Britain’s railway network is one of the busiest in the world. Trespass on the railway can have tragic consequences.

In this activity you will study real life stories and information about the dangers of trespassing on the railway track, and then using this research write and act out your own short drama on the subject. Here are some resources you can use to research and shape your drama:

**Real life story videos**
You can download the videos below from the Secondary School Resources section at:
www.networkrail.co.uk/safetyeducation

**Nathan**
Nathan was electrocuted while playing near the railway overhead power line. He suffered severe shock and burns, and was lucky to survive.

**Leighton and Sammy**
Leighton tells the story of his girlfriend Sammy who died in his arms after she tripped and fell onto the electrified rail while they were taking a shortcut across the railway.

**Richard**
Richard drove over a level crossing when the lights were flashing and the alarm sounding, crashing into a train. His two friends died.

**Railway staff talk about what happens on the tracks**
Train drivers and a mobile operations manager for Network Rail give the lowdown on the risks.

**News reports of the real life incidents**
You can view news reports of these real life incidents via the links below:
Samantha Cook: www.news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/hampshire/6382771.stm
Richard Fleming: www.news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/highlands_and_islands/7346459.stm

**Trespass and vandalism**
This video illustrates the dangers of trespassing on the railway:
www.trackoff.org/TrespassAndVandalismaspx?subItemId=A2AD2237-950B-40B0-93B1455C6D8B40E2&#anchorVideo

**The dangers of the electrified rail**
BBC news story about deaths caused by the third rail: www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-10640569
Perspectives
A video about the impact of a death on the railway, from the point of view of railway staff as well as the British Transport Police is available from the Secondary School Resources section at: www.networkrail.co.uk/safetyeducation

Outline scenario
You should consider these aspects in creating your drama:

Characters involved
• You and your friends or others you know, or characters you’ve made up
• Parents, brothers, sisters
• Form teachers
• The emergency services
• A police officer
• An ambulance crew
• The Network Rail community safety manager
• A local councillor
• Reporters from the local newspaper and TV station

The situation
What was the occasion and time of day? For example, was it dark, cold or rainy making it hard to see what was happening, or a clear sunny day when you’d expect to know well in advance if a train was coming.

The reason for ending up on the track
A shortcut returning home from seeing friends? A game? A regular journey home from school or work? Rescuing an animal or a ball?

What happened?
There are a number of scenarios to choose from, including trespassing on the tracks illegally, or messing around on a level crossing, or an incident involving the electrified overhead lines or third rail.

Why did it happen?
A combination of factors may have caused the incident:
• Motivation for taking a risk, e.g. a bad decision due to time pressures; a desire to rescue someone or something; a game gone wrong; a mistake or misunderstanding; confusion due to emotional upset; bad influences such as friends or alcohol.
• Actual causes of harm, e.g. slipping and becoming trapped; injury; coming into contact with electrified rails or overhead lines; being hit by a train; unable to make it to safety.

What was the impact of the incident?
• What range of thoughts and emotions might different characters be experiencing?
• How would the characters react in the immediate aftermath of the accident?
• What would happen in the next few hours, days and weeks as a result of the incident?

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• STAY CLEAR OF THE TRACKS. Is it worth putting your life on the line?
  - electricity can jump up to three metres.
  - don’t play with kites or balloons near overhead power lines.
• USE THE LEVEL CROSSING. Shortcuts across the railway can kill.
• KNOW THE SIGNS. Be alert to railway signs, they could save your life.
Who’s in charge?

This activity is designed to help you explore how confident you are in making decisions. It will also help to highlight the people or processes that influence or pressure you when making a decision.

What kind of decision-maker are you?

Q1. You’re in town with a group of friends when you see two pupils from the year below you across the street. Your group crosses the street and starts following them, making loud comments and laughing. It’s obviously making them uncomfortable, and a bit scared. What do you do?
   a. I’d tell my friends to stop. If they refused, I’d walk away.
   b. I’d stick with the group, but I wouldn’t get involved in the shouting and laughing.
   c. I’d join in with the others. I wouldn’t want to be the odd one out.

