



The Parent Driving Zone - Curriculum/Study Questions

Below are 18 lesson plans for grade 4 through 8 school students regarding MOBILITY AND SAFETY. These lesson plans have been designed for lesson times as short as 12 minutes yet can be easily expanded as time allows by adding more discussion or video review. Grade 4 through 6 students seem to be the most receptive to this curriculum.

Lesson 1 -

Define Goals and Define areas of concern in this lesson:

- Traffic deaths between vehicles and pedestrians are on the increase.
- Driver distractions and Pedestrian distractions are causing more and more problems.
- New technology such as auto brake functions will eventually help more but most vehicles do not have them.
- Despite technological improvements; the problem for cyclists, pedestrians, skateboarders and others is getting worse.

IMPORTANT note to teacher: Explain to the students, the information they will receive here is the same information driver education teachers give to student drivers. This information applies to them because they are out walking, riding bicycles, on skate boards etc. They need this important safety information now. I have found many students really like to know they are receiving the same information and knowledge as student drivers.

To the CLASS: What are some driving distractions that can cause drivers to not look for pedestrians or not see them?

Lesson 1 Video: DZ2 Chapter 3 (2m:15s).

PDZ Chapter 7 (Distracted Driving section only)

Lesson 2 -

Last time we discussed driver distractions and how they are especially dangerous to pedestrians, cyclists and anyone else on the streets. We are going to look at some footage to show some of the distractions that we see drivers in vehicles doing every day.

Lesson 2 Videos: DZ2 Chapter 4 (5m57s).

Optional Video if time allows: DZ2 Chapter 5 (2m 53s).

Lesson 3 -

Play DZ2 Chapter 4 or 5 if there was not enough time during the last lesson or view parts of them again if required. Discuss driving distractions they have seen exhibited by adults for a couple of minutes or longer if you have time.

Class Question: Ask the students what kind of distractions they see from pedestrians and cyclists?

Answers should include manipulating a phone (texting, dialing is included in this), watching a video on the phone, talking to friends, eating or drinking a beverage as they walk etc. You can discuss how the pedestrian/cyclist distractions are in many cases the same as the driving distractions.

Important NOTE: Make sure that the definition of a pedestrian in this case includes anyone we find on our streets; cyclists, skate boarders, inline skaters, runners, playing ball games, walking etc. This applies to any activity that can cause us to be on a sidewalk, crossing the street, playing in the street or using the roads.

Lesson 4 -

Discuss the difference between looking and seeing. In this case “seeing” means a person is processing what they see. Looking in this case means a person is NOT processing the situation.

In this lesson we discuss physical distractions such as typing a text which may mean you are not looking at your surroundings at all. Therefore, you are very vulnerable. People walking, texting or manipulating their phones all the time.

Also, we will discuss “mental” distractions. Again, this means a person may be looking ahead, but they are not seeing/processing the information in their field of vision. Being on a phone call is a good example that causes this problem. Any person on a phone call, as a pedestrian, cyclist or car driver is always more “vulnerable”.

RODT Chapter 4: Dangerous & Vulnerable.

Reminder for Teachers Only:

DZ2 Chapter 4 showed Physical distractions.

DZ2 Chapter 5 showed Mental distractions.

Talk more about the common distractions between Pedestrians and Vehicle drivers; being on a phone call, listening to an iPod, looking at/manipulating a smartphone, looking at a person you are talking to etc.

Lesson 5 -

Lesson Video: PDZ Chapter 25 (3m:58s) and 26 (0m41s).

Go over any questions the students may have from watching the video. Include how important it is to be “aware of surroundings” when they are outside playing, walking or riding.

IMPORTANT: Vehicles will always win the fight with a pedestrian/cyclist/skater etc.

Lesson 6 -

Review again any part of the first 5 Lessons that may have been of particular interest to the students or area’s that you felt they were not clear on.

Lesson 7 -

How can pedestrians help themselves to be safer while on the streets?

SOLUTIONS: Awareness and as addressed already cutting out unnecessary distractions.

DZ2 Video Chapters: 9 (Seat Belts), 13 (Using Your Senses), 14 (Situational Awareness), 18 (Attitude and Emotion), 20 (Parts: Blind Spots, Low Eyes and Safety Zones)

These same skills, so important for drivers, should be used at all times while riding a bicycle, skating AND walking.

