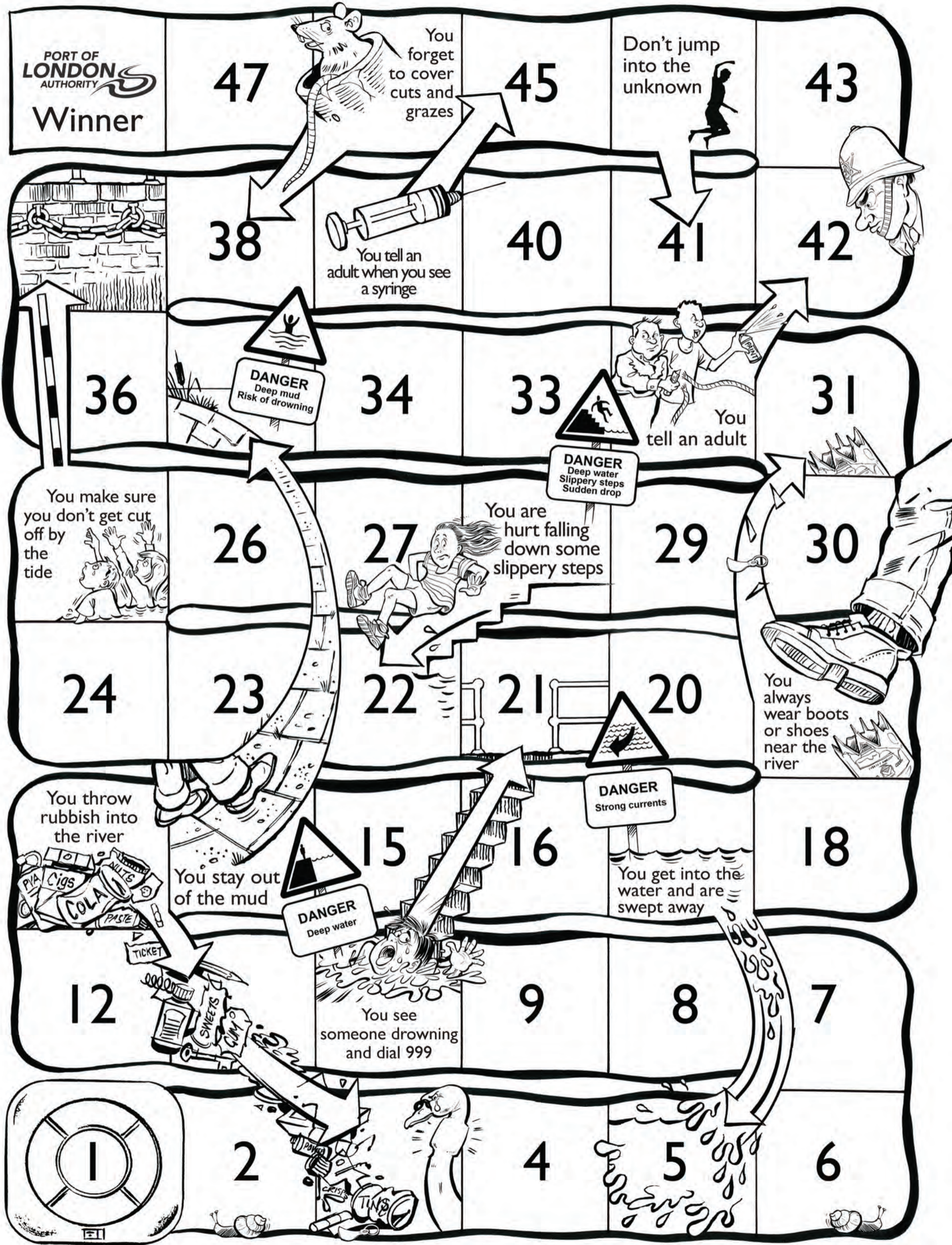


# The Riverside Code

PORT OF  
**LONDON**  
AUTHORITY



# The Riverside Code



PORT OF LONDON AUTHORITY  
Winner

47

You forget to cover cuts and grazes

45

Don't jump into the unknown

43

38

You tell an adult when you see a syringe

40

41

42

36

**DANGER**  
Deep mud  
Risk of drowning

34

33

**DANGER**  
Deep water  
Slippery steps  
Sudden drop

You tell an adult

31

You make sure you don't get cut off by the tide

26

27

You are hurt falling down some slippery steps

29

30

24

23

22

21

20

You always wear boots or shoes near the river

You throw rubbish into the river

You stay out of the mud

**DANGER**  
Deep water

15

16

**DANGER**  
Strong currents

18

You get into the water and are swept away

12

You see someone drowning and dial 999

9

8

7

2

4

5

6

1

# The Riverside Code

The Riverside Code is designed to explain and promote safety on the River Thames. The Code's main aim is to prevent accidents in the river as well as on the foreshore.

