

Stepping It UP

Teacher's Guide (Gr. 4 – 8) *4min 11sec*

Stepping it UP is a fun, motivational video about walking to school. In it, you will hear from students describing how walking to school gives them exercise and independence while enjoying time with friends. They describe the social interaction opportunities, environmental benefits and observations of nature that do not come as readily when children are sitting in the back seat of a car. Students take the lead within the video with 100% student voice!

This Teacher's Guide will help you extend your students' learning from the video with five activities linked to the most recent Ontario curriculum guidelines. These activities will help your class investigate local factors that are influencing the walk to *your* school.



"So many of my friends and classmates haven't discovered how much fun it is to walk to school."

student comment from video

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r59_rzKuAMA

Context for Walking: Over the past 20 years, in Canada and all over the world, there has been a steady decline in walking trips to and from school. Nevertheless, the students interviewed within the *Stepping it UP* video highlight the health, environmental, social and developmental benefits that they enjoy. Together with this Teacher's Guide, your class can use these tools to identify local factors that prevent more families from walking to/from school.

Before your class watches the video, assess their prior experience and knowledge...

Current Walking Levels: Hold a short discussion asking how your students travel to and from school. How many students walked to school today? How many students have ever walked to school? *Some students who could be using active travel modes but instead get a ride in the family vehicle are missing out on opportunities for exercise, fresh air, and social time with friends and family.*

Being inclusive: How many students live too far to walk all the way to school? Do many students travel by school bus? How many students cannot walk to school for other reasons (e.g. family schedules, different abilities)? Recognize these possibilities and encourage these students to watch the video critically in order to identify how a "Walk to School" message speaks to them and the unique conditions of their school community. *These students could be thinking about possible changes to their routine/lifestyle in future that would create more opportunities for everyday physical activity, socialization and getting to know their neighbourhood.*

DRAMA

"Walking to school gives you more time with friends."

student comment from video

DAD, CAN I WALK WITH MY FRIEND?

A role-playing exercise to investigate factors influencing whether or not students are able to walk to school.

Lesson Plan: one or two 30-45 min periods

Objective/Outcome:

- To role-play in character as a "guardian" and a "student" while exploring conditions that may influence a student's permission/ability to walk to school with a friend.

Materials/Resource:

- Group instructions – copy and cut the table below.

Preparation/Discussion:

The final scene in the *Stepping It Up* video shows the spokesperson inviting Emma in on the walk to school. Without any words, Emma checks with her 'dad' and he gives her the nod. What might have happened if he had said no?

Divide the class into five groups and have each group discuss, plan and prepare a role-play of their scenario.



Suggested Group Activities:

Group 1	In the video, allowing Emma to walk to school seemed to be an easy decision for her dad. Brainstorm some factors or discussions that might have taken place before this morning's request. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Emma usually rides in the car to school, but she has walked to school before today.</i>• <i>Dad trusts that Emma will follow her traffic safety rules and choose a safe route.</i>• <i>Dad recognizes Emma's friend. Or he knows her friend's parents.</i> Choose two or three factors and develop a role-play scenario to demonstrate what might have happened before Emma's request to walk to school this morning.
Group 2	Identify Emma's and dad's motivations. Brainstorm some of the thoughts that might have been going through their minds. Develop a role-play scenario that expresses the unspoken thoughts that took place during the 'request' and 'nod'. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Dad: Well, I have a busy morning at work anyway, and she will be fine.</i>• <i>Emma: It would be fun to walk with my friend. Great, I wanted to talk to her about my birthday party.</i>
Group 3	Emma was very enthusiastic to walk to school with her friend. What if dad didn't want to let Emma go to school without a parent and said "no" in front of Emma's friend? Develop a role-play scenario to demonstrate what the resulting conversation in the car might be like if dad said "no".
Group 4	What factors might have changed this scene's outcome, for example: rain, very cold weather, heavy snow, darkness, if dad has never met the friend before, if the distance to school was too far, etc. Select two or three factors and develop a role-play scenario to continue the conversation from the video based on these factors.
Group 5	Imagine the scene within your own community. How is your community the same or different from the neighbourhood where Emma lives? What would your parents say if you asked them at the last minute to walk with your friend instead of being driven? What are the factors that your parents need to consider, for example: weather, traffic, distance to school, student's age, time, etc. Develop a role-play scenario that presents a few of these factors.

