



## Walk to School Month Assembly

### Summary information

Age range:	5-16
Curriculum links:	Geography, science, citizenship
Time needed:	15-20 minutes
Group size:	One or more year groups or whole school
Setting:	School assembly hall



### THIS ACTIVITY WILL HELP YOUR STUDENTS TO:

- understand that by walking or cycling to school, traffic congestion will be reduced. Parents who drive children short journeys to school can make up a large proportion of traffic.
- understand that by walking or cycling to school, fuel will be saved with significant reductions in emissions of gases that cause air pollution. Travelling to school by public transport is much more environmentally friendly than going by car. Older pupils can learn that these gases include carbon dioxide, the major gas that causes global warming which is leading to climate change.
- understand that walking or cycling are sustainable ways of travelling to school unlike travelling by car and that using public transport is more environmentally friendly than going by car.
- appreciate that walk or cycling are good ways to learn road safety skills and exercise.

### RESOURCES NEEDED

- Walk to School month campaign posters including one on the international theme are available to download or buy at [www.walktoschool.org.uk](http://www.walktoschool.org.uk)
- A CD player and CD with one or more songs about walking, such as “Walking the Air” (from The Snowman) or “Just walking in the rain” (all pupils) or “Walking on sunshine”, “You’ll never walk alone” or “These boots are made for walking” (older pupils).
- Flipcharts and marker pen or interactive white board.
- Background information on Walk to School month and how to get involved at [www.walktoschool.org.uk](http://www.walktoschool.org.uk)

### PROCEDURE

- Play one of the songs about walking on the CD player as pupils are entering the assembly hall and getting seated.
- Ask for four volunteers. Tell each volunteer to ask the pupils about their mode of transport to school that morning, by asking for a show of hands for those who came by car, bus, train, bike or by walking. Each volunteer then records the numbers of pupils who travelled by different modes on an interactive white board or flipchart.



- Discuss the numbers of pupils under each mode. Which is the largest? Which is the smallest? Many pupils may travel to school by car.
- If they didn't walk to school ask pupils for the reasons why not and write these on one of the flipcharts. Younger children will need some help here. Reasons could include:
  - Its too far to walk to school
  - There isn't time to walk – driving is much quicker
  - There is too much traffic so its too dangerous to walk to school
  - Many motorists drive too fast
  - The pavements are dirty with dog mess
- Now ask pupils who walk or cycle to school for the reasons why they think this is a good way to get to school and write these on the interactive white board or another flipchart. Once again younger children will need some help here and older pupils may need help too. Reasons could include:
  - A good way to learn road safety
  - Cuts down on the number of cars on the road
  - Keeps you fit
  - Saves problem of finding somewhere to park the car
  - Cuts down on air pollution
  - Saves money as there are no fuel costs
  - Saves fuel so reduces use of valuable natural resources (older pupils)
  - Cuts down on carbon dioxide pollution and so helps to reduce climate change (older pupils)
- Ask pupils how far they think they travelled. Older children could be asked if the distance was more or less than a mile. Younger children could be asked how long the journey took them if they came to school by car

## REFLECTION

- Ask pupils to think for a few minutes about all the reasons for and against walking to school. Who benefits the most from walking?
- Now ask pupils to think about the distance they travelled to school and if they could have walked or cycled instead of coming by car. If its too far to walk all the way, could their parents park away from the school and walk the rest together or could parents pool the car journey with neighbours?
- Ask pupils to think about whether travelling by car or public transport, that is by bus or train is more environmentally friendly and discuss reasons for their answer with the pupils.
- Introduce pupils to Walk to School month and encourage them to take part. Why not introduce them to WoW (Walk on Wednesdays) in which young people walk at least once a week. As well as walking to school, there are competitions the pupils can take part in, such as 'Win with WoW' which makes pupils the designers! Details are on the Walk to School website.



- Younger pupils could take part in the Greening the Trees exercise. Introduce the children to this by drawing a large tree with branches, but no leaves on a flipchart. This can be a class tree. Each of the pupils should draw their own tree as well. Every time a pupil walks or cycles the whole way to school, they place a green leaf on their own tree and the class tree. A yellow leaf is used if they walk or cycle part of the way or come by bus. A brown leaf represents a whole journey to school by car. Individual trees can be compared. Which is the greenest? Trees can also be compared at the beginning, during and after Walk to School month to evaluate how successful the month has been in changing pupil behaviour.

Adapted from the "Way to Go!" school travel awareness program, developed in Vancouver, Canada by Bernadette Kowey, Program Co-ordinator and given at [www.walktoschool.org.uk](http://www.walktoschool.org.uk)

- Play another walking song on the CD player as pupils leave the assembly.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### Students:

- Badges, diaries and leaflets at Official UK Walk to School website [www.walktoschool.org.uk](http://www.walktoschool.org.uk)
- Many interesting ideas for activities and photos of Walks to School around the world at International Walk to School [www.iwalktoschool.org](http://www.iwalktoschool.org)
- Hedgehogs Lively, interactive site that teaches road safety to 8-11 year olds. [www.hedgehogs.gov.uk](http://www.hedgehogs.gov.uk)
- Sustainable School - Interesting and useful information on transport [www.suschool.org.uk](http://www.suschool.org.uk)

### Teachers:

- Classroom activities and leaflets at [www.walktoschool.org.uk](http://www.walktoschool.org.uk)
- Ideas for activities at [www.iwalktoschool.org](http://www.iwalktoschool.org)
- Sustrans, the sustainable transport charity, works on practical projects to encourage people to walk, cycle and use public transport for health, safety and environmental reasons. Their aim is to create a Safe Route to School for every child in the UK [www.saferoutestoschools.org.uk/](http://www.saferoutestoschools.org.uk/)
- WWF Climate Chaos resources pack. Background information and activities for pupils 7-16 years. Look under Resources at [www.wwf.org.uk/oneplanetschools/resources/](http://www.wwf.org.uk/oneplanetschools/resources/)