



River Kayak Day-Trip Leading

Skills Assessment

Assessment Overview: This course is intended to provide the minimum skills and training necessary for an adult leader with basic paddling skills, to safely lead a trip for participants with adequate paddling skills, on a day trip, on moving water up to and including Class I-II rapids. (Class I: Easy, fast moving water with riffles and small waves, few obstructions, all obvious and easily missed with little training. Risk to swimmers is slight; self-rescue is easy.)

Essential Eligibility Criteria (EEC):

ACA courses are open to all individuals who acknowledge the ability to perform the following essential eligibility criteria.

1. Breathe independently (i.e., not require medical devices to sustain breathing)
2. Independently maintain sealed airway passages while under water
3. Independently hold head upright without neck / head support
4. Manage personal care independently or with assistance of a companion
5. Manage personal mobility independently or with a reasonable amount of assistance
6. Follow instructions and effectively communicate independently or with assistance of a companion
7. Independently turn from face-down to face-up and remain floating face up while wearing a properly fitted life jacket*
8. Get on / off or in / out of a paddlecraft independently or with a reasonable amount of assistance*
9. Independently get out and from under a capsized paddlecraft*
10. Remount or reenter the paddlecraft following deep water capsize independently or with a reasonable amount of assistance*
11. Maintain a safe body position while attempting skills, activities and rescues listed in the appropriate Course Outline, and have the ability to recognize and identify to others when such efforts would be unsafe given your personal situation*

** To participate in adaptive programs, participants must acknowledge only the first six EEC listed above. Entry-level adaptive programs will involve teaching and practicing EEC #7-11.*

Course Prerequisites: Must be an ACA Member

Course Duration: 2 days (16 hours) minimum

Course Location / Venue: Easy moving water up to and including class I-II rapids

Assessor: Level 4: Whitewater Kayaking Instructor (or higher)
Level 3: River Kayaking Instructor with the Trip Leading Endorsement



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Course Ratio:

Solo: 5 students : 1 Instructor; with an additional instructor or qualified assistant the ratio can be 10 : 2

The sequence of assessment should be adjusted to best fit the participant's needs, class location and time allowance.

Course Outline:

Day One Classroom and on shore discussion (IT judgment) depending on locale etc.

Introduction and Logistics

- Welcome
 - Introduction of instructors and participants
 - Workshop objectives
 - Schedule
 - Insurance waivers and medical disclosure
 - PFD policy/Eligibility
- with attention to best position for the Leader
 - Communication systems
 - Audio and visual river signals
 - International Scale of River Difficulty
- Leave No Trace – outdoor hygiene, stretch break, and lunch stops
 - Group etiquette with put-ins, take-outs, property owners, and changing clothing in public

Trip Leader Qualities

- Qualifications and desired characteristics of trip leaders
 - Judgment and leadership
 - Competent paddler
 - Good communication skills
 - River sense
 - Safety and rescue trained
- Trip leader
 - Applies appropriate discipline & group control
 - Makes final safety decisions including trip cancellation
 - Considers the well-being of the group over the wants of an individual
 - Takes final responsibility overall

Trip Leader Knowledge - discussion

- Group Organization
 - Assignment of buddy boats
 - Group formations; responsibility for others,

Trip Preparations and Planning

- Recommended Guidelines for Leader/Participant Ratio:
 - 1 leader for every 10 participants, with an assistant.
 - Conditions or skill levels may warrant additional leaders
- Appropriate river selection and determining skill level of the group
- Sources of information on rivers- other paddlers, guide books, Internet
- Develop a float plan including:
 - Driving route to and from
 - Specific put-in and take-out locations with a map
 - Schedules with approximate times
 - Contingency plans for bad weather, health problems or equipment failures. Plans