Many people drown in the Thames each year. These deaths reflect the fact that although the Thames always appears to be a broad, slow river, it is in fact fast, cold and unpredictable.

You can use this book with other material. We also have an exhibition trailer on the same subject.

We would also like to thank Northcourt Primary School in Gravesend, BP and Shell.

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**DANGER**  
Deep water  
Slippery steps  
Sudden drop



**DANGER**  
Strong currents



**DANGER**  
Deep mud  
Risk of drowning



**DANGER**  
Deep water

## The Riverside Code

- Spot the dangers
- Pick up advice
- Learn how to help
- Always go with an adult
- Stay safe
- Have fun by the river

Don't jump  
into the  
unknown

# SPLASH!

**PORT OF  
LONDON  
AUTHORITY**

If someone  
is in trouble

No  
swimming

Don't  
throw  
rubbish

Walk down  
steps or  
ramps

Getting off  
the foreshore

Wear shoes  
or boots

Watch out  
for mud

Strong  
currents

Report  
vandalism

Cover  
cuts and  
scratches

# Don't run down the steps.



# Don't get stuck in the mud.



# Put on your boots.

If someone is in trouble

No swimming

Don't throw rubbish

Walk down steps or ramps

Getting off the foreshore

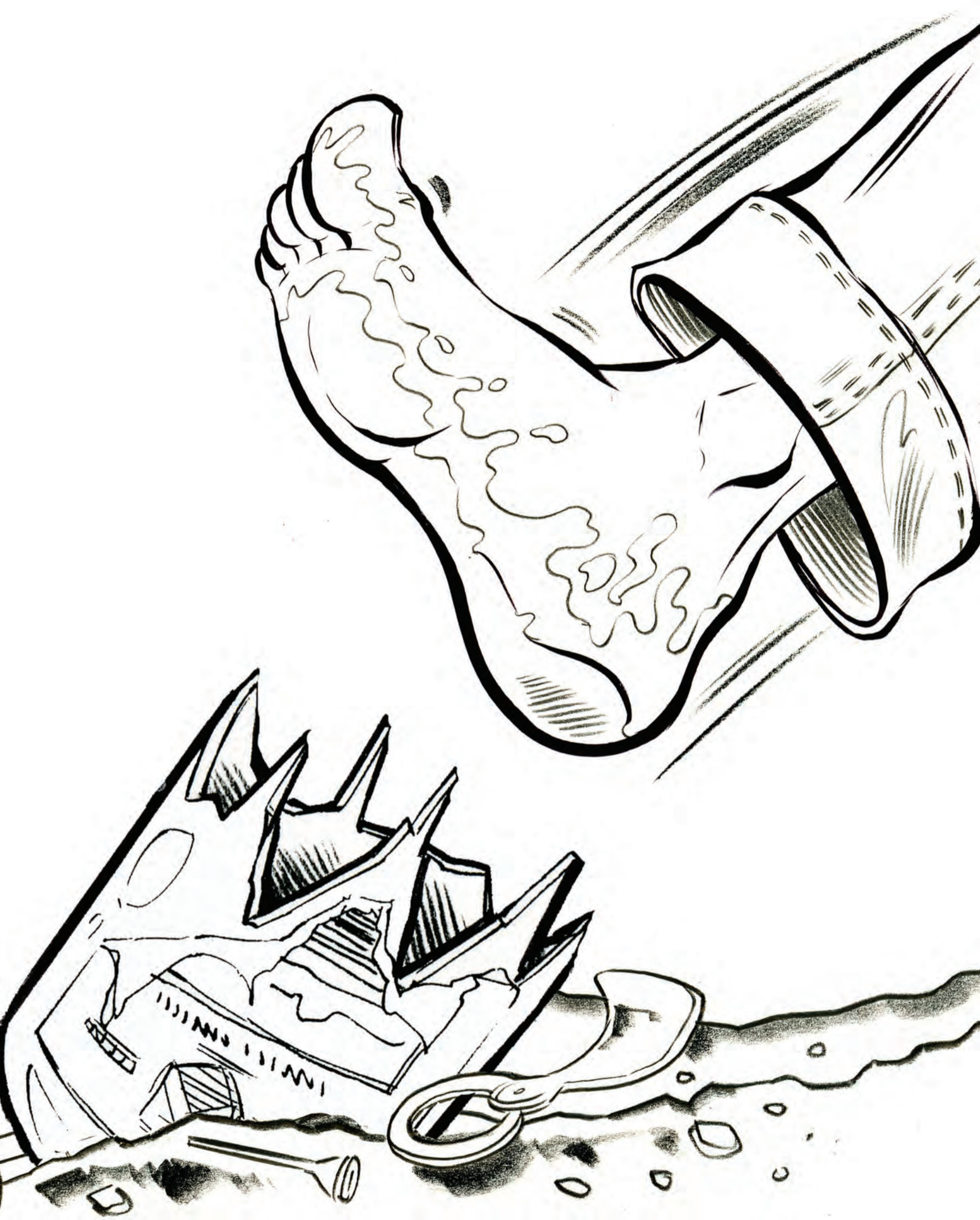
