



Canoeing for the Beginner

Kevin Point, 4-H Member
and Canoeing Enthusiast

Mark H. Mohr, Certified Instructor

—American Canoe Association

www.ag.ohio-state.edu/~idea

Please Note:

This project is meant for a child learning to paddle on calm inland bodies of water.

Use this two page publication as the starting place for your 4-H Self Determined Project. You may choose to do a little or a lot depending on your level of interest in this topic. Use in conjunction with our 4-H 365, Self Determined Project Guide; available through your county OSU Extension office or by visiting our web page at www.ag.ohio-state.edu/~idea. Be sure to register your Self Determined Project with your county OSU Extension office.

Background

Canoeing is an enjoyable sport for all ages and a wonderful way to experience the outdoors. There are many important facts to learn in order to have a safe time on the water. It is important to study some basics about safety as well as equipment and techniques before going on an outing. Selecting the appropriate equipment and location for the event will help you have a more rewarding and safer time.

There are several types of canoes and lots of equipment to choose from when preparing for a canoe outing. In the past, canoes were made out of wood or aluminum, but today they are also made from fiberglass, plastic, or Kevlar. Each of these materials has advantages and disadvantages. Along with deciding which material works better for your needs, you should also consider the shape of your canoe. Flat bottom canoes will provide excellent primary stability and will work best if you plan to canoe on calm lakes. Round or V shaped bottom canoes have excellent sec-

ondary stability and will help experienced canoeists make sharper turns. It is important to choose a properly fitting paddle.

Another area of interest is safety. Personal flotation devices, better known as PFDs, are the single most important piece of safety equipment. There are four types to choose from, each with advantages and disadvantages. Selecting the appropriate type and size and having it securely fastened will greatly increase your safety. The three “Ws” also known as wind, weather, and waves can have a big impact on your safety.

The most exciting aspect of canoeing is learning the different strokes and techniques. Before you learn to paddle you must take time to learn how to transport a canoe. You need to learn how to tie knots such as a figure eight knot and half hitches so that you can safely transport your canoe on a moving vehicle. Some of the basic strokes you need to know are; forward, reverse, J-stroke, L-stroke, push-away, draw, and the forward and reverse sweeps. The only way to master these skills is to learn from a certified instructor. The ACA offers several good courses. Each time you canoe you will notice improvement.

No matter what part of the country you live in, there is sure to be a lake to paddle. You don't need to travel to distant lands to enjoy beautiful scenery. America's natural resources are here for all of us to enjoy and there is no better way to enjoy the beauty of a lake than to be paddling it in a canoe.



Planning Your Self-Determined Project

Planning Your Self Determined Project

Every Self Determined Project can be broken down into areas of interest. These are the specific things members wish to address during their project adventure. Using your *Self Determined Project Guide* 4-H 365, identify at least three (3) areas of interest with at least three (3) activities per area to explore. Take your ideas from the list below or make up your own.

Areas of Interest

I. Selecting Your Canoe and Equipment

- Label the parts of a canoe and a paddle.
- Learn how to select a paddle that fits you. Explain a Palm Grip and a T-Grip.
- Select a properly fitting lifejacket. Explain the advantages/disadvantages of Class I, II, III, and IV lifejackets.
- Learn the advantages/disadvantages of the following canoe materials.
 - a. Wood
 - b. Plastic
 - c. Fiberglass
 - d. Cross link
 - e. Kevlar
 - f. Aluminum
- List supplies and equipment needed for a canoe outing.

II. Water Safety

- Explain why group canoeing is safest.
- Explain the importance of Wind, Waves, and Weather while canoeing.
- List all the safety equipment you should have when paddling.
- Practice rescuing capsized paddlers and boats using ACA standards.

III. Paddling Strokes

- Learn and demonstrate at least 4 warm up exercises and explain the importance of doing them.
- Learn to perform the following strokes and understand when to use them.
 - A. Forward and Reverse Strokes
 - B. Forward and Reverse Sweeps
 - Practice the above strokes by paddling a figure “8” around buoys spaced 20 ft. apart.
 - C. “J” and “L” strokes
 - Paddle solo, a canoe a distance of 500 ft. in a straight line by using the “J” and/or “L” strokes.
 - D. Draw and Push Away Strokes
 - With a partner, use your draw stroke/push away stroke to “slide” sideways 100 ft. across a waterway, then return to starting point.
- Register and attend an American Canoe Association’s “Introduction to Paddling” course in your area.

Related Reference Sources

- *Canoeing and Kayaking Instruction Manual*, Laurie Gullion
- *Introduction to paddling* – ACA
- *Paddle America*, Nick and David Shears

Web Sites

1. American Canoe Association—www.acanet.org (Look here for an American Canoe Association course in your area)
2. Wenonah Canoe—www.wenonah.com (Be sure to request one of their free 44 page catalog/magazines which is loaded with information about canoes and canoeing.)
3. Canoe Kayak Magazine—www.canoekayak.com
4. Canoeing and Kayaking information—www.paddling.net

Visit our web page at www.ag.ohio-state.edu/~idea for more project idea starters along with additional information about exhibiting your Self Determined Project at the Ohio State Fair.