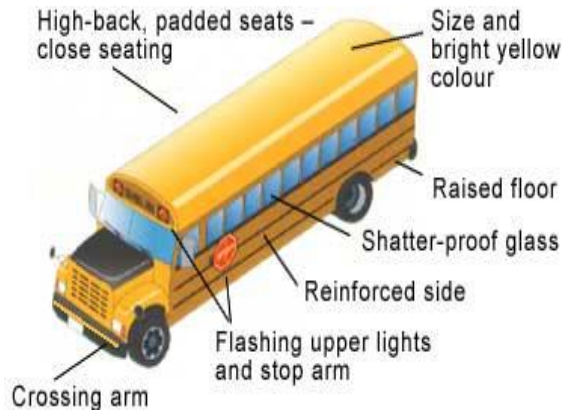


## HOW SAFE IS YOUR SCHOOL BUS?

The good news is it's pretty safe. In fact, experts say a child is 16 times safer in a school bus than in a family car. And that's important. Because every day, over 25 million students across North America are riding to school on buses.



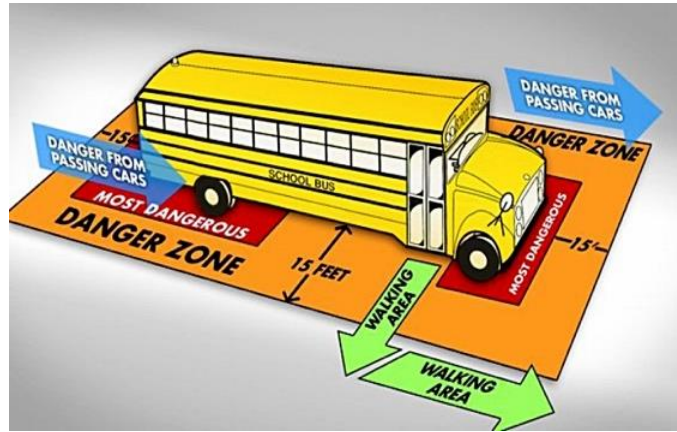
School buses get in fewer accidents than other vehicles. This is partly because school bus drivers are trained to drive safely. Also, school buses are more visible than other vehicles. It's no coincidence that school buses are yellow. Yellow gets people's attention more quickly than any other color, especially in poor light. But it's not just any yellow. It's a special color known as National School Bus Glossy Yellow. And it's been used on school buses in Canada and the United States since 1939.

Unfortunately, sometimes school buses do get into accidents. But when they do, the passengers are rarely injured. There are a number of safety features built into buses. Riders sit high off the ground. The seats are well-padded. The seats backs are high and close together. These seats form "compartments" that protect their young passengers in a crash.

Most school buses don't have seatbelts. Bus seats would have to be completely redesigned to include safety belts. And bus drivers would have to take time from driving to make sure every student had their seatbelt adjusted properly. Most traffic safety experts believe seat belts on school buses would not make a big difference in injury prevention.



That's not to say school buses have a perfect safety record. Each year about 17,000 children are treated for injuries associated with school buses. Fortunately, most injuries are minor. And most injuries occur *around* the bus, not *on* it. More students are hurt getting on and off the bus than riding inside it. The area ten feet (three meters) all around a bus is a "danger zone." Teaching children to stay out of the "danger zone" except to board the bus will help to prevent many mishaps. In fact, rider behavior on and off the bus makes a big difference in keeping riders safe.



The people on the bus go up and down, just like the song says. But thanks to good safety features, they're not likely to get hurt.



## BEFORE READING

How do you get to school? Chances are, you've been on a school bus a few times in your life. Think about the last time you were on a school bus. Do you remember how you got on and off the bus? Where did you sit? How did the other riders act?

## DURING READING

As you read, think about whether there are any facts in this article that you didn't know before. Are there any facts that you don't agree with? Read with a pencil. Put a mark beside facts that are new or confusing to you. Highlight (or circle) any tricky words you find. Try to use your strategies to figure them out. If you can't wait till the end of the reading to check them out.

## AFTER READING

Some things to think about:

1. The article says that "rider behavior" makes a big difference to school bus safety. What do you think that means? Make a T-chart, listing some behaviors that are not safe for bus riders and some that are.
2. Do you think school buses should have seatbelts? Why or why not? You might want to do some internet research to support your thinking.
3. It's important to read the pictures as well as the words. Diagrams and other images often give extra information that is not in the text. What is some information you can get from the diagrams in this article that is not in the words?

### Something to do:

**What can riders do to make sure they are safe on school buses? Create a poster to tell younger students what they should (and shouldn't) do on the school bus.**

#### TIPS ON DESIGNING A POSTER

Keep it simple! Large print, point form bullets, exciting images will grab a reader's attention. Your poster will include three things: a title in large, clear print; details or facts in smaller, but still clear print; one or two bright, interesting pictures. Before you start, plan ahead where you are going to put each item so it looks balanced on the page.



# BUS SAFETY POSTER

