

Longfellow's WHALE Tales

Water Habits Are Learned Early

Lesson 6

Wave, River or Tide, Water Smarts Are Your Guide

ABOUT THIS LESSON

From oceans to ponds, rivers to lakes, this lesson takes a deeper dive into specific considerations for different types of waterfront settings where a participant might be in, on or around the water. As with other lessons, it emphasizes the role of basic water smarts as the foundation for helping keep participants safe.

GUIDANCE FOR THE LEADER

Please refer to the section How to Lead Longfellow's WHALE Tales for full guidance on how to teach this lesson and the Longfellow's WHALE Tales Water Safety for Children program. Leaders are encouraged to follow the lesson plan provided. However, you should adapt the language and activities as needed based on the age and learning level of participants, the teaching setting, local references and available time. In some cases, options are offered for activities based on these factors.

KEY TERMS

Aquatic life: Animals and plants that live in or around the water

Current: Continuous movement of water in one direction

Dam: A barrier built across a river, stream or creek that is used to control the flow of water

Shore: The land that is along the edge of an ocean, lake, pond or river

Waterfront: A natural water environment, such as an ocean, lake, pond or river

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

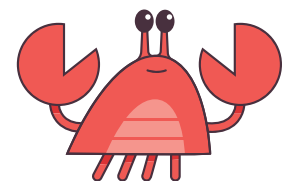
After completing this lesson, participants will be able to:

- Name different types of waterfronts.
- Understand key differences between swimming in a pool or at a waterpark and swimming at a waterfront.
- Identify water smart ways to stay safer at a waterfront.
- Discuss the role of lifeguards in relation to staying safer at a waterfront.
- Explain how to check for safety by scanning the land and the water.
- Understand some special hazards of swimming in the ocean including currents, waves and aquatic life.
- Understand some special hazards of swimming in a river, lake or pond including currents, aquatic life, dams and spillways.

MATERIALS, EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

Review the lesson plan prior to leading it to determine which items you'll need for the options you choose. Materials may include:

- Course Presentation 6: Wave, River or Tide, Water Smarts Are Your Guide
- Poster: Wave, River or Tide, Water Smarts Are Your Guide
- Longfellow's WHALE Tales animated video: Wave, River or Tide, Water Smarts Are Your Guide
- Longfellow's WHALE Tales live action video: At the Ocean
- Monitor or computer, projector and screen (for use with downloadable course presentation and videos)
- Dry erase board and marker or other method to record answers for all to see (newsprint and marker, chalkboard and chalk, etc.)
- Sticker badges (one for each participant)
- Coloring Sheet: Wave, River or Tide, Water Smarts Are Your Guide (one for each participant)
- Activity Sheet 6-1 (one for each Level 1 participant)
- Activity Sheet 6-2 (one for each Level 2 participant)
- Caregiver Letter 6-1 (one for each participant)



TOPIC: INTRODUCTION

Time: 2 to 6 minutes, depending on whether optional video is used



Leader's Note: If needed, start by introducing yourself to participants and allow them to introduce themselves.

SHARE AND TELL DISCUSSION



LEVEL



MATERIALS

Course Presentation 6,
Slide 1

■ Tell participants:

- In this lesson, we're going to talk about some things you should know if you are going to be swimming at a waterfront.
- While a pool or waterpark is something built by people, a waterfront is a natural water area such as an ocean, lake, pond or river.

- #### ■ Say to participants:
- Close your eyes and picture a swimming beach at the ocean in your head. If you haven't been to the ocean before, think about what you've seen on TV, online or in pictures. [Pause] Now think of a swimming pool. It can be any kind of pool you've been in or seen a picture of. [Pause] Now open your eyes.

- #### ■ Ask participants:
- Who can name a way a pool and the ocean are different from each other?

- *Answers may vary but should include things like:*
 - *A pool is much smaller than an ocean.*
 - *An ocean has waves, a pool (usually) doesn't.*
 - *A pool is sometimes marked so you know where it is shallow and where it is deep. An ocean has no markers.*
 - *There are fish and other aquatic life that live in the ocean, but not in a pool.*



Leader's Note: If there is a natural body of water in your location that many participants are likely familiar with, have them contrast a pool with that waterfront instead of the ocean.

