



Teaching road safety:

**guide for educators
of 2-18 year-olds**



Road safety is a great subject in which to engage children and young people.

It's a subject even the youngest children know something about because everyone uses roads, and road danger impacts on everyone. It's also a vitally important subject. Road crashes are a major cause of death and injury among the young, with the risk rising as children reach secondary school age and have more independence, and young drivers and passengers facing significant risks. Danger from traffic is also a big factor in whether children and young people are able to walk and cycle to school, to the park or to see friends, and therefore their ability to be healthy and socially active.

Below are some guidelines on what to teach different age groups from age 2 to 18, and some ideas for lessons and activities, including some that can be run in assemblies or citizenship lessons, and some that can be incorporated into subjects like Maths, Science, Drama and English.

You can also use our educational resources page to download posters, videos and other resources you can use to help make road safety an interesting and engaging topic.

Sign up for Brake's termly **educators' e-bulletin** for updates about teaching road safety.

Find out about **other ways schools can promote road safety.**

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This guide is also available online at brake.org.uk/educators

This guide to teaching road safety was created by Brake, the road safety charity with support from the Department for Transport.

Supporting





Before you start

Sensitivity issues

Before teaching road safety, check if any children have been bereaved by, hurt in, or witnessed a serious road crash, and be sensitive to their needs. Talk to them and their carers about whether they wish to be excluded from lessons or activities that discuss death or injury. (If your school or any students experience a bereavement in a road crash, you can see Brake's [reports on child bereavement](#) and order our [child bereavement support literature](#) to help you support them.)

Getting outside help

Bear in mind that classroom teaching is more effective if combined with practical experiences and campaigning. So if you can build in these three components it will have greater impact:

- ▶ classroom teaching
- ▶ roadside experiences and training (which must be delivered safely)
- ▶ getting the children campaigning for road safety.

You can get advice on all three of these elements in this guide, but to successfully deliver on them, especially practical training, you may need or benefit from outside help. For example, road safety officers from local authorities can visit schools to run practical [pedestrian and cycling training](#) for children. You may also be able to work with emergency services to help you teach road safety in an exciting way, and convey why road safety is important, such as by giving talks in assemblies, or helping to supervise and deliver practical experience-based lessons or discussions.

You might also be able to get help from a local company who could provide funding to aid your road safety work, or volunteers to help supervise, or help you promote a campaign led by the children (for example by providing space to display banners and posters). You can also make use of Brake's [road safety events and programmes](#) to help you bring road safety to life, and link your teaching with a national programme. Many of these include free resource packs and guidelines to help you get involved. In particular, [Road Safety Week](#) is the UK's biggest road safety event, organised by Brake every November, and a time when thousands of educators, local authorities, emergency services and employers work to promote road safety. [Register for a free e-action pack.](#)

Getting everyone on board

You may need to persuade others within your school, nursery or college, such as other teachers, the head or board, about the importance of road safety before you start teaching and promoting it. Here are a few key points you can make to help persuade others:

- ▶ Every death or serious injury of a child on roads is devastating for the family, the wider community, and the pre-school, school or college – and every one is preventable. No child should lose their life or suffer a horrendous injury on roads.
- ▶ Poor road safety not only means children are in danger of being hurt or killed, it also often affects their health and wellbeing. Children are increasingly being driven to school, and are less likely to regularly walk and cycle, contributing to inactivity, obesity and affecting social development. If streets are unsafe, parents are less willing to let their children walk or cycle.
- ▶ Educators can play a vital role in protecting children and stopping devastating casualties by teaching life-saving messages to pupils, and promoting road safety more widely such as to parents and drivers in the area.
- ▶ Schools and colleges can lead the way in making local roads safer, especially enabling children and families to walk and cycle safely. You are at the heart of a community and therefore well placed to work with authorities to help achieve improvements to local roads to make them safer for children and adults, such as through paths, crossings, lower speed limits and better law enforcement. (Read our [guide on campaigning.](#))
- ▶ Road safety can help you meet teaching requirements and demonstrate to people in the area that you are a school that cares about pupils' safety and wellbeing.
- ▶ Road safety is not just a subject for younger children. The older children get, the more at risk they become, as they gain independence. This includes when they are on foot or bicycle, and when they may start to drive or be passengers with other young drivers. Crashes involving young drivers are a big problem, causing one in five serious road casualties, so improving awareness of the risks on roads is crucial for teenagers too.



Getting parents on board

Getting parents on board with your road safety messages is vitally important, given their responsibilities for protecting children, especially at a younger age, and as children are likely to copy their parents' behaviour, including any bad habits. It's therefore a good idea when planning road safety teaching to consider how you can reach out to parents at the same time.

Encouraging parents to behave safely on roads, as drivers, pedestrians and cyclists, and to display positive attitudes towards road safety, will help make sure what you are teaching in the classroom is being positively reinforced at home. Engaging parents with road safety messages can also of course make roads around the school safer by encouraging them to slow down and park safely, or to leave the car at home and walk or cycle to school if there are safe routes.

