

	<p style="text-align: right;">Mainline Middle Virtual Presentation Facilitation Guide</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Audience: OLAVs</p>
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Age Group: Students in 6-8th Grade

Technology Level: Intermediate (Participants should be comfortable with having a screen on)

Estimated Time: 30-45 Minutes (made shorter by stopping video fewer times)

Background Information: Mainline Middle School is a set of PowerPoint slides for Operation Lifesaver Authorized Volunteers to use with children in Grades 6th – 8th, or between the ages of 11 – 13, when discussing railroad safety. During the Covid-19 pandemic, this slide presentation was given professional animation and voice over to create a video. This video, like the slides it was developed from, was created to introduce key safety messages to young children in an engaging and relatable way. This deck of slides covers general safety messages, signs and signals, and trespass prevention messages.

About this Age Group: An audience consisting of children in grades 6th – 8th are at the age when children start to question authority and authority figures. They are also entering that stage where "nothing will ever happen to me" starts to be prevalent in their minds. Additionally, this age group sincerely believes that each one of them can make a difference in the world. Children in this age group are very self-conscious and many are concerned about how they are perceived by their peers. Therefore, direct questioning and asking for responses is usually not the most effective technique. However, being sincere, respectful, waiting for them to respond to you, and relating as many of the safety messages to their local surroundings (i.e., a highway-rail grade crossing close to their school, a set of railroad tracks by their football field, etc.) will help them better understand and heed your safety advice.

Presenting *Mainline Middle* Virtually

Utilizing Zoom:

- In the first five minutes, go over any Zoom techniques you would like them to follow such as:
 - Raising hands to be called on.
 - Have participants practice putting on mute while the story is going. Some students will know how to do this, some will not. Be prepared to give directions as to how to do this.

Option 1: *Reading from the screen*

Reading *Mainline Middle* aloud while showing the slides mimics the experience of reading a picture book aloud. This will be familiar to most children. When using this option, prepare where you will take breaks within the story as you normally would.

With this age group, it is imperative that you plan breaks for every 10-15 minutes to incorporate discussions or activity for students to feel connected to the story. Use the suggestions listed below

Option 2: Playing the video with guided stop and start

Play the Video. Utilize the page turn effect to stop and interact with participants. Consider the following places:

- SLIDE 2-3 Introduce each character, and ask students if any walk to school:
 - If YES, ask if they cross train tracks
 - If NO, ask *where* in their community they have noticed visible train tracks.
 - Get students to discuss and interpret where they would need to cross safely in these locations.
- SLIDE 4 Discuss the different personalities that EJ and Taylor have. Ask students to describe these two types of people (they may feel comfortable sharing in figurative language such as, “He’s like...” or “As if a...” Be sure to validate student’s connections
- SLIDE 8 Be sure to point out that NOT ALL crossings will have ALL of these, but they will have at least one.
- SLIDE 14 Ask students to discuss different things that would be wrong with playing and hanging out even just near tracks
- SLIDE 15: Point out the hazards presented:
 - Inability to see around curve in the track.
 - Length of time it takes a train to stop
 - Trains can be very quiet.
- SLIDES 23-26 can present unique places for students to share their own opinions and experiences around trains. *Be careful to their thoughts.* Try not to tell them they are wrong or shouldn’t have done something. Rather, navigate alternative safe scenarios.
- **SLIDE 28: If you are in an area with a commuter/light rail**, take some time to highlight safety concerns around student’s individual area.
 - Ask questions about experiences in student’s safety and perceived safety on their light rail.
 - Poll how many of the students use their system on their own and share what they do to ensure safety in train travel.
- Slide 32: Ask students to tell you what they’ve learned. You can phrase it as:
 - What is something that surprised you to learn?
 - What is something that you felt like you already knew, but now have more knowledge about?

Wrapping up:

Option 1: If time allows, take a few minutes at the end of the presentation to have students develop a chant or cheer for:

1. **Look. Listen. Live.**
2. **Stay off. Stay away. Stay alive.**

Encourage students to do movements or (if space allows) stunts such as cartwheels into a hand near the ears as if to listen, or to make a unique order. You can even do this several times over to ensure everyone who wants to add a move or beat is able.

If your group is musical or interested in rap and rhythm, have them put this to a backbeat (some students will bring up different musical trends from social media platforms such as TikTok or Snapchat to build their chant). Offer to record *if you have already cleared it with the organization*. **OLI will not post videos to our website.**

Option 2: If time allows, take a few minutes to encourage students to create another scenario for EJ, Ashley, and Taylor. Some examples to start your storyline:

1. Ashley wants to create a gymnastics video near a track. How would EJ and Taylor respond? What might Ashley say in response? Role Play the three roles and potential situation.
2. Taylor is running late to his chess club and contemplates crossing train tracks behind a field rather than walking to the cross walk where he normally crosses. He knows it isn't the safest choice, but he really cannot be late for his meeting. What should he do? How might he *justify* an unsafe choice? What would your response to that be? How would the situation be different if EJ was with Taylor? Ashley? Role Play the three roles and potential situation.
3. EJ is working on an extra credit project about migrant communities. He is working with a film club documenting the migrant workers. He wants to create a "day in the life" documentary about members of the community traveling among towns. When he asks his teacher, the teacher approves the project. Why? What perception of trains and train safety do we have that are wrong? How might EJ reframe his project to be safe and follow the laws against trespassing? Role Play the three roles and the potential situation.

If they are interested in an additional activity, you could ask them to illustrate their created situation.

To end:

1. Encourage students to visit www.oli.org to learn more and check out more information (you can direct them to PSAs and stories—especially those in 8th grade who are only a few years from driving)
2. Answer any questions and/or reference any information that you shared that came up during your discussions.
3. Be sure to *manually remove* each person from the Zoom Room.

Operation Lifesaver is a nonprofit public safety education and awareness organization dedicated to reducing collisions, fatalities and injuries at highway-rail crossings and preventing trespassing on or near railroad tracks. Visit OLI.org for more information.