■ Tell participants:

- Even a wave pool or a winding river ride at a waterpark is only kind of like being in the actual ocean or a river. At a waterpark, the rides are controlled by people, but nature is much less predictable!
- You may be thinking that there is a lot more to know about water safety when you swim in an ocean versus a pool or waterpark or even in a river, lake or pond.
- That's true, but it's also true that the things you already have learned about being water smart will help keep you safer in a waterfront setting too if you always use them as your guide.

VIDEO



LEVEL



MATERIALS

Course Presentation 6, Slide 2

Dry erase board and marker, or similar

- **Tell participants:** We are going to watch a short video.
- **Play animated video:** Wave, River or Tide, Water Smarts Are Your Guide



Leader's Note: After watching the video, pose the following questions and allow a few participants to provide answers. If desired, and as appropriate for your participants and setting, you can create a Notice and Wonder chart for all to see by making a column for each and writing down what the participants say. You can refer to this throughout the lesson as you cover topics where relevant.

- **Ask participants:**
 - Who can tell me one thing they noticed when watching the video?
 - *Allow two or three participants to answer.*
 - Who can tell me one thing they are wondering after watching the video?
 - *Allow two or three participants to answer.*
- **Tell participants:** As we go through this lesson and we learn more about this topic, think about what you saw in the video to help you in our discussions and activities.

TOPIC: REVIEW OF WATER SMARTS

Time: 1 minute

SHARE AND TELL DISCUSSION



LEVEL



MATERIALS

None

- **Tell participants:**
 - Here are some of the ways you've learned to be water smart so far.



Level 1 Variation: Use the hand gestures taught in Lesson 1 as you review each rule (included below). Tell participants: "As I say each one, repeat what I say and copy what I do." If desired, ask for volunteers to come to the front of the group to help lead other participants in doing these.

- *(Say as you look up and down, left and right)* **First look around** *(hold your hands up as if you are asking a question)* **is the scene safe and sound?** *(Pause to let participants say and do this.)*
- *(Say as you make a swimming motion with your arms)* **Swim as a** *(hold up two fingers together)* **pair with a** *(hold a hand over your eyes as if you are scanning the distance then point forward)* **lifeguard there.** *(Pause to let participants say and do this.)*
- *(Say as you point to the side of your head [brain] and then to yourself)* **Know your** *(hold up your hand as if to say stop)* **limits.** *(Pause to let participants say and do this.)*
- When you say those things, you really do sound water smart!
- Always being water smart will help keep you safer when you visit a waterfront swim area.

TOPIC: BEFORE YOU ENTER THE WATER

Time: 11 minutes

Check First: Is This a Designated Swim Area with Supervision?

SHARE AND TELL DISCUSSION



LEVEL



MATERIALS

None

■ Tell participants:

- The first part of checking if a scene is safe and sound at a waterfront is making sure you are swimming in a designated swim area. That doesn't mean there are no risks. But it does mean:
 - The area is meant for swimming.
 - It will likely have lifeguards on duty.
 - Following the rules and staying in lifeguarded areas can help you be safer.

■ Ask participants: Who can help remind the group why it's best for there to be lifeguards on duty where you swim?

- *Answers may vary but should include:*
 - *A lifeguard helps keep you safe.*
 - *A lifeguard can help you remember to follow the rules.*
 - *A lifeguard is trained to rescue a person if they are in danger of drowning.*
 - *A lifeguard knows how to use safety equipment.*

■ Tell participants:

- A lifeguard at a waterfront is trained to know what to watch for and how to help someone in danger of drowning who may be far from land or who is in water that is moving because of waves or tides.
- They will also have equipment that is especially meant for the waterfront including things like:
 - A ring buoy attached to a long rope that can be thrown to someone who is having trouble far out in the water. The long rope makes it possible to pull the person who needs help back to land.
 - A rescue flotation device that the lifeguard can use to stay safer if they need to swim out to someone who needs help in the water.
 - Binoculars to help them see what's happening in the water even far away.
 - A way to communicate with emergency services if extra help is needed.
- When you swim at a waterfront, you should also have your own capable adult water watcher there supervising you. This is especially important when the designated swim area does not have lifeguards on duty.