Lesson 8 -

This lesson continues the points from lessons 5 and 7. If you didn't have time to show and discuss all the lesson 7 video suggestions in your last lesson; please review again, as these address critical concepts.

New Video Chapters: PLAY PDZ Chapter 12 (Attention Blindness), 13 (Peripheral Vision), Chapter 40 (Eye Glance) and Chapter 51 (Vanishing Point).

Teachers: It is critical to continually emphasize to students, the distracted actions of vehicle drivers described in the video chapters, apply directly to them as pedestrians and cyclists.

Lesson 9 -

Recap: Go over any points from lessons 5, 7 and 8 that may not have been clear. The overall point for lessons 5, 7 and 8 is to provide information in the form of usable knowledge. This knowledge can help the students be less vulnerable and more aware as pedestrians and cyclists etc.

Discussion of these topics by 8- to 12-year olds is easy. I have found they are eager to tell me stories about distracted driving and how they were affected. Please make sure all the students understand the basic concept of a distracted driver and a distracted pedestrian are very closely tied.

Lesson 10 -

Lesson Videos: PDZ Chapters, Important Stats (Chapter 9: 1m37s), Reality Check (Chapter 10: 1m44s).

Discuss all the chapters shown here with the students and explain how this kind of information is very important to them now and will be extremely important when they start to drive.

Lesson 11 -

Continue showing the chapters you didn't have time to get to from the previous lesson.

Lesson Videos: PDZ – Important Stats (Chapter 9), Reality Check (Chapter 10). Discuss all the chapters shown here with the students. Continue to emphasize the extra importance as they increase their street presence with age.

Lesson 12 -

Danger areas and how to use safety knowledge does help. Discuss the following danger areas for pedestrians and cyclists relative to Vehicle presence:

- Railroad Crossings
- Crossing a Street
- Blind spots due to parked cars and trucks, buildings, driveways etc.
- Cell Phone use and ALL phone calls. Hand held OR hands free, both are equally distracting
- Loud Music
- Red Lights (cyclists in traffic, pedestrians using crosswalks)
- Construction Zones

- Conversation with others
- Reading texts, looking at a smartphone, playing games.

The Dangers of Glance and Go: When crossing the street, make sure you stop, look and analyze speed of oncoming vehicles. Many times, a glance is not enough time.

NOTE: It takes years of practice to be able to quickly analyze an approaching vehicle's speed. This is especially difficult to do at night or at dusk or dawn. Concentration and practice are required.

Discuss how to use the new skills you are learning about. Skills such as situation awareness and eye scanning are so important and useful.

Discuss how using/manipulating smartphones and even person to person conversation can be very dangerous when pedestrians and vehicles are in the mix.

Lesson 13 -

Continuation of Lesson 12: Teachers continue to go through the list of danger areas for any children mobile on the streets and confirm the new skills the students may now be using and learning about.

Lesson 14 - "Recap"

We now understand that many distractions "chosen" by vehicle drivers are exactly the same as the ones people "choose" when walking or cycling.

REMINDER: A vehicle will ALWAYS win in a fight with a pedestrian or cyclist. We know we have a choice whether to be distracted or pay attention to our surroundings as we walk, cycle, or skateboard.

We understand who is more vulnerable when comparing pedestrians and vehicles.

Suggested Pledge for Students: *We will raise our awareness and cut out distractions when we are out on the streets.*

Lesson 15 -

Lesson Video: RODT Chapter 10 (Teachers might want to review this video chapter **BEFORE** showing to students, to check for possible sensitive areas.)

Discuss with the class how to recognize distracted driving when they are passengers in a vehicle. **NOTE:** over 90% of students will see the most distracted driving situations in a vehicle driven by their own parents (one or both).

Think about all the distractions we saw in DZ2 Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 (replay if necessary). Many of the same distractions we now understand better because we are more aware as pedestrians.

We know most adult drivers in the US drive while distracted. If the students see adult drivers driving distracted then encourage them to say something and ask the driver to please stop driving distracted while they are in the vehicle.

Solid reason against any distracted driving with passengers in the vehicle: A driver always has the life of a passenger in their hands. We all know it is just too dangerous to drive distracted.