Some of the activity and teaching ideas below incorporate ways to engage parents, but whatever you're planning you could:

- ▶ Include something in your newsletter, website or on social media, and/or send out letters, informing them of what you will be teaching the children and suggesting ways they can reinforce the messages at home and lead by example;
- ▶ Encourage parents to sign the [Brake Pledge](#), a six point pledge covering key road safety topics;
- ▶ Direct parents to brake.org.uk/families, Brake's road safety advice for families, and directly communicate the key messages;
- ▶ Display posters in your reception area promoting road safety activities you're running and road safety messages. These could be [posters from Brake](#), or designed by the children;
- ▶ Invite them to attend a demonstration or workshop. This could be of a creative project by the children, such as a screening of a video they have made or performance of a play, or by an external partner, such as emergency service professionals.

For more advice on getting parents on board, see THINK!'s advice for involving parents of children in [early years](#), [lower primary](#), [upper primary](#), and [secondary](#).

Organising resources and materials

There are plenty of resources available from Brake and our partners, including [THINK!](#). We recommend that you utilise a range of interactive, visual and practical resources to make road safety an interesting and engaging subject.

You can explore Brake's [teaching tools and resources](#), and the low-cost resources available in the [Brake shop](#), or if you're working with older students, make use of tools on our [2young2die website](#).



Or you can register for one of our events such as a [Beep Beep! Day](#), or [Giant Walking Bus](#), and receive a free resource pack. THINK! also has dedicated [primary](#) and [secondary](#) education websites, offering more teaching activities and worksheets. You can also use THINK!'s lesson packs for [early years](#), [Key Stage 1](#), [Key Stage 2](#), [Key Stage 3](#), and [Key Stage 4](#).

Using the right language

Think carefully about what language to use when teaching road safety to communicate its importance in a powerful, memorable and sensitive manner. Brake strongly recommends avoiding the term "road accidents" to describe crashes, deaths and injuries. Road crashes are preventable tragedies – "accident" implies they are inevitable (undermining messages about steps people can take to prevent them) and understates the devastation they can cause. Be completely open and honest about the seriousness of road safety with children, and of the tragic consequences of road crashes and casualties, particularly with older students. Don't shy away from referring to the deaths and injuries that regularly occur on our roads, and the impact these have. See section below on ['what to teach'](#).

Take care not to glamorise driving, and don't make assumptions about your students' circumstances in regards to being driven or learning to drive. Some may come from families that do not have a car, and some may have no interest in driving. Make it clear that there are sustainable and active alternatives to car use, which are good for you and the planet. Bear in mind that driving is a high-risk activity for young people in particular, and if people learn to drive in their teens they are far more likely to be in a serious crash. Steering young people away from driving is one of the most important road safety and environmental messages you can convey.

You should also bear in mind a child's experience of traffic in an urban location will greatly differ from that of a child in a rural location, so adapt your messaging and activities to suit your class profile.



What to teach: age appropriate messages

Brake recommends you aim to cover the road safety ABC, adapted for the age group you're working with, as set out below:

- A** is for **awareness** (traffic is dangerous and can hurt people)
- B** is for **behaviour** (things you should do to stay safer)
- C** is for **choice** and campaigning (how to make safer choices and to help others make these choices too)

Under 8's can be taught A and B from the age of two upwards. They can be taught rules and encouraged to follow them through practical training. However, under 8's should not use roads without an adult, and adults should follow the Green Cross Code (see below) at all times when on foot with their children. Adults should, at all times, hold children's hands or use reins with younger children because under 8's:

- ▶ have difficulty judging speed and distance;
- ▶ are easily distracted and act on impulse;
- ▶ have difficulty understanding danger and death and are oriented around play;
- ▶ are small (so can't see hazards) and are still developing eyesight and hearing;
- ▶ are carefree, not careless;
- ▶ should not be allowed to walk near roads on their own for these reasons.

Over 8's will have more ability to understand C, and make their own choices based on different options and assessment of risk. However, they need to have A and B re-emphasised to them because over 8's:

- ▶ may walk on their own but make mistakes that can cost their lives because of lack of experience;
- ▶ are vulnerable to peer pressure from other children to make risky choices, such as running across a road.

The following sections list teaching topics within the road safety ABC.

A is for awareness: traffic is dangerous and hurts people You can teach, with increasing frankness as children get older, that:

- ▶ Traffic hurts tens of thousands of people in the UK each year. Five people are killed in road crashes every day.

- ▶ People hurt by traffic are often seriously injured. Injuries include paralysis and losing limbs. (Note: many children may think minor injuries such as breaking an arm are okay or even fun – you may need to make clear how awful a serious injury is.)
- ▶ Some people do dangerous things when walking or cycling, such as texting on their phone while crossing a road, or not wearing a cycle helmet. These people are more likely to be killed or hurt.
- ▶ Some drivers do dangerous things, which increase the chance of them killing or hurting themselves or someone else, for example, speeding, or using a phone at the wheel, or driving after drinking alcohol. We have laws such as speed limits to stop people being killed or hurt in crashes, but some drivers break them.

B is for behaviour: rules you can follow to stay safe

Children need to be taught the language of road safety before they can understand the rules. For example, names of vehicles, names of street furniture such as pavements and kerbs, and an understanding of fast, slow, looking, listening and crossing. Download Brake's [colour in work sheet](#) with key words and street furniture. A well-educated child age five may already have a grasp of fundamental road safety rules thanks to their parents. But others may not. Therefore, you should begin with younger children by checking they all understand the following:

- ▶ Paths and pavements are for people; roads are for traffic.
- ▶ Never go out near roads without a grown up. Hold their hand and don't let go.
- ▶ Stop at once if you are told. Never try to cross a road until you are told.
- ▶ Don't run into the road or play on roads - play in a park or garden.
- ▶ You can help grown-ups look and listen for traffic to cross safely.
- ▶ Traffic lights and other crossings help people cross the road. When a red man appears, it means you must stop.
- ▶ You can wear bright clothes to be seen by traffic.
- ▶ If you ride in a car, never undo your belt, play with door handles, or distract the driver.