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- should include evacuation routes.
- Identify trip leaders and participants. Include contact telephone numbers
- Emergency contact information for local rescue agency(s) and/or governmental agency(s) responsible for chosen river and designated emergency contact person for group.
- Distance to emergency care
- Attach copies of permits and documentation of permissions from private landowners when appropriate.
- Make assignments to secure the necessary permits and permissions.
- Develop a planning and training schedule when appropriate. Include organizational, classroom, and on-the-water time. If no training is planned, determine methods of verification of skills including swimming and paddling.
- With group input, determine trip rules for acceptable behavior and discipline consequences.
- Determine if food or snacks are necessary.
- Discuss personal and group equipment. Make assignments for specific group equipment.
- Secure medical releases and parental permissions.
- Discuss environmental concerns.
- Organize transportation and shuttles. Include use of possible outfitters or livery services.
- Hypothermia/Hyperthermia
- Changing weather/water levels
- River Dynamics
 - Flow volume
 - Gradient-elevation changes
 - Flow rates and current
 - Straight channel
 - Bends
 - Right angle corners
 - Eddies
 - Waves
- Specific River Hazards
 - Rocks (upstream and downstream Vs)
 - Holes
 - Low-head dams and ledges
 - Undercut rocks
 - Strainers and sieves
 - Debris and logjams
 - Manmade obstructions
 - Bridge abutments
 - Entrapments
 - Pins and broaches
- River classification systems
- Prevention
 - Proper planning and pre-trip hazard identification
 - Proper skill training
 - Scouting
 - Constant Reassessment of changing conditions
 - Lining or portaging boats
 - “Just Say NO!” if uncomfortable. Better safe than sorry.

Personal and Group Safety Equipment – discussion

- Effective communication is key.
- Risk management issues. Warn and inform.
 - PFD - right type and size
 - Properly fitting helmet
 - Appropriate paddling clothes plus spares

Trip Hazards and Prevention

- Environmental Hazards
 - Air temperature
 - Water temperature

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- Dry bags, water proof containers and packs
- Appropriate foot wear
- Night lighting and signal devices as appropriate and required by law.
- Bivy bag, ground cloth, etc.
- Survival kit (knife, matches, etc.) and where to carry what - e.g. on your person
- Personal items including sunscreen, meds, hygiene products, plenty of food & water
- Items NOT to bring - e.g., glass containers.
- Boats – properly outfitted.
 - Grab loops intact
 - Sponges
 - Flotation materials and float bags
 - Center Walls/Pillars where necessary
 - Foot braces, backbands, thigh braces
- Group
 - Adequate first aid kit(s).
 - Kayak repair kit for use on/off water
 - Cell phones (several) and other communication devices
 - Bivouac Kit
 - Tow bags-rescue ropes
 - River maps, Compass
 - Emergency Group Shelter
 - Spare paddles, food & water
 - Water purification
 - Bio breaks and Sanitation equipment

Debrief and discuss day two preparations, boats, gear etc.

End of Day One, or at IT's discretion an evening session, homework, etc.

Day Two:

The Put-in Talk/ Pre launch briefing

- Discuss weather and water temperature for the day
- Review trip plan for day including known hazards and plans to deal with them.
- Review paddling partner and buddy boat assignments
- Discuss responsibility of buddy boats, lead boat and sweep boats and group organization on water
- Check PFD's for size and fit
- Check each boat for safety equipment, inflated flotation bags, and that all gear is well-secured.
- Review auditory and visual signals
- Discuss what to do in the event of a capsize, the responsibility of the individual and the group.
- Demonstrate and discuss Foot Entrapment, defensive swimming position, and aggressive self-rescue.
- Discuss lost paddler procedures/scenario.
- **Make sure wet exit procedure is clear** and demonstrate/test as appropriate.
- Review etiquette and outdoor ethics

Review of Basic Paddling Skills – On water

- Strokes
 - Forward
 - Back
 - Sweeps
 - Bracing
 - Draws
 - Sculling
 - Rudder
- Maneuvers
 - Forward: boat moves in a straight line
 - Reverse: boat moves in a straight line



