Water Safety Lesson 1

Introduction to swimming in cold water

School:	Year/Class:	Term:	Teacher:

Duration: 30–45 minutes
Equipment: Floats of various sizes, noodles, balls, etc.
Learning objective: Understand the effects cold water has on the body

Set the scene

- The pool is an area of open water e.g. sea, lake, canal
- You're on a boat trip and the boat has capsized. There are a number of your friends on the boat, some are very good swimmers and swim in competitions, some have just learnt to swim.
- Everyone is thrown into the water. What's your body's first reaction?
- What happens to your body? Why?
- Do you think the very good swimmers will have a better chance of survival than those who have just learnt to swim? Why?
- It is very important to keep your head out of the water. Why?

Practical challenge for pupils

- Complete an obstacle course.
- Give the pupils the opportunity to go round, over, through equipment.
- The challenge is to perform the course keeping the head dry throughout.

Teacher notes

- Emphasise the feeling of being thrown into cold water.
- Ask questions and listen to the pupils' answers:

Example questions and answers:

- **What's your body's first reaction when thrown into the water?** You experience 'cold shock,' which affects the breathing and coordination.
- **What happens to your body and why?** You gasp for breath, your breathing increases and your heart rate increases – you then go pale because blood rushes to the middle of your body to keep your organs warm. As your organs such as your heart and brain get colder they begin to slow down and will eventually stop.
- **Do you think the very good swimmers will have a better chance of survival than those who have just learnt to swim?Why?** No because cold water shock affects everyone in the same way. Even the most competent swimmers can find themselves in difficulty after falling into cold water unexpectedly.
- **It is very important to keep your head out of the water. Why?** There is no fat on the top of your head to keep in the warmth. The heat from the body escapes from our heads.

Evaluation:

Discuss the answers to the questions and the actions your pupils have taken in the challenge.