Wear shoes or boots

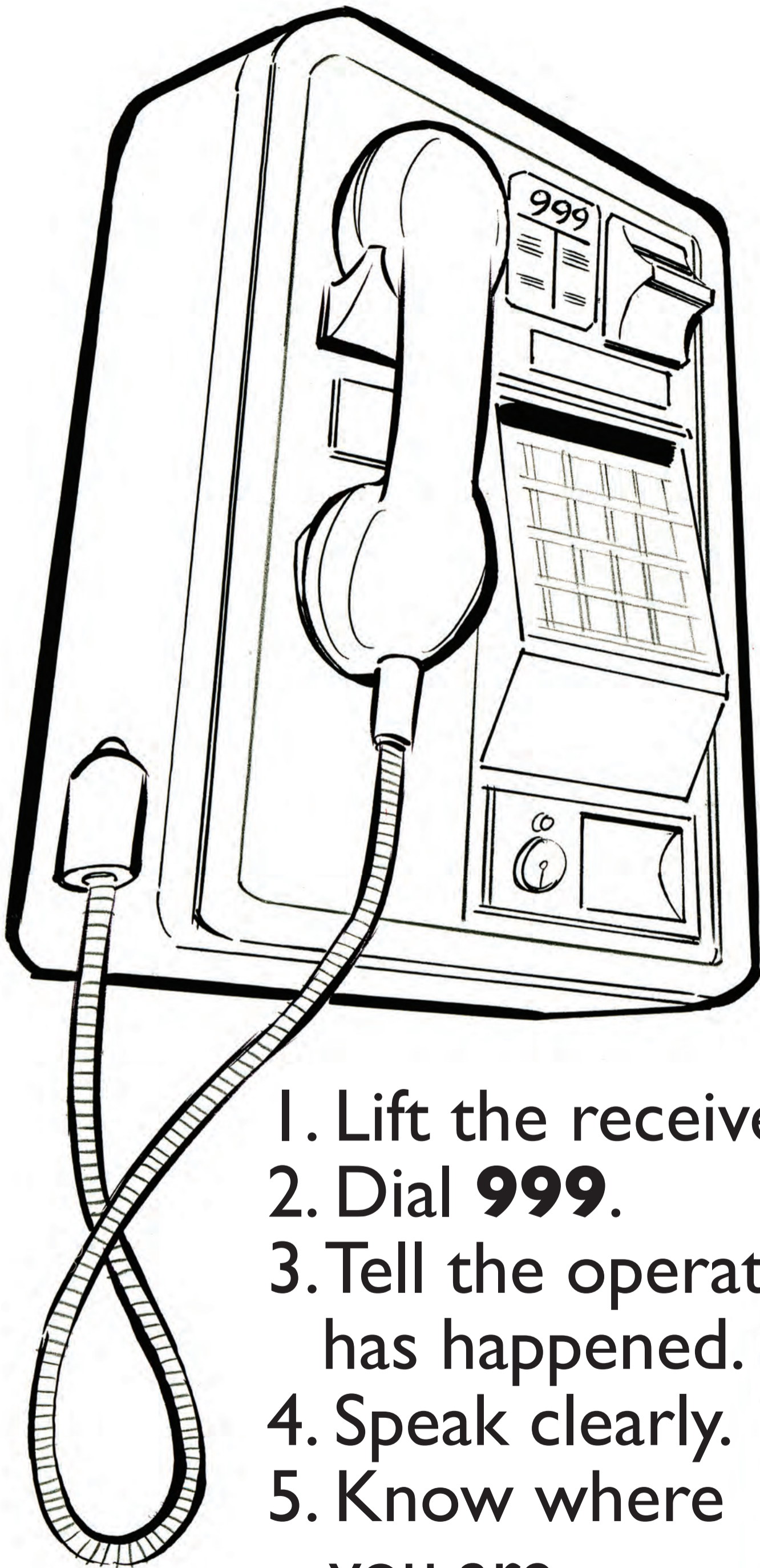
Watch out for mud

Strong currents

Report vandalism

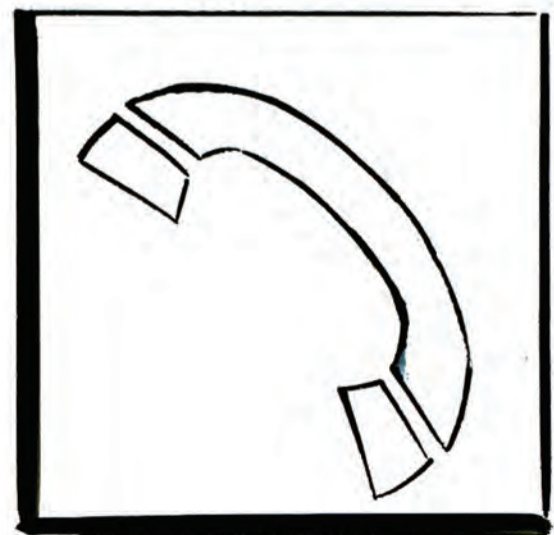
Cover cuts and scratches





**Use the  
phone  
to call  
for help.**

1. Lift the receiver.
2. Dial **999**.
3. Tell the operator what has happened.
4. Speak clearly.
5. Know where you are.







If someone  
is in trouble

No  
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the foreshore

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Watch out  
for mud

Strong  
currents

Report  
vandalism

Cover  
cuts and  
scratches

**The water  
is cold and  
deep.  