By the age of five, children are ready to learn, in addition to the above:

- ▶ The Green Cross Code (find a safe place to cross, stop, look, listen, cross with care, looking and listening all the time)
- ▶ The safest places to cross: underpasses; footbridges; where there is a crossing-patrol (lollipop) person; traffic light crossings; zebra crossings.

The Green Cross Code

1. Find a safe place to cross
2. Stop just before you get to the kerb
3. Look all around for traffic and listen
4. If traffic is coming, let it pass
5. When it is safe, go straight across the road – do not run

Go to the **THINK!** site to read the full Green Cross Code with more detailed advice.

- ▶ The importance of wearing the right gear when walking and cycling. Fluorescent and reflective materials help drivers see you, and helmets protect your head.
- ▶ In a car, only get out on the pavement side.
- ▶ In a bus or coach or minibus, wear your seat belt if there is one. When getting off, never cross the road in front or behind the bus. Wait until it has pulled away so you can see in all directions.

By the age of 9 and upwards, depending on development, children are ready to explore:

- ▶ The impact of road crashes, injuries and deaths on families.
- ▶ The responsibilities of drivers to protect other people, especially people who are on foot or bicycle.
- ▶ The dangers of giving in to peer pressure to take risks.

Read more about teaching older students below.

C is for choice: how to make the safest choices and help others stay safe too

Under-8's are ill-equipped to make their own choices. However, it is important that older children recognise their ability to make safe choices, recognise pressures they may come under to make dangerous choices and learn how to resist those pressures, and how to speak up for the safety of others too.

Younger children can also be encouraged to think about choices, as long as they are not encouraged to make those choices on their own. All children can be encouraged to speak out against dangerous behaviour, such as children pushing each other into the road, or running across roads without looking, or drivers driving too fast, or people not doing up their seatbelts or not wearing helmets on mopeds or motorbikes.

What to teach to teens

Students aged 11-20 may initially think that road safety is for younger children, or boring. But most young people have a lot to say about road safety and won't find it boring as long as it's taught well. In fact, effective road safety teaching with these age ranges enables you to explore challenging and worth-while issues, including:

- ▶ Death and bereavement, and especially the impact of sudden, violent and 'man-made' bereavement, such as through road death, knife crime, war and terrorism
- ▶ Life-changing injuries (such as paralysis and brain injury) and how this affects people and their families
- ▶ Taking responsibility for others in the context of good citizenship - particularly if driving

- ▶ Society's obsession with motor vehicles, the effects this has on communities (safety, health, pollution, social interaction, costs), and the alternatives to driving
- ▶ The differences in levels of risk-taking among males and females, and young drivers and older drivers
- ▶ Alcohol and drugs – including alcohol and drug use among young people, and how this links with the issue of drink and drug driving

There are a number of reasons that students may not initially be receptive to road safety teaching. For example, they may:

1. Think they 'know it all' and road safety is for 'babies'
2. Already be taking risks on roads (for example, mucking about on busy roads, driving without a licence or taking illegal drugs and driving)
3. Feel invincible - road crashes happen to someone else, not them. They think their youth and fast reaction times will keep them out of trouble
4. Have a misunderstanding of the true extent of deaths and injuries on roads and just how at risk they are as young people.

However, young people are likely to have witnessed risky behaviour on roads and grasp road safety issues easily as they deal with roads every day. They also may well have experienced, or heard of, someone in their community being hurt or killed in a road crash, and therefore understand that death and serious injury is a reality on roads.

Effective road safety teaching for this age range should:

- ▶ Build on students' existing knowledge and experiences, not preach
- ▶ Require students to think for themselves and conduct original research
- ▶ Be discussive and creative, and related to students' real lives
- ▶ Involve real-life projects (such as devising and running a campaign to get parents and students to 'belt up') not just class-room learning
- ▶ Explore the dangers and consequences of risk-taking, and the benefits of making safe and sustainable choices
- ▶ Explain clearly that road safety is about stopping deaths and serious injuries and therefore it is crucial to take it seriously – particularly as these students are in the highest risk group for dying or being seriously injured on roads.





Early years: age 2-5 teaching ideas

By running simple, fun, educational activities like those suggested below, you can help prevent deaths and injuries of children. The sooner you start, the better; we suggest teaching from the age of two. Teaching road safety is an active, fun and stimulating thing to do, and children love toy vehicles, fire engines, and bicycles, so they're keen to learn more about them. The ideas below can also help you meet foundation stage learning requirements and aid development of children's motor and creative skills, language skills, their understanding of the world around them, and their personal, social and emotional development.

If you work with 2-7 year olds, run a **Beep Beep! Day:**

a fun, educational day of activities teaching children the road safety basics and helping you promote road safety to parents. Sign up to get a free resource pack.



Teach that traffic is dangerous:

1. Toy car Olympics

You: Arrange the children in a line across one end of a room or in the playground. Give each child a toy car.

The children: In turn, send their car across the room. Which is fastest? Which goes furthest before it can stop? Which car is near? Which is far away?

