

## Safe T Squad Lesson Plan (3-5)

### Learning Objectives

#### Students will:

1. learn to identify and respond to people engaged in unsafe actions.
2. discuss and establish a definition of actions that are illegal and those that are dangerous but not illegal.
3. use these definitions to discern whether scenes in the book are illegal or dangerous.

**TEKS:** SS Grade 3: 9A, C, SS Grade 4: 19B;  
SS Grade 5: 17A

#### Materials Needed:

*Don't Monkey Around with Safety in a Car* by Dawn Fielder, paper to make a T-Chart for collecting decisions

**Estimated Time:** 30 minutes

### Teaching Strategy:

1. Show the book cover and ask students for predictions about the story. Expect a variety of answers. Encourage participation.
2. Say: This story tells about students in a school who watch out for each other so that they stay safe in all kinds of situations.
3. Say: Can you think of a law that is meant to keep people safe?  
Examples: speed limits, safety belts, motorcycle helmets
4. Say: What can happen if these laws are broken besides being hurt?  
Give an example such as a fine
5. Say: Sometimes an action is not against the law, but it is still dangerous. Can you think of an example?  
Examples: walking on the street instead of the sidewalk, not using eye protection while working with tools, petting an animal that belongs to a stranger without asking permission
6. Say: Today while I am reading we will consider some scenes involving students and various transportation situations then decide whether we see something that is illegal and unsafe or dangerous but not illegal.
7. Say: We will keep track of what we decide by using the T-Chart that I am passing out.
8. Pass out the T-Charts.
9. Introduce the book by its title and author.
10. Read pages 1-2 and ask students what unsafe action occurred. Once it is identified discuss whether it is illegal or just dangerous.

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Scenario for pp 1-2: A student did not go to the crosswalk. According to Texas Transportation Code 522.009 a local government may pass an ordinance requiring use of crosswalks, so it may or may not be illegal according to local ordinances.

11. Read on through pages 5 and 6 about forming a Safe-T-Squad. You might ask students if they might want to form such a club. If so, direct them to pay attention to the book for guidance on how it works.
12. Read pages 7 to 11 and ask students what unsafe action occurred. Once it is identified discuss whether it is illegal or just dangerous.

Scenario for pp 7-11: A student was reminded to wear a bicycle helmet. Texas does not have a state law requiring bike helmets, but some cities require them for those under 18 – Austin, Houston, Ft. Worth are known to have this ordinance.

13. Read pages 10-11 and ask students what unsafe action occurred. This action is the same as pages 1-2. This time you can discuss the meaning of “right of way.” Pedestrians have the right of way in the crosswalk while cars have the right of way if there is no crosswalk according to Texas Transportation Code 552.005.
14. Pages 12 and 13. Read only the first and second paragraphs. (Place a sticky note here to remind yourself). Ask students what unsafe action occurred. Once it is identified discuss whether it is illegal or just dangerous. Now continue reading the rest of page 12 that explains the law about the use of booster seats.
15. Read pages 14 and 15 and ask students what unsafe action occurred. Once it is identified discuss whether it is illegal or just dangerous.

Scenario for p. 15: A student chased a ball into the street. This would not be illegal. Ask students their opinion on how to best handle this situation, such as let the ball go and go get it once the traffic is cleared.

16. Read pages 16 and 17 and ask students what unsafe action occurred. Once it is identified discuss whether it is illegal or just dangerous.

Scenario for 16 and 17: A student did not face front while riding the bus. In Texas a school bus manufactured after 2017 must have safety belts –Texas Transportation Code 547.701. On buses without safety belts, the safest way to seat is “on your pockets” facing front.

17. Read pages 18 and 19 and ask students what unsafe action occurred. Once it is identified discuss whether it is illegal or just dangerous.

Scenario for 18 and 19: A student crossed a street when the traffic signal was flashing “Don’t Walk.” Texas Transportation Code 552.002 says “a pedestrian may not begin to cross a roadway in the direction of a ‘Don’t Walk’ signal...” No penalty is prescribed in the law. Local ordinances may differ.

18. Read page 20 paragraphs 1 and 2 only and show page 21. (Place a sticky note here as a reminder) and ask students what unsafe action occurred. Once it is identified discuss whether it is illegal or just dangerous.

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Scenario 1 page 20: A student is riding in the back of a pickup. This is illegal according to Texas Transportation Code 545.414. There are exceptions – in a parade, on a beach, transporting farm workers, only vehicle owned by the family and the cab is full. Page 23 shows a picture.

Continue reading page 20 and ask students what other unsafe action occurred. Once it is identified discuss whether it is illegal or just dangerous.

Scenario 2 page 20: A student claims a friend gets pulled behind a truck while on rollerblades. Read page 22. It says getting pulled by a vehicle while on skates is illegal, but that may be by local ordinances. Texas Transportation Code does not address it.

19. Read page 25 paragraphs 1 and 2 and ask students what unsafe action occurred (Place a sticky note here as a reminder). Show the picture on page 26. Once the unsafe act is identified discuss whether it is illegal or just dangerous.

Scenario for page 25: A high school student is seen drinking beer while driving. Read the rest of page 25. Ask students the legal drinking age. Drinking from an open container of beer while driving is illegal at any age according to the Texas Penal Code 49.031.

20. Read pages 26 and 27 and ask students what unsafe action occurred. Once it is identified discuss whether it is illegal or just dangerous.

Scenario for pages 26 and 27: A student is riding on the handlebars of a bicycle.


Texas Transportation Code 551.102 says “a person may not use a bicycle to carry more persons than the bicycle is designed or equipped to carry.” This law has no penalty associated.

21. Read 28 and 29 and ask students what 3 unsafe actions occurred. Once it is identified discuss whether it is illegal or just dangerous.

Scenarios for pages 28 and 29: A teacher is texting while driving, she is not buckled in, and her child is not buckled in. According to Texas Transportation Code 545.4251 it is illegal to “read, write, or send an electronic message while operating a motor vehicle.” The safety belt situation for the child was addressed (see part 14 instructions for page 12). For adults the safety belt law is the Texas Transportation Code part 545.413.

22. Concluding the lesson:

- a. Ask students what the purpose of the Safe-T-Squad book was in the book? (to watch out for unsafe actions and warn people of the danger and if it is illegal)
- b. Identify each unsafe action in the book and ask students if it is illegal and unsafe or just dangerous.
  - i. Using the crosswalk
  - ii. Wearing a bicycle helmet
  - iii. Chasing a ball in the street
  - iv. Facing backwards on a school bus
  - v. Not using safety belt on a bus if it has that equipment
  - vi. Riding in a car booster seat

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- vii. Crossing a street when the sign says “Don’t Walk”
  - viii. Riding in the back of a pickup
  - ix. Holding onto a vehicle while on rollerblades or a skateboard
  - x. Drinking while driving
  - xi. Putting two people on a bicycle made for one
  - xii. Texting while driving
- c. Ask students whether they use the safety belts in the car, wear a helmet when on a bicycle, and use crosswalks. (Encourage them to continue or begin)





**Illegal Actions  
we see**

**Dangerous Actions  
we see**