Conclusion:

As a class, watch each group's role-play scenarios. Discuss the factors associated with the walk to school that students: 1) have control over? 2) do not have control over? If a student really wants to walk to school, what can they do to create a persuasive argument?

Curriculum Connection:

Through exploring drama, students will develop an understanding of ... themselves and others... As they work in role in a context, they will come to understand particular situations ...expand their thinking, solve problems, and develop their ability to express ideas and feelings through ... role-play... (and by) assuming different roles. ...Pretending to be someone else involves an act of the imagination that is of central importance in the development of the ability to understand others. As students "live through" experiences of others in imagined situations, they learn to understand a variety of points of view and motives and to empathize with others.

From The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1-8: The Arts, 2009 (revised) (page 15-16)

MEDIA LITERACY

"I encourage kids to walk to school because it's way more fun than driving. You get to hang out with your friends, get away from your parents and it wakes you up in the morning."

student comment from video

Walk to School Advertisement:

An examination of the themes and messages used in car ads in order to design a Walk to School advertisement.

Lesson Plan: 15 min discussion plus 30-45 min for drawing or collage

Objective/Outcome:

- To identify the themes and messages within a car advertisement.
- To adapt these same themes and messages in creating a Walk to School advertisement.



Materials/Resource:

- Ask students to bring in magazines, newspapers, or flyers that include at least one car advertisement.

Preparation/Discussion:

- Have pairs or small groups of students select a car advertisement and ask them to identify the major components within the layout: *e.g. headline, vehicle, setting, logo, fine print, other...*
- Inferencing: Have each group identify the **basic message** behind the advertisement. (*e.g. This vehicle is... attractive, good value, family-friendly, sporty, powerful, outdoorsy, environmentally responsible, etc.*)
- Synthesizing: Continue the discussion to investigate if there are any **deeper (underlying) messages**. (*e.g. This vehicle will make you feel... safe, free, fast, prestigious, important, etc.*) How is the text and imaging used to re-enforce this message?
- Point of View: Consider having each group present their advertisement with their findings.
- Questioning: After each presentation, ask the class if the message is convincing. Is there anything portrayed that the students don't believe. (*e.g. My parents would never drive our car through a mountain stream!*)

Activity:

1. Have each group brainstorm how that same **basic message** might translate to Walking to School. (*e.g. Walking to school is... attractive, good value, family-friendly, sporty, powerful, outdoorsy, environmentally responsible, etc.*)
2. Have them brainstorm how that same **deeper message** might translate to Walking to School. (*e.g. Walking to school can make you feel... safe, free, fast, prestigious, important, etc.*) How might the text and imaging be used to re-enforce this message?
3. Using the same headline and layout, have each student draw/ collage (from the remaining magazine pages) their own advertisement to promote Walking to School.

Conclusion:

As a class, discuss the fundamental difference between selling a product (a car), and an idea or behaviour (walking to school). In what ways is an advertisement a good means to promote walking to school? In what ways might it be effective? Consider displaying the Walk to School advertisements along with the original car advertisements in the school hallway.

Curriculum Connection:

Media literacy explores the impact and influence of mass media and popular culture by examining ... advertisements... Understanding how media texts are constructed and why they are produced enables students to respond to them intelligently and responsibly. Students must be able to differentiate between fact and opinion; ... (and) recognize bias; ... Students' repertoire of communication skills should include the ability to critically interpret the messages they receive through the various media and to use these media to communicate their own ideas effectively as well.

From The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1-8: Language, 2006 (revised) (page 13)

SOCIAL STUDIES, HISTORY & GEOGRAPHY

"What they don't realize is that it doesn't have to be this way. They could be walking to school."

student comment from video

CAUSE & EFFECT:

A *Change and Continuity* activity to investigate factors influencing families' transportation choices for the trip to and from school.

Lesson Plan: 35-45 min

Objective/Outcome:

- To examine factors influencing students' travel routines.
- To identify decisions and adaptations that might be made to reduce the barriers for walking to/from school.