Q2. Would you ever buy an item of clothing because it’s what your friends are wearing?
   a. No, I’ve got my own style and I stick to it.
   b. Sometimes, but those are the things that tend to end up at the bottom of the wardrobe!
   c. Yes – I like to fit in with what everyone else is wearing.

Q3. You’re walking to your best friend’s house after school when you run into a group of older kids. They’re playing ‘chicken’ – standing in the road, and jumping out of the way of the traffic at the last minute. They ask you to join in. What do you do?
   a. Just keep on walking. There’s no way I’m getting involved in something as stupid as that!
   b. Use delaying tactics. Tell them I’m going to get my friend and we’ll both come back and join in.
   c. Join in. Of course I know it’s dangerous but I can’t believe I’m really going to get hurt.

What are the chances?

Q4. Your best friend has been invited to a party, but their parents have said no. Your friend asks you to cover, by saying that they’re staying with you that night. What do you do?
   a. Say no. I’m not prepared to lie to both sets of parents. And what if something goes wrong at the party?
   b. Spend the whole week worrying about what to do. My friend is putting me under loads of pressure. Eventually my mum notices that there’s something wrong and I end up spilling the beans.
   c. Say yes. I know they’d do the same for me. And really, what are the chances of something going wrong?
Q5. Have you ever done something out of character, or that you knew was wrong or stupid, to try to make someone new like you?

a. No. I want people to like me for myself, not for some fake version of me.
b. Sometimes I catch myself laughing a bit too loudly, or saying things I wouldn’t normally say, when I’m around someone new.
c. Yes. I often get nervous when I’m around someone new and I don’t feel like I’m in control.

Q6. When you have to make a decision, which of the following is most important to you?

a. Making sure I look at all sides of the argument.
b. Getting it over and done with as quickly as possible.
c. Keeping other people happy.

Now look at your answers. How many As, Bs or Cs did you get? Check below to find out more about your decision-making style.

Mostly As: Mr or Miss Independent
You certainly seem to know your own mind. That’s great – it means you’re confident, and clear about your own limits and boundaries. Just make sure you don’t end up so convinced that you’re always right that you ignore other possibilities. Sometimes it’s good to listen to other people and take their views on board.

Mostly Bs: In the Mix
Like most of us, you’re somewhere in the middle. You tend to dither a bit and worry about the decisions you’ve got to make rather than tackling them in a logical way. The good news is that you’ve got the makings of a great decision-maker. You just need to spend a bit more time weighing up the pros and cons. And learn to listen to – and trust – your own inner voice.

Mostly Cs: The Butterfly
You tend to go along with the crowd, and that can get you into trouble. You don’t have to curb your enthusiasm all the time – after all, it’s a big part of who you are and what makes you fun to be around. Try to slow down a bit, and think before you take the plunge.

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Reporting on the railway

The ancient Greeks first had the idea of moving freight in carts along tracks carved in rock. In the sixteenth century Germany created a wooden railway. However, the first use of steam locomotives was in Britain, and the UK’s railway system is the oldest in the world.

The first public railway was built in 1807, using horse drawn carriages on an existing tramline. A number of small, privately owned lines followed. During the 1840s a national rail network was almost completed. Building the railway totally transformed towns and the landscape. Writers and artists of the time captured the enormous changes brought by the arrival of the railway.

