Grades 4 and up.

Original story by: Shelley Gill
Illustrated by: Liz Shine
Edited by: Kelli Toth

A publication of the Alaska Office of Boating Safety
Alaska Kids Don’t Float Education Program

www.AlaskaBoatingSafety.org

Copyright 2018 State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, Office of Boating Safety
TOWN KIDS? FANCY STUFF... NICE RAY-BAN'S THOUGH.
I'm Lars. You going on the field trip with Mr. Day's group? You from Homer?

Yes and no. I'm going but I live in Galena.

I'm Ember.

Ember...

I've never heard that name.

Yeah. Well.

When an elder dies the next baby born gets the elder's name. I was the lucky baby.

I like it. It's different.
Hey! Hey everybody, the boss should be here in a bit.

He's got to be the most muscled-up old guy ever.
Ok, Roll Call.

When I say your name you say where you're from...

Dimi.

Here! Nome.

Ember.

Kiana

Anchorage.

Nick.

Angoon.

GaLeNa.

All present and accounted for?

Ok, let's get all the gear onboard. We're the last group to leave the dock! Be sure to load each skiff so it's balanced, fore and aft - port to starboard. More weight in the back and middle.
The kids on the shore were from all over the state — they had won their area science fairs. The prize was this trip, four days across Kachemak Bay at a wilderness camp. Each day a different scientist would show them different stuff.

Ok. Everyone needs their life jackets on now!

Why? We’re still on the shore. They are hot and hard to move in.

And just ugly!

Hmmm. Everyone follow me.

It’s the kids don’t float board. Just like back home.
Everyone who doesn't have their own life jacket take one of these, put it on and make sure it fits. This could save your life if you end up in the water.

Kids under 13 are required by law to wear a personal flotation device.

Hey, I'm over 13 and I can swim so I don't have to wear it!

Even good swimmers can drown in Alaska's cold water.

Now let's go over how to pick a life jacket that fits.

This label tells you if the life jacket is U.S. Coast Guard approved and what size it is. It will also tell you what its main purpose is, like near-shore or off-shore boating.

Next, fasten all straps and zippers.

First check the label for the correct size.

Finally, lift at the shoulders to test the fit.
Below are three different sized boaters. Lead them through the maze to the life jacket that will fit them the best!

WOW! THERE SURE ARE A LOT OF DIFFERENT LIFE JACKETS. HOW DO I KNOW WHICH ONE IS BEST FOR ME?

YOU SHOULD ALWAYS CHECK THE LABEL FOR INTENDED USE, BUT THE BEST LIFE JACKET IS THE ONE THAT FITS PROPERLY AND YOU ACTUALLY WEAR IT!
PFFFF.

Is that the coat?

Well this is a teachable moment.

Yes.

This coat won first place in the Western Alaska Science Fair. Tell us about it.

HMMMFF.

Sure! It's a flexible and warm float coat I made myself.

It's not U.S. Coast Guard approved though. For now I'm going to borrow a life jacket from the kids don't float board.
But don’t you live on a river? You can just swim to shore.

Well not really. Ending up in a big fast river can be really dangerous.

Another part of my project was to get everyone in town to sign the pledge.

What pledge?

The pledge to live.

They promised to always wear a life jacket or float coat when they are on the water.

PLEDGETOLIVE.ORG

Did you know:
• In Alaska, drowning is the second leading cause of accidental death.
• Alaska has one of the highest non-commercial boating fatality rates in the nation.
• 9 out of 10 boating deaths occur from open boats that are less than 20 feet long.
Please. Don’t be a statistic.

I ____________________ pledge to always wear my life jacket because

For more information on safe boating in Alaska, please visit PLEDGETOLIVE.org.

Thanks Ember.

Lars...

There are 2 paddles in the back of my truck, and a dry bag. Put them in your skiff.
LET'S GO OVER THE RULES.

NO STANDING OR LEANING OVER THE SIDE, AND MAKE SURE YOUR LIFE JACKETS ARE ALWAYS FASTENED.

THESE CAN COME IN VERY HANDY. IT'S CALLED A TYPE IV THROWABLE DEVICE, AND THEY ARE LOCATED ON THE SIDES OF THE BOAT.

EVERYONE ATTACH ONE OF THESE WHISTLES TO YOUR LIFE JACKET BEFORE WE LEAVE.

IT'S IMPORTANT TO HAVE A WAY TO SIGNAL OTHERS IF YOU NEED HELP ON THE WATER.

READY?

OK. LET'S GET GOING!

THE TRIP ACROSS THE BAY WAS QUICK BECAUSE THE TIDE AND WIND WERE BEHIND THEM. THE SKIFFS STAYED CLOSE TOGETHER, LARS RIDING THE SMOOTH WATER IN THE V-WAKE OF MR. DAY'S BOAT. BUT IT WAS STILL WINDY.
LOOK AN OTTER!

I HAVE NEVER SEEN AN OTTER BEFORE, HOW DO THEY STAY WARM? BLUBBER?