Materials/Resource:

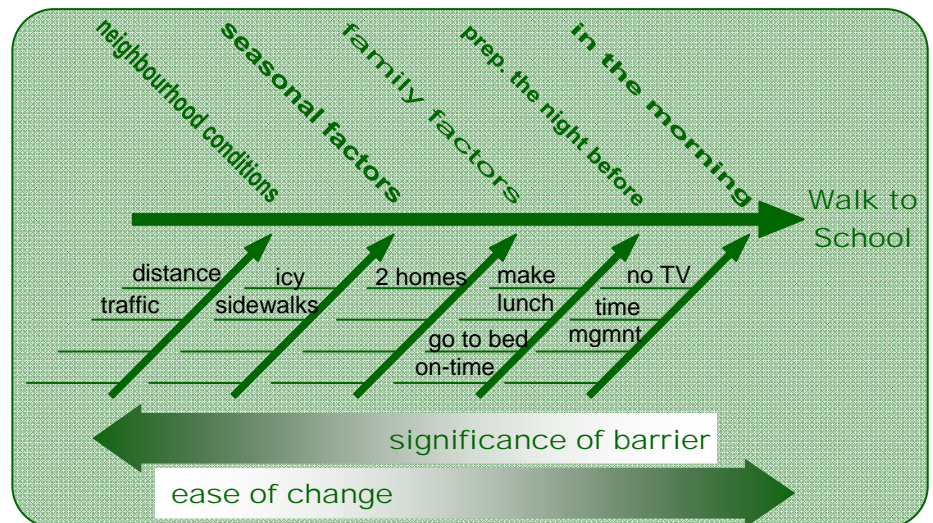
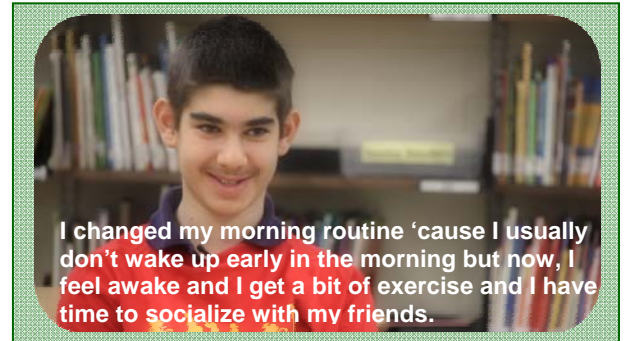
- Draw a large Cause & Effect chart (fishbone) graphic organizer on the chalkboard or whiteboard

Preparation/Discussion:

Although many students are driven to school nowadays, it has not always been that way. *It is possible that many of the students' parents and grandparents walked to elementary school.* What systems and structures have caused this change? What might be done to reverse this phenomenon? Students could ask parents or grandparents how they got to school.

Activity:

1. As a class, discuss "Cause & Effect". Brainstorm some examples, e.g. *as it's raining, I'll bring an umbrella.*
2. Ask about factors that affect how families choose to travel to school: e.g., *distance (use school bus), weather or seasonal differences, family schedule, traffic, physical abilities, personal safety concerns, steep hills, time management, separated parents in two homes, before- or after-school care, etc.*
3. Explain that some of these factors will come into play each day (e.g. distance) while some change from day to day, or season to season (e.g. weather, family schedule), while others have changed within the past generation (higher degree of car ownership).
4. Present the Cause & Effect chart (fishbone) on the board and ask students to identify where each of the factors might lie along the chart.
5. What are the biggest barriers? Where along the chart do they lie? Is it true that the closer they are to the right of the chart, the greater the control that students' have over choosing to walk to school?



Cause & Effect Chart

Conclusion:

Discuss: Regarding their walk to school, what are the factors that students: 1) have control over? 2) do not have control over? And, if a student really wants to walk to school, what can they do to create a persuasive argument and demonstrate their capability and responsibility?

Curriculum Connection:

Systems and Structures: Humans have created systems and structures to allow societies to function; natural systems and structures have developed in response to a variety of natural factors.

Change and Continuity: Change is manifested by differences over time, and is recognized by comparing phenomena and contexts as they exist at different times. Continuity represents consistency and connectedness over time, and is recognized by exploring the forces within ... human societies that create stability and link the past with the present.

From The Ontario Curriculum: Social Studies, Grades 1-6; History and Geography Grades, 7-8, 2004 (revised) (page 4)

HEALTH and PHYSICAL EDUCATION

"You get more exercise walking to school than when you drive to school."

student comment from video

WALKING SCHOOL GROUPS

A *Living Skills* exercise to identify factors that could allow student groups to walk to and from school together (see Extension for ideas for students who are bussed or cannot walk for other reasons).

Lesson Plan: 30-45 min

Objective/Outcome:

- To develop the students' awareness of responsibilities and critical thinking skills in forming small Walking School Groups with classmates.