2. Learn about wheels

Make play dough wheels, and roll them around. Pick up a toy car and spin its wheels. Wheels mean that traffic goes fast and can't stop easily. It goes much faster than people who are walking. Traffic is dangerous.

3. Let's look at a car!

Only do this activity if you can park a car somewhere away from traffic where the children can approach it safely. The car should be parked on a flat surface with the handbrake firmly on and engine off.

You: Tell the children the importance of standing well away from cars, even when they look like they aren't moving. Take each child up to the side of the car in turn, holding their hand.

The children: Poke the car then poke their tummy. Which is soft, which is hard? Cars are hard and can hurt you if they hit you. You are soft and easily hurt. Look at a wheel. Look at how big and hard it is. It goes round very fast.

Teach them cars and other vehicles aren't toys. They're dangerous. Teach them to stay away from traffic unless holding an adult's hand.

Teach to always hold hands:

1. Create a giant road map

You: Make a giant map of roads, paths and pavements out of coloured paper stuck together. You could include features that you have in your local area, like crossings or a park.

The children: Help you cut out pictures of vehicles, people, dogs and buggies out of old magazines. Stick the pictures in the right place on your giant road. Vehicles on the road, people on the pavement and in the park.

You: Practise with the children key road safety words related to what's in the picture. Can you see a? How many? What colour is the.....? Then stick your giant road on the wall as part of a road safety display. Make sure your display is somewhere parents will see it.

This activity could be delivered on an interactive white board if you have one, or using a tablet or computer for a small group, using basic image editing software such as Paint to create the map, and Powerpoint to add the interactivity.

2. Looking and listening skills

What can you hear? What can you see? What can you sing?

You: Record some road sounds, or find them online: car, fire engine, motorbike, bicycle bell, a pedestrian crossing beeping. Play these to the children, and show them a set of matching pictures.

The children: Sit in a circle and guess the noises when you play them, matching them to the pictures you show, and saying what makes what noise, for example, 'The blue car goes brum brum brum, The big red fire engine goes nee nah nee nah....' etc.

3. Giant handprint display

Create a giant poster of children's hand prints and write 'We hold hands' at the top, and display it where parents and children can see it.



4. Colour in pictures

Older children with more developed motor skills can colour in the Brake [photocopiable posters](#) from our teaching resources page.

5. Draw or make a road safety car

Use a small box and cut out circles for children to stick to the side for wheels, or just draw a car on a piece of paper and let children colour it in. Write 'slow down' or 'belt up' on the side of the cars, or draw a 20mph road sign, and give them to the children to take home.

Key stage 1: age 5-7 teaching ideas

Under-8s shouldn't use roads without an adult and can't be expected to make their own choices when using roads. However, they can be taught rules and encouraged to follow them, and you can help develop their understanding of the dangers on roads and how to avoid them. This will help ensure that as they start to gain independence, road safety is already well engrained. You can explore road safety as part of subjects such as literacy, maths, and science (see lesson ideas below).

Register for Brake's **Giant Walking Bus**

our annual event for primary schools every June. It's a giant march for road safety: a great way to teach children about safe walking and promote safe driving.

Or if you can't wait until June, run a **Beep Beep! Day**, to teach 2-7 year-olds the road safety basics through fun activities.



In literacy

Expand children's road safety vocabulary to include words like pedestrian, zebra crossing, kerb, while talking about road safety.

This activity could be delivered using an interactive white board if you have one, or using a tablet or computer for a small group, by showing a picture of a street scene and asking the children to name different street features.

In science or numeracy

Measure your children's height and weigh them. Then talk to them about how they are small, and traffic is big. Because they are small they find it difficult to see traffic. Because they are small they have to be in a special seat in their car. Photocopy our [Letter to send home](#) to parents and fill in the blanks with the children's height and weight, then put it in children's 'book bags' so they can talk about road safety with their parents when they get home.

Discuss scenarios together

Present scenarios using pictures, film clips or demonstrations on the playground or in the school hall and discuss them with the children. For example, 'Ahmed's ball is in the road because he threw it over the fence by accident. What should he do now?' or 'Where is a safe place to play? Let's name some around here.' 'Why does a cycle helmet help you stay safe?'

Creative projects

Draw or paint posters of people on pavements holding hands and vehicles on roads. Discuss how holding hands keeps children safe. Write road safety slogans for the posters and display them where parents will see them.

Paint an ambulance

Ask the children to paint an ambulance in its bright colours. Discuss why it is painted brightly - so people can see it coming, when it's travelling fast. Discuss, with appropriate sensitivity, how the ambulance could be carrying someone to hospital who has been hurt on the road. You can help make sure this isn't you by staying away from the road, and wearing something bright so drivers see you.



Experiment with wheels

In a large room, send a large toy truck racing across the floor. Discuss how trucks go faster because they are on wheels. Wheels are fast, and traffic can go really fast – much faster than the faster person can run. A car or truck might look a long way away but it can get to you fast and hit you hard.

Do a seat belt experiment

Belt up a small teddy into a toy car using ribbon. Put another teddy in another toy car without a seat belt. Carry out experiments using slopes and obstacles to demonstrate that the teddy who doesn't wear a seat belt can fall out and get hurt.

