

# SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL ACTIVITIES



**IDEAS FOR TRAVEL & TRANSPORT THEMED  
CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES**

**SUITABLE FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL AGED PUPILS**



**Nottinghamshire  
County Council**

# INTRODUCTION

This document provides ideas for activities and classroom material that can be incorporated into lessons to teach pupils about safe and sustainable travel. Activities have been divided according to subject to provide a quick-reference resources for teachers. The ideas can be used on their own, or to support travel planning.

Incorporating travel and transport related activities into classroom teaching is a great way of teaching children about the importance of travelling safely and sustainably. Walking, cycling, using public transport, and car sharing can help improve students health and wellbeing, as well as help tackle global warming, parking problems and improve air quality. The list of activities contained within this document are by no means exhaustive, and teachers are encouraged to adapt and add to existing activities.

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# 1. GEOGRAPHY

## • WALKABILITY AUDIT



A walkability audit of your school and the surrounding area involves students and teachers walking with a map, paper, pen and camera to identify areas of existing transport provision, and identifying areas for improvement. This activity could be linked in with a literature exercise to compose a letter to the local council / school travel champion / headmaster suggesting suitable improvements. Maps for the activity can be sourced from OpenStreetMap

## • WALKING & CYCLING MAP

Get students to create a map of the local area showing cycling routes, cycle parking and walking routes. This activity could be incorporated with art and design classes where pupils draw what they see along each route (e.g. trees, landmarks etc).

## • NEIGHBOUR IDENTIFIER

Pupils find their house on a large map and place a pin where they live. Once everyone has placed their pins onto the map, pupils are then paired according to who lives nearby them. The pairs then use another map (or journey planning software (such as Traveline East Midlands) if they have access to ICT equipment) to determine what route they would take to get to school by different modes, eg. walking, cycling, bus etc. and how long it would take by each mode.

## • THE NATURAL & MAN-MADE ENVIRONMENT

Using aerial photographs pupils identify natural (i.e. along rivers) and built transport routes (e.g rail lines / roads). Pupils should identify features on the maps (e.g. woodland, contour lines etc) and explore why these transport routes were chosen.

## • HUMAN IMPACT

Pupils should explore the impact of humans on the planet, exploring the increase in pollution, greenhouse gases & climate change resulting from our use of different transport modes. Pupils should brainstorm the impact of travel on the local environment and on a global scale. This activity acts as a good springboard for topics such as sustainability.



# 2. MATHS



## • HUMAN BAR CHART

When learning about graphs, get children to form a 'human bar chart' according to the number of children who travel to school by car, on foot or cycling. You can track this and calculate how the percentage of pupils in each category changes over time, on different days and at different times of the year. This is great for school posters / newsletters.

## • TRAFFIC SURVEY

Conduct a traffic survey at the school gate, counting the number of people passing using each mode (walking, cycling, using the bus, car etc). Pupils should display the results in a pie or bar chart. This could be linked in with a discussion about car occupancy rates (i.e. how many people in each car).

## • SPEED GUN

Use a speed gun (which may be available via the local police) to monitor the speed of traffic passing the school gates. Children can then calculate the maximum, minimum and average speed cars are travelling. Pupils could use the evidence collected to identify a speeding problem, and the data could form evidence for traffic calming interventions outside the school.

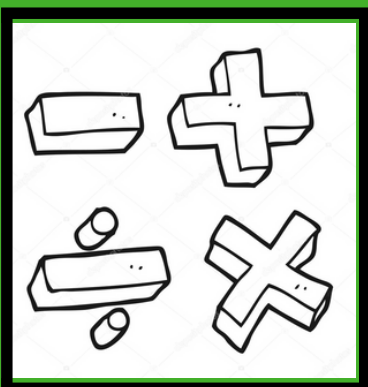


## • DISTANCE ACTIVITY

Ask pupils to calculate how many kilometers and/or steps they travel to school. Combine these totals (either across all pupils within the class or across the school) to determine how far the class / school could travel (e.g to London? to Europe?). Pupils could explore how many are taking the recommended number of steps and explore how much fuel / emissions would be saved by travelling by foot instead.

## • DATABASE MANAGEMENT

If the school are choosing to monitor their Travel Plan progress using surveys, pupils could be involved in conducting and compiling the data. This activity could help develop skills in Microsoft Excel. Using this software, pupils can calculate percentage modal change, whether they are on track, and how much more modal shift is required to reach the schools target.



# 3. LITERACY

## • HISTORY WALKS

Take pupils for a themed walk, such as a local history tour or a ghost walk. Once back at school they can write about their experience. Walking whilst at school encourages more children to travel to school on foot, and also helps develop pedestrian safety skills.

## • PUBLIC TRANSPORT HISTORY

Pupils select a mode of transport (e.g. tram, bus, bicycles, trains, aeroplanes etc) and explore how the mode has changed over time, how its impact on the environment has changed and what impact it has had on social development. The assignment could be a written piece, or a visual display. To make the assignment more interesting focus specifically on your local area, and how transport has changed there.



## • NEWSPAPER PUBLICATION

Pupils produce a newspaper article which could be submitted to the local press or school newspaper to publicise a travel issue and/or actions being taken by the school to tackle it.

