

Good for You, Good for the Earth

Subjects: Language Arts, Math



OBJECTIVES:

Students will understand how walking, bicycling, and riding a bus promotes good personal and environmental health.



MATERIALS:

- Tag board for sentence strips
- Crayons or markers
- Bar Graph: how I got to school today overhead sheet OR Chart paper or chalkboard for bar graphs
- Picture of smoggy air (In Materials section)



SETTING: indoors



ESTIMATED TIME:

40-50 minutes



VOCABULARY:

Public transportation, car-pooling, pollution



ACTIVITY SOURCE:

Nebraska Roads, Safe Routes to Schools



OVERVIEW: This lesson has a few different parts to it. During the first part, students will be discussing how they got to school and will be introduced to bar graphs. During the second part the class will brainstorm ideas and write sentences (with the help of an adult) about why it's a good idea to walk, bike, take the bus or carpool to school.

BACKGROUND: In the early 1960's, nearly half of all school children in the U.S. got to school by walking or bicycling. Today, fewer than one in six children walk or bike to school (*CA DOT & University of California Traffic Safety Center*).

This dramatic decrease in walking, bicycling or taking the bus to school has taken a toll on the health of children, the environment and our communities. For example:

MORNING TRAFFIC: In some communities, as much as 20 to 30% of all morning traffic is created by parents driving their children to school.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH: The growing epidemic of children that don't get regular exercise is leaving a greater proportion of children in the Bay Area overweight than the national average of 19% (*California Center for Public Health Advocacy*). In addition, because of the rising pollution and smog in the air, children in Sonoma County suffer increased rates of asthma.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH: In Sonoma County approximately 50% of all greenhouse gas emissions is created by motor vehicles. Consequently, the air is getting more contaminated and exacerbating the greenhouse effect, which causes global warming.

LESSON SET-UP:

1. Take a tally of the methods students use to get to school. Using that information to show the whole class how to create a bar graph using the overhead provided, a chalkboard, or chart paper. This will help introduce them to the Math 1.0 and 1.1 State Standards.
2. Write out sentence strips: "It's a good idea to walk... It's a good idea to bike because... It's a good idea to take the bus because..."

STATE STANDARDS

Language Arts:

1.0 Writing Strategies: Students write words and brief sentences that are legible.

Math:

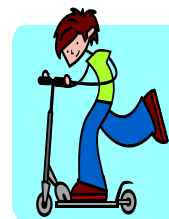
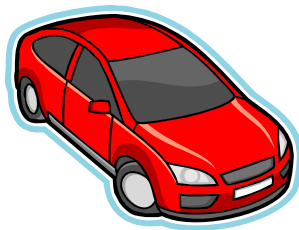
1.0 Statistics, Data Analysis and Probability: Students collect information about objects and events in their environment:

1.1: Pose information questions; collect data, and record the results using objects, pictures and picture graphs.

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BUILDING BACKGROUND/ DISCUSSION:

1. Discuss how students get to school. Do they walk? Ride their bikes? Take the bus? Get driven in a car by their parents? Carpool? (explain carpooling; it means riding in the same car with others who aren't related to you).
2. Discuss how walking and bicycling help keep our bodies and the earth healthy. Introduce to them the **Fantastic Four** reasons to walk and ride:
 - ✓ Cutting down on pollution
 - ✓ Getting exercise
 - ✓ Cutting down on traffic
 - ✓ Having fun
3. Ask students, "How many of you have taken the bus or train? Why did you take the bus or train instead of driving in a car?" Talk about the importance of using public transportation or sharing a ride (carpooling).
4. Show students a picture of smoggy air (*found in the Safe Routes toolkit*) and explain that cars help to contribute to dirty air (pollution)



ACTIVITY:

1. Take a survey of how many students, walk, bike, drive or take the bus to school. Use the following worksheet *How I got to School Today Bar Graph* as an overhead aid, or create similar bar graphs on a chalk board or chart paper.
2. Use the sentence strip that you have created: "It's a good idea to walk because..." and have them brainstorm reasons why they like to walk.
3. Continue with the rest of the sentence strips, brainstorming ideas about each topic:
 - It's a good idea to ride my bike because...
 - It's a good idea to ride the bus because...
 - It's a good idea to carpool because...
4. Pass out pieces of paper to the students. Ask them to choose one of the themes discussed to draw and write about. Either work with each student individually to write down the rest of the sentence, or have them simply draw their pictures of why it's important to walk or pictures of themselves doing this activity. On their pictures they can write down the names of the objects to learn basic vocabulary: bus, bike, car, walk.

EXTENSION IDEAS

1. Have students take their worksheets home and talk to their parents about what they discussed in class.
2. Continue on with the graph for the next few weeks. Encourage students to walk, bike and take the bus to school.
3. Have students collect pictures about various forms of transportation, and make a collage of these pictures.
4. Have students tell, write or draw a picture of a traffic jam they have experienced. Or have them build a traffic jam with blocks and other materials available in the classroom.
5. Walk with the students to the teacher's parking lot (or a nearby parking lot). Ask students what we could do with the space in the parking lot instead of having cars in it. Examples could be planting a garden, building a park, etc.

How I got to School Today Bar Graph



I Walked:



I bicycled:



I took the bus:



I drove in a car:



I carpoled:



Other (including scooters):

