

5: river hazards

teacher's notes

1) This worksheet is relevant to any activities that take place on, in or around freshwater rivers or lakes. Such activities might include canoeing, rafting, liloing, bushwalking or residential camping.

2) **Hazards** are the physical object that create the risks. **Risks** — real risks, that is — are the actual danger, an act or action that could result in losing something of value. **Loss** is some form of damage or injury. It can be physical (e.g. bruises or breaks), psychological (embarrassment) or financial (damage to equipment).

3) What makes this worksheet more complex than a simple “mix & match” is that it asks students to examine the relationship between 3 different things: hazards, risks & potential loss. There is certainly room for debate. Take #6 strong currents as an example. Wading or swimming against strong currents could be seen as *risky behaviour*. Tumbling & being swept downstream could be seen as the risk inherent in (or consequence of) that behaviour. Broken bones or bruised ego could be seen as potential losses.

An example is crossing a river on a slippery log. The slippery log — combined with the water & rocks underneath — is the hazard. Falling into the river is the risk. Breaking bones, developing a fear of water or smashing a watch are all forms of loss.

4) In the loss column, there will always be a continuum of potential losses. For example, if you step on or otherwise get too close to a snake, potential loss may vary from getting a fright to fatality. The severity of the loss could just come down to chance.

	hazard	risk/s	potential loss
e.g.	mucky water	just entering the water in the first place	becoming ill from swallowing a toxic brew
1)	snakes	not watching your step; putting your hands where you can't see them	being poisoned
2)	steep banks	mucking around or being careless where you can fall	getting wet or breaking bones (depending on what you fall onto)
3)	submerged objects (esp. in murky water)	jumping or diving into water when you can't see the bottom	spinal injury (1)
4)	sharp rocks or broken glass	not wearing shoes	flesh wounds (to the feet especially)
5)	loose or slippery rocks	not taking care with foot placement; not keeping low	ankle sprain; cuts & bruises
6)	strong currents	trying to wade or swim against or across currents that are too strong	tumbling & being swept downstream
7)	cold water/wind-chill	not wearing proper clothing/gear	rapidly losing body heat [possibly resulting in hypothermia]
8)	wind (in open water)	paddling out or sailing when it is too windy; not staying close to the shore	being swept a long distance from the shore, resulting in (at least) serious inconvenience
9)	deep water	getting out of your depth	drowning
10)	shallow water	jumping or diving into the water without first checking the depth	spinal injury (2)