

# Call Before You Dig

## Teacher's Resource Guide

In planning for use of this video it is highly recommended that the educator request representation from a local utility company on or near the day of the viewing. The company can provide colored maps before viewing (which are much easier to read than black and white copies) and later explain the actual process for locating underground utilities in your specific district or neighborhood. For more information, visit [www.call811.com](http://www.call811.com). Please e-mail any questions or comments to: [kids@commongroundalliance.com](mailto:kids@commongroundalliance.com).

### Objectives

After watching the video and engaging in the teacher-selected instructional activities, the students will be able to explain why we should:

- ✗ Call 811 before digging
- ✗ Wait for someone to come out and mark the area before digging
- ✗ Respect the marks that indicate underground hazards
- ✗ Dig with care
- ✗ Learn how to read maps

### Pre-viewing Questions

1. Why would you dig in the yard?
2. Have you ever thought what might be under the ground in your yard?
3. What might you dig for?
4. Why do we need to know how to read a map?

Before viewing the video the teacher may choose to familiarize students with the following vocabulary terms.

Spyglass	
Utilities	Pipes and cables
Power line	Sewer and drain
Natural gas	Perspective (in relation to map reading)

### Post-viewing Discussion Questions

1. What parts of this video are real and what parts are fantasy (fiction and non-fiction)? The teacher may need to help students decipher which parts of the video were magical components added to tell the story and which parts were real.
2. Teachers will want to check the students' understanding of how to read the map provided. What items are above ground? What items are below ground? Does the map show an eye-level perspective or a bird's eye view? (If colored copies of the map are not available a teacher can use a document camera to display the colored copy to the entire class.)
3. Why is it important to make sure you dig in the right spots?
4. How do you know where it is safe? (Discuss the purpose of the white circle on the map, as the intended place for digging. Also, it is important to remember that the depth of buried utilities varies greatly, which is yet another reason to call before you dig, no matter how large or small the digging project.)
5. Who do you call to find out where pipes, cables and wires are?
6. Why is this information important?
7. What does "Respect the marks" mean?

8. Do you think the pipes in your yard are the same color as the pipes shown on the map? Who locates the lines accurately?
9. Why do you think they use the colors they do?
10. What might happen if you hit a natural gas line? A sewer line? A cable TV line? An electrical power line? (It is important that the instructor takes the time to discuss the possible serious consequences of disrupting various utility lines such as power outages, bodily harm and costly repairs.)
11. What does natural gas smell like? What should you do if you smell that rotten egg smell in your house?
12. Does anyone know the difference between the following phone numbers: 811, 911, 411, 511, etc?
13. What are the really important ideas that we should take away from this video?

### Reinforcement/Extension Activities

The following extension activities are optional. Teachers may choose to try any number of these strategies to reinforce/extend the critical information presented in this video.

1. School personnel could partner with a local utility company to sponsor a poster contest. The winning design could be used to increase awareness of the 811 message by reproduction as a postcard for mass mailing or as a billboard display (preferably located near local home improvement stores). Posters could also be showcased at a PTO meeting, back-to-school night or local library.
2. Students could follow-up the video viewing with a field trip to a local utility company.
3. Schools could partner with local home improvement stores to "get the word out."
4. As mentioned earlier, school personnel could contact a utility company and request that a representative visit the school to demonstrate the process used to locate underground lines. If this is not possible, the utility company should be able to share this information so that the classroom educator can pass it on to the students.
5. Students could interview neighbors to see how many are aware of the 811 service. Results of the interviews could be represented as a ratio or graph (math) along with qualitative information gleaned from those interviewed.
6. This video could be tied to a science unit on topics such as electricity, natural gas, and/or the transfer of energy.
7. Students could develop a short play based on the concepts introduced in the video and perform for other classes, the PTO or at Parents' Night.
8. Students could create a catchy jingle to help others remember the safety concepts (Treasure Hunter's Oath):
  - a. Call 811 before digging
  - b. Wait the required amount of time
  - c. Respect the marks: Know what's below
  - d. Dig with care
9. Students could create a comic strip with a sequence of activities related to safe and unsafe digging.