Read this description of the construction of the new railway in Britain from the nineteenth century:

**Extract from Chapter 6 of Dombey and Son by Charles Dickens**
*(first published in monthly parts 1846–1848)*

The first shock of a great earthquake had, just at that period, rent the whole neighbourhood to its centre. Traces of its course were visible on every side. Houses were knocked down; streets broken through and stopped; deep pits and trenches dug in the ground; enormous heaps of earth and clay thrown up; buildings that were undermined and shaking, propped by great beams of wood. Here, a chaos of carts, overthrown and jumbled together, lay topsy-turvy at the bottom of a steep unnatural hill; there, confused treasures of iron soaked and rusted in something that had accidentally become a pond. Everywhere were bridges that led nowhere; thoroughfares that were wholly impassable; Babel towers of chimneys, wanting half their height; temporary wooden houses and enclosures, in the most unlikely situations; carcasses of ragged tenements, and fragments of unfinished walls and arches, and piles of scaffolding, and wildernesses of bricks, and giant forms of cranes, and tripods straddling above nothing. There were a hundred thousand shapes and substances of incompleteness, wildly mingled out of their places, upside down, burrowing in the earth, aspiring in the air, mouldering in the water, and unintelligible as any dream. Hot springs and fiery eruptions, the usual attendants upon earthquakes, lent their contributions of confusion to the scene. Boiling water hissed and heaved within dilapidated walls; whence, also, the glare and roar of flames came issuing forth; and mounds of ashes blocked up rights of way, and wholly changed the law and custom of the neighbourhood.

In short, the yet unfinished and unopened Railroad was in progress; and, from the very core of all this dire disorder, trailed smoothly away, upon its mighty course of civilisation and improvement.

But as yet, the neighbourhood was shy to own the Railroad. One or two bold speculators had projected streets; and one had built a little, but had stopped among the mud and ashes to consider farther of it. A bran-new Tavern, redolent of fresh mortar and size, and fronting nothing at all, had taken for its sign The Railway Arms; but that might be rash enterprise—and then it hoped to sell drink to the workmen. So, the Excavators’ House of Call had sprung up from a beer-shop; and the old-established Ham and Beef Shop had become the Railway Eating House, with a roast leg of pork daily, through interested motives of a similar immediate and popular description. Lodging-house keepers
were favourable in like manner; and for the like reasons were not to be trusted. The general belief was very slow. There were frowzy fields, and cow-houses, and dunghills, and dustheaps, and ditches, and gardens, and summer-houses, and carpet-beating grounds, at the very door of the Railway. Little tumuli of oyster shells in the oyster season, and of lobster shells in the lobster season, and of broken crockery and faded cabbage leaves in all seasons, encroached upon its high places. Posts, and rails, and old cautions to trespassers, and backs of mean houses, and patches of wretched vegetation, stared it out of countenance. Nothing was the better for it, or thought of being so. If the miserable waste ground lying near it could have laughed, it would have laughed it to scorn, like many of the miserable neighbours.

Questions:

1. What would you say is Dickens’ overall impression of the railroad?

2. Provide a summary of the positive and negative implications of the new railroad from Dickens’ perspective. Provide evidence from the text to support your view.

3. If Dickens were alive today what differences might he observe in the way major railway infrastructure projects are carried out in modern times?

4. What concerns about construction work on the railway might people living locally raise today? E.g. TV reception, view, safety etc. Pretend you are a representative from the railway – how would you manage local people’s concerns?

Creative exercise

Either:
Write a story that is based on the perils of a young person taking a dangerous split-second decision near the electrified railway. For example, one summer afternoon a group of mates has gone out to find something to do. They end up close to the railway line. What happens next?

Or:
Considering what you have learned, write a poem that captures your impressions of how a major railway upgrade can impact on individuals and the community.

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Shocking campaigns

Railway routes across Britain are being electrified to make journeys faster, greener, and more reliable. Electrification will improve travel between major cities and is vital in supporting economic growth.

But electricity that powers the railway can be dangerous. In this activity you will study different safety campaigns and then create your own! Start by comparing, contrasting and evaluating the following railway safety posters that have been created over the last 40 years.

POSTERS
Look at the posters on the right and then answer these questions:

• Which is the most effective poster and why?
• What is the message each poster is trying to convey?
• Who is it meant for? (i.e. is the communication targeted at a specific audience such as teenagers?) Give evidence to support this view.
• What visual or narrative techniques have been used? Are they effective or ineffective?