■ Ask participants: Of course, we don't just want a lifeguard and a capable adult water watcher around. Who else is important to have with when you want to go in the water?

- *Answer: A water buddy*

■ Ask participants: Why swim with a water buddy?

- *Answers should include:*
 - *Buddies help watch out for each other in the water.*
 - *A buddy can get help if you become in danger of drowning.*

Scan for Other Safety Clues

SHARE AND TELL DISCUSSION



LEVEL







MATERIALS

Course Presentation 6,
Slide 3

■ Tell participants:

- Another part of checking that a scene is safe and sound is to look before you leap, and then enter the water feetfirst if it's safe to do so.
- Whenever you are in, on or around water, you should make it a habit to stop to look around for safety information and clues about where dangers may be.
- First, scan the land.
 - Look to make sure there is a lifeguard on duty.
 - Look for any posted rules.
 - Look for things like warning signs or flags. Waterfront areas often use these to share information about the conditions in the water on any given day.
 - A red flag may be used to warn swimmers about dangerous waves or currents.
 - A sign may tell you if there is bacteria or algae in the water that could make you sick or if there are dangerous currents present in the area.
 - Not everyone uses the same flag system, so be sure to check the signs that tell you what the flag system means at any waterfront area.
- Once you've looked around the land area, you'll next want to scan the water. Look for things like:
 - Ropes, buoys or other markers that show where the swim area is.
 - How much the water is moving. Are there waves or currents that you can see?
 - Clues about where the water is shallow and where it gets deep. Keep in mind this may not be marked and can change quickly as the bottom surface changes too.
 - Structures in the water such as jetties or dams that you should stay away from.
- If possible, also notice what you can see under the water. Depending on the setting, things underwater might include:
 - Rocks or tree branches.
 - Holes.
 - Weeds and water grass.
 - Aquatic life like jelly fish or snapping turtles.
 - Sharp objects such as broken glass or trash.
- Once your check is done, everything looks good and you are ready to get in, remember to always enter water feetfirst.
- Do not jump or dive unless an area is marked as safe for doing so. A headfirst entry into shallow water is the number one cause of head, neck and back injuries in the water. These types of injuries can be very serious.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● And, know your limits. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If you don't know how to swim or aren't sure your skills are strong enough for the type of water you're entering, wear a life jacket. Don't go into water any deeper than waist or chest deep. ○ Watch out for the "dangerous too's": <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Too tired ○ Too cold ○ Too far from safety ○ Any of these could make it hard to stay safe and stay above water. If you feel any of these ways, head back to land and take a break.
<p>BRAIN GAME</p>  <p>LEVEL</p>   <p>MATERIALS</p> <p>Poster: Wave, River or Tide, Water Smarts Are Your Guide OR Course Presentation 6, Slide 4</p> <p>Dry erase board and marker or similar</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;">  Leader's Note: As participants give answers to the discussion question that follows, write them down for all to see, as desired. If needed, offer prompts to encourage answers similar to those below. </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Set up activity: Display the poster: Wave, River or Tide, Water Smarts Are Your Guide. Divide participants into small groups of two or three. ■ Say to participants: Let's pretend we want to go swimming at the waterfront area shown on the poster. We've just arrived. Everyone put on your safety spotters and let's look for clues about whether this is actually a designated swim area and what dangers we should be aware of. Talk together with your activity buddy/group for about one minute about any things in the scene that tell you where it's a good place to swim, or not. ■ Ask participants: What are some things that caught your eye that might be important for safety? Why do you think so? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Answers should include:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>The lifeguard. When a lifeguard is on duty, they can help keep you safe. It's best for there to be a lifeguard and your own water watcher.</i> ○ <i>The safety ropes: They are there to mark the designated swim area.</i> ○ <i>The rocks and branches under the water. You could get hurt if you entered the water where they are instead of the swim area.</i> ○ <i>The turtle. Do you know if snapping turtles live in the area?</i> ○ <i>The dam/spillway. You should never go near a dam or spillway. There are usually warning signs to help you remember. You can also see that the water appears to be moving faster in that area.</i>

TOPIC: WATERFRONT SETTINGS—WHAT TO KNOW

Time: 5 to 15 minutes, depending on option selected



Leader's Note: For the next section of the lesson, there are two options for how participants are taught. Choose the one that works best for your setting, participant learning level and resources:

