



LESSON PLAN

Lesson 5: Reading the Street - Rules, Signs & Shared Spaces

SEQUENCE TITLE: Protective Behaviours – Navigating Risk in a Mobile World



LEVEL

Years 9-10



LESSON NUMBER

5 of 7



LESSON LENGTH

60 minutes

CURRICULUM AREAS



LEARNING AREAS

- Health and Physical Education



CAPABILITIES

- Personal and Social Capability
- Critical and Creative Thinking

LESSON SUMMARY

In this lesson, students develop the ability to critically interpret how streets, transport spaces and shared environments communicate safety expectations through signs, symbols, markings and design features. Rather than seeing the built environment as passive, students learn to “read the street” as a system that actively influences behaviour, decision-making and risk.

Students are encouraged to consider that safety is not only a matter of individual behaviour, but also a product of design, communication and environment. They analyse how different groups (e.g. pedestrians, bike riders, drivers, young people, older adults, people with disability) may experience the same space differently.

By the end of the lesson, students will have gathered evidence from real or simulated environments and begun identifying how design and communication influence their chosen travel safety issue. This evidence directly supports their ongoing project work, helping them justify where and why change is needed in their community.

LESSON PLAN

Lesson 5: Reading the Street - Rules, Signs & Shared Spaces

.....

Creating a Safe Social Space for Participation and Learning



In alignment with the Department of Education's **Respectful Relationships (RR)** [teaching and learning resources](#):

- Establish class agreements that help all students and staff to feel safe and respected.
 - Notice, name and address sexist or inappropriate behaviour, utilising classroom agreements and school codes of conduct.
 - Be clear about what is appropriate to share in a group space and what is better suited to a private setting.
 - Provide content advice and help-seeking reminders to support the wellbeing of students when engaging with sensitive material prior to and at the beginning of lessons.
 - Remind students that they are not expected to disclose personal experiences and use protective interrupting to redirect students to a conversation with a teacher in a more private and safe space.
 - Let wellbeing staff know the lesson is running in case students seek support afterwards as discussions may bring up concerns about harassment, disclosures of gender-based violence, unsafe environments, or anxiety about travel.
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Achievement Standard (Extract)



Health and Physical Education:

Students evaluate how attitudes and beliefs about equality, respect, diversity and inclusion influence the nature and quality of relationships.

Personal and Social Capability:

Students explain the importance of respecting diversity and analyse the challenges involved, considering factors that influence the acceptance of diversity.

Critical and Creative Thinking

Students construct, use and adapt questions to support thinking in different contexts. They select, justify, use and reflect on a range of strategies to generate new ideas and possibilities and critically reflect on suspension of judgement when generating and evaluating alternative ideas and possibilities from different perspectives.

LESSON PLAN

Lesson 5: Reading the Street - Rules, Signs & Shared Spaces

.....

Victorian Curriculum Content Descriptions



LEARNING AREAS

Health and Physical Education

VC2HP10P05 Propose strategies and actions individuals and groups can implement to challenge biases, stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination, and promote inclusion in their communities.

VC2HP10P09 Critique health information, services and media messaging about relationships, lifestyle choices, health decisions and behaviours to evaluate their influence on their own, others' and community's attitudes and actions.

VC2HP10P10 Plan, justify and critique strategies to enhance their own, others' and community's health, safety, relationships and wellbeing.

CAPABILITIES

Personal and Social Capability

VC2CP10O01 How divergent values and beliefs contribute to different perspectives on social issues; the benefits and challenges arising from different perspectives.

VC2CP10O02 Barriers to and enablers of the acceptance of diversity, and how to evaluate strategies for being respectful of diversity; strategies for managing competing human rights and responsibilities.

Critical and Creative Thinking

VC2CC10Q03 Strategies for generating new ideas and possibilities including identifying links and patterns across multiple information sources and perspectives.

VC2CC10R01 Ways to analyse and improve the structure, clarity, consistency and coherence of a conclusion and its justification in different contexts.



PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

Students:

- have experience navigating local streets and transport environments.
- understand basic road rules and shared-path expectations.
- have previously identified a travel safety issue for inquiry.
- can observe and describe features in their environment.
- have basic awareness that environments influence behaviour.

VOCABULARY

Regulatory signs – signs that communicate rules that must be followed.

Warning signs – signs that alert users to potential danger.

Guidance signs – signs that provide direction or information.

Shared spaces – environments used by multiple types of road/path users.

Infrastructure – physical elements of transport environments (paths, crossings, lighting, layouts).

Interpretation – how people understand and respond to information or situations.

Accessibility – how usable an environment is for different people.

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Student [Travel Investigator Logbooks](#).
- Printed or digital sign/road/transport images.
- Station task sheets (A–E).
- Sticky notes or mini whiteboards.
- Devices for Google Maps / Street View (optional).
- Butcher's paper or digital board for class discussion summaries.
- Short stimulus video/s (as listed in lesson plan).
- Project focus notes from previous lessons.

LESSON PLAN

Lesson 5: Reading the Street - Rules, Signs & Shared Spaces

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LEARNING INTENTION

Students will analyse how road signs, markings and shared-space designs communicate safety expectations, and evaluate how effectively these systems influence behaviour in real community environments.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

- I can interpret what different road signs, markings and symbols are communicating.
- I can explain how environments influence people's behaviour and safety decisions.
- I can identify where signage or design may be unclear, ineffective or exclusionary.
- I can analyse how different users might experience the same space differently.
- I can connect environmental design to a real travel safety issue in my community.

TEACHING CONSIDERATIONS

- Emphasise that the focus is on behaviour and systems, not blaming individuals or groups.
- Ensure examples reflect a mix of metropolitan, regional and rural contexts where possible.
- Be mindful that students may have personal experiences of road incidents or unsafe travel situations.
- Some students may benefit from using familiar school environments before analysing broader community spaces.
- Encourage respectful discussion when comparing how different users experience the same space.
- Reinforce that environmental critique is aimed at improving safety and inclusion, not criticising authorities or services.
- Support students who struggle with abstract interpretation by using visual examples and guided questioning.



USEFUL LINKS

[Vic Dept. of Education: Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships Level 9-10](#)

Topic #1 - Emotional Literacy

Activity #2: Thinking from different perspectives

Topic #2 – Personal and cultural strength

Activity #1: Is respect a human right?

Activity #2: Valuing character strengths

Activity #3: Using strengths in ethical dilemmas

Topic #4 – Problem solving

Activity 1: Using a logical model for problem-solving.



ASSESSMENT

- Quality of observations and analysis recorded in [Travel Investigator Logbook](#).
 - Student participation and reasoning during station activities and discussions.
 - Ability to correctly interpret and explain meaning of signs, markings and environments.
 - Depth of analysis in identifying effectiveness, limitations, and user impact.
 - Exit reflection demonstrating understanding of how environment influences safety behaviour.
 - Evidence collected to support project focus refinement (notes, sketches, screenshots, annotations).
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LESSON PLAN

Lesson 5: Reading the Street - Rules, Signs & Shared Spaces



LEARNING CONTINUUM

Learning Continuum	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Students investigate how signs, symbols, markings and shared-space designs communicate safety expectations and influence behaviour in public environments. They analyse how people interact with transport systems and evaluate how effectively streets and shared spaces support safety, accessibility and responsible decision-making for different users in the community.	Students identify familiar road signs, symbols and shared-space markings and describe some basic behaviours they are designed to influence. They recognise that people do not always notice or follow signs and begin identifying simple safety risks within community environments.	Students explain how different signs, markings and transport environments influence behaviour and safety. They analyse examples of effective and ineffective communication within shared spaces and begin considering how age, experience, accessibility and behaviour affect how people use public environments.	Students critically evaluate how street and transport environments influence decision-making, behaviour and community safety. They analyse how design, signage, accessibility and social cooperation interact within shared spaces and justify improvements that could create safer, more inclusive and effective community environments.

ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

Organising Element	Action	Insufficient Evidence	Quality Criteria		
Understanding of street communication systems	1. Identify and interpret road signs, symbols and shared-space markings	1.0 No response or demonstrates limited understanding of signs and markings.	1.1 Identifies common signs, symbols or markings and describes their basic purpose.	1.2 Explains how signs and markings influence behaviour and support safety within shared environments.	1.3 Analyses how effectively signs and markings communicate expectations for different users and situations.
Critical and Creative Thinking	2. Analyse how environments influence behaviour and safety	2.0 Limited analysis or observations unrelated to safety or behaviour.	2.1 Identifies examples of safe or unsafe behaviour within a transport environment.	2.2 Explains how design, signage or shared-space expectations influence people's decisions and interactions.	2.3 Critiques the effectiveness of an environment by considering risk, accessibility, cooperation and community impact.
Investigation and Evidence Gathering	3. Gather and interpret evidence from community environments	3.0 Minimal or incomplete evidence collected.	3.1 Collects simple observations, sketches or examples related to the investigation focus.	3.2 Uses relevant evidence to explain safety issues, behaviours or environmental challenges.	3.3 Selects and analyses detailed evidence to support informed conclusions and potential improvements.

* continued overleaf

LESSON PLAN

Lesson 5: Reading the Street - Rules, Signs & Shared Spaces

ASSESSMENT RUBRIC (Cont'd)

Organising Element	Action	Insufficient Evidence	Quality Criteria		
Accessibility and Inclusion	4. Evaluate how environments work for different users	4.0 Limited recognition of different user needs or experiences.	4.1 Recognises that some people may experience environments differently.	4.2 Explains how age, mobility, sensory needs or experience may affect how people interpret or use shared spaces.	4.3 Evaluates how effectively environments support accessibility and inclusion and proposes realistic improvements.
Project Development and Decision-Making	5. Apply investigation findings to a community safety project	5.0 Limited connection between investigation findings and project focus.	5.1 Identifies a relevant issue connected to behaviour, signage or environment design.	5.2 Uses investigation findings to refine a project direction or possible solution.	5.3 Justifies project decisions using evidence, analysis and consideration of community safety and inclusion.

Structure of lesson:



INQUIRY QUESTION: How do road rules, signs and shared-space markings influence behaviour and safety in our community?

GOAL: To build students' ability to interpret and critique the "visual language" of streets and transport spaces — what is the environment telling us to do to keep us safe?

PROJECT STEP: Gather and analyse evidence in the local community environment.

1

LESSON PHASE: Introduction (Hook)



TIMING: 5 mins

Show video: [Julian O'Shea - How these blue squares are saving lives](#)

Explain: Every day, whether we realise it or not, the environment is communicating with us. Signs, symbols, markings, crossings and pathways are constantly giving us instructions about how to move safely and responsibly through shared spaces.

Ask:

- On your way to school today, how many signs or markings do you think you passed?
- How many can you actually remember?
- Why do you think people stop noticing them?

Explain: Most people stop actively noticing signs because they become part of the background. Today, students will begin "reading the street" more carefully by analysing how environments influence behaviour, safety and decision-making.

LESSON PLAN

Lesson 5: Reading the Street - Rules, Signs & Shared Spaces

.....

Emphasise: Signs and markings alone do not keep people safe. Safety depends on people noticing, understanding and responding appropriately to them.

DIFFERENTIATION STRATEGIES

Enable

- Provide examples of familiar local signs or markings before discussion begins.
- Allow students to brainstorm examples with a partner before sharing with the class.

Extend

- Ask students: "Who decides what signs and rules belong in public spaces, and why?"
- Invite students to consider whether some signs are more effective for different age groups or road users.

2

LESSON PHASE: Explicit Teaching & Modelled Learning



TIMING: 15 mins

The "Language" of the Street.

Explain: Our streets are systems. Just like laws in society, they rely on shared understanding and cooperation. Signs, symbols and markings are how those rules are communicated quickly, without words, to large numbers of people.