The current  
is strong.**



The current can travel at five miles an hour

Even fast swimmers can't beat the current





**Boats may not see you**

If someone is in trouble

No swimming

Don't throw rubbish

Walk down steps or ramps

Getting off the foreshore

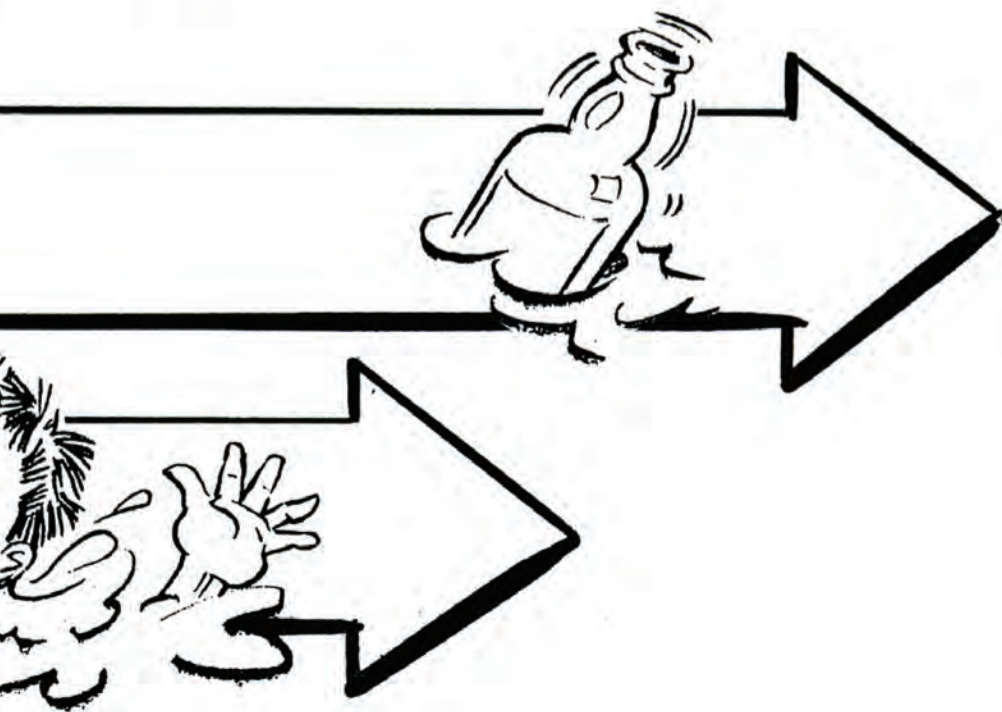
Wear shoes or boots

Watch out for mud

Strong currents

Report vandalism

Cover cuts and scratches

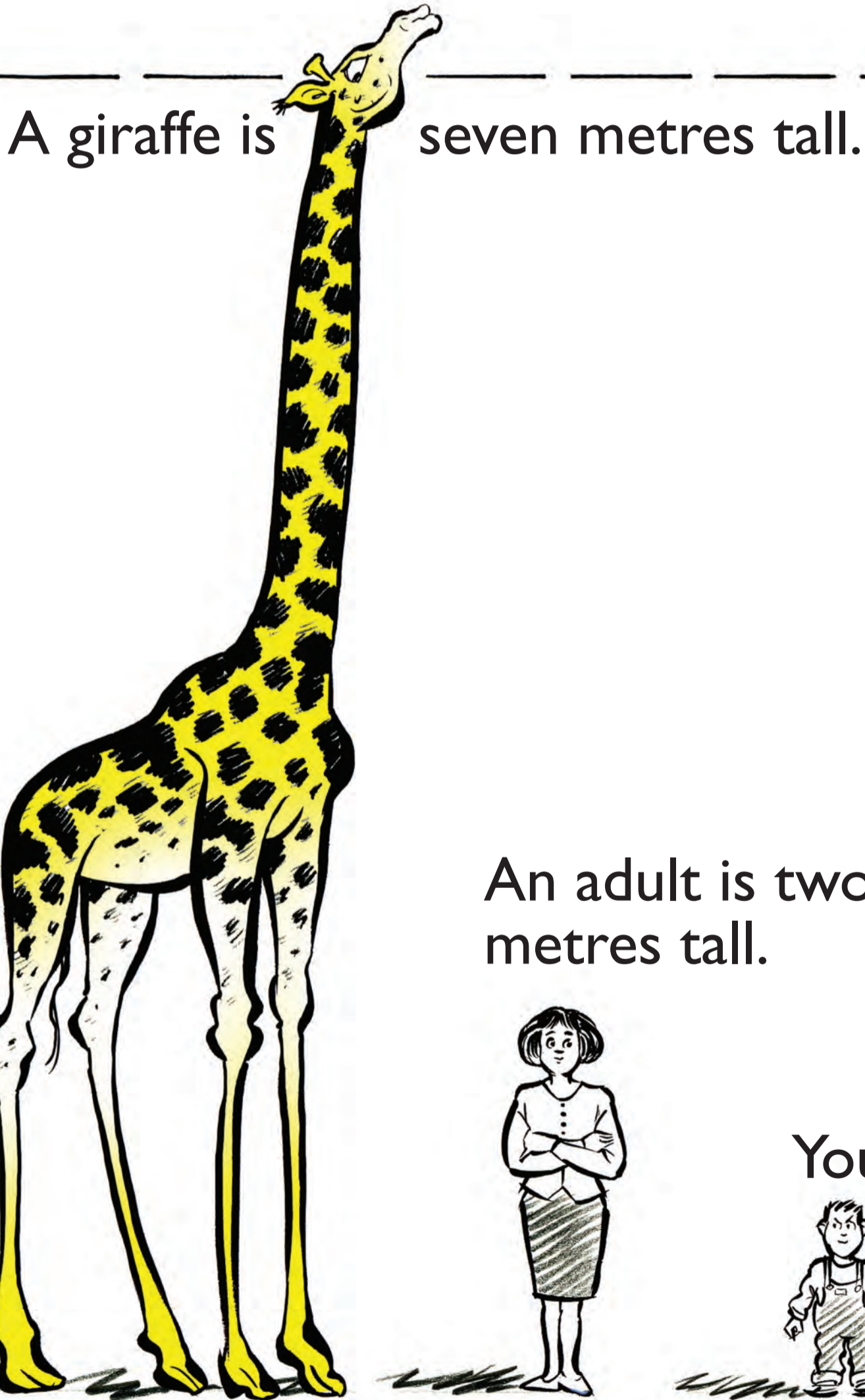


**Mud is easy to sink into and hard to get out of.**



**Don't be a stick in the mud.**

# Mud can be eight metres deep.



A giraffe is seven metres tall.

An adult is two metres tall.