- Option A: At the Waterfront (Video and Share and Tell Discussion)
- Option B: At the Waterfront (Share and Tell Discussion and Pop Quiz)

Option A: At the Waterfront

VIDEO



LEVEL



MATERIALS

Course Presentation 6,
Slide 5

- **Tell participants:** To learn more about what to expect in different waterfront settings, we are going to first watch a short video about some things you'll want to know about if you swim at the ocean or in a very large lake, like one of the Great Lakes.
- **Play live action video:** At the Ocean
- **Tell participants:**
 - Being water smart when swimming at a river, lake or pond shares a lot in common with being water smart at the ocean.
 - Like the ocean, rivers also have water that is always moving, although in a river, the water mostly moves in one downstream direction. Unless it's moving fast, this can be hard to see, but you might notice a leaf or stick slowly moving along the surface.
 - Lakes and ponds are also usually calmer than the ocean, although a very big lake could have waves.
- **Ask participants:** Does anyone have any questions about what we just watched?
 - *Answer any questions.*

SHARE AND TELL DISCUSSION



LEVEL



MATERIALS

Course Presentation 6,
Slides 6–7

- **Tell participants:**
 - In addition to looking for posted warnings, you can ask the lifeguard on duty if you have questions about the conditions in the water including whether there are any strong currents in the area or how rough the waves are.
 - Stay away from piers, pilings and jetties, and other structures such as spillways and dams.
 - Be aware that a river, lake or pond may have underwater obstacles, too.
 - Never dive headfirst into breaking waves or water in lakes or rivers that are not marked as safe for diving. It can be hard to tell just how deep a river, lake or pond is and the depth can vary a lot from spot to spot depending on what the bottom surface is like.

- Try to learn what kind of aquatic life is common in the water where you are swimming. This can be different depending on where you live or vacation.
- In an ocean, aquatic life that you should avoid might include:
 - Stinging animals like jellyfish, Portuguese man-of-wars, cone snails and sting rays.
 - Sharp animals like sea urchins or coral.
 - Dangerous biters like sharks, barracudas or moray eels.
- In a river, lake or pond, you should find out if snakes, snapping turtles or alligators might be around.
- If you spot an animal, in or out of the water:
 - Leave it alone. Do not touch it.
 - Move away slowly.
 - Tell the lifeguard or an adult where you saw it.
- If you are bitten or stung by any kind of aquatic life, tell a lifeguard or an adult, or call for help right away.



Leader's Note: For more information about what a person can do to help themselves in a water emergency at a waterfront, including getting caught in a strong current, see Lesson 7: Think So You Don't Sink.

Option B: At the Waterfront

At the Ocean and Large Lakes

SHARE AND TELL DISCUSSION



LEVEL



MATERIALS

None

■ Tell participants:

- Now let's talk more about what to expect in different waterfront settings starting with the ocean or very large lakes, like the Great Lakes.
- In these settings, the water moves all the time. This can make it extra fun, or it can make it extra dangerous.
- That's why it's important to understand these settings before you swim in one.

POP QUIZ



LEVEL



MATERIALS

None

■ Tell participants:

- It's time for a pop quiz: Ocean True or False?
- I'm going to make a statement about the ocean that may also be true of some very large lakes. If you think the statement is true, stand up and do the wave. If you think it's false, stay seated. It's OK if you get something wrong at first. We are just learning this so make your best guess.



Leader's Note: Demonstrate what is meant by "doing the wave." As you stand up and raise your arms over your head, and then lower them as you sit back down to mimic the motion of an ocean wave.



Level 1 Variation: You can just have participants work in pairs and give a thumbs up for true or a thumbs down for false.