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- Edging: boat turns by edge control
- Carving turns
- Sideslips, draws on the move

Water Reading and Route Determination

- Understanding Behavior of Water in the Riverbed
- River Running Strategies, i.e. Destination, Obstructions, Route, Alternatives (DORA)
- Use of eddies
- Awareness of weather – current conditions and upcoming

Rescue

- Principles of Rescue discussion and on-water demo/practice.
 - Priorities – People, Gear and Boats depending on conditions. Don't lose boat.
 - Responsibilities of Victim
 - Responsibilities of Rescuers
 - Responsibilities of the Group
 - Self defense; bracing, rolling, wet exits, aggressive swimming with boat and paddle
 - Importance of gaining self rescue skills
- Contact Rescues like towing swimmers with proper care

- Towing boats/plowing boats to shore
- Use of Rescue Vest towline
- Raft-Up Rescue
- T - Rescues
- Boat-over-Boat Rescue/importance of inflated airbags
- In-Water Re-entry
- Hand of God

Review and Wrap Up

- Importance of safety and trip leader responsibility
- Avoid and manage risks as much as possible
- Incident reporting
- Additional training in advanced first aid, wilderness first aid, maintaining CPR certification
- Take ACA courses
- Making things fun with games etc.
- Evaluation of course by participants
- Assessments of participants by Instructor

Suggested Books and Videos

- Swiftwater Rescue by Slim Ray
- River Rescue by Les Bechtel and Slim Ray
- Whitewater Self Defense DVD by Performance Video



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River Kayak Day-Trip Leading Assessment Check List

Date _____ Candidate Name & ACA # _____

Instructor or IT Name & ACA # _____

I. Qualities of a responsible Trip Leader:

- a. Manages group and instruction effectively; takes no unnecessary risks; decisions reflect safe boating practices and sound leadership.
- b. Models safe behavior analyzes student's conditions; recognizes and avoids unsafe situations/hazards.
- c. Communicates safety-related issues with emphasis, in a clear and concise manner
- d. Competent paddler
- e. Communication Skills
- f. Reading water & route determination
- g. Safety Competence and awareness
- h. Discipline awareness

Rating: Weak _____ Satisfactory _____ Good _____

Comments:

II. Trip Preparation and Planning

- a. Prepared Trip Plan
- b. Prepared Put-In Talk
- c. Awareness and knowledge of trip plan and float plan details
- d. Group Organization skills & awareness off- and on-water

Over Rating: Weak _____ Satisfactory _____ Good _____

Comments:



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III. Basic paddling Skills on Moving Water:

- a. Ability to maneuver effectively in Class I water ,upstream and down stream
- b. General Boat Control in Class I water
- c. Eddy turns & peel outs
- d. Front & back ferries
- e. Side-slips
- f. Effectively teaches paddling skills to students

Rating: Weak_____ Satisfactory_____ Good_____

Comments:

IV. Rescue and Recovery:

- a. Self Rescue ability and knowledge
- b. Shoreline Rescue: Extension, wading, throw Rope.
- c. Boat Rescues Knowledge and ability: tow, bump, tired swimmer, boat over, side by side
- d. Boat recovery and pins. Knowledge and ability

Rating: Weak_____ Satisfactory _____ Good_____

Comments:

Conclusion: Over all Rating: Weak_____ Satisfactory_____ Good_____

To be Deferred_____

Comments:



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River Kayak Day-Trip Leading Assessment Written Examination (*optional*)

I. Trip Preparation and Planning:

1. The ACA River Kayak Day-Trip Leading Assessment is designed for trips on water of what type and level of difficulty?
 - a. Flat Water
 - b. Moving Water
 - c. Class I-II and below
 - d. Class III and below
 - e. All of the above