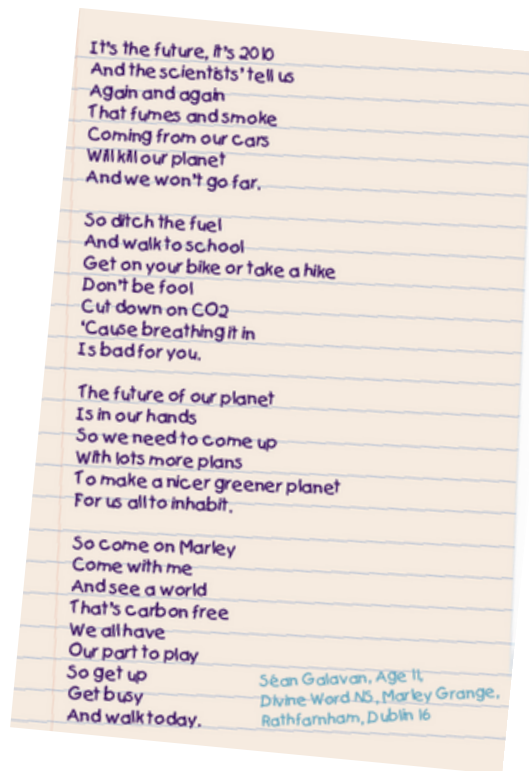
## • TRAVEL ADVENTURES

Pupils write poems and short stories about their journey to school.

What made it fun?

What did they see along the way?

What didn't they enjoy on the journey?



Pupils can get creative and talk about what they'd like to do on the way to school, or how they'd prefer to travel. This can be incorporated into a creative writing lesson.



# 4. SCIENCE



## • SUSTAINABLE TOWN

Pupils design a sustainable town (whether on paper or by constructing models). They should consider different travel modes, and design a suitable transport system (thinking about what mass transit modes would work, and how they could maximise the number of walkers / cyclists). They could also consider other elements of sustainability, such as recycling provision, water conservation and housing types.

## • POLLUTION EXPERIMENT

Pupils investigate the level of pollution in different areas of the school by smearing petroleum jelly onto microscope slides. Pupils place these slides in different areas of the school, including one at the front of the school. These are then monitored after one day, one week, one month etc. to determine which is dirtier. This experiment can then be related to a lesson on congestion and air pollution.

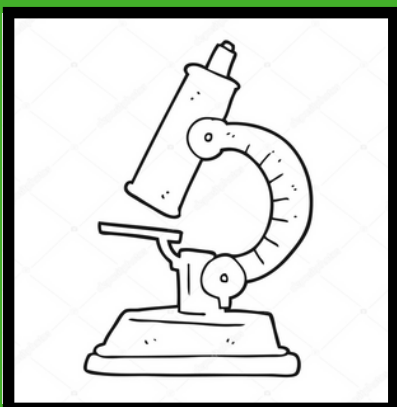
## • BE BRIGHT BE SEEN

Students learn about what makes certain materials absorb light and what makes other materials reflect light. They learn how high-visibility clothing works and experiment how from what distance someone wearing high-visibility clothing compared to dark cloths can be seen. They discuss about the implications of this in terms of road safety.



## • POSTERS AND DISPLAYS

Students make posters with travel facts and figures (e.g. amount of greenhouse gas prevented by walking 1km rather than driving). These can then be displayed across the school. Other posters could be produced explaining how fossil fuels are obtained and burnt, and how this process impacts the environment. This activity should stem from a lesson exploring the environmental impacts of different travel modes.



# 5. ART, DRAMA & MUSIC



## • LOCATION POSTER

Get pupils to create posters to publicise the location of cycle parking and/or Park & Stride locations. This activity could be made into a competition to find the best design!

## • TREE OF LIFE

Pupils from each class draw a tree within their classroom and produce lots of paper leaves. Each morning, children colour these leaves in according to their mode of travel:

Walked / cycled = Dark Green

Bus / train / tram = Light Green

Car sharing (with others) = Yellow

Car / Taxi = Brown

The leaves are stuck to the tree and at the end of the term, each class compares how healthy their tree is.



## • BENEFITS OF ACTIVE TRAVEL

Ask pupils to choose one mode of travel (e.g. bus, walking, cycling etc) and explore the benefits of that mode (health benefits, financial benefits, social benefits etc) then ask them to visualise these benefits on a poster / piece of artwork. Pupils can get very creative with this and their designs could be used to produce posters to distribute to parents, banners to display around the school etc.



## • TRAVEL SONGS

Pupils are asked to pick a song they really like (or given a song by the teacher). They then need to re-write the lyrics making it relevant to travelling to school.

## • POSTER DESIGN

Get pupils to design awareness posters – such as a poster asking parents not to park in front of the school gates, a road safety poster, or a poster for the Travel Action Day



# 6. OTHER



## • BICYCLE MAINTENANCE

Consider inviting a bike mechanic to the school to deliver a workshop to teach bicycle maintenance sessions - these sessions could be scheduled within PSHE time. Contact a local cycling enthusiast or a bike shop to deliver the sessions. Via East Midlands Ltd are also able to deliver sessions in Nottinghamshire.

## • THE GOLDEN BOOT

Classes count how many people traveled to school sustainably (walked, cycled, car shared or used public transport). At the end of every week / month / term the class with the most sustainable travelers wins the golden boot. Boots are made by spray painting an old shoe and then mounting it.



## • GUEST SPEAKERS

Consider inviting guest speakers into the school to talk about their subject area e.g. public transport (representative from a bus, rail or tram company), road safety (e.g. representatives from the police or VIA East Midlands Road Safety Team). The session could involve, for example, how to read timetables, how to flag buses and how to pay.

## • NO IDLING CAMPAIGN

The school may be involved in a "No Idling" campaign, which attempts to stop drivers leaving their engines running outside of school which emits toxic air pollution into the environment. To support this campaign, students could design posters to be held up during drop off / pick up times, or design a banner to be displayed outside the school. Additional activities could involve monitoring air pollution levels to see whether these change as more people turn off their engines.



## • LITTER AWARENESS

Pupils discuss whether their journey to school is pleasant, or whether there are areas with lots of litter. Discuss how long different materials take to decompose and why. If possible, arrange a litter pick. Contact your local council who often have litter pickers and high-vis tabards available to borrow.

