even if they feel fine.

11. Cut up the melon and enjoy a delicious treat!
SHOP SAFETY 101: THE RULES

Shop safety guidelines.

LESSON

You can present these rules however you see fit. Often it’s good to have students brainstorm the rules they think are important and then just add in the ones that were not touched upon. See the Group Contracts activities (p. 27–33) for more ideas.

Below are the rules that are used at Bike Works. Yours may be different. Focus on creating “positive rules” that encourage specific behaviors, as opposed to saying “don’t” or “no.”

CLASSROOM RULES

1. RESPECT... yourself, instructors, classmates, the shop, tools, and all bikes.
2. Act safely and responsibly.
3. Practice safe riding habits- always wear a helmet when riding to or from Bike Works.
4. Clean up your workspace and the shop.
5. Waste nothing!
6. Leave all tools and parts in the shop.
7. Ask questions.
8. ENJOY YOUR WORK AND BE PROUD OF YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

**Bike Works needs to be a safe place for everyone. Any violence or discriminatory language based on race, gender, sexual orientation, age, class, ability, nationality, or religious belief will not be tolerated.**
10 Things to Bring on a Bike Ride

Equipment list for a successful and safe ride.

**Get creative! There’s no wrong way to teach this list.**

Brainstorm

Have the youth brainstorm as many things as they can think of to bring and then narrow it down to 10.

Charades

Pass out cards with each of the 10 things on them. Have each person act out their object without using words while the rest of the youth guess.

What’s in my backpack?

Pass around a backpack and have each student take out one thing. Talk about why it is one of the “Big Ten” and what other variations they could bring. For example, if someone takes out a cliff bar, what other food could you substitute instead? Is chocolate the right kind of nourishment? What things will last through a long hot ride without getting squished, spilling, melting or going bad?

The Big Ten

1. Food
2. Water
3. Helmet
4. Extra clothing/ rain gear
5. Multi tool/ repair tools
6. Patch kit
7. Pump
8. Sun glasses
9. Wallet/ Spare money and ID
10. Map

Materials

List of “10 Things”

Resources

None
LESSON

Emotional safety is an important component of creating a safe space. Be sure to have a way of dealing with conflict in the classroom. At Bike Works we use this model because it encourages youth to take responsibility for their actions, feelings and futures.

VOICE

Have each student voice what is happening for them. i.e. “He threw water on my face!”

OWN

Own your feelings! Encourage each student to rephrase their frustration. “I am upset because the water on my face made me cold and it hurt my feelings that it was thrown at me.”

MILE

Walk a mile in the other person’s shoes. Have the students vocally express what they think it would feel like to be the other person. “I suppose he was trying to cool me down because I looked really hot.”

PLAN

Make a plan. Have the students work together to come up with a solution to the problem. For example, “Next time you should ask before you splash your water on me.”

MATERIALS

None

RESOURCES

None
SCENIC TURN-OUT: FRUSTRATION TOLERANCE

Technique to help youth deal with frustration in a healthy way.

LESSON

Working on bikes can be incredibly frustrating. The more frustrated a person is, the more likely he or she is to hurt themselves or others with a careless mistake. One of the most rewarding skills we can teach youth is how to deal with this frustration in a safe, productive way. One way to help youth cope is through a “scenic turn–out.”

A “scenic turn–out” is just like on the highway when you take a break from driving 60 miles per hour to stop and see a beautiful view. In the same way, a “scenic turn–out” invites youth to take a break from what they are working on and enjoy the view.

Encourage youth to take this break whenever they need it.

They should put down their tools, take their hands off their bikes and look around at the rest of the class. They will probably notice that some people in the class are struggling, while others are moving along easily.

Youth can take this time to appreciate the work that each participant is doing and send their good-vibes to those who are having a tough time. In this way, it allows youth to switch focus from “I’m so frustrated!!” to encouraging their peers. This encouragement is usually best when it is silent—“Just think it, don’t say it. It still works.”

The great thing about this method is that it re–connects youth to the rest of the class, whereas, methods like “taking a walk” or “close your eyes and take a deep breath” disconnect kids and encourage them to look inwards. Different youth will benefit from different strategies, so here is one more to add to your list!
LEsson

This lesson is really a skills assessment dressed up as a game. It is your chance to watch youth ride and evaluate their skills, think where you might want to put them in the line on a ride, and plan what to work on next.

