

RIP CURRENT SAFETY

Surviving a Rip Current

Activity: 1

Level: 5 & 6

Overview

Rip currents are one of the most dangerous hazards on Australian beaches, so it is important to take precautions and always swim with a friend, family member or adult. Anyone can get caught in a rip current, even strong swimmers, so it is important to know what to do. During this lesson, students will experience what it is like to be caught in a rip current and learn options to respond if they were caught in one. They will then write a narrative that demonstrates their understanding of the common visible features of a rip current as well as how to escape one.

Key Understandings

- Always swim between the red and yellow flags and never swim alone
- If you're caught in a rip current:
 - Stay **calm**
 - Conserve your energy and consider these options:
 - **Raise** an arm and call out to seek help
 - **Float** with the current, it may return you to a shallow sandbank
 - **Swim** parallel to the beach. You may escape the rip current.

Resources

- Smartboard
- Appendix A: *Script*
- Appendix B: *5 Senses brainstorm* (1 copy per pair and 1 enlarged copy for modeling)
- Appendix C: *Narrative success rubric* (1 copy per student)

Activity

ENGAGE

Display students' rip current collages (from Lesson 2) around the classroom and send students on a gallery walk to view each other's artwork. Encourage them to search for the rip current in each collage and identify which features are visible (i.e., fewer breaking waves or sandy water floating away from the shore).

EXPLORE

Lead students to visualise being caught in a rip current by reading the *Script* (Appendix A). Give pairs a copy of the *5 senses brainstorm* (Appendix B) and ask them to list vocabulary or phrases that describe what they might see, feel, smell, hear and taste. As a whole group ask students to share these descriptions and collate them on the enlarged copy of the *5 senses brainstorm*. Encourage students to add any of these suggestions that they like to their own brainstorm for use later when writing a narrative.

EXPLAIN

Watch *Video 3 – Surviving a Rip Current*.

ELABORATE

Ask students how it felt to be drawn out into the rip current in the video. Add their descriptions to the brainstorm. Ask them to describe what they saw and heard and add these to the brainstorm as well. Together, make a list on the board of the *Dos* and *Don'ts* of escaping a rip current. Students now need to write a short narrative about someone being caught in a rip current, incorporating what they now know about how to escape. Explain to them that the focus is on using descriptive and ambitious language to hook their audience and to paint a vivid image in the mind of the reader.

Encourage students to draw on their own experiences of being at the beach, what they have learnt about rip currents so far, as well as what they experienced when watching the video.

EVALUATE

Invite a few students to share their narratives with the whole group. Next, give each student a copy of the *Narrative success rubric* (Appendix C) and ask them to mark their own writing. Then students can swap with a peer and evaluate each other's writing. Encourage them to give each other constructive feedback based on the criteria. Allow some time for students to make changes to their writing based on the feedback given.

Curriculum Links



Level 5		
ENGLISH	<u>Writing: Creating Literature</u>	Create literary texts that experiment with structures, ideas and stylistic features of selected authors (VCELT327)
	<u>Writing: Creating Texts</u>	Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive print and multimodal texts, choosing text structures, language features, images and sound appropriate to purpose and audience (VCELY329)
		Reread and edit own and others' work using agreed criteria for text structures and language features (VCELY330)
HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION	<u>Personal, Social and Community Health: Being healthy, safe and active</u>	Plan and practise strategies to promote health, safety and wellbeing (VCHPEP108)
Level 6		
ENGLISH	<u>Writing: Creating Literature</u>	Experiment with text structures and language features and their effects in creating literary texts (VCELT355)
	<u>Writing: Creating Texts</u>	Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive texts, choosing and experimenting with text structures, language features, images and digital resources appropriate to purpose and audience (VCELY358)
		Reread and edit own and others' work using agreed criteria and explaining editing choices (VCELY359)
HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION	<u>Personal, Social and Community Health: Being healthy, safe and active</u>	Plan and practise strategies to promote health, safety and wellbeing (VCHPEP108)

Sample Report Comments

{Name} understands the danger that a rip current poses and knows what to do in the event that {he/she} gets caught in a rip current.

{Name} wrote a short narrative describing the experience of being carried away from shore by a rip current. {He/She} drew from personal experiences at the beach and used ambitious language to engage {his/her} audience, creating a vivid image in the mind of the reader.

Appendix A

Script

Read the following to students to help them visualise being caught in a rip current.

Find a comfortable place. You might like to lay down or close your eyes. Make sure you are not touching anyone else.

Imagine you are at your favourite beach. You are swimming in the water with a friend. It is a hot, sunny day and the water feels lovely and cool on your skin. There are lots of other people in the water with you. You can hear splashing, children laughing and the sound of a jet ski nearby. You can see your family up on the beach building a sandcastle.

Your friend splashes you and then says "Hey, I'm going to go grab a ball and we can play catch." "I'll wait here" you reply and roll over onto your back to float. The sky is blue, and you have to squint against the bright sun. There are big, fat fluffy clouds above you and you start to look for shapes. You spot a dragon and a duck and then something that looks kind of like a dog wearing a tutu. You laugh, feeling relaxed. It's so quiet and peaceful out here.

It's been a while since your friend went to get the ball and you wonder what is taking them so long. You splash upright and look for them. You can't immediately spot your friend or the rest of your family. You start to stand up so you can look properly, but you can't touch the bottom. You start to panic, thinking that they have left without you. You remember to take a few deep breaths to calm yourself and you realise you've drifted off to the left and further out from the beach.

Finally you spot them. Your friend is waving frantically at you and you start swimming towards them. As you stop for a breath you look again and realise that you have drifted even further out. Now the panic really sets in and you swim as fast as you can, but you still don't get any closer. You are feeling exhausted and properly scared now. You shout to your friend to get help, but they are so far away that you aren't sure whether they've heard you...

Appendix B

5 Senses Brainstorm

Listen to the script and try to imagine yourself at the beach. Think about what you might see, smell, feel, hear and taste as you swim and then begin to drift away from the shore. Be descriptive and ambitious with the language you choose to describe your experience.

See

Hear

SMELL

Feel

Taste

Appendix C

Narrative Success Rubric

Carefully read your narrative and use the rubric below to evaluate your writing. Then swap with a partner and evaluate each other's work. Give your partner three constructive suggestions about how they could improve their writing.

	Entertainment Value	The Technical Bits	Rip Current Content
Nailed it!	Your narrative hooks the reader, flowing smoothly from beginning to end. You have used very ambitious language to create a vivid image in your readers' minds.	Paragraphs have been used consistently. Spelling and grammar are pretty much perfect!	Narrative shows a very good understanding of the common features of rip currents and the strategies for escaping a rip current.
Pretty good	Your narrative is interesting, logical and sequential. You have used some descriptive language to make your writing more exciting.	Paragraphs have sometimes been used. Spelling and grammar are mostly accurate.	Narrative shows a good understanding of the common features of rip currents and the strategies for escaping a rip current.
Needs work	The structure of your narrative needs work. You have used simple language to describe events in a basic way.	Paragraphs have not been used. Spelling and grammar need work.	Narrative shows a basic understanding of the common features of rip currents and the strategies for escaping a rip current.