Materials/Resource:

- A large neighbourhood map (school catchment)
- 8½x11 copies of the map – enough for groups of 4-6 students



Preparation/Discussion:

Regularly walking to school contributes to a student's *DPA* goals and makes them *more likely to adopt healthy active living practices and maintain them throughout their lives*. However, many parents do not feel comfortable letting their children walk alone. For that reason, the goals of this activity are to form small Walking School Groups between friends and classmates, and to investigate factors related to the personal skills of individuals and the group as a whole.

In advance, have students mark their home with a star or push pin on the map so that you can pre-group the students. If students live beyond the map, have them point to, and mark, the roads where their commute enters onto the map.

- Discuss the **Personal Skills** involved in walking to/from school:
 - o Time management, e.g.: know how long it takes to walk to school and leave early enough to arrive on-time.
 - o Organizational skills, e.g.: prepare lunch and school bag before going to sleep, dress for the weather, choose a central meeting place.
 - o Responsibility: know safe walking practices, follow them, e.g. a short cut is not always a good choice, use sidewalks and crosswalks where possible.
 - o Flexibility: adopt an optimistic attitude, adapt to changes in your walking routine (e.g. your walking buddy gets sick or is late).

Activity:

1. Create groupings of 4-6 students living near to each other, or else sharing a common access route to the school.
2. Distribute an 8½x11 map to each group, and ask students to plot their route to school using colour markers to represent their usual transportation mode, e.g.: walking (blue), cycling (green), school bus (yellow), public transit (orange), car - just my family (red), carpool - two or more families (black)
3. Ask the students to consider the possibility that their group could walk to/from school together. (Note: *students living too far to walk could be dropped off at a classmate's home and join the walk from there.*)
4. Discuss the **Interpersonal Skills** required in a Walking School Group. Have groups create an action plan:
 - o Respect: apply conflict resolution skills in dealing with minor problems (e.g. lateness, forgetting to tell others about a morning dentist appointment, etc.).
 - o Leadership: responsible/mature students can take leadership roles in a Walking School Group.
 - o Planning: consider varying schedules (e.g. morning sports practices, separated parents in two homes, etc.)
 - o Presentation: prepare a persuasive argument outlining the value and benefits of a Walking School Group that could be presented to parents and guardians.
 - o Teamwork: e.g. be inclusive of students with different abilities or living too far to walk the entire journey.

Conclusion:

When the student groups have completed their assessment of both the viability and safety of their proposed Walking School Groups, have them synthesize the results in order to present the plan to their parents/guardians.

Curriculum Connection:

Personal Skills - Self-awareness and Self-monitoring Skills; Adaptive, Coping, and Management Skills

Interpersonal Skills - Relationship and Social Skills

Critical and Creative Thinking -Reflecting/Evaluating: Planning next steps

From The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1-8: Health and Physical Education, Interim Edition, 2010 (revised) (page 20)

LANGUAGE

"Sometimes when you walk to school you see things better and that can start a conversation."

student comment from video

WALKING HAIKU¹:

A writing activity to encourage awareness of how the walk to school can change from day to day due to the weather conditions, walking companions, emotions and perceptions.

Lesson Plan: 1st class: 30-45 min, 2nd-5th classes: 15-30 min

- optional – go for a class walk: 15 min

Objective/Outcome:

- To compile a series of morning Walking Haikus (daily or monthly).
- To reflect upon how one's perceptions of the walk to/from school can vary from day to day due to things we experience (see, hear, smell, feel, touch).

Materials/Resource:

- A traditional Japanese haiku is a three lined poem with a structure of **five, seven and five** syllables.

Preparation/Discussion:

This activity requires that students walk to school each day in a week, or once a week for a month (e.g. Walking Wednesday). The day before you begin, remind students that part of their homework will be to walk to school tomorrow.

As this may not be possible for all students, consider several options:

- encourage students who live too far and are driven to school to ask their parents to drop them off three to four block from the school,
- encourage students using the school bus to reflect upon their walk to the school bus stop,
- meet your class outside at the morning bell and go for a 5-min walk around the school grounds, or
- take your class for a short walk after lunch.