Shine torches

Use a room with blinds, and shut them. Then shine torches on high visibility vests that the children wear. This is a good experiment to do in the autumn and winter, such as when the clocks go back and the evenings get darker. Provide children high-visibility gear if you can, and encourage them to wear it. This is something your local authority road safety team may be able to assist with.

Sing a road safety song

Get the children to do actions in time to the song using the words stop, go, pavement and hold hands. You could invent new verses to 'Wheels on the bus' such as 'The children and the grown ups all hold hands, all hold hands, all hold hands'.

Listen to some recordings of road noises

Play recordings of road noises, e.g. an ambulance, car, pedestrian crossing beeping. What are they? Can the children match them with pictures you hold up? Listen out for noises on roads; it can warn you that traffic is coming.

Bake for Brake!

Follow this [traffic-light biscuit recipe](#) and use it to talk about the colours of traffic lights and what they mean. Red means stop, green means go - always wait till you see the green man at a pelican crossing.



Key Stage 2: age 7-11 teaching ideas

Most children in this age range have a better understanding of death and injury than you may think. With sensitivity, it's important to develop children's knowledge and engagement with the concepts of hazards (things that are dangerous), risk-taking (things you do that expose you to danger), and the consequences of risk-taking (death and injury).

The teaching ideas below are best used in conjunction with [practical pedestrian training](#) and activities, which your local authority may be able to provide.

Register for Brake's **Giant Walking Bus**, our annual event for primary schools every June.

It's a giant march for road safety: a great way to teach children about safe walking and promote safe driving.



Hands-up survey

Use a 'hands-up survey' to get the children thinking about road safety through a discussion-based lesson. You could then use the results to inform further road safety lessons and carry out wider [road safety campaigns](#). Create your own survey, making sure each answer can be answered yes or no (so you get a show of hands for each and write down the number of hands put up), or use [Brake's sample survey](#) for 5-11 year-olds, or whichever questions from it you think are most relevant for your students.

Run a discussion

You could use the questions below or download our sample [whiteboard discussion slides](#) for primary school classes. You could also show an appropriate road safety video or advert at the start, or use an online game, to help spark discussion – go to Brake's [educator resources page](#) for videos.

- ▶ Let's start with the basics. Who can tell me how to cross a road safely? (See [THINK!'s online game about crossing safely](#).)
- ▶ Does everyone do this? Has anyone run across a road, crossed somewhere dangerous, or been pushed into the road by someone? Let's share our stories. Why did you do it? (Answers are likely to include in a rush, had to get over the road, not thinking or because it was exciting.) How did it make you feel?

- ▶ What happens to children on foot and bicycles who are hit by a car or a bigger vehicle, such as a lorry? (Answers likely to include death and various injuries.)
- ▶ If someone is very seriously injured, how could it affect their life? (For example, it may mean they can never walk again and need to use a wheelchair.) If you could never walk again how would it affect your life? (Answers likely to include couldn't play football, couldn't dance.)
- ▶ How do drivers sometimes break the rules and put people in danger? (Answers are likely to include driving too fast, being distracted, drink driving.)
- ▶ If you are trying to cross the road, and you see a car far away, can you tell how quickly it will get to where you are standing? No, because it will depend how fast that driver is going, and they could be speeding.
- ▶ Why is it safer if drivers slow down? How long does it take a vehicle to stop if they are driving at different speeds? (See Brake's [stopping distances activity](#) – this could be delivered on an interactive whiteboard.)
- ▶ Does anyone know the speed limit outside our school? Do we think drivers stick to that limit? Are there any signs or road markings that remind drivers the school is here, and they should drive carefully?
- ▶ Has anyone got ideas about how we can encourage drivers to drive more safely in the area? What about persuading parents to drive more safely? (Answers are likely to include posters, adverts, letters to parents, talking to our parents.)



Write or read stories and plays

Write a story or play script about someone being hurt in a crash. What happened? Why? What choices did the characters make that led to the injury? What were the consequences of this?

Alternatively, there are numerous theatre in education companies who can perform in your school. Sometimes, this can be funded by your local council. Contact your local council and ask to speak to the road safety officer to find out local providers and any costs.

Be ambassadors for road safety

Get children to write poems or songs on road safety for Key Stage 1 children, to help teach the younger children basic road safety lessons. Get the older children to perform them in front of the younger children. By doing this, you will be helping the older children reaffirm the importance of the messages. Use this as an opportunity to tell the older children to look out for younger children. Do you have a younger sister or brother? It's really important for your parents or you to always hold their hand, keep them away from roads, and help teach them how to cross safely.

Check to see if your local authority runs a Junior Road Safety Officer scheme. In primary schools, two 10-year-old children are appointed to help their local authority road safety officer to educate other children about the importance of road safety. Even if this scheme isn't run in our area, you can still adopt this idea of having road safety prefects. Schools in Scotland can register for Road Safety Scotland's Junior Road Safety Officer scheme and access resources on the [JRSO website](#).

Getting messages across to parents

Write, paint, draw, film or design road safety adverts for parents about the importance of driving slowly and safely when kids are about. Make a road safety display in your reception area for parents using these adverts, or create online versions and share them through the school website, email newsletter, or social media. You could also invite parents to a special assembly and present your adverts.

Study road safety in maths and science

How many people die and are hurt on roads? In numeracy, you could work out how many classrooms are killed and injured each year using the government's annual [road casualty statistics](#). How many people are killed or injured every day? You also can find facts and figures on different road safety topics, including the maths of speed, on Brake's [fact pages](#).