NOTE: Teachers, please make sure the student does not get into an argument with the driver/parent. Arguing with a driver is also a dangerous driving distraction.

If any student is too nervous or uncomfortable to say something to a parent or another adult because they know there will be an argument, they might get in trouble or it may be a classmate's parent; then encourage them to wait until they are done with the trip before approaching the subject. If still too nervous to speak to their own parent, then it is ok to talk to another parent, a known adult family friend or a teacher. **BUT:** please make sure students have every piece of information available to them, to help them deal with this difficult situation.

Make sure students understand, ALWAYS wear seat belts when they are passengers in a vehicle. Also, explain they should encourage their parents to always wear them too. Why? A loose person (especially an adult) flying around in a vehicle during a crash endangers every belted passenger in that vehicle.

DZ2 Chapter 9 (Seat Belts)

Lesson 16 -

Show RODT Chapter 10 again if you think it is needed. Continue to go over the Lesson 15 points. Explain again how important it is for children to speak up (if comfortable) when they are traveling in a vehicle being driven by a distracted driver.

Help them understand the importance of telling another trusted adult friend, parent or teacher, if they are too nervous to say something to the offending distracted driver etc.

IMPORTANT NOTE: "The Bridge" – Teachers; I have been told this by numerous students - I told my parents, please don't drive distracted, because I learned at school it's not safe. But my parents told me it is ok for them to drive distracted, because they have many years of experience driving. "The Bridge" is a response I have given grade 4 students and above to use as a response to parents. I have found that "The Bridge" is something easily understood by most 8-year olds and above, but not easy for younger children. Hence, this is ideally a Grade 4 through 6 mobility curriculum.

"The Bridge" – My teacher said I can say this to any distracted driver, if that driver tells me it's ok for them to drive distracted because they have many years of driving: "I should not be seeing distracted driving as I grow up. Children who grow up seeing distracted driving are way more likely to drive distracted when they start to drive on their own; this will make them more dangerous or more vulnerable drivers." It is never ok to drive distracted, but it's an especially dangerous/reckless example for children passengers in the vehicle.

Student/teacher discussion is critical for Lesson 15 and 16.

Lesson 17 -

Safety Tools for Children to use, say and do:

Suggestions for students (Teachers validate as necessary)

They can say:

- Mom or dad; could you please stop driving distracted. I am really not comfortable seeing this. We learned how to recognize distracted driving in school.
- To another adult; my parents have asked me to speak up when I see distracted driving. Could you please stop driving distracted, I am not comfortable seeing this.
- Maybe you could pull over and do your texting in a parking lot with the vehicle stopped.
- I think you can wait to make your phone call or preferably not pick up a phone call in the first place.
- You have my life in your hands.
- I learned in school, it is not safe to drive distracted or angry.

Lesson 18 - Recap:

Discussion Points:

Fatal collisions involving pedestrians and vehicles driven by distracted drivers are getting more and more common. Therefore, pedestrians (walkers, cyclists, skaters etc.) have to be as aware as possible, so that they can see vehicles driven by distracted drivers, before they become a problem to them.

IMPORTANT: A completely aware pedestrian will always be way safer than a distracted pedestrian. Pedestrians have to “see” the distracted drivers BEFORE that distracted driver gets into their space and causes injury or worse. Is it fair

that pedestrians need to be so aware? No, it's not fair, but it's way better to "see" these distracted drivers first, than try to complain about the crash afterwards.

SOLUTIONS: Be aware at all times!

Protecting Friends: If you are walking or cycling with friends who you know are distracted (looking at their phones etc.), please make sure you are not also distracted. Please be looking/scanning around for any distracted drivers who might be coming and might harm your group. Be the protector/ the lookout.

If you are traveling in a vehicle and the driver is distracted, please remember, you can speak up and ask them to stop driving distracted while you are in the vehicle; they have your life in their hands. If you're too nervous to say anything, then you need to tell another parent, known adult friend when you get an opportunity.

Make sure you wear your seat belts at all times while you are a passenger in a vehicle and encourage everyone else to wear them too, even people in the back seats. **IMPORTANT:** I strongly advise you never ride in any vehicle that does not have enough seat belts for EVERY occupant. This could be a very dangerous situation.