



Be Disaster Safe 6–8

At School



Visit the American Red Cross Web site
at www.redcross.org/disaster/masters

LESSON PLAN 8

Build a Kit

Young people find comfort in knowing they have stored items they will need in case of emergency and in working to help others.

Key Terms and Concepts

community outreach
emergency
NOAA Weather Radio

needs
perishable

prepare
supplies

Purpose

To help the students prepare for an emergency at school and ensure that the school is ready, too

Objectives

The students will—

- Come to a consensus on a class list of the types of items to be included in their personal emergency kits.
- Write letters to their families discussing the needed items and explaining why the personal emergency kits are important.
- Work with their families to fill and return their personal emergency kits. (Home Connection)
- Write opinion letters for school or local newspapers in support of school personal emergency kits.
- Determine how to distribute within the community personal emergency kits that are not used by the end of the year. (Linking Across the Curriculum)
- Interview local merchants to request donations for personal emergency kits, put them together and distribute them to those who need them throughout the community. (Linking Across the Curriculum)
- List items to be placed in a classroom emergency kit, based on specific criteria.
- Help pack and store emergency items for their classroom, discussing why each item is necessary.
- Write stories to illustrate how their classroom emergency kit might be used to make an emergency situation better and to determine changes or additions to the kit.
- Write and present a proposal to the school board to provide emergency supplies for all classrooms in the community. (Linking Across the Curriculum)



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- Work in small research groups to discover the impact and importance of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio and how it can be used in schools.

Activities

- “Personal Emergency Kits”
- “Classroom Emergency Kit”



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Materials

- Chalkboard and chalk or chart paper and markers
- One-gallon bags with a zip closure, 1 per student



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"Personal Emergency Kits"

SET UP 10 minutes **CONDUCT** 30 minutes, plus Home Connection

Social Studies: Personal Responsibility; Science: Health

TEACHING NOTE The purpose of storing individual kits is that each student will have items from home during an emergency. In low-income areas, the PTA or other organizations might be able to purchase the supplies in bulk to be assembled by students in the classroom.

1. Talk to the students about what they might want to have at school in the event an emergency kept them away from home longer than normal. What items might help them be less anxious about their families? What personal items might be necessary?
2. Write the class ideas on the chalkboard and then go through the list to make sure that everything on it will fit inside a one-gallon plastic bag. Also, every item will be stored in the classroom for the school year, so nothing perishable can be on the list. Which items must be eliminated? Which items are most necessary? Most comforting? Work with the class until they come to a consensus.

TEACHING NOTE The standard items many schools include in personal emergency kits are—

- A space blanket or large plastic trash bag for warmth and protection from wind and rain
- Snack food such as granola bars, dried fruit, nuts and hard candy
- One or two boxes or small plastic bottles of juice or water
- A family photograph
- A personal flashlight
- A paperback book, and word or number puzzles
- Items of personal hygiene

3. After agreeing on a list, have the students write letters home describing their needs and asking for help in assembling the supplies.



Home Connection

Send home a one-gallon plastic bag labeled with each student's name, along with his or her letter. As the kits are returned, mark off each student's name.

TEACHING NOTE It may be necessary to assist some students if the family is unable to provide the needed items. The PTA might help.



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Wrap-Up

Store the individual kits in a large storage box. Work with the students to find a suitable storage spot—away from heat, light and insects and in a secure but accessible place. Remind the students that there is a good chance the supplies will not be needed but that these are items that will be helpful in almost any emergency.

TEACHING NOTE Some schools choose to store the personal emergency kits for all the classrooms together in one location.



Ask the students to write opinion letters for the school or local newspapers describing personal emergency kits and their importance in helping students cope with possible emergency situations at school.



Linking Across the Curriculum

Social Studies: Personal Responsibility and Community

Once the personal emergency kits are completed and stored, talk with students about possible ways to use the kits if they are not needed by the end of the year. Discuss ways the items might help others. Let the students decide as a class whether to take home the kits or remove personal photographs or memorabilia and donate the bags to a homeless shelter or other institution. Have the students research to find local organizations that might have use for the items in the kits.

Come to a class consensus of what to do with the kits. Mark a date on the calendar, near the end of school, to implement the class plan.

Social Studies: Personal Responsibility and Community

As a class, locate companies in the area that could supply needed items for the personal emergency kits—grocery stores, drug stores, hardware stores. Have groups select one of the companies listed and outline a telephone interview with the owners or managers to ask for donations in order to create personal emergency kits for other classes in the school, for students who are unable to purchase the needed items for their own kits or for another school in a low-income area of town.

Have the students rehearse their interviews and then call to see which local merchants might be able to help. Set up a time for parents to help students gather the donations. Set aside a “Build a Personal Emergency Kit” day to pack and deliver the kits to those who need them.

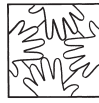


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Materials

- Chalkboard and chalk or chart paper and markers
- Classroom emergency kit supplies



"Classroom Emergency Kit"

SET UP 5 minutes **CONDUCT** 30 minutes, plus time to pack and store the kit

Social Studies: Community; Science: Health; Language Arts: Writing

1. Now that the students have individual emergency supplies, talk about what the whole class might need in case of an emergency.
2. Write the students' ideas on the chalkboard. Make sure students consider the criteria discussed earlier—easy-to-store and nonperishable.

TEACHING NOTE Classroom emergency supplies are often stored in backpacks or buckets. The minimal items many schools include in classroom kits are—

- The class roster or emergency contact cards
- A copy of the school emergency procedures
- First aid instructions and first aid supplies
- Bottled water (for drinking purposes only, the recommended amount is one half-gallon [2 liters] per person per day)
- A bucket and plastic bags (to be used if toilets are not accessible)
- Toilet paper
- Hand wipes or antibacterial hand cleaner
- Duct tape and heavy plastic sheeting
- A push broom
- Work gloves for adults in classroom
- Tissues
- A flashlight with extra batteries
- Space blankets, one per student in cold climates, if not included in personal emergency kits
- Large tarp or several large trash bags
- Age-specific activities for students

3. Work with school officials to gather the items for your classroom. Ask the students to help pack the supplies, discussing the use of each item and why it might be needed. Store the water apart from the other supplies because occasionally water bottles leak.
4. Guide the students to set up a calendar to check the supplies every few months to ensure that batteries work, water is not leaking and perishable supplies are replaced according to marked expiration dates.



Wrap-Up

Have the students write stories about fictitious emergencies that cause them to take shelter at school. How were their supplies used? What items were not available? What happened when they ran out of items? Based on these scenarios, have them discuss changes or additions to their classroom emergency kits.



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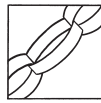


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Linking Across the Curriculum

Science: Health

If your school board has not developed a plan to provide emergency supplies for all classrooms or for the whole school, guide the students to write and present a proposal at the next school board meeting. Proposals must include—

- Reasons
- Possible costs
- Storage plans
- Ways to get local support
- Ways the class will volunteer to help

Science: Health; Social Studies: Community



All Hazards NOAA Weather Radio is an excellent preparedness tool for classrooms, schools and homes. Divide the class into small research groups. Assign groups to find out about Weather Radio broadcasts and maps, background information on the service, alarms, alerts and tests, as well as the program for putting weather radios in all public schools. The sites below are excellent starting points for research.

- NOAA Weather Radio
<http://www.weather.gov/nwr/geninfo.htm>
- Public Alert Radios for Public Schools
<http://public-alert-radio.nws.noaa.gov/proginfo.htm>

Have the groups come together to share information and write a brochure to help other classrooms and families recognize the impact and importance