Streets and transport spaces are part of a public systems designed to protect people. Every sign, symbol and marking is there to guide behaviour and reduce risk. They rely on:

- People noticing them.
- People understanding them.
- People choosing to follow them.

Show video: [Julian O'Shea - Why Do Trucks Keep Smashing into This Bridge? | Montague St Bridge](#)

Introduce the four common categories of street communication:

1. Regulatory Signs (Rules)

- Must/must not behaviours.
- Examples: Stop, Give Way, No Crossing signs

These are not suggestions - these are rules. If people ignore or misunderstand them, the consequences can be serious.

2. Warning Signs

- Alert people to danger ahead.
- Examples: Train crossing ahead, slippery surface.

These signs rely on people noticing them and reacting in time.

3. Guidance Signs

- Provide information and direction.
- Example: arrows, shared path symbols.

These signs help people move safely and ease confusion.

4. Shared-Space Markings

- Where people must negotiate behaviour.
- Example: bike and shared paths, crossings, platforms, speeds suited to one transport type but not another

Shared spaces are where things get interesting, and risky. Because now it's not just about rules, it's about people interacting and cooperating space with each other.

LESSON PLAN

Lesson 5: Reading the Street - Rules, Signs & Shared Spaces

.....

Explain: When rules and signs are ignored, it doesn't just affect the person making that decision. It affects others in the community. Think about:

- A driver ignoring a crossing.
- A bike rider speeding along a shared path.
- A pedestrian distracted near traffic.

Ask: Who else is impacted?

Discuss:

- Other road users.
- Vulnerable groups (children, elderly, people with disabilities).
- Families and communities.

Emphasise: Not everyone experiences the same street the same way either.

A space that feels safe to one person might feel confusing, unsafe or inaccessible to someone else.

Highlight:

- Vision impairments.
- Mobility challenges.
- Cultural/language differences.
- Age and experience.
- Neurodiverse sensory needs.

Explain project connection: For your project, this matters. If you're designing a solution, you need to ask - Does this work for everyone or just some people? To create real change, you need evidence. Today is where you start looking at your community like an investigator.

You'll begin analysing real signs, markings and spaces to answer:

- Are they clear?
- Do people follow them?
- Where might things go wrong?

DIFFERENTIATION STRATEGIES

Enable

- Use familiar local examples before introducing more complex transport scenarios.
- Pre-teach key vocabulary such as regulatory, shared-space, accessible and infrastructure.

Extend

- Ask students to compare which types of signs rely most heavily on personal judgement versus strict rule-following.
- Challenge students to identify examples where design may unintentionally encourage unsafe behaviour.

LESSON PLAN

Lesson 5: Reading the Street - Rules, Signs & Shared Spaces

.....

3

LESSON PHASE: Guided Practice



TIMING: 30 mins

Investigation Carousel – Reading the street.

Students investigate how signs, markings and shared-space designs communicate safety messages within their own community environments.

Explain: Students will work as "street investigators," analysing examples of road signs, markings, transport spaces and shared environments they have personally noticed in their local area, near school, during travel, or through Google Maps/ Street View/open street map/Melways online exploration.

Emphasise: Students should not only identify what the sign, symbol or marking is, but also analyse:

- What behaviour it is trying to influence.
- Whether it is likely to be effective.
- Who it works well for.
- Who may struggle to understand or respond to it.
- Whether the environment encourages safe or unsafe behaviour.

Students record findings, sketches, observations and analysis in their [Travel Investigator Logbook](#).

Investigation Stations:

Station A – Road Signs & Rules

Task: Find examples of signs that communicate rules or expectations for road users.

Inquiry prompts: How clearly does this sign communicate what people should or should not do? Would everyone interpret it the same way?

Station B – Shared Spaces & Pathways

Task: Identify examples of shared spaces where different people must move together safely.

Inquiry prompts: What behaviours are expected in this space? Where could conflict or confusion occur?