- **Ask participants:** True or false? At the ocean, the place where you put your towel down on the sand when you arrive could be under water by the time you leave.
 - *Answer: True [Do the wave!]*
- **Tell participants:** The water level in the ocean is always changing because of something called the tide. Twice a day it's high tide, when the ocean is at its highest level and the water reaches farther onto the beach. And twice a day it's low tide, which is the opposite. So, if you're not careful where you set up your beach towel, it could get wet or even be washed away. The tide also changes how deep the water is when you go into it. A spot where it was only up to your knees could be much deeper at a different time of day.
- **Ask participants:** True or false? The waves at the beach are always the same size.
 - *Answer: False [Stay seated.]*
- **Tell participants:** The waves can be small and gentle, or they can be big and strong. When they're big, they can knock you over and may even be able to move large objects.
- **Ask participants:** True or false? When it's windy, waves can be bigger.
 - *Answer: True [Do the wave!]*
- **Tell participants:** If it's windy, waves can be even bigger and stronger. If they are too big, it can be unsafe to swim so follow any posted warning signs.
- **Ask participants:** True or false? If you see an area of the ocean that looks like a different color than the rest, it could be a sign of danger.
 - *Answer: True [Do the wave!]*
- **Tell participants:** One of the main hazards in any water that has breaking waves is something called a rip current. This is a powerful current that can pull people and objects far away from the shore. A rip current may make the ocean look darker or calmer in a certain spot while there is whitewater from waves breaking everywhere else.

- **Ask participants:** True or false? A designated swimming area at the beach won't have any fish or other aquatic life present.
 - *Answer: False [Stay seated.]*
- **Tell participants:** Aquatic life can be anywhere in the ocean. Most of it will just swim right on by, but there are some sea creatures you want to be aware of and avoid, like jellyfish and sharks! The lifeguard will help watch the water for aquatic life hazards, but you need to be aware of your surroundings too.



Leader's Note: If you have time and want to have a little more fun with your group, have them celebrate doing a great job on the pop quiz by doing the full wave. Have one person start by standing up and raising their arms above their head. As they begin to sit and lower their arms, have the person next to them start to stand and raise their arms, and so on. Allow the wave to move through the whole group two or three times before settling into the next section.

SHARE AND TELL DISCUSSION



LEVEL



MATERIALS

Course Presentation 6, Slide 6

- **Tell participants:**
 - In addition to looking for posted warnings, you can ask the lifeguard on duty if you have questions about the conditions in the water including whether there are any strong currents in the area or how rough the waves are.
 - Stay away from piers, pilings and jetties.
 - Never dive headfirst into breaking waves.
 - Keep a lookout for aquatic life. In an ocean, this might include:
 - Stinging animals like jellyfish, Portuguese man-of-wars, cone snails and sting rays.
 - Sharp animals like sea urchins or coral.
 - Dangerous biters like sharks, barracudas or moray eels.
 - Try to learn what kind of aquatic life may be in the water where you are swimming. This can be different depending on where you live or visit.
 - If you spot an animal, in or out of the water:
 - Leave it alone. Do not touch it.
 - Move away slowly.
 - Tell the lifeguard or an adult where you saw it.
 - If you are bitten or stung by any kind of aquatic life, tell a lifeguard or another adult right away.



Leader's Note: For more information about what a person can do to help themselves in a water emergency at a waterfront, including getting caught in a strong current, see Lesson 7: Think So You Don't Sink.

At Rivers, Lakes and Ponds

SHARE AND TELL DISCUSSION



LEVEL



MATERIALS

Course Presentation 6,
Slide 7

■ Tell participants:

- Being water smart when swimming at a river, lake or pond shares a lot in common with being water smart at the ocean.
- Like the ocean, rivers have water that is always moving, although in a river, the water mostly moves in one downstream direction. Unless it's moving fast, this can be hard to see, but you might notice a leaf or stick slowly moving along the surface.
- Lakes and ponds are also usually calmer than the ocean, although we learned a very big lake could have waves.
- A river, lake or pond may have underwater obstacles.
- It can also be hard to tell just how deep a river, lake or pond is and the depth can be very different from spot to spot depending on what the bottom surface is like.
- Finally, as in the ocean, there could be aquatic life you should avoid. Snakes, snapping turtles and alligators live in rivers, lakes and ponds. Before you go in the water, know what living creatures you are sharing your swimming area with and pay attention to posted warnings.
- Another hazard you might find in one of these waterfront settings is a dam or spillway.
 - A dam or spillway is a structure that's built across a river or lake to control the flow of water.
 - Above a dam, strong currents could pull you into danger.
 - Below a dam, the danger can come if water is released. This can cause the water level to rise very quickly.
 - If you are at a river, lake or pond and there is a dam in the area, stay far away and follow all warning signs.