Study cycle helmets

Crash test eggs with and without specially-made helmets to show why wearing a helmet is so important.

For more information and games and activities on bicycle helmet protection, go to the Bicycle Helmet Initiative Trust's [website for kids](#). *Some of these games can be played with the whole class using an interactive white board.*



Be bright, be seen

Study the properties of reflective and fluorescent materials, using a high visibility vest and blacked out rooms and torches. Talk about the importance of being bright at night and on dull days.



Key Stage 3: age 11-14 teaching ideas

By the time children reach secondary school they are likely to be becoming much more independent as road users and, as such, are exposed to increased road risks. This means their ongoing road safety education is vital, especially given that road crashes are the biggest cause of deaths and serious injuries among young people.

Get young people involved in Brake's **2young2die campaign**, or attend **Brake's training** on engaging young people in interactive road safety workshops and campaigns.

Study statistics on deaths and injuries on roads

Explore statistics surrounding various **road safety topics** or use the government's **road casualty statistics**. Find visually engaging and significant ways to display them (eg. pie charts and bar graphs). Make a display for other pupils to look at.

Explore the alternatives to cars

Hold a discussion about the benefits of walking and cycling for health, the environment and social interaction, alongside the barriers that sometimes prevent people from walking and cycling, and the hazards people on foot and bike may be exposed to. Explore what authorities and drivers can do to make walking and cycling safer and the importance of this. Explore what changes the students think are needed in your area to make walking and cycling safer and more appealing.

Road safety quizzes

Explore areas in which pupils feel they need to extend their knowledge of road safety - e.g. bicycle maintenance. You could devise a quiz to test their knowledge.

Survey your students

Get the students thinking about and discussing road safety, by surveying them on their experiences and attitudes towards road safety, as part of a discussion-based lesson. You could then use the results to spur further work, such as a science experiment or creative project (see suggestions below) based around a particular issue you identify. You could use our **hands-up survey for teens** on walking and cycling or devise your own.

Survey others

Get the students to devise and carry out a survey of the risks that other people take on roads and their motives and attitudes towards road safety. Focus on surveying a particular group, or more than one group, such as pupils who cycle, parents who drive to school, or older pupils who are coming up to the age when they might start learning to drive. For example, a survey on 13-year-olds' attitudes to cycle helmet wearing, or a survey of 17 year-olds' attitudes to driving or being a passenger with other young drivers. Get the students to analyse the results and propose what could be done to encourage safer behaviour.

Look at the aftermath of road crashes

Explore the aftermath of crashes.

Ask pupils to write a fictional newspaper article about a crash caused by a young driver that caused a death and serious injuries, including interviews with a police officer who attended the scene, a bereaved family member and injured victim. To help pupils understand the severity of injuries in road crashes and impact of bereavement you could play Brake's **victim stories videos** on an interactive whiteboard, or consider inviting a local A&E nurse or surgeon to talk to students about life-changing injuries. (Some may think that injuries are always minor or recoverable, so this can help them realise their severity.) You could also ask pupils to research stories of road crashes and casualties online.



Study stopping distances

Study momentum. Why does it take vehicles longer to brake and stop if they are going at faster speed or are heavier? Use a chart of stopping distances at different speeds or use Brake's **stopping distances calculator** as part of an activity on an interactive whiteboard, looking at different scenarios. For example, if someone steps out six car lengths ahead, will a driver travelling at 30mph be able to stop in time? What about at 20mph? Use this to explore the difference it makes when drivers slow down, especially for the safety of people on foot and bike.

The science of road safety

Study scientific improvements in road safety, such as seat belts, air bags, crash helmets, protective clothing for motorbike riders, reflective and fluorescent materials, variable speed limits on motorways. Devise science tests to demonstrate the effectiveness of such improvements, such as how reflective material glows in the dark when a light is shone on it. Stress that scientific improvements help to improve safety, but people also need to be committed to using roads safely. It's estimated that 95% of crashes are caused by human error. You could also consider the future: could 'driverless' vehicle technology help to stop road casualties?

Local survey of road safety

Survey local roads for hazards (e.g. fast traffic - your local police force may be able to visit you and carry out speed checks outside the school with the children) and for road safety measures (e.g. crossings, wide pavements, cycle paths, and lower speed limits). Show these hazards and road safety measures on a map, or take photos or videos. Create a display for other pupils and parents. You can create your own custom maps for free (or for a small cost for added customisation options) using [Google maps](#). This could be displayed and discussed in class using an interactive white board.

Use it to discuss how pupils can take advantage of safety features and safer routes, and avoid hazards, and to discuss what changes could be made in the area to improve safety. You could provide this as a report to your local authority, calling for road safety measures, and use this as the basis for a [community campaign](#) led by the students.

Review road safety adverts

Watch road safety adverts and look at road safety poster campaigns (such as those in our [educator resources page](#) or on [Brake's YouTube channel](#)). Are they effective? Who are they aimed at? Do they get the message across well? If not, could you do any better? Task the pupils with a creative project to develop their own road safety adverts, for example posters, billboards, bus-back adverts or films (see below).