NO, THEY STAY CLEAN. THEY HAVE TWO LAYERS OF HAIR. THE OUTSIDE IS WATERPROOF AS LONG AS IT'S REALLY CLEAN, THEN THERE'S A SUPER DENSE INNER LAYER.

LOOK AT THAT RAVEN CHASING THE BALD EAGLE!
That's why they call 'em ravens - they're raving mad!

Crunch!

Aaaahh!!
Lars and Nick hit a log, they're in the water!

Man overboard!

Gasp! Gasp! Gasp!

Click

Aaahhhhh!! We're tipping!

Grab on!

Dimi! Move to the other side with Ember.
I didn't see the log until the last minute and then it was too late!

Everyone's okay! Let's get to the camp and get you boys dry.
NOW WHAT?

PITCH YOUR TENTS ABOVE THE TIDE LINE WHERE THE REST OF THE TENTS ARE. YOU BOYS GET CHANGED AND WE'LL ALL MEET AT THE BIG FIRE PIT TO TALK ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED.
SO, WHAT DID YOU GUYS LEARN TODAY?

THAT IT’S SMART TO KNOW WHERE THE EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT IS... ESPECIALLY THE TYPE IV THROWABLE.

AND THAT THINGS CAN HAPPEN REALLY FAST. I’M REALLY GLAD WE ALL HAD OUR LIFE JACKETS ON, OTHERWISE NICK AND I MIGHT NOT HAVE MADE IT.

I KNOW. THANKS YOU GUYS.

WHEN I HIT THE WATER I COULDN’T BREATHE. IT WAS LIKE A SEA LION WAS SITTING ON MY CHEST.

IT’S CALLED THE GASP REFLEX. IF YOU HAD BEEN UNDERWATER WHEN YOU STARTED GASping, YOU COULD HAVE SUCKED IN WATER AND POSSIBLY DROWNED. IT’S REALLY GOOD THAT YOU HAD YOUR LIFE JACKET ON.
WHAT A SURPRISE! IT’S MY OLD FRIEND PROFESSOR POPSICLE FROM FAIRBANKS.

DID SOMEONE SAY GASP REFLEX?

MAYBE WE CAN GET A LITTLE LESSON ON COLD WATER IMMERSION?

I’D BE DELIGHTED! YOUR STORY HAS BEEN THE TALK OF THE CAMP AND I COULDN’T HELP OVERHEARING YOUR DISCUSSION JUST NOW. IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU GUYS HAD QUITE AN EXPERIENCE.

MAYBE NICK AND LARS CAN SHARE HOW THEY FELT WHEN THEY WERE IN THE WATER?

SURE. WELL, IT WAS REALLY, REALLY COLD, OF COURSE. BUT ONE OF THE VERY FIRST THINGS I NOTICED IS THAT IT WAS SUPER HARD TO BREATHE. IT FELT LIKE THERE WAS A GIANT WEIGHT ON MY CHEST.

I FELT THE SAME WAY. I COULDN’T GET A DEEP BREATH, SO I’M REALLY GLAD THAT I WAS WEARING MY LIFE JACKET. I FEEL LIKE I MIGHT HAVE DROWNED RIGHT THEN AND THERE WITHOUT IT.

EXCELLENT BOYS! WHAT YOU BOTH EXPERIENCED WAS THE FIRST STAGE OF SOMETHING CALLED COLD WATER IMMERSION. THERE ARE ACTUALLY THREE MAIN STAGES—LET’S GO OVER EACH.
1. **Gasp Reflex**
   1. Within the first 3 minutes
   2. Uncontrollable gasping and hyperventilation
   3. If not wearing a life jacket, a higher risk of drowning

2. **Cold Incapacitation**
   1. Within the first 30 minutes
   2. Arms and legs begin to lose sensation and function
   3. If not wearing a life jacket, a higher risk of drowning

3. **Immersion Hypothermia**
   1. After 30 minutes (or more)
   2. Gradual drop in body core temperature
   3. Wearing a life jacket may increase survival time

---

**Wow, that’s scary stuff!**

**Think about it— If you’re wearing a life jacket, you don’t have to worry about drowning during the gasp reflex and you are able to keep your head above water when your arms and legs get so cold you can’t use them!**

**Wearing a life jacket drastically increases your survival time! This gives rescuers more time to rescue you, or more time for you to rescue yourself.**

**Now I’m really glad we were wearing life jackets!**

**Quite right, Nick!**

**Well that’s all for now. I’ll see all of you in my class tomorrow.**

**Keep cool, but don’t freeze!**
AHEM. EMBER AND I HAVE A FEW THINGS WE'D LIKE TO SAY.

TO NICK. EMBER'S FIRST PRIZE FLOAT COAT.

AND TO MR. DAY, THE SUPER SAFE BOATER'S TRIDENT AWARD!

BULL KELP FIT FOR A KING!

AND LAST BUT NOT LEAST, THE SHINY S'MORE STARFISH AWARD. TO LARS FOR BLOWING HIS WHISTLE TO HELP SAVE NICK...

Wearing his life jacket, and packing the chocolate in a dry bag so that it stayed dry!