You

If someone is in trouble

No swimming

Don't throw rubbish

Walk down steps or ramps

Getting off the foreshore

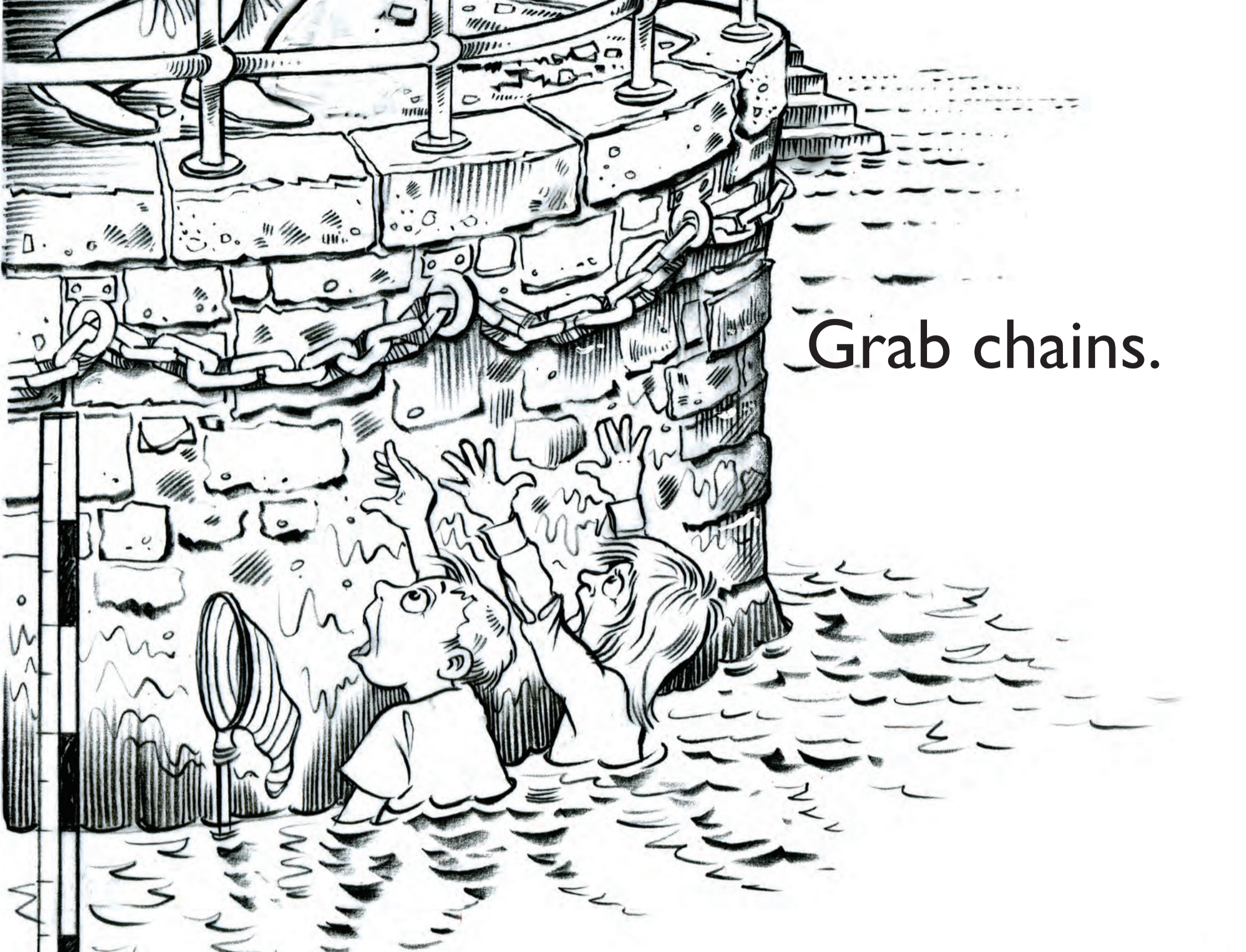
Wear shoes or boots

Watch out for mud

Strong currents

Report vandalism

Cover cuts and scratches

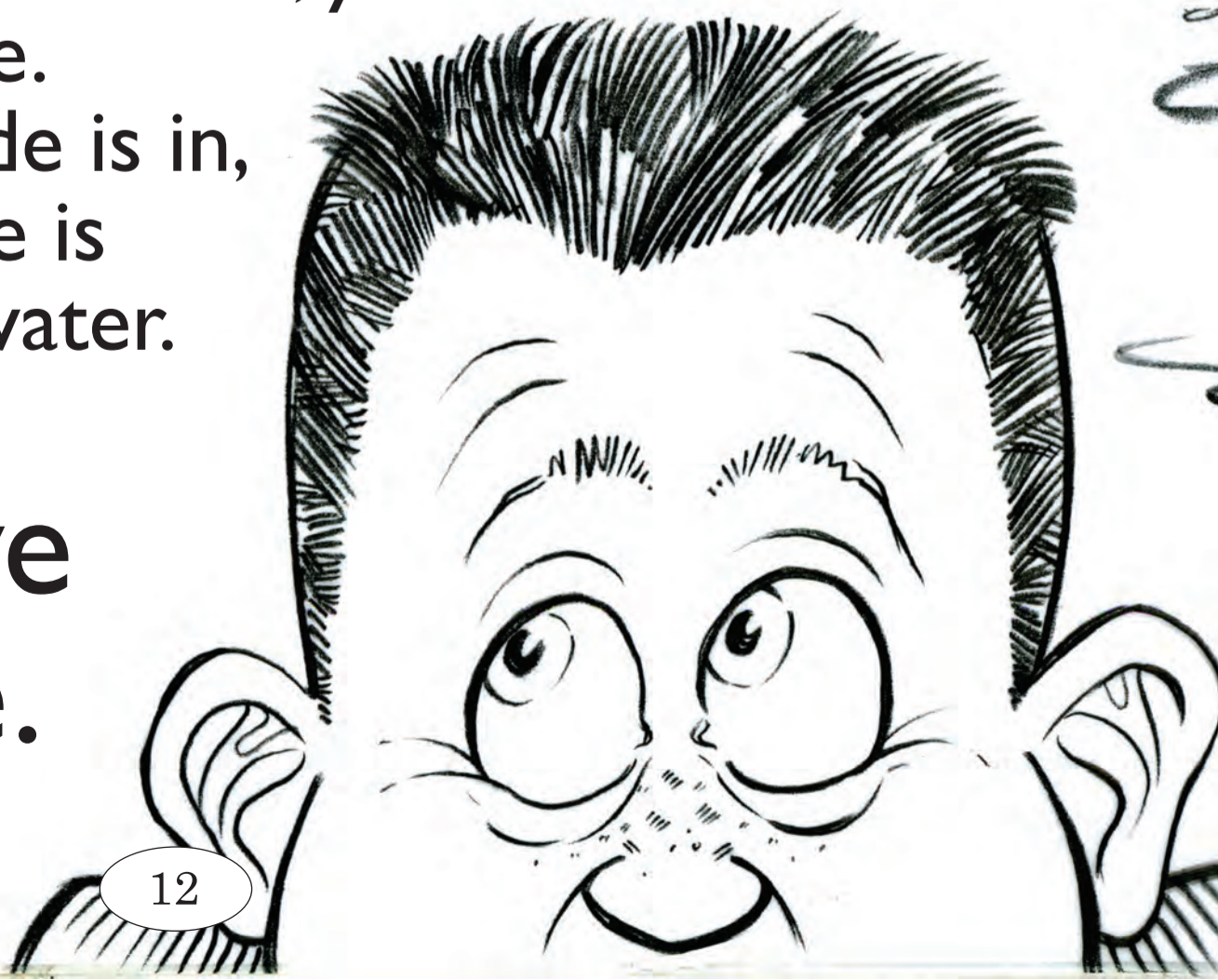


**Grab chains.**

**Don't get stuck on the foreshore.**

The tide makes the water rise and fall. When the tide is out, you can see the foreshore. When the tide is in, the foreshore is covered by water.

**Keep an eye on the tide.**



# Slippery steps can make you fall.

If someone  
is in trouble

No  
swimming