Create your own poster, advert or play

Create a poster, advert, film, or play about a road safety issue. Posters or adverts could be based on promoting one or more messages from [Brake's Pledge](#), or on a specific issue pertinent to your school (like trying to persuade drivers to slow down in the area to protect people on foot). A play could explore the temptations and pressures to take risks on roads, and the possible consequences. For example, being in a hurry, or being with friends who want to mess about on the road with a football, or being with older friends who want you to get in a car with a dangerous driver who speeds. Discuss the emotions pupils feel in these situations and how to 'speak up' for the safe option.

Campaign using your creative project



Use a poster, advert, film, or play by the pupils to build awareness locally and to campaign for change around a specific road safety issue that is affecting your school's area, or that the class feels strongly about. You may be able to work with your local authority, emergency services or local businesses to get creative projects and road safety messages out in your local area, and read our guide to [community campaigning](#) on working to achieve road safety measures.



Key stage 4 and beyond: age 14-18 teaching ideas

Statistically, this is an age group at a much higher risk of death and injury on the road than any other, and road crashes are the biggest killer of this age group. At this age, young people may be thinking about learning to drive, and older students may already be driving, so raising awareness about safe and sustainable road use for drivers, passengers, pedestrians and cyclists, and helping young people to consider their travel options, is essential. Your lessons should aim to not only promote safe choices, but help young people to realise their own and other people's responsibilities as adult road users, and empower them to feel able to challenge risky behaviour around them.

Get young people involved in Brake's [2young2die campaign](#), or attend [Brake's training](#) on engaging young people in interactive road safety workshops and campaigns.

Analyse different modes of transport

Analyse the benefits and disadvantages of different modes of travel, including walking, cycling, cars and public transport. Explore issues such as safety, pollution, congestion, noise, health, and the well-being of communities. What are the barriers that may prevent people from choosing safer and more sustainable modes of travel? What can be done to encourage more active and sustainable travel? You can find statistics on walking and cycling on our [facts pages](#). Find information on sustainable transport at www.sustrans.org.uk.

Study road casualty data

Explore in-depth a set of statistics relating to road casualties, over a period of years. Look for increases or decreases and explore the possible reasons for these. For example, look at the large number of deaths on roads of motorbikers, or the large number of young people involved in road crashes. Use Brake's [fact pages](#), or see the government's annual [road casualty statistics](#).

Explore risk by mode of transport

Using the above statistics, explore the risks of dying on roads using different modes of transport. For example, on average, everyone stands a one in 438 chance of dying on the road. Do people know the risks are this high? Would they take more care if they did? The risks of dying on a train or in an aeroplane are significantly lower. Discuss people's perceptions and fears of risk on different modes of transport. Discuss people's perceptions and fears of being killed in a road crash compared with being attacked or murdered. Nearly three times as many people are killed on roads compared with people killed by murder and manslaughter.

Discuss improving road user behaviour

What can be done to improve behaviour of road users? Pick topics that will have direct relevance to young people. For example, what are the dangers of driving on drugs or alcohol, or speeding? Are there some issues that lots of people misunderstand, like the dangers of using a hands-free phone kit at the wheel, or driving after one or two drinks? Should there be more advertising campaigns? Or tougher laws and enforcement? What can be done to help people understand the risks and get into safer habits? See Brake's [advice pages](#) and [fact pages](#) for more information on these, and other, road safety topics, and see our [campaign pages](#) for Brake's calls for behaviour and policy change. Use an initial discussion to spur a creative project or [campaign by the students](#) to try to persuade others to use roads more safely, or call for a road safety measure by the authorities.

Explore casualty reduction

Explore reasons for reductions in casualties and whether these reductions may have been brought about by people behaving more safely, or road and vehicle technology, or improvements to the law and enforcement, such as crash protection features in vehicles, speed cameras, better awareness and enforcement of drink drive laws. Get the students to consider and write manifestos setting out what they think the government should do next, aiming ultimately to reduce road deaths and serious injuries to zero.



Explore sustainable and active travel

Hold a discussion about the benefits of walking and cycling for health, the environment and social interaction, alongside the barriers that sometimes prevent people from walking and cycling, and the reasons so many people own cars and drive even for short journeys. In what ways is our society car-dependent and what problems does this cause? Compare the costs of running a car over the course of a year to getting about by public transport, walking and cycling. If people can't get about by walking, cycling and public transport, does this create inequality in mobility, i.e. some people can afford to get around and others can't? Explore what authorities can do to make walking, cycling and public transport safer, more accessible and more appealing. Explore what changes are needed in your area. You could use this to lead onto a creative project or [campaign](#).



Debate a contentious road safety issue

Have a debate on a contentious topic. Some cyclists think that cycle helmets shouldn't be compulsory because it will discourage people from cycling. Other people, particularly neurosurgeons, say that helmets are life-saving and if adults wear them, then children will be encouraged to do so. Do you think there should be a law making helmets compulsory when cycling on roads? Have someone speak for helmets, and someone against. Do some research online before the debate in groups. Have a vote at the end of the debate.

Survey local roads and suggest improvements

Carry out an in-depth survey of local roads and suggest road safety improvements (eg. road markings, a speed camera, crossings, regular police patrols). Your council's safety engineer may be able to give you information about guidelines on implementing road improvements. As part of your survey, write and carry out a questionnaire for local people about their perceptions of local roads and if they think anything needs improving. Use our [community campaign page](#) for information on working with local officials to achieve road safety engineering measures.

