

Lesson Plan: School Bus Safety Awareness Week

October 19th to 23rd

Grade Level: 4-5

Length: 20-30 minutes

Topic: School Bus Safety

Teaching Approach: Students move beyond memorizing bus rules to explaining why the rules matter and applying them to realistic situations.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- Explain why key bus safety rules exist, not simply recall them.
- Identify unsafe choices at the bus stop, around the bus, and while riding.
- Describe the danger zone and safe road-crossing procedures.
- Explain how one rider's choices can distract the driver or affect others.
- Demonstrate leadership by choosing safe, respectful responses in realistic situations.

Materials

- School Bus Safety presentation
- Screen/projector
- Optional bus safety stickers or certificates
- Open space for students to practice movements

Lesson Procedure

1. Welcome and Warm-Up

Slides 1 | 1 minutes

Begin enthusiastically:

“Welcome Aboard!”

Opening Question: "How many decisions do you think you make in the run of a morning?"

People make roughly about 2000 decisions every hour.

How many of those do you make during a single bus ride?"

- From what time you choose to leave the house, to when and how you choose to cross the street.
- how you speak with the bus driver and your fellow students.
- And how you secure your belongings.

Key Message: Every choice you make contributes to a safer ride for everyone.

2. Welcome and Warm-Up

Slides 2+3 | 1-2 minutes

What do you notice?

What safety features do you notice?

- Yellow and Red Flashing lights to let drivers know the bus is slowing down or coming to a stop
- Stop sign with flashing lights to tell drivers to stop
- Crossing arm to keep riders 10 feet in front of the bus.
- Rearview mirrors to help the bus driver see around certain areas of the bus
- Can anyone tell me what a blind spot is?

Encourage 1 answer and then define.

School bus Facts:

- Hundreds of students ride school buses every day in your community.
- Safety depends on students, drivers, parents, and schools working together.
- Good decisions help prevent injuries and distractions.

Ask: "What could happen if students ignored bus safety rules?"

Encourage students to discuss.

3. At the Bus Stop

Slide 4+5 | 1 minute

Remember to:

- Arrive a few minutes early
- Stay back from the roadway
- Stay in line
- Respect personal space
- Wait for the bus to stop completely
- Stay alert to traffic, avoid horseplay and distractions

Discussion: Why is the bus stop one of the most important places for safety?

Encourage discussion with Students

Example answers:

Immediate dangers include traffic, blind spots around the bus, environmental factors like bad weather, rough roads/ or shoulders etc

4. Crossing Safely

Slides 6| 2 minutes

Title: Crossing in Front of the Bus

Steps:

1. Stop.
2. Wait for the crossing arm to engage
3. Look both ways.
3. Make eye contact with the driver.
4. Cross only when signaled by the bus driver.

Practice Activity: Pretend crossing demonstration.

Use Transit Terry as the cue for the crossing routine.

Students can practice verbally together:

- STOP and wait for the crossing arm/red lights; -LOOK both ways and make eye contact with the driver;
- LISTEN to traffic and cross only when the bus driver signals to;

Try incorporating physical actions to help students remember, stop, look, listen.

Remind students to always follow their own bus driver's instructions.

5. Boarding the Bus

Slides 7+8 | 1-2 minutes

Safe Practices:

- Give yourself lots of time to get to your bus stop before the bus,
- walk and never run along the road.
- Wait until the bus completely stops.
- Follow the driver's directions.
- Use the handrail. with 3 points of contact
- Board in an orderly manner.
- Watch for loose items such as backpack straps.

Think About It: Why can rushing create hazards?

Challenge Question: Why do buses have handrails?

Preventing falls and trips, safe boarding - holding onto the rail while stepping up and down the stairs and aiding mobility for those who need assistance. 3 points of contact ensures students have 1 foot and 2 hands or 2 feet and one hand in contact with a surface at all times.

6. Understanding Blind Spots – Never walk behind the bus

Slides 9 | 2 minutes

The driver cannot see you behind the bus

Key Concept: Large vehicles have blind spots where visibility is limited.

Important Rule: Never walk behind the bus.

