

Outdoor Skills Lesson Plan for
Canoeing
PARTY Grant funded by Resource Enhancement and Protection
Conservation Education Program (REAP – CEP)
& Polk County Conservation



Goal: Participants will experience canoeing and know the basic strokes and safety for canoeing

Objective:

1. Students will be able to name and demonstrate three different canoe strokes
2. Students will be able to name three basic safety rules for canoeing
3. Students will be able to name three different parts of the canoe

Materials: Canoeing equipment, life jackets, throw rope, and location to canoe

Season: Spring, Summer and Fall

Time: 1 to 2 hours

Information

History of Canoes

- Were used by Native American Indians several hundred years ago
- Were used as a primary means of transportation by Natives and European settlers
- Early canoes were dug out logs, these were replaced by the birch bark/animal hide canoes

Today

- 19 million people canoe
- Two basic types of canoes
 - Solo- individual sits in the middle of canoe for control
 - Tandem (2 people) – bow (front) set tempo
stern (back) guides the canoe while matching tempo

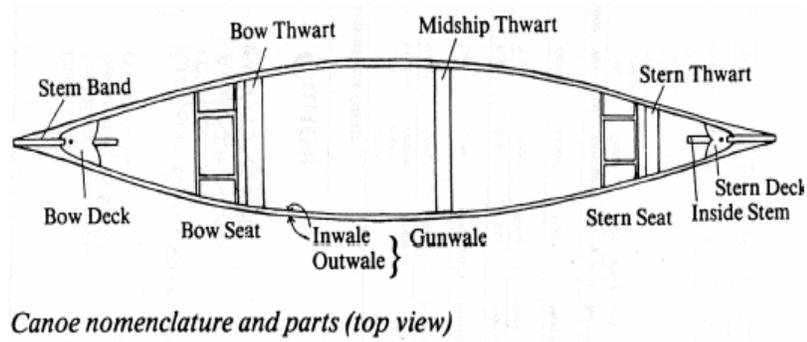
Where to Canoe

- For beginners, lakes/ponds
 - Slow moving water or no current
 - May have to portage (Carry canoe on land to next water entry spot)
- More experienced, rivers/streams
 - Constant current can cause problems for beginner
 - More challenging to maneuver

Paddles

- Sizing - the handle should come to your chin. Having the correct size is very important for ease of paddling and maneuverability
- Types
 - Curved paddles stay in the water longer and give more power, however harder to steer with them.
 - Straight paddles are easier to control and steer with, however not as efficient as the curved

Parts of a Canoe



- Bow – Forward or front of the canoe
- Stern – Back of canoe
- Thwart – Cross braces
- Keel – Middle seam
- Gunwale – Edges of canoe
- Deckplate – Front and back plate of canoe

Types of Canoes - Plastic, aluminum, fiberglass, kevlar, wood (priced from least to most expensive)

Strokes

- Forward strokes (J and Sweep) move the canoe away from the paddle or to the opposite direction the paddle is on
- Backward J or Sweep strokes move the canoe toward the paddle or to the same side the paddle is on
- Draw stroke - draws the canoe towards the paddle
- Pry stroke - pries the canoe away from the paddle
- The person in the back generally is responsible for steering the canoe
- The person in the front generally is the power or the “motor”, they make the canoe go

Entering and Exiting Reminders

- Person entering needs to keep their center of gravity low
- Partner needs to stabilize canoe by sitting on end and bracing it with their knees
- Do not carry paddle while entering canoe

Clothing

- Loose, quick drying, comfortable when sitting
- Roomy shorts or pants that don't bind when setting
- Nylon bathing suit more comfortable than wet cotton underwear
- Several light layers are better than just one
- Rain gear (trash bags, rain jacket)
- Hat and sunglasses to cut glare off the water
- Footwear- water socks, river sandals or neoprene booties
- Form fitted shoes that won't fall off – no flip-flop sandals

Safety

- Always wear PFD's (Personal Flotation Device)
- Be aware of the weather (wind, lightening)
- Bring and wear sunscreen
- Drink plenty of water to prevent dehydration
- Bring a map of the river or location your are canoeing
- Let others know of you canoe route and schedules
- Don't stand up in a canoe

Environmental Issues

- Watershed –introduce/review term
 - Water Quality
 - Pollution from soil erosion & chemicals
 - Improve buffer strips along waterways
- Litter
 - Recycling
 - Land pollution
- Fisheries management in Iowa waterways

Additional Resources

Polk County Conservation
11407 NW Jester Park Drive - www.leadingyououtdoors.org
Granger, IA 50109
515-323-5300

American Canoe Association – www.acanet.org

Polk County canoe rental
Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt
8700 NE 126th Ave,
Maxwell, IA 50161
515-967-2596

Easter Lake
2803 Easter Lake Drive
Des Moines, IA 50320
515-285-7612