



Level 2: Essentials of Canoe Touring (Sample Skills Course)

Course Overview: The **Essentials of Canoe Touring** course is designed to teach beginner paddlers to safely and enjoyably canoe on quiet water.

Essential Eligibility Criteria: In order to participate in an ACA Skills Course, each participant must satisfy the following essential eligibility criteria:

- Be able to independently participate in all individual skills and activities listed in the course outline while also maintaining an appropriate and safe body position
- Be able to hold their breath while under water and, while in the water wearing a properly fitted lifejacket, be able to independently turn from a face down to a face up position keeping their head above water
- Be able to effectively communicate with the instructor and other course participants
- Be able to manage all personal care independently, or with the assistance of a companion
- Be able to manage all personal mobility independently, or with the assistance of a companion

Course Prerequisites: None

Course Duration: 8 Hours

Course Location / Venue: Flat water

Class Ratio - Tandem: 6 Students : 1 Instructor; with a qualified assistant the ratio can be 12:2
Solo: 5 Students : 1 Instructor; with a qualified assistant the ratio can be 10:2

Succeeding courses:

Level 3: Freestyle Canoe

The following is a general summary of course content for the **Essentials of Canoe Touring** course. The content covered and sequence of instruction should be adjusted to best fit the participant's needs, class location and time allowance.

Course Content

Introduction, Expectations, & Logistics:

- Welcome, introductions, paperwork
- Student & instructor course expectations and limitations
- Course itinerary & site logistics
- Review waiver, assumption of risk, challenge by choice, medical disclosure
- About the ACA
- PFD policy (always wear on water)
- Appropriate personal behavior

- No alcohol / substance abuse
- Proper etiquette on & off the water
- Respect private property
- Practice Leave No Trace ethics

The Paddling Environment:

- Wind
- Waves
- Weather
- Water

Personal Preparation:



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- Personal ability
- Swimming ability
- Water comfort & confidence
- Fitness, conditioning, and warm up
- Safe paddle and boat handling
- Safety and rescue considerations
- Personal equipment (reviewed by Instructor)

Equipment

- Life Jackets (PFDs): types & fit
- Canoes: types, materials, parts (including safety features such as flotation).
- Paddles: types (straights, bents), materials, parts, sizing, hand position.
- Care of equipment.
- Personal equipment: water, food, shoes, hat, sunscreen, bug repellent, sun glasses, eyeglass straps, protective clothing for heat or cold, sponge, bailer/pump, whistle, knife, light.
- Optional equipment and outfitting.

Getting Started

- Warm up and stretching
- How to pick up a canoe safely.
- Car topping: loading and unloading, racks, straps.
- Launching and landing.
- Boarding, three points of contact, keep weight low, etc.
- Positions in the canoe, sitting, kneeling, etc.
- Posture, rocking and balance.
- Water comfort and confidence.
- How to empty a canoe.
- Basic Terminology: onside, offside, etc.
- Types of strokes: power, turning.
- Stroke components: catch, propulsion, recovery (CPR)
- Safe and effective body usage.

Safety and Rescue:

- Exercising Judgment, Safety as a mindset, etc.
- Hypothermia: help/huddle, clothing
- Dehydration: hydration, clothing
- Hazards: wind, waves, weather, current, rocks, bridges, dams, strainers
- Rescue:
 - Rescue sequence: RETHROG
 - Rescue priorities: people, boats, gear
- Demonstrate/participate:
 - Water confidence and comfort test
 - How to empty a boat full of water
 - Swim boat to shore
 - Boat-over-boat rescue
 - Deep-water re-entry, with sling, scooping.

Paddling Concepts:

- Canoe physics: pull the paddle, push the canoe, skid turns, steer from rear, etc.
- Paddle physics: vertical blade, vertical shaft
- Body physics: torso rotation, shoulder injury, etc.
- Stroke parts: catch, propulsion, recovery
- Apply general paddling concepts:
- Vertical paddle not carried past body
- Tandems: opposite sides, in cadence, etc.
- Switch sides for fatigue and steering

Strokes and Maneuvers:

Strokes:

- Forward w/Switch, w/bent paddles
- Forward, J and C corrections
- Cross forward
- Back
- Draws: abeam, static, to bow, to stern
- Cross draws: abeam, static, to bow
- Pushaway/Pry
- Sweeps: Forward and Reverse



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Maneuvers:

- Forward: travel in reasonably straight line
- Stopping: stop in a reasonable distance
- Spin: pivot in place
- Turn: turn in arc while underway
- Moving abeam: boat moves sideways without headway
- Stop turns (onside and offside)
- Sideslips: boat moves sideways with headway

Conclusion & Wrap Up:

- Group debrief / Individual feedback
- Course limitations
- Importance of First Aid & CPR
- Importance of additional instruction, practice, experience
- Importance of appropriate level of safety & rescue training
- Demo advanced maneuver
- Life sport / Paddling options
- Local paddling groups / Clubs
- Handouts / Reference materials
- ACA Membership forms
- Course evaluation
- Participation cards