Don't  
throw  
rubbish

Walk down  
steps or  
ramps

Getting off  
the foreshore

Wear shoes  
or boots

Watch out  
for mud

Strong  
currents

Report  
vandalism

Cover  
cuts and  
scratches





Wear the right shoes.



**Cover cuts and scratches.**



Sharp things can be hidden on the foreshore.





If someone is in trouble

No swimming

Don't throw rubbish

Walk down steps or ramps

Getting off the foreshore

Wear shoes or boots

Watch out for mud

Strong currents

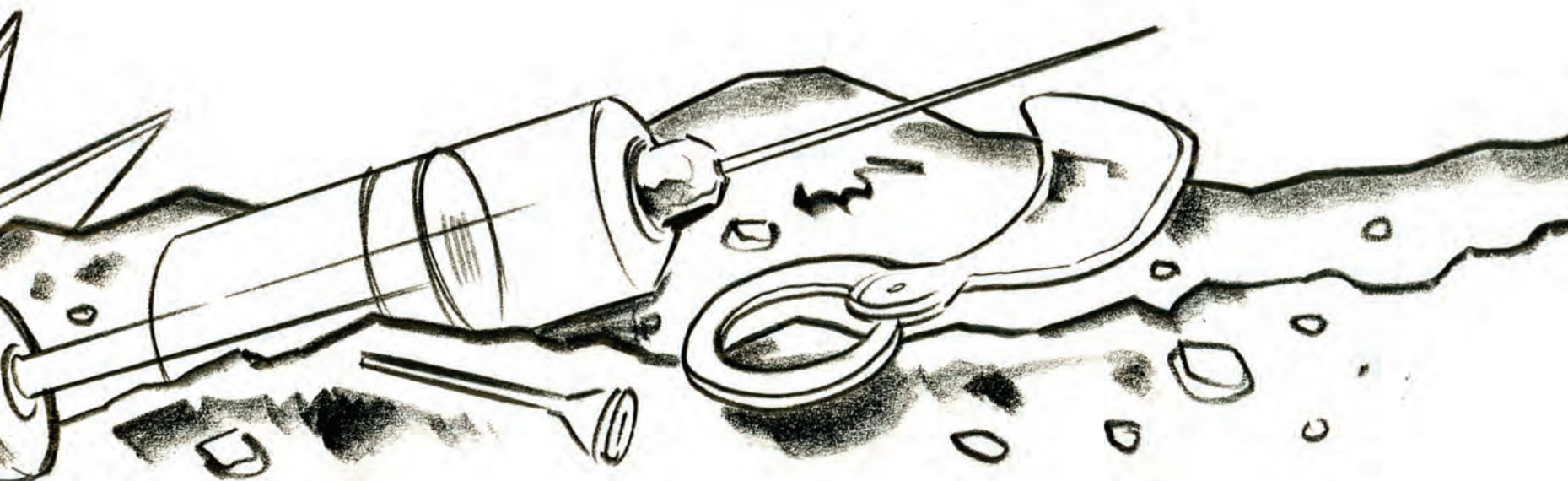
Report vandalism

Cover cuts and scratches

What sort of shoes will protect your feet?