A Blind Spot is an area around the vehicle that the driver cannot see directly through the windows or by using the rear-view and side mirrors

Think-&-Share: Who's responsibility is it to keep you safe? You!

Why might a blind spot be dangerous? The driver can't see you.

Class Discussion Question: Why do you think drivers rely on students to follow safety procedures around the bus?

Encourage students to share different reasons why they need to act safely and why it's their responsibility to act safely around traffic.

7. Blind spots continued + the Danger Zone

Slides 10-11 | 5 minutes

Key Point: The danger zone is the area around the bus where the driver may not be able to see you clearly. This is roughly about 15 feet in front and behind the bus. Additional danger zones are located along the side of the bus.

Remember:

- Stay at least 15 feet away from the front of the bus.
- Follow the driver's instructions.
- Wait for the signal to cross. This includes a crossing arm, making eye contact with your bus driver and waiting for their signal to cross.

Review the most dangerous areas of the bus and the safe walking areas. (next slide)

ASK: What makes this area safe to walk?

8. VIDEO – Meet Transit Terry the Bus Driver!

Slides 12 | 2:56 minutes

9. How to sit Safely

Slides 13| 2 minutes

Rules:

- Stay seated - standing could cause a fall or an accident
 - Face forward - always watch what is coming up ahead
 - Keep hands and feet to yourself be respectful of everyone's space and self
 - Keep aisles clear - keep clear of tripping hazards
 - Listen to the driver - They want to get you to school and home safely!
 - Use respectful language - and keep our volume at a low level so to not distract the bus driver.
 - Keep Water bottles inside of you bag or off of the floor.
 - Always check with your driver if you can bring items like balls or skateboards – Just because your AM driver let us, doesn't mean that your afternoon driver will. Have a back up plan for bigger items.
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10. VIDEO School Bus Safety Tips – School Bus Evacuation

Slide 14 | 2:56 minutes

Watch the video demonstration

Lets review some safety tips form the video.

Where are the emergency exits located on the bus?

Front door, rear door, hatch and two side windows. all have safety lock mechanisms, typically red in colour, so they can be manually opened in case of an emergency

Did anyone notice the alarms when the emergency doors were open?

If exiting through the rear, how do we exit the bus

True or false: We meet at a safe space so the bus driver can take our attendance?

11. Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down Safety Game

Slide 15 | 2 minutes

Ask simple review questions:

Q1: Should you run toward a bus?

A: No

Q2: Can you walk behind a bus?

A: No

Q3: What should you do before crossing?

A: encourage multiple answers

Q3: Why should you stay seated?

A: encourage multiple answers

Q4: What is the danger zone?

A: encourage multiple answers

Let students answer together.

Safety Is Everyone's Job

A Responsible Bus Rider:

- Follows instructions
 - Shows respect
 - Helps keep the bus calm
 - Makes safe choices
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12. Review and closing

Slide 16 | 1 minute

Before we finish today, can everyone stand up and repeat after me:

Teach three actions:

"Always remember to:"

STOP: Everyone freezes.

LOOK: Everyone points to their eyes.

LISTEN: Everyone points to their ears.

Practice together:

"STOP! LOOK! LISTEN!"

Repeat three times, changing the volume or speed to keep it playful.

For example, the final round can be whispered.

10. Closing and Drawing contest.

Teachers: Encourage students to take part either as a class or on their own.

The winner of the 2026 1st place prize will receive an annual family pass to the natural history museum in Halifax.

the second-place winner will get to take their family to the discovery centre for a day of exploration, adventure and science!

Post Lesson Activities

Word search – Find the school bus safety objects – classroom print out

Bus Safety Rules – a cut out activity to be done with supervision.

Drawing Contest – “What does School bus safety mean to me?”

Quick Assessment

Assessment should be informal and observation-based. During the presentation, look for whether students can:

- Explain why keeping a safe distance from the bus matters?
- State that they should never walk behind the bus?
- Describe the crossing routine in the correct order?
- Connect inside-the-bus rules to safety for the driver and passengers?
- Can students justify whether a scenario is safe or unsafe?