Creative project

Use road safety as the theme for a creative project, such as designing a website, producing a video, producing a play, or [running a media campaign](#) for local people. Run this project over a term and have quantifiable outcomes - e.g. hits on the website, or the amount of coverage obtained in local newspapers. Pick road safety topic that each group feels particularly strongly about and use the finished project to campaign and raise awareness around their chosen topic.

Look at the impact of road crashes

Explore the impact of road crashes on the NHS. Explore the types of injuries and their treatment. Explore the enormous costs involved in treating and rehabilitating victims. Explore the costs involved when a 'bread winner' is killed. Who pays for food? Child care? The mortgage? Watch Brake's [victims' videos stories](#) or study newspaper articles about road crashes and consider the possible consequences in those cases. Task the students with writing fictitious newspaper articles on different types of crashes.

Develop policies to reduce at-work vehicle crashes

Nearly a third of crashes involve a vehicle being driven for work. Students could pretend they are a health and safety officer for a company with a fleet of trucks, vans and company cars. What policies could they implement to reduce the chances of crashes involving their vehicles? For example, banning the use of all types of mobile phone while driving, setting reasonable schedules so drivers don't speed between appointments or drive when they are tired, ensuring all vehicles are well maintained.

Deliver Pledge workshops

If you're working with young people who mainly drive, or are considering learning, attend a [free Pledge webinar](#) on running interactive workshops based on [Brake's Pledge](#).

(ADD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD); Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD); Dyspraxia (or Developmental Co-ordination Disorder); and Dyslexia.

- ▶ [Dangers of roads for pupils with SEN](#)
- ▶ [Devising road safety lessons and activities for pupils with SEN](#)
- ▶ [Organising practical roadside training for pupils with SEN](#)
- ▶ [Developing a School Travel Plan that considers the needs of pupils with SEN](#)
- ▶ [Links to additional resources for teaching road safety to pupils with SEN](#)

General information on teaching children with SEN, including the Government's SEN Code of Practice and SEN Teaching Toolkit, can be found at www.education.gov.uk.



Road safety policies and safe school trips

Comprehensive road safety policies that cover the safety of the pupils when on school property, and when on school trips, are vitally important. They help keep safe the children in your care, and ensure that the school is fulfilling its duty of care to pupils. Browse the links below for Brake's online guidance on school road safety policies and safe school trips and travel.

- ▶ [A sample school policy on road safety](#)
- ▶ [Organising trips on foot safely](#)
- ▶ [Safe bus and coach transport](#)
- ▶ [School Travel Plans](#)

Children with special educational needs (SEN)

It is crucial to ensure that road safety education and training is appropriate for all pupils, including those with special educational needs (SEN). Before teaching road safety, consider if your lesson plans are suitable for any children in your class who have special educational needs.

To help you, explore the below links below for Brake's online guidance on making road safety education inclusive for children with special educational needs. Bear in mind this guidance is focused on teaching safe walking and cycling to children under 16 with SEN who are included in mainstream education and taught alongside pupils who do not have SEN. However, it can be adapted by special schools and special inclusive learning centres. It focuses mainly on working with children with: Attention Deficit Disorder





Pedestrian and cycle training

Practical pedestrian and cycle training for children is an effective and important way to teach safe walking and cycling skills to children, reinforcing the road safety lessons learnt in the classroom, and giving the children the opportunity to put them into practice.

Some local councils offer pedestrian and/or cycle training to schools, so you should contact them in the first instance. Use Brake's [online advice on pedestrian and cycle training](#) alongside any training and resources your local authority offers.



Campaign for safer streets in your community

Schools can make a huge difference to road safety in their area, and therefore to children and other local residents' lives, by joining or taking the lead on campaigns for safer streets. Such campaigns can be especially powerful if they are led by or involve the children themselves.

This can be of great benefit to the children, by empowering them and giving them a voice in their community, and by creating a great combination of classroom teaching and active campaigning: one of the most effective way to engage children with road safety messages.

Such campaigns can help raise wider awareness about road safety, particularly the importance of drivers protecting children, and can contribute to local authorities introducing improved road safety measures in the area. For guidance on road safety campaigning in the community, see Brake's [online community campaign guide](#). Plus [tell us about your campaign](#) and we may be able to offer advice, support and send out our mascot, Zak the Zebra.

Brake events for educators

Brake runs a range of events and programmes to support and encourage schools and communities to teach, promote and campaign on road safety. Sign up to take part in any of these events and you'll get free resources to help you, plus a great opportunity to get life-saving messages across:

▶ **Road Safety Week:** the UK's biggest road safety event each November is open to all, and an ideal time to teach road safety and campaign for safer streets



▶ **Giant Walking Bus:** a giant march every June for primary schools to say yes to healthy walking and no to people driving fast, and to raise valuable funds for Brake



▶ **Beep Beep! Day:** a fun day to help nurseries and infant schools teach 2-7 year olds the road safety basics and raise awareness among parents



▶ **2young2die resources and training:** to help you effectively engage teens and young people in road safety, including training on delivering interactive workshops and discussions with young people on making safe and sustainable choices



▶ **Bright Days:** a dress down day with a difference where everyone comes in wearing their brightest, brashest clothes to raise awareness about the importance of drivers looking out for people and to raise valuable funds for Brake



▶ **Community campaign support:** use our guide to campaigning for road safety measures in your area, and tell us about your campaign using our form – we may be able to send out our mascot Zak the Zebra.



Sign up to Brake's [termly educators' bulletin](#) for updates on these and other road safety initiatives for educators.