2. The ACA Trip leading assessment recommends a leader to participants ratio of:
 - a. 1 to 6 with an assistant
 - b. 1 to 5
 - c. 1 to 10 with an assistant
 - d. 1 to 10
 - e. b or c

3. You are planning a trip which includes paddlers of mixed abilities (low, average and highly skilled). You should design this trip for which skill level:
 - a. Low Skill
 - b. Average Skill
 - c. Highly Skilled
 - d. Your own Skill level

4. You have prepared a float plan as outlined in The Trip Leading Course. What do you do with the float plan?
 - a. Take it with you in a Waterproof case
 - b. File with your organization/group.
 - c. File one with the destination Organization if possible. [e.g. local National Park Service station]
 - d. All of the above.

5. Planning the route for a day trip involves:
 - a. Obtaining a weather and river level report
 - b. Determining the distance the group will paddle
 - c. Discussing local water hazards
 - d. Establishing intermediate stopping/meeting points along the route.
 - e. All of the above

6. You will be leading a trip for a church group. The group asks where to find information on buying life jackets, cold water safety, scale of river difficulty, river practices, ethics, and conduct, etc. What is a single source where you know you can find this information?
 - a. ACA web site
 - b. Local outdoor retailer
 - c. Local paddling club
 - d. Fellow boaters/paddlers
 - e. All of the above



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7. A document that includes: Driving routes, put-in and take-out locations, time schedules, contingency plans for weather or injury, evacuation routes, list of leaders and participants, emergency contacts and permits or permissions is generally called

- a. Logistics Plan
- b. Contingency plan
- c. Float Plan
- d. Put-in plan
- e. All of the above

II. Trip Hazards, Avoidance and Prevention:

8. Hypothermia is the...

- a. Lowering of the body's core temperature
- b. Rising of the body's core temperature
- c. Rapid fluctuation of body temperature
- d. Fluctuation of water temperature

9. What sum of water temperature and air temperature protocol indicates that special clothing (wet suit, dry suit) should be worn while paddling?

- a. 60 degrees
- b. 100 degrees
- c. 120 degrees
- d. 98.6 degrees

10. A river hazard commonly found on the outside of a sharp river bend after rising water conditions is called a _____

- a. Keeper
- b. Strainer
- c. A souse hole
- d. Eddy

11. Hydration can help avoid both hypothermia and hyperthermia. As a trip leader, you should advise your group to:

- a. Take a water bottle and drink conservatively
- b. Take a water bottle for emergencies only
- c. Take ample water and drink it frequently
- d. Reduce the amount of water intake, so that minimize the number of bathroom stops.

12. You are a trip leader on a day trip. One of the participants shows up with flip flops. Which of the following actions is **not** acceptable?

- a. Find him safe suitable shoes
- b. Send him home
- c. Allow him to go on the trip

13. You are leading a trip. You see a horizon line downstream and hear rapids. You decide to scout from the bank. As a best practice, what should you take with you?

- a. Hands empty for a fast safe scout and return
- b. Paddle and a throw rope
- c. Paddle, throw rope and at least one member of the group
- d. Water bottle, a snack, first aid kit



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14. When crossing a river channel where boat traffic is the major hazard, to minimize exposure and increase visibility Your group's crossing formation should be:
- Together, as a close tight unit at a right angle to channel
 - Together, but spaced far apart
 - Paddlers should cross one at a time
 - Using the buddy system, boats cross two at a time
15. You are leading a trip on an easy moving river, one of the participants has accidentally turned their boat sideways to the current and they are about to hit a rock. Your best advice to them would be.
- Hang onto the grab loop
 - Lean downstream onto the rock
 - Lean upstream away from the rock
 - wet exit
16. You are running a river you have never run before. Your party is approaching a loud sounding rapid that lies beyond a blind turn in the river. How should you proceed?
- Send the leader down to run it first.
 - Take out and carry your boats around it.
 - Pull out a safe distance from the bend and scout it.
 - Have everyone run it, but stay close together.
17. Which of the below is a valid reason why paddlers should scout rapids:
- Find a clear path to run the rapid.
 - Assess the rapid for hazards and obstacles.
 - Decide whether to run the rapid or portage it.
 - Decide where to set appropriate safety in the rapid
 - All of the above