Leader's Note: For additional information about what a person can do to help themselves in a water emergency, including getting caught in a river current, see Lesson 7: Think So You Don't Sink.

TOPIC: WRAP-UP

Time: 1 minute

SHARE AND TELL DISCUSSION



LEVEL



MATERIALS

Sticker badge

Coloring Sheet:
Wave, River or Tide,
Water Smarts Are Your
Guide

Activity Sheet 6-1
or 6-2

Caregiver Letter 6-1

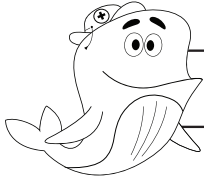
- **Tell participants:** That was impressive! You all learned a lot today, but you also showed me how much you already knew.
- **Ask participants:** Does anyone have any questions about what we learned today?
 - *Answer any questions.*
- **Tell participants:**
 - You've all earned a safety champion badge to add to your collection.
 - If you have Internet access at home, you can also view and share videos about what we learned today by following the link on the activity sheet I am going to hand out.



Leader's Note: Hand out a sticker badge to each participant along with the coloring sheet, activity sheet and caregiver letter.

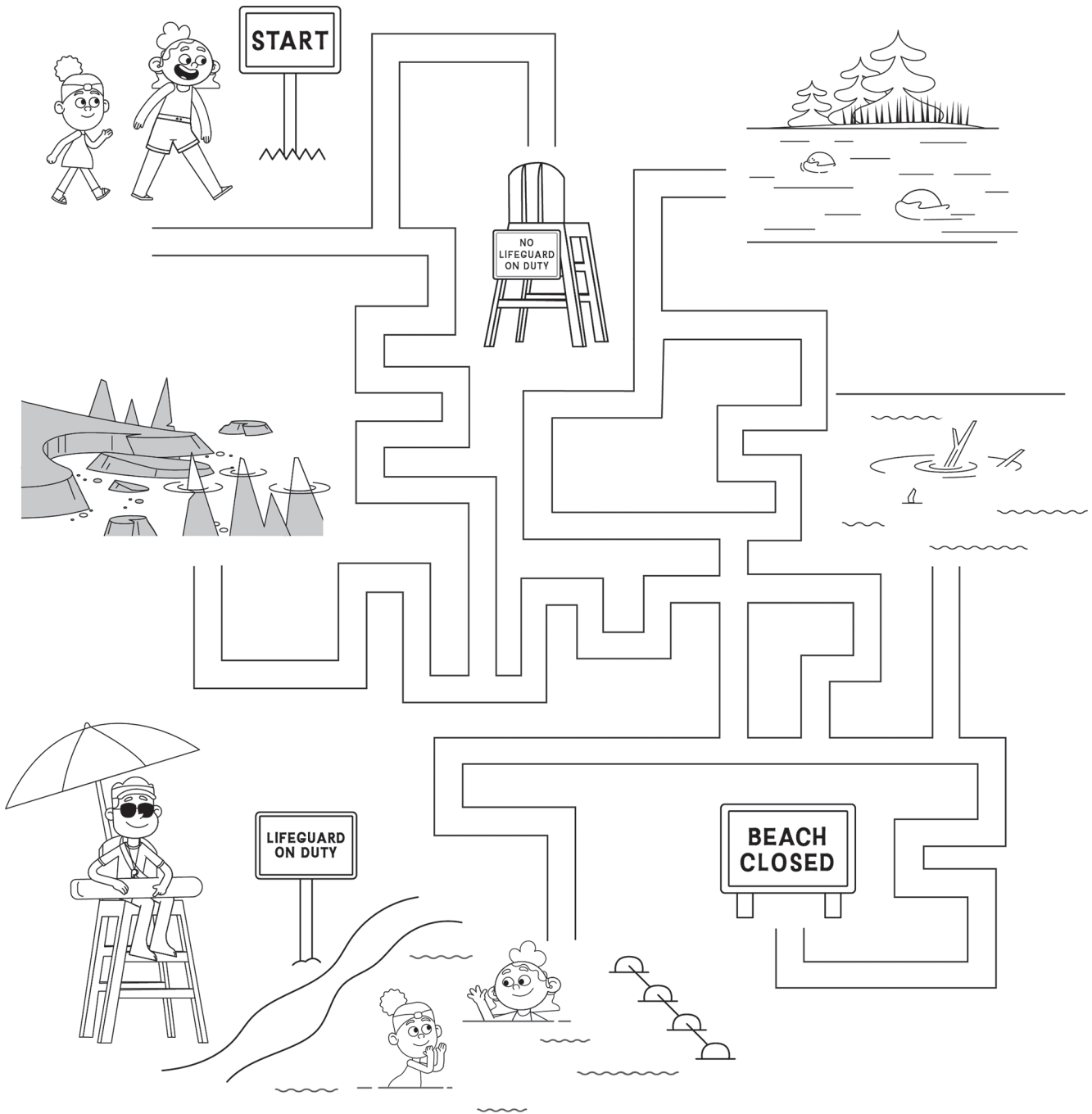
If this is the final lesson you will be teaching in Longfellow's WHALE Tales, allow time to do the Closing Ceremony at the end of this lesson to celebrate what participants have learned. You can find this in the Closing Ceremony section of Longfellow's WHALE Tales.

