

FOCUS➤

KICKING ALONG THE GROUND AND IN THE AIR

Subfocus➤

Partner Relationships, Force

Grades 2-4

This lesson has two parts.

Standard 1

The physically literate individual demonstrates competency in a variety of motor skills and movement patterns.

Grade-Level Outcomes

- Uses a continuous running approach and kicks a moving ball, demonstrating three of the five critical elements of a mature pattern (S1.E21.2)
- Uses a continuous running approach and intentionally performs a kick along the ground and kick in the air, demonstrating four of the five critical elements of a mature pattern for each (S1.E21.3a)
- Uses a continuous running approach and kicks a stationary ball for accuracy (S1.E21.3b)
- Kicks along the ground and in the air using mature patterns (S1.E21.4)

Critical Elements for Kicking for Distance or Force

- Arms extend forward in preparation for kicking action.
- Contact with the ball is made directly below center of ball (to travel in the air); contact with ball directly behind center of ball (travel on the ground).
- Contact the ball with shoelaces, or top of foot, for kicking action.
- Trunk leans back slightly in preparation for kicking action.
- Follow through with kicking leg extending forward and upward toward target.

Lesson Objectives

The learner will:

- Extend arms in preparation and contact the ball directly behind center with the shoelaces to kick the ball along the ground
- Extend arms in preparation and contact the ball slightly below center with the shoelaces to kick the ball in the air
- Kick with accuracy at varying distances to large targets or partners
- Use a running approach to kick a moving ball
- Use a running approach to kick a stationary ball, demonstrating a step-hop
- Action and follow-through (grades 3, 4)

Safety Concern

Ensure that spacing and awareness of others is sufficient when kicking and retrieving balls.

Materials and Equipment

Kicking balls, one per student

Introduction

Earlier in the year, we worked on kicking balls along the ground. Who can tell me the keys to a successful kick—arms, contact on ball? (Younger students benefit from your demonstrating each of the previously learned critical elements.) Today, we will add kicking through the air and kicking to partners. Do we ever need those two skills in games or sports? (Take examples from students.)

PART I—INDOORS, ALONG THE GROUND

LEARNING EXPERIENCE: REVIEW OF KICKING

Have students practice kicking to the wall (on your signal)—stationary ball and stationary kicker. After a couple of minutes of kicking on signal, they progress to independent kicking. Students retrieve, check for space awareness, and continue practice without waiting for your signal.

Assessment

Practice early in the lesson provides an excellent time for you to observe critical elements and offer individual or class feedback as needed. This formative assessment early in the lesson directs the teaching to either progression or reteaching for remediation.

- Students continue practice of kicking with choice of distance, 10 feet (3 m) or 15 feet (4.5 m) from the wall (tape marks on the floor for starting position).
- Have students practice kicking to the wall with the running approach. Again, they kick on signal and progress to independent practice based on your observation of safety and accuracy of kicks.

(Observe students kicking a stationary ball with a running approach. Is the class ready for progression to a moving ball and a moving kicker?)

- Students choose kicking practice—stationary ball and stationary kicker, stationary ball and running approach, distance from wall.
- Challenge students to produce straight pathway to wall and sufficient force for ball to travel back to kicker at starting position.

LEARNING EXPERIENCE: PARTNER KICKS FOR ACCURACY—RUNNING APPROACH, STATIONARY BALL

Students select a partner with whom they want to practice kicking. They position themselves approximately 15 to 20 feet (4.5 to 6 m) apart. Partner A places the ball 3 to 4 feet (90 to 120 cm) in front of his or her standing position. Partner A approaches the ball and kicks it along the ground, sending it to partner B. Partner B then places the ball on the ground, approaches it from 3 to 4 feet, and kicks it back to partner A.

Remember, use a running approach and kick directly behind the ball.

Safety Concern

Position students so that all kicking is done in the same directions across the gymnasium or work area.

Task Extensions

- Kicking the ball from a stationary position or with a running approach
- Being far from the partner or closer
- Challenge students to kick the ball 10 times to their partner so that it travels along the ground and the partner does not need to move more than one or two steps to collect the ball. For added challenge, after five successful kicks, receiver takes a giant step backward.

