

Locomotor Skills: Walking, Running, Galloping & Skipping

Grades K-2

Physical Education

SHAPE America 2024

30-40 min

Standards: S1.E1 (Walking/Running) | S1.E2 (Galloping/Skipping) | S1.E3 (Sliding/Leaping)

Lesson Overview

Students explore four fundamental locomotor skills - walking, running, galloping, and skipping - through structured practice, teacher-led instruction, and guided movement activities. Aligned to SHAPE America 2024 National Physical Education Standards, this lesson builds spatial awareness, coordination, and rhythmic movement foundational to all future PE skill development.

Learning Objectives

- Demonstrate correct form for walking (arms swing, heel-to-toe, upright posture)
- Run with proper technique: forward lean, pumping arms, landing on balls of feet
- Perform a gallop with a consistent lead foot and smooth rhythm
- Execute a two-beat skip pattern (step-hop) with coordination and balance
- Identify the name and key cue for each locomotor skill when prompted

Materials Needed

- Gym or open outdoor space (approx. 40x60 ft minimum)
- Cones or poly spots to mark boundaries and pathways
- Music with clear 4/4 beat (optional but recommended for skipping)
- Printed observation rubric (pages 3-4 of this PDF)

Grade-Level Modifications

- > Kindergarten: Focus on walking + running only. Introduce gallop as "bonus."
- > Grade 1: Add gallop. Allow generous cuing and modeling repetition.
- > Grade 2: Full four skills. Introduce skipping with partner mirroring activity.

WARM-UP*8 minutes***Freeze Tag Walk (3 min)**

Students walk throughout the space. On "Freeze!" they stop in a balanced position. Teacher reinforces: tall back, arms swinging, eyes forward.

Animal Walk Warm-Up (3 min)

Bear walk (on hands and feet), crab walk, bunny hops. Activates core, shoulders, and legs.

Stretching Circle (2 min)

Standing quad stretch (balance), arm circles, ankle rolls. Teacher narrates body-part activation.

DIRECT INSTRUCTION*7 minutes*

- Model each skill in sequence: walk -> run -> gallop -> skip. Name each one clearly.
- Give 1-2 key cues per skill (e.g., skip = "step-HOP, step-HOP").
- Have class mirror teacher for 30 seconds per skill before independent practice.
- Use "freeze-check" technique: students freeze, teacher points to a student for live feedback.

MAIN ACTIVITY*18 minutes***Locomotor Stations (10 min)**

Four cones mark a large rectangle. Each side uses a different skill: Side A walk, Side B run, Side C gallop, Side D skip. Class circulates. Teacher rotates to coach and observe. Play music - change skills when music pauses.

Partner Mirror Game (5 min)

Partners face each other. Leader performs a skill; partner mirrors. Switch leader every 60 seconds. Encourages rhythmic coordination and peer learning.

Skill-Card Challenge (3 min)

Teacher holds up picture cards (walking figure, running figure, etc.). Students must perform the correct skill immediately. Speed up the pace to increase engagement.

COOL-DOWN*5 minutes***Slow Walk Debrief (2 min)**

Students walk slowly in a circle. Teacher asks: "What's the difference between galloping and skipping?" Students answer as they walk.

Seated Stretching (2 min)

Seated forward fold, butterfly stretch, supine knee-to-chest. Hold each 15 seconds.

Exit Reflection (1 min)

Students hold up 1-4 fingers to self-assess: 1 = I need more practice, 4 = I can teach this to a friend.

3-Tier Observation Rubric

Use during Main Activity stations. Circle the level for each student. Attach to grade book.

- Beginning** Student attempts skill but has critical errors in form or rhythm
- Developing** Student performs skill with minor inconsistencies or prompting needed
- Proficient** Student performs skill independently with correct form and rhythm

Skill	Standard	Beginning	Developing	Proficient
Walking	S1.E1	Inconsistent arm swing; shuffling or toe dragging; posture hunched	Occasional arm swing; mostly heel-to-toe; minor posture issues	Smooth arm swing; heel-to-toe footstrike; upright posture; eyes forward
Running	S1.E1	Arms cross body; flat-footed; no forward lean; labored movement	Some forward lean; arms pump but crossing midline; landing inconsistent	Forward lean; arms pump at 90 deg; lands on ball of foot; fluid stride
Galloping	S1.E2	Lead foot inconsistent; step-together rhythm uneven; losing balance	Consistent lead foot; rhythm developing; occasional balance loss	Consistent lead foot; smooth step-together rhythm; controlled balance
Skipping	S1.E2	Step-hop pattern absent; running or walking instead; no arm coordination	Step-hop present but arrhythmic; arms not synchronized with feet	Smooth step-hop alternating feet; arms swing in opposition; rhythmic

Teacher Observation Notes

Student Name Grid (record tier 1/2/3 per skill)

Student Name	Walk	Run	Gallop	Skip