S'MORES!
ACROSS

6. Kids Don’t __ __ __.
8. Choose a life jacket that __ __ __.
9. To tie-off a boat to a dock or buoy
10. Can limit your visibility on the water
11. A person under 13 is required by law to wear a life jacket when __ a boat or on an open deck.
13. __ __ __ __ for help in an emergency.
16. The #1 threat to Alaska’s boaters (two words)
18. The stern is the back __ __ of a boat.
20. Along with #16 down, this can help you find your way
ACROSS (continued)

21. A person who drinks alcohol and drives a car may be arrested for driving while intoxicated (DWI).
   If driving a boat, this is called a ___.
22. An important object attached to a boat by chain or rope
24. When a person in a boat is facing toward the stern they are looking ___.
25. Small boat propelled by double bladed paddle
26. Turbulence left by something moving through the water
28. Freedom from danger
30. A signaling device that burns brightly
33. A boat that tows other boats is called a ___.
34. To rescue someone in the water you should reach, throw, row, but never ___.
36. Small boat paddled by one or more persons
37. When you wear your life jacket, don’t forget to ___ up.
38. Motorboats should always carry an extinguisher in case of a ___.
39. A rope, when used on a boat, is called a ___.
40. Used to row a boat
41. ___ is the force that keeps something afloat.

DOWN

1. Personal Flotation Device (abb.)
2. Place to moor your boat
3. To use a fire extinguisher, you must first pull the ___.
4. A good life jacket is NOT ___.
5. Kids don’t float, life jackets ___.
7. A __ device (type IV) is designed to be tossed to someone in the water.
8. For use in medical emergency (three words)
10. “A life jacket is your best ___.”
12. Another name for Personal Floatation Device (two words)
15. An implement having a blade at one or both ends
16. Device used to determine direction of travel
17. To propel a boat with oars
19. Signaling device with a piercing sound
23. Swell or ridge that crests on the surface of the water
27. A wireless transmitter
29. ___ should always wear a life jacket when in a boat.
31. “Don’t ___ the boat.”
32. To remove water from a boat
34. If the buoys on your right are red, the buoys on your left are ___.
35. “The best life jacket is the one you ___.”
37. Floating object used to mark something
### Break the Code: Boating Safety Messages

1. Count the letters in your first name.
2. Subtract 4 if your name has 6 or more letters.
3. Add 3 if your name has less than 6 letters.

The number you get is your code number. Circle all the letters under your code number to find the message just for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>6</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>L</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>U</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>T</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>O</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>G</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>T</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>G</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

22
Find all of the boating-related words below. What does each word mean or refer to?

GASP
INCAPACITATE
HYPOTHERMIA
LIFE JACKET
BOW

STERN
OVERLOAD
SWIM DECISION
DROWNING
VESSEL

ROUGH SEA
TRIPOD
SIGNAL
STAY
AFLOAT
DROWNING

REACH
THROW
ROW
BALANCE
NO ALCOHOL
COLD WATER

RESCUE
RECOVERY
OVERBOARD
FLOAT PLAN
CAPSIZE

HINT: Words can be horizontal, vertical, diagonal, forwards or backwards.
TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE! KIDS DON’T FLOAT QUIZ

Circle the BEST answer

1. Who should wear a life jacket when in an open boat or deck of a boat?
   a. kids only
   b. boaters with only 1-5 years of experience
   c. non-swimmers
   d. everyone

2. The manufacture’s label on a life jacket provides what kind of information?
   a. the price and where it was purchased
   b. if it glows in the dark
   c. who the jacket belongs to
   d. the types of activities it is approved for

3. What is the best life jacket?
   a. the one you wear and the one that fits
   b. the newest one
   c. an inflatable
   d. a Type III

4. What does “serviceable condition” mean as it relates to life jackets?
   a. that the expiration date has not passed
   b. it is free of wear and that all the buckles work
   c. it has plenty of pocket holes
   d. that it is Coast Guard approved

5. Alaska law requires that a person under what age must wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved life jacket when in an open boat or on an open deck?
   a. 11
   b. 12
   c. 13
   d. 14

6. What should you do first if you fall into the water?
   a. take off your shoes
   b. get your breathing under control
   c. do the back stroke
   d. go fishing
7. What is the first stage of cold water immersion?
   a. frostbite
   b. gasp reflex
   c. broken bones
   d. hypothermia

8. What is one way a life jacket can help when experiencing cold water immersion?
   a. reaching overboard for an object
   b. keeps you comfortable
   c. keeps head above water
   d. keeps you dry

9. When does a victim start to experience the first stages of hypothermia in the cold water?
   a. one to two minutes
   b. after about thirty minutes
   c. after about one hour
   d. four hours

10. If you are still in the water after about 30 minutes, what should you do?
    a. get breathing under control
    b. H.E.L.P position
    c. practice the side stroke
    d. yell as loud as you can
Wow! We learned a lot today & we hope you did too!

Now it’s time to share our knowledge with friends and family.

If you want to learn even more about being safe on boats and around cold water, go here: www.alaskaboatsafety.org www.pledgetolive.org

Hey, let’s start a club! The Alaska Safe Boater Kids Club!
Crossword Answers


Wordfind Answers