Ultimate Accuracy

Partner A kicks the ball with the choices listed earlier; partner B stands with feet shoulder-width apart. The kicker attempts to send the ball along the ground in a straight pathway so that it travels between the receiver's legs. Partner B collects the ball and becomes the kicker; partner A is then the receiver. Allow several minutes of practice. (If indoor work area does not have a wall area behind kickers, organize task with three per group: kicker, receiver (target), and fielder positioned behind receiver to collect the ball as needed. Rotate positions after five kicks.)

LEARNING EXPERIENCE: RUNNING APPROACH, MOVING BALL

With partners facing each other, approximately 15 feet (4.5 m) apart, partner B gently rolls the ball toward partner A, who uses a running approach to kick the ball back to partner B. After five practice kicks, receiver and kicker switch positions.

Cues: Watch the ball. Run, run, run, kick. Contact the ball directly behind center for travel along the ground.

Safety Concern

For this first attempt at kicking with the running approach and moving ball, emphasize accuracy, not force.

Note: The distance between the partner rolling the ball and the kicker is determined by skill of the partner executing the underhand roll as well as space and safety concerns. Distance will vary for grades 2, 3, and 4.

- As students become comfortable with the running approach and moving ball, the distance between partners can be increased to provide challenge.
- Challenge students to kick with sufficient force and accuracy for the receiver to collect the ball with only one or two steps from self-space (grade 2) or without moving from self-space (grades 3, 4). Remind students that all kicks are along the ground.

Assessment

- Summative assessment of critical elements relative to kicking a stationary ball from a stationary position and kicking a stationary ball with a running approach
- Formative assessment of critical elements relative to kicking a moving ball with a running approach and accuracy to target or partner
 - Grade 2: three of five critical elements
 - Grade 3: four of five critical elements
 - Grade 4: mature pattern

Closure

- What was the focus of our lesson today?
- What new skill did we add to kicking?
- Tell your neighbor the most difficult type of kick for you: stationary ball and stationary kicker, stationary ball and moving kicker, or moving ball and moving kicker. Why is that one the most difficult for you?

Reflection

- Are students able to keep the ball on the ground for all three types of kicks?
- Do students have control of their bodies during and after the kicking action; that is, are they in balance?
- Are they ready for kicking through the air?
- Are they ready for the punt to be introduced (grade 3)?

PART II—KICKING OUTDOORS, ALONG THE GROUND AND IN THE AIR

The practice of kicking outside creates opportunities for kicking with increased force, for height, for refinement of critical elements, and for practice in an authentic environment.

Materials and Equipment

Partially deflated balls, one per student

Safety Concern

Ensure that students have spatial awareness for kicking and retrieving balls. (See the Inside-out Circle diagram for organization and management.)

LEARNING EXPERIENCE: REVIEW OF KICKING ALONG THE GROUND

- Have students practice kicking a stationary ball as stationary kicker, using maximum force for distance. Allow several minutes for students to establish maximum distance with a straight pathway to partner.

Have student practice kicking a stationary ball using a running approach, focusing on critical elements:

- Kicking really hard for maximum distance
- Kicking for accuracy in straight pathway to partner

Cues: *Extend arms (for balance). Make contact directly behind ball.*

LEARNING EXPERIENCE: KICKING THROUGH THE AIR

All of your work thus far has been on kicking the ball along the ground. You are now ready for kicking the ball for travel through the air. Watch as I demonstrate the kicking action. (Demonstrate several kicks for travel of the ball through the air.) What is different about this kick? What is the same for kicking along the ground and through the air?

After several minutes of class discussion, introduce the new critical element: contact slightly below center of the ball.

Students practice kicking to their partners so that the ball travels through the air. Allow several minutes for exploration of the aerial kick.

Cues: *Contact the ball below center. Run, run, run, kick. Watch the ball.*

The combination of kicking with force and the running approach will lead to the introduction of the step-hop as contact is made for the kick, and the resulting follow-through. Demonstrate several times.