Station C – Public Transport Signage

Task: Find signs, markings or announcements designed to guide behaviour around trains, trams, buses or stations.

Inquiry prompts: What behaviours are these systems trying to influence? What risks could occur if people ignore them?

Station D – Confusing or Ineffective Design

Task: Identify examples where signage, markings or layouts may be unclear, cluttered or easy to ignore.

Inquiry prompts: Why might people misunderstand or overlook this design? What could make it more effective?

Station E – Accessibility & Inclusion

Task: Find examples where street or transport design may work differently for different people.

Inquiry prompts: Who may find this difficult to use or understand? How could the design become more accessible or inclusive?

Circulate and prompt deeper thinking:

- Where could someone misinterpret this?
- Would this still work effectively at night, in poor weather or in crowded conditions?
- How might teenagers respond differently compared to adults?
- Does this design rely more on rules, judgement or cooperation?
- Does this design favour the movement of one transport type over another (ie: cars over bikes)?
- How does this connect to your Street Safe Action Project issue?

LESSON PLAN

Lesson 5: Reading the Street - Rules, Signs & Shared Spaces

.....

DIFFERENTIATION STRATEGIES

Enable

- Provide structured investigation templates with guiding questions and examples of the types of observations students could collect.
- Allow students to work in pairs or assign clear investigation roles (observer, recorder, discussion leader, photographer/sketch artist).

Extend

- Encourage students to compare environments and analyse why some spaces rely more heavily on cooperation and social behaviour than others.
- Invite students to begin proposing improvements or redesign ideas linked to their project focus.

4

LESSON PHASE: Independent Application



TIMING: 15 mins

Project Integration

Ask: Is the issue you are investigating mainly caused by people's behaviour, or is it also influenced by how the environment is designed, signposted, or communicated?

Engage in a brief class discussion to reinforce that most real-world safety issues involve a combination of behaviour and environment.

Allow students to use their investigation evidence to refine their project direction based on one of the following focus areas:

Awareness Campaign Focus

Students consider:

- Which signs, rules or messages are most often ignored or misunderstood in your chosen environment?
- What misunderstandings or assumptions lead to unsafe behaviour?
- What key messages would people need to better notice, understand or rethink?

Behaviour-Change Solution Focus

Students consider:

- What repeated behaviours increase risk in this environment?
- Which rules or expectations are unclear, ignored or inconsistently followed?
- Where could clearer expectations or reminders influence safer choices?

Infrastructure / Design Solution Focus

Students consider:

- Where is signage missing, unclear or ineffective?
- Which parts of the environment create confusion, congestion or unsafe movement?
- What changes to design, layout or signage could improve safety and flow?

Students add supporting evidence from their investigation, such as:

- Photos or screenshots of environments.
- Sketches or annotated diagrams.
- Written observations and notes.
- Quotes or informal feedback from peers/community members.
- Identified hazards or risk points.
- Accessibility or inclusion considerations.

LESSON PLAN

Lesson 5: Reading the Street - Rules, Signs & Shared Spaces

.....

DIFFERENTIATION STRATEGIES

Enable

- Work through one shared example using a familiar school or local space.
- Allow students to work in pairs to support interpretation and recording of observations.

Extend

- Ask students to identify key stakeholders responsible for change (e.g. local council, school leadership, transport authorities) and justify their choices.

5

LESSON PHASE: Reflection / Review



TIMING: 5 mins

Reflection – One Sign That Matters

Ask students to name one sign or marking you now realise is more important than you thought.

Ask them to then explain why?

Reinforce: Safe communities rely not only on rules and signs, but on people understanding, interpreting and responding responsibly to the environments around them.

DIFFERENTIATION STRATEGIES

Enable

- Provide sentence starters such as: "This sign is important because..." and "People might be unsafe if..."
- Allow verbal responses before writing.

Extend

- Ask students to identify one improvement that could make the sign, marking or space more effective or inclusive.
- Invite students to connect their reflection directly to their developing project focus.