

Activity: What NOT to do in the Chemistry Lab

FOR THE TEACHER

Summary

In this activity, students will examine a cartoon of a chaotic chemistry laboratory and note the specific behaviors that are dangerous and unsafe in a chemistry laboratory setting. This activity provides an opportunity for teachers to introduce laboratory safety and best laboratory practices and discuss them with their students.

Grade Level

High, Middle or Elementary School

Objectives

By the end of this activity, students should be able to

- Distinguish between safe and unsafe behavior in the chemistry laboratory.
- Understand the importance of following safety rules in a chemistry laboratory.
- Responsibly follow safety guidelines presented in a chemistry laboratory.

Chemistry Topics

This activity supports students' understanding of

- Laboratory Safety

Time

Teacher Preparation: 5 minutes

Lesson: 20-30 minutes

Materials

- Safety Cartoon handout
- Projector (optional)

Safety

- No specific safety precautions need to be observed for this activity.

Teacher Notes

- This cartoon is meant to be an exaggeration, and the intention is for it to be used to help initiate a discussion in your classroom about laboratory safety. An assortment of safety violations can be found in the cartoon, including: goggles should be worn, shoes should be worn, eating and drinking in the lab is prohibited and horseplay is prohibited.
- We suggest providing a photocopy of the student document to each of your students. Then students should be given some time to find the unsafe behaviors in the cartoon.
- It is encouraged to have your students make a list of each safety infraction that is found, and explain *why* this is an unsafe behavior in the chemistry laboratory.
- If you have access to a projector, after the student investigation, use the projector so the students can all view the cartoon at the same time and your class can have a meaningful discussion about the safety violations, and best practices for the chemistry laboratory.