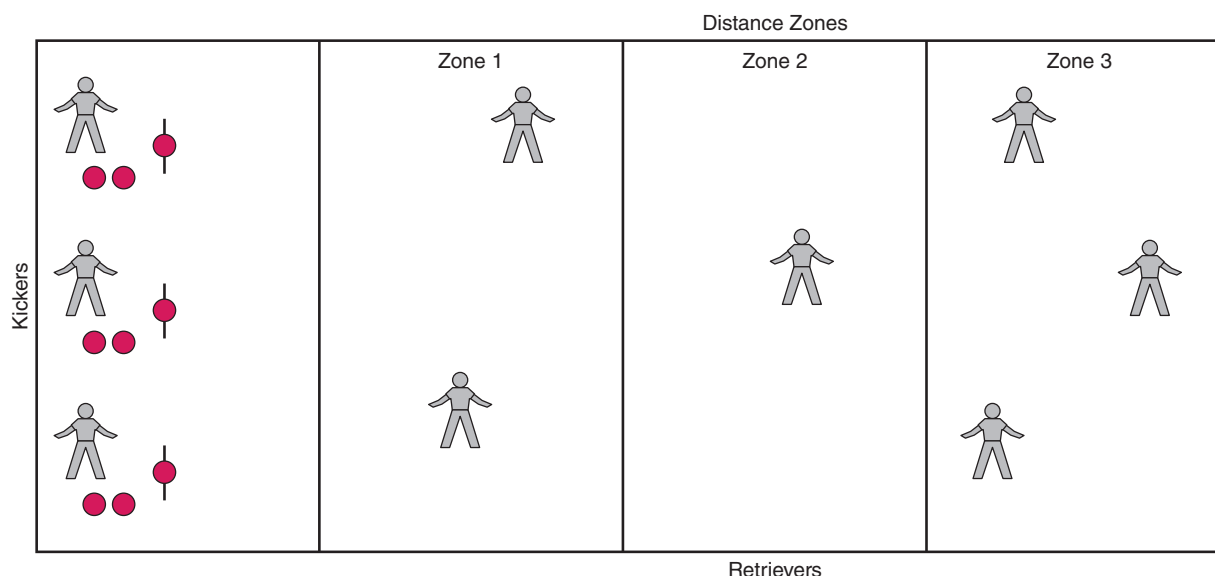
- Allow several minutes of practice as students focus on the step-hop action and high follow-through of the kick. The follow-through should be demonstrated because the height of the leg action is critical for an aerial kick.
- Observe new critical elements and provide individual assistance as needed.

Aerial Kick for Accuracy

Have students practice kicking through the air to determine range of kick. After several kicks with partners, challenge students to kick so that the partner can catch the ball. Remind each set of partners that they can determine the distance for the kick and the catch.

Aerial Kick for Distance (Grades 3, 4)

Use outdoor spray paint to create three distance zones. Partners A stand behind the kicking line with several balls each; partners B are the retrievers positioned in the zones.



Kicker stands approximately five or six steps behind the ball. With a running approach, he or she kicks the ball through the air for maximum distance. (Each kicker has three balls.) Retriever collects the balls after all three have been kicked. Partners switch positions as kicker and retriever.

Aerial Kick for Distance and Accuracy (Grade 4)

Have each student determine his or her best distance for accuracy and attempt to kick all three balls to that distance zone. Challenge students to tell their partners the distance zone that will be the target and then attempt to kick all three balls to that zone.

Assessment

The Grade-Level Outcomes for kicking (SHAPE America, 2014) are a reminder that distributed and deliberate practice is needed for mastery of skills:

- Grade 3, kicking through the air, four of five critical elements
- Grade 4, kicking through the air, mature pattern

Kicking to distance zones can easily become the assessment. Focus on the critical elements, not the distance of the kick.

Closure

- What was the focus of our lesson today?
- Tell your neighbor the key to kicking the ball in the air versus kicking the ball along the ground.
- What does the step-hop add to the kicking?
- What is the difference in the follow-through for kicking along the ground and through the air?

Reflection

- How well did students develop the skill of kicking along the ground outdoors as compared with kicking indoors?
- Was the introduction of kicking through the air appropriate for this class?
- Do the students understand the role and importance of each of the critical elements?
- Can the students (grade 4) adjust force to achieve the desired distance for the kick?