Overview:
Start out with Helmet Fitting (p. 169), Head to Toe (p. 168) and ABC Quick Check (p. 167). Discuss bicycle fitting. Seats will probably start lower than you expect for newer riders.

1. **Discuss safe cycling.**
   What does this look, sound and feel like?
   What are the rules of the road in your area? Where it is safe to ride? How do you identify hazards while you are riding? What does “scanning the road” mean?

2. **Hand Signals.**
   Ask everyone to demonstrate the hand signals for left and right turns as well as “stopping” and “hazard.”

CONTINUED ON P. 177

MATERIALS

Helmets
Bikes
Safety cones (damp sponges or half tennis balls also work)
Chalk
Plastic sign boards (cow/bus)

RESOURCES

None
LESSON (CONTINUED FROM P. 176)

Activities:

DRIVEWAY RIDEOUT

1. In advance draw a short line marking the end of the driveway, a short line marking the end of the street at the intersection, and a long line connecting the two.

2. Have everyone line up single at the beginning of the ‘driveway.’

3. Have students roll down their ‘driveway’ stopping at the end. After looking both ways and calling out “clear!” they can continue down the ‘road’ in a straight line.

4. Before reaching the intersection they will perform the signal for stopping, yell out “stopping!” as they come to a complete, foot-down stop.

5. One instructor will be at the end of the intersection and tell them which way to go.

6. Students will look both ways again, yell out “clear!” signal the direction they are going, yell “going right/left!” then go that direction and circle back in line.

7. Make sure everyone has the opportunity to go twice.

SCANNING

1. Draw one long line with chalk for this activity or use a line on the blacktop.

2. Have students line up and take turns riding in a straight line.

3. One instructor will run behind them on the left side holding a sign with an image on each side. At Bike Works, we have a cow one one side, and a bus on the other. Staff can also hold up a number fingers if they don’t have a sign. When the instructor yells “now!” the student will do a ‘shoulder check’ and should be able to demonstrate maintaining their straight line while glancing behind them.

4. The other instructor will be at the end of the line and the student will tell them what they saw.

CONTINUED ON P. 178
LESSON (CONTINUED FROM P. 177)

ROCK DODGE
1. In advance set up the cones so that they are spaced out in a line roughly four feet apart.
2. Students will take turns weaving in and out of cones.
3. Once everyone has successfully completed it, and if time allows, you can have the more skilled students who chose try to ‘split the cone with their bike’ by rolling over a cone with only one wheel. Have an instructor demonstrate before this activity.

TIGHT TURNS
1. In advance create a series of four connected boxes with one open end. The first box should be very large, about 6 feet wide, the second 4 feet, the third 3 feet and the last 2 feet.
2. Students will get in line and be asked to ride in and out of the first big box without touching any lines. If they do it successfully they can move on to the next box, one size smaller. Let youth progress all the way to the end so long as they are able to roll in and out of the boxes without putting their foot down or touching any lines.
3. This activity is VERY difficult to complete and most students won’t make it past the second or third boxes.

SLOW RACE
1. Have students line up on a line for a race. Make sure they have plenty of room between them.
2. Mark another line about 20-40 feet away.
3. The goal is to be the LAST person to get to the line.
4. Participants must ride in a straight line and keep both feet on the pedals. If a foot touches the ground, that student is out.

CONTINUED ON P. 179
FOOT DOWN

1. Identify the boundaries for a very large box using chalk or cones.
2. Have all of the students begin slowly riding within the boundaries of the box after explaining the rules.
3. Once the referee/instructors yells “3, 2, 1, Foot Down!” the game begins.
4. Students are not allowed to put their foot down or go outside of the boundaries.
5. The goal of the game is to be the last one riding—so people are encouraged to try and force each other out of the box.
6. There will be no contact, bike, person or otherwise and any intentional contact results in getting out.
7. Once a student is “out” make sure they sit on the sidelines and watch (no free riding!) Youth who are “out” can help referee the rest of the game.
8. Once there are only 2 people remaining, have them enter the Circle of Doom, a small circle in the middle of the court to continue playing. Have fun!