Name: _____



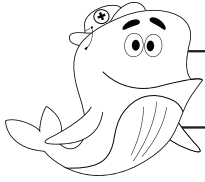
Follow the Path to Safe Swimming

Help these water buddies find their way to a safer swim area.



See the answer key, plus learn more at [redcross.org/watersafetyforkids](https://www.redcross.org/watersafetyforkids).

Name: _____



An Ocean (and River) of Fun!

This word search puzzle has a hidden message in it about swimming at a natural waterfront. To reveal it, first find all the words below in the puzzle. Then, starting in the top left corner and moving left to right, copy all of the unused letters into the blanks provided. (Tip: Use a highlighter to mark the words you find. Then it will be easier to see the unused letters you need for the hidden message.)

E B R E V I R X A R
H D A M K T P L W A
E S C R I R L T A P
T T I D R I A B V I
H N E F G A U H E D
E U E A Y D C N S E
X P T R D L P U E C
T O E Y R D L O D T
R E K A L U I E N A
O C E A N G C C J D

alligator

barracuda

buddy

current

dam

jellyfish

lake

ocean

pond

rapid

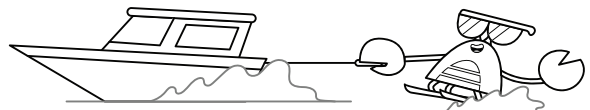
river

shark

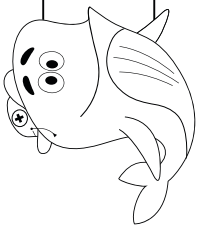
tide

wave

_____!



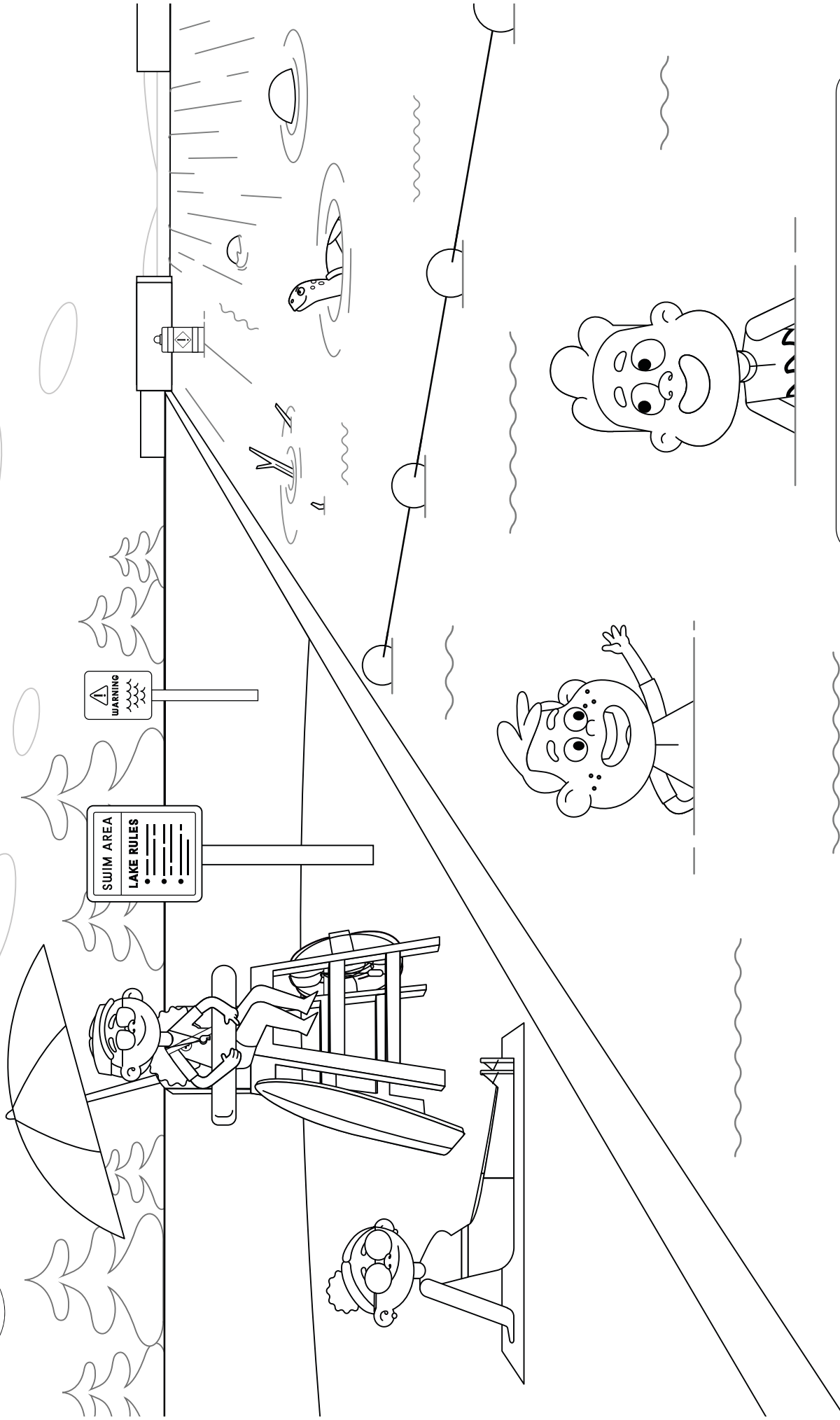
See the answer key, plus learn more at [redcross.org/watersafetyforkids](https://www.redcross.org/watersafetyforkids).



WAVE, RIVER OR TIDE, WATER SMARTS ARE YOUR GUIDE

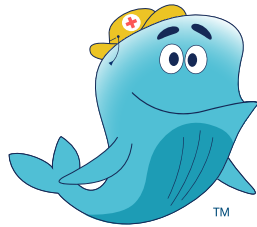


American
Red Cross



Name _____

Always scan for safety before you enter water.



Longfellow's WHALE Tales

Water Habits Are Learned Early

Dear Parent/Caregiver,

In today's Longfellow's WHALE Tales lesson, your child learned that it's important to understand the water environment where you are swimming, boating or doing other water activities so you can adapt to the unique safety risks of each setting.

What does this mean?

If your family most commonly swims in a pool, for example, but you are planning a trip to the ocean or a lake or a river, you'll need to be ready for a lot more unpredictability!

Waves, currents, changing tides and aquatic life can all make swimming in a natural waterfront setting more fun and interesting, but also more dangerous. Plus, natural environments may also introduce things like underwater hazards, colder temperatures, rapid changes in conditions, plus the addition of watercraft, jetties and dams.

To help keep your family and yourself safer:

- Always supervise your children as they swim and choose lifeguarded areas for an extra layer of protection.
- Ensure all members of your family know their limits when it comes to swimming skills.
- Be aware of weather and water conditions and pay attention to posted warnings.
- Always enter water feetfirst.

To learn more, visit [redcross.org/watersafety](https://www.redcross.org/watersafety) and visit the resource pages for *Swimming Safely in Lakes, Rivers and Streams* and *Swimming Safely at the Beach*.

You'll also find information on swim classes for the whole family along with first aid, CPR and water safety courses you can take to be as prepared as possible, wherever you swim.

Stay smart!

Longfellow