III. On Water Conduct & Management

18. You are a trip leader. You have strong, average and weak paddlers in your group. What would be the least desirable positioning of the weaker boaters?
- near the front of the group
 - At the back of the group
 - Disbursed through the group
 - It does not matter where boaters are placed
19. A storm front is moving toward you. You see lightning; count to 30; and then hear thunder. One of the following statements is **not** true.
- The lightning is about 6 miles away
 - The lightning is within the 10 mile radius of strike danger.
 - Generally, lightning is not a threat until it is 3 miles (15 seconds from sight to thunder)and as long as you are outside of the rain area.
 - The lightning is an immediate threat now and 30 minutes past the last thunder clap.
20. You have selected 2 skilled, athletic and very energetic paddlers in your group to be the lead boats for your trip. That is generally a:
- good choice
 - questionable choice
 - As long as the lead boats are skilled the choice criteria doesn't matter.



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21. You are inspecting life jackets, you discover a worn discolored and threadbare jacket. It should be.
- Washed and repaired
 - Disposed of
 - Given to a more experienced paddler
 - Returned to the manufacturer
22. Which of the following would not be part of the Put-in Talk.
- Discuss the weather and water temp for today
 - Review trip plan, known hazards, and avoidance
 - Set buddy boats, lead, sweep, limit points and group order.
 - Review assignments of shuttle vehicles and seats
 - Discuss communication signals, capsize & pin protocols, PFD fit & condition
23. When choosing a sweep boat on a river trip, the trip leader needs to consider that:
- The sweep needs to be particularly alert, capable and knowledgeable
 - The boaters who like to play, surf and explore are best as sweep since in the back they don't hold up the group.
 - The sweep has little to do at the back and is a good job for one of the slower paddlers in the group
24. You are outfitting a boat for a river trip. Which of the items below is most important from a safety standpoint?
- Thigh braces
 - Sponge or pump
 - Carrying yoke
 - Flotation
 - Foot braces /bulkhead
25. When all is said and done about clothing “you should always dress for the water first, then the weather, then the weather report”
- True
 - False

IV. Rescue and Recovery

26. The things to check for, and the proper order to check them, when a participant tips and swims are:
- Boats, people, equipment
 - Your safety, your group's safety, others' safety, the swimmer, equipment
 - Equipment, boats, people
 - swimmer, boat, paddle
27. Which one of the following is not one of the techniques involved in self-rescue:
- Get to the upstream end of the boat. Grab the grab-loop and swim towards an eddy or shore if it appears safe to do so.
 - Get in defensive swimming position: body horizontal on surface, feet downstream, back-stroke and kick with head towards the shore to which you want to go.
 - Aggressively swim to catch a critical eddy or avoid a dangerous obstacle.
 - Wait for someone in your group to throw you a rescue rope.



