



## Knife Safety Lesson

**Grade Level: 2-8**

**Description:**

In this lesson, students will discuss the hazards of working with sharp knives and then the teacher will demonstrate procedures for working with knives safely. This lesson is best done directly before the first food preparation lesson that involves kitchen knives.

**Objective:**

Students will know how to use a knife safely, and they will understand that they must follow safe knife use protocol in order to participate in food preparation that involves kitchen knives.

**Teacher Background:**

While cooking can be a highly engaging and educational activity, it can also be dangerous. This is particularly true when using kitchen knives. Nonetheless, by effectively establishing procedures at the outset and sufficiently supervising students, students can safely use kitchen knives to participate in a wide variety of food preparation activities. We only recommend allowing students to use knives in groups of 8 or less with 1 or more adults. You can do this by running a cutting station while other students work independently on a separate project, or by inviting in other adult volunteers to supervise small groups.

**Materials:**

- 1 clean work surface
- 1 cutting board
- 1 kitchen knife (we recommend round tipped serrated steak knives)
- 1 fresh fruit or vegetable for slicing
- Chart paper
- Markers

**Preparation:**

Set out all materials onto a clean work surface in an area where all of your students can see you at once.

**Class Discussion:**

*In this class, we are going to use knives. Of course, knives can be dangerous, and you will only be allowed to use these knives if you agree to use them properly. Knives are tools in the*

*kitchen, but they are not toys to be played with, even jokingly. What can knives help us do in the kitchen (chop vegetables, slice fruit, etc.)? Of course, if we are not careful with knives, we can cut ourselves or others. Who here has ever used a sharp knife? Keep your hand up if you can tell us one tip for using a knife safely?*

Create a Safe Knife Use procedures list, and make sure it includes the following tips:

- Give yourself space - Only use a sharp knife when you know that no one else is within an arm's reach of you.
- Claw and Saw - To keep your fingers out of the way of the blade, you can hold your fruit or vegetable with a "claw" rather than with straight fingers and then use the knife to "saw".
- Cut round things in half, and then place the flat edge down to cut more.
- Always leave knives at the table - When students are finished with their knives, they can wipe them down with the wet towel on the table and place them in the bucket for cleaning later.
- Stay focused - Take your time and pay attention to your work. If someone calls your name, for example, you can stop what you're doing to look up and respond.

### **Action:**

*I. Now that we have this list, I will demonstrate safe knife use for you. As I am working, please raise your hand when you see me following one of the guidelines. (between each step listed below, pause, put your knife down on your cutting board, and call on people with their hands raised.)*

- Wash your hands and your fruit or vegetable with soap and warm water. Explain that you already washed the knife and cutting board.
- Before you pick up a knife, stretch your arms out and swing them in front of you and out to the sides. Then say, "Okay, no one is too close to me. I can safely use a knife here."
- Make a claw with one hand by bending all fingers. Using the claw, pick up your fruit or vegetable.
- Pick up a knife and begin to slice the fruit or vegetable you have, keeping your knife as far from your "claw" as possible. Turn your fruit or vegetable so that you are clearly able to cut away from your hand and body.
- Wipe your knife off with the wet towel and place it in the bucket.

### **Wrap Up:**

Reiterate the importance and seriousness of knife safety.

### **Digging Deeper:**

Without using a real knife, have student volunteers act out one of the knife safety tips and allow the class to guess which tip they are acting out.