BROADCAST SAFETY
Now, using the same questions and criteria, can you evaluate the following rail safety TV adverts and videos?

Public information – substations danger: 1979
www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y-yGTrd4Z7I

Electricity (Football) public information film 1989:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=bjgeUiNwtEU

Network Rail “Watch Rush” Campaign 2008:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=nJgHZgWndjs
Creative exercise

Now design your own railway electricity safety poster or TV advert. Messages that you might want to get across may include the following:

- Railway electricity in overhead power lines is 100 times greater than electricity in the home.
- 9 out of 10 people die from the electric shock received from getting too close to railway overhead power lines.
- The conductor rail (also known as the third rail and overhead power lines have electricity flowing through them at all times and are never switched off. They will kill or seriously harm anyone that comes into contact with them.
- Electricity in overhead lines can ‘jump’. You don’t have to touch the overhead lines to get electrocuted. Playing with a kite or balloon or dangling things from railway bridges near electric power lines are very dangerous things to do.
- Stay clear of the tracks. Is it worth putting your life on the line?
- Use the level crossing. Shortcuts across the railway can kill.
- Know the signs. Be alert to railway signs, they could save your life.

If you opt for a TV advert draw up a storyboard and a script. There is an example of a TV railway safety advert storyboard and script below. Think carefully about what messages you are trying to convey and the audience you wish to reach – use language, visuals and other techniques that will encourage this audience to stay safe.

Example of a storyboard and script from a recent TV safety advert: Network Rail’s TV advert “See Track. Think Train.”

M&C Saatchi’s most recent TV advertising campaign on level crossing safety for Network Rail aimed to make pedestrians realise they should approach any railway crossing with a great sense of caution, following research which found that we treat railway tracks as being only mildly risky, like a country road. For the message to have impact the advertising aimed to surprise and startle people – making them ‘jump’. The advertising team also came up with a memorable endline: “See Track. Think Train.”

You can view the advert and ‘making of’ film in the video gallery on the ‘Rail Life’ website: www.rail-life.co.uk

Railway Electricity is 100 times more powerful than electricity in the home. It is very dangerous so remember the Rail Life ‘Safety Top 3’:

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Example script “See Track. Think Train.”

“SEE TRACK. THINK TRAIN.”
This ad features a family of four as they amble through the British countryside. All the while, they’re playing a rapid-fire game of eye spy. The family dog is with them and seems to want to involve himself in the game. The pace is peaceful and serene as the family scour the idyllic landscape for the correct answer. Mum and Dad are in their early 40’s, the daughter’s 15 and the son’s 7.

SON
I… Spy… With my little eye… Something… Beginning with… ‘T’.

Mum, Dad and the daughter begin to look around for clues.

MUM
Is it a tractor?

She points to a tractor in a field.

SON
No.

DAD
Tree?

SON
Nope.

DAUGHTER
Is it a Train?

We see a train travelling right to left in the distance.

SON
No.
DAD
Is it a tyre?

We see a tyre swing in a tree.

SON
No.

MUM
Is it Teddy?

DAUGHTER
It has to be a tree...

SON
We’ve had that. Do you give up?

DAD
Yes I do.

MUM
Me too.

DAUGHTER
Wait, is it tracks?

As she says that, a train, travelling from left to right, wipes the screen. One minute she’s there, the next, there’s just a wall of train (like the bus scene in ‘Final Destination’). We fade to black and hear the train’s frightful horn.

VO (voice over)
Distractions can cost you your life.

SUPER
“SEE TRACK. THINK TRAIN.”
Example storyboard “See Track. Think Train.”
‘Rail Life’ is run by Network Rail.  www.networkrail.co.uk/safetyeducation
Now it’s your turn – create your own storyboard!

Use the frames below to create a storyboard for your advert. If you need additional frames, you can use extra sheets.