Activity:

1. When class begins, ask students to reflect upon their walk and recall "things" they have experienced (seen, heard, smelled, felt) that were noteworthy, or caught their attention. Ask them to consider the five Ws and/or their five senses.
2. Have each student write a few lines describing what they sensed.
3. Before they proceed, demonstrate a process for editing text to create a haiku:
 - *read what you wrote, and lightly circle the best parts*
 - *write out those parts again, adding any new words that come to mind*
 - *read it again and as before, make any changes that you feel would give it a better sense of what you saw, heard or felt*
 - *finally, re-write to fit the haiku pattern: a three lined poem of five, seven and five syllables*
4. At the end of the first day's lesson, ask students how they might be even more observant on their next walk.

Conclusion:

At the end of the writing series, encourage students to reflect upon the process of writing a series of poems over time. Ask the students to reflect upon the various experiences they encountered along their walk. Invite students to read their haikus. Consider displaying the Walking Haikus on a bulletin board in the hallway.

Curriculum Connection:

Students need ... numerous opportunities to write, as the process of writing enables them to clarify their thinking and sort out and express their thoughts and feelings. ... Students should be given ... opportunities to produce writing that is interesting and original and that reflects their capacity for independent critical thought. ...

From The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1-8: Language, 2006 (revised) (page 12)

A construction site
Music blasting in my ears
It's easy to think.

Matthew (Gr. 12)

~ sample process ~

the wind is blowing through the trees and
the branches clap their leaves like I've just

won a gold medal

the wind is blowing
branches clap their leaves

~~won a gold medal~~

**the wind is blowing
the trees and branches applaud
me, I take a bow**

AO

¹ This activity has been adapted from a previous version developed by Urbanthinkers from an article by Naomi Beth Wakan in *Green Teacher* (Fall 2003).

Extensions, Follow-Up Activities & Adaptations

DRAMA: Dad, can I walk with my friend?

Extensions: What if Emma's dad said yes, but only on the condition that he had to accompany the girls? ...or just until they have made it across the busy main street? What if Emma stepped out of her home a few seconds later and saw her friend just after she passed by. Might Emma call out to her friend, or turn to ask her dad first? What if there were three friends walking and they didn't ask Emma to join them?

Notes:

MEDIA LITERACY: Walk to School Advertisement

Extension: How do the car ads vary according to the magazines, e.g. how does a car ad in *New Moms' Weekly*, differ from one in *Cool Guy's Fitness*?

Adaptation: Senior students may want to extrapolate the ad into a video, or public service announcement (PSA).

Notes:

SOCIAL STUDIES, HISTORY and GEOGRAPHY: Cause & Effect

Extension: Discuss - how long is a short trip? Does one's perception of this have an effect on transportation choice?

Follow-Up: Students could be asked to interview their parents and/or grandparents to find out how they got to school. As part of the interview, they could ask for that person's opinion as to what has caused so many of today's students to be driven to school. Also, what would need to happen in your community in order to *cause* more students to walk to school?

Notes:

HEALTH and PHYSICAL EDUCATION: Walking Groups

Extension: Discuss the opportunities for more daily physical activity with students who take the bus or who cannot walk to school for other reasons. Discuss places students may go and activities they may do before and/or after school (e.g. the store, a friend's house, sports) where there may be the opportunity for them to walk part or all of the way. For students who are bussed, discuss walking to and from the bus stop.

Follow-Up: If there is an upcoming event that will bring parents/guardians to the school, each group could assemble their parents/ guardians to talk about these opportunities for physical activity and how family members can support one another to realize these opportunities.

Notes:

LANGUAGE: Walking Haiku

Extension: Encourage different forms of poetry. Do the different moods and conditions lend themselves to particular styles of poetry or expression?

Adaptation: The class could choose a variety of options: walking different routes, walk with different people, in different seasons, before and after Daylight Savings Time takes effect, or with theme days: e.g. a silent day, a skipping day, a sunglasses day, etc. Ask your students to write about yesterday's walk home: discuss how different it is when a whole day has passed since the event they are trying to recall. Students could be encouraged to carry a pencil and notepad and either take notes, or write a haiku along their walk.

Notes:

Teacher's Notes:

Ideas for Next Year:

Favourite Resources and Web-Sites:

If your class would like to share results of activities you've completed or any feedback regarding this guide or the *Stepping It Up* video, please contact Jennifer Lay, School-Based TDM Program Coordinator at Metrolinx at 416-874-5951 or Jennifer.Lay@metrolinx.com

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www.saferoutestoschool.ca

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Transport
Canada

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Stantec

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