Tell an adult if you see a needle.





If someone  
is in trouble

No  
swimming

Don't  
throw  
rubbish

Walk down  
steps or  
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Getting off  
the foreshore

Wear shoes  
or boots

Watch out  
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Strong  
currents

Report  
vandalism

Cover  
cuts and  
scratches

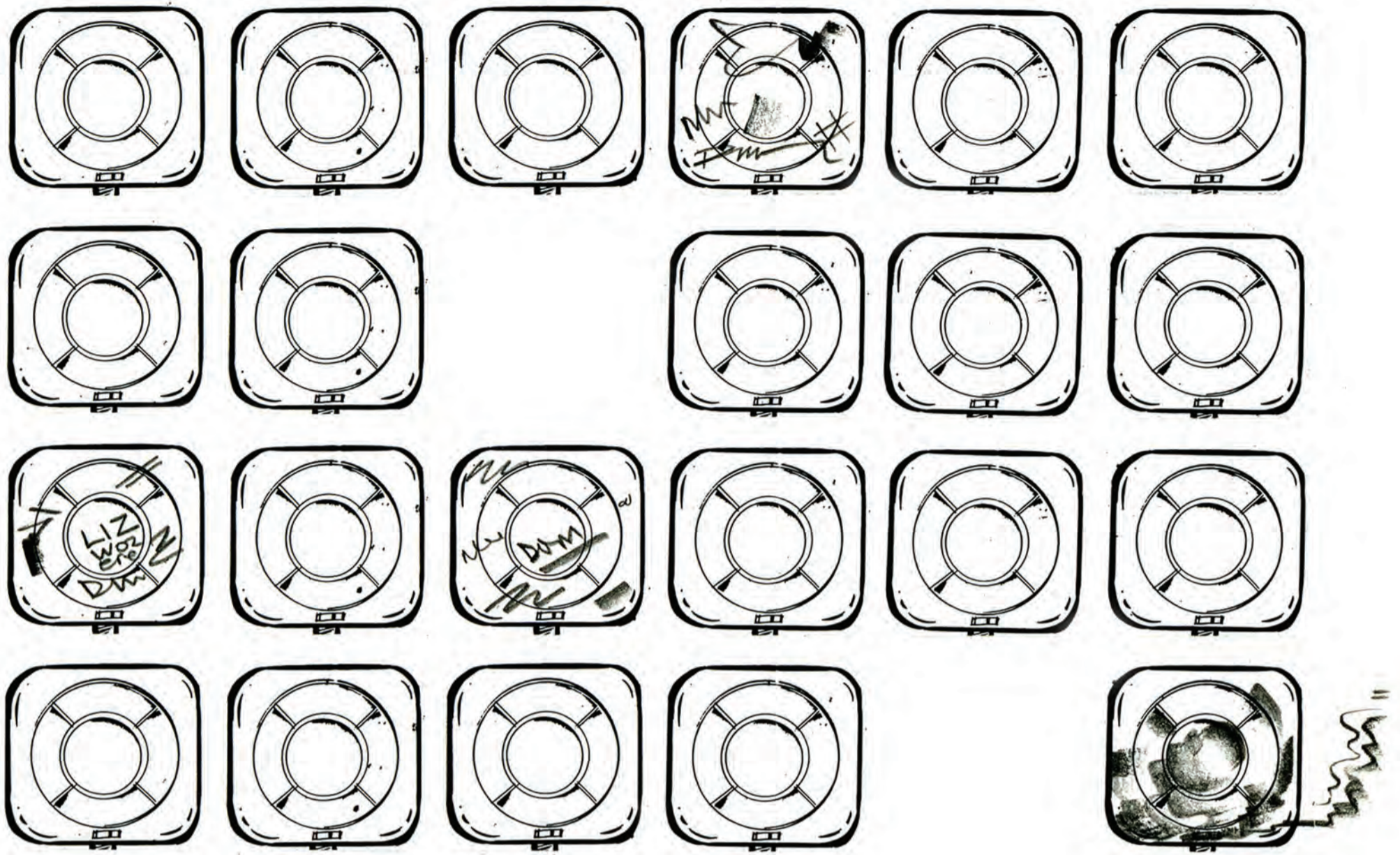


# Don't throw rubbish in the river.