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28. You have capsized and are being unavoidably swept into a strainer. What should you do?
- Get on your back with your feet facing downstream in the defensive swimming position.
 - Swim aggressively toward the strainer and try to thrust yourself up and over it.
 - Wait for someone to throw you a rope.
 - Fend off of the strainer with your feet and dive down to clear water and swim under the obstruction.
29. When using a bumping or towing rescue technique in current it is important to effect a ferry angle. The object (rescued person or boat) will travel easiest and quickest
- toward the bank to which the up stream end of the rescued boat or person is pointed.
 - toward the bank to which the down stream end of the boat or person is pointed.
 - the angle of the rescued boat or person doesn't matter in river current.
30. When throwing a throw bag to a swimmer in current it's important to have eye contact, yell "rope", and then throw it:
- an arms length upstream of the swimmer
 - an arms length downstream of the swimmer
 - across the swimmer so the rope hits them
 - all of the above are acceptable
31. In a boat-over-boat (T) rescue the first thing is to :
- Get your hand(s) on the capsized boat.
 - Make sure that you and your group are safe and controlled
 - Make sure that the paddlers in the water are safe
 - Have the safe swimmers hold onto the capsized boat while you collect loose gear, paddles etc.
32. If a boat pins, once the paddlers are safe and you begin procedures to recover the pinned craft, which of the following actions would warrant consideration?
- Set up and down stream safety
 - Control the pinned boat with a tag line.
 - Wrap a pulling line around the hull of the pinned boat.
 - Use the Armstrong method first to pull on the recovery line.
 - All are important considerations
33. RETHROG stands for reach, throw, row then go. The go concept may involve wading in swift current.
- True
 - False
34. To wade safely you may need to:
- Set up safety above and below the site you are wading to
 - Bring a paddle with you Get help from others
 - Practice
 - All of the above



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V. Basic Paddling Skills

35. To correct a failing ferry angle the most effective stroke to initiate a turn is:
- Push away/reverse sweep
 - Stern draw
 - Bow draw on upstream side
 - Stern draw on one side bow draw on other
36. Generally speaking the power phase of a forward stroke in a river kayak stops at the?
- Knee
 - Hip
 - 6" to 8" behind the paddler
 - Both a. and b.
37. When doing peel outs - speed, angle and boat lean are critical. Boat lean is always down stream
- True
 - False
38. When making an eddy turn, the approximate angle at which you hit the eddy line is
- A little less than 45 degrees
 - 45 degrees
 - 60 degrees
 - close to 90 degrees
39. What are two strokes used to correct boat angle on upstream ferries and peelouts?
- bow sweep/stern draw
 - sculling draw/stern sweep
 - bow sweep/stern sweep
 - static rudder/Duffek
40. In general, to avoid hitting an obstacle in front of you in fast current, your strokes might best be:
- A forward sweep immediately followed by a reverse sweep
 - A draw on the move, or hanging draw stroke
 - A rudder stroke followed with a low brace
 - A reverse sweep followed by forward strokes
 - Both b and d, depending on skill and time to react



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River Kayak Day Trip Leading Assessment Exam - ANSWER SHEET

Candidate _____ ACA Number _____

Workshop Date(s) _____ Instructor/Trainer/Assessor : _____

Please circle your answers

<i>Trip Preparation & Planning</i>	<i>Rescue & Recovery</i>
1 A B C D E	26 A B C D
2 A B C D E	27 A B C D
3 A B C D	28 A B C D
4 A B C D	29 A B C
5 A B C D E	30 A B C D
6 A B C D E	31 A B C D
7 A B C D E	32 A B C D E
<i>Trip Hazards, Avoidance & Prevention</i>	33 TRUE FALSE
8 A B C D	34 A B C D
9 A B C D	<i>Basic Paddling Skills</i>
10 A B C D	35 A B C D
11 A B C D	36 A B C D
12 A B C	37 TRUE FALSE
13 A B C D	38 A B C D
14 A B C D	39 A B C D
15 A B C D	40 A B C D E
16 A B C D	
17 A B C D E	<i>Test Scoring</i>
<i>On-Water Conduct & Management</i>	Trip Preparation & Planning: ____/07
18 A B C D	Trip Hazards, Avoidance & Prevention: ____/10
19 A B C D	On-Water Conduct & Management: ____/08
20 A B C	Rescue & Recovery: ____/09
21 A B C D	Basic Paddling Skills: ____/06
22 A B C D E	Total Score: ____/40
23 A B C	28 / 40 = Passing
24 A B C D E	<i>This answer sheet is to be submitted, by the facilitating Instructor/Trainer, in conjunction with the Assessment Course report form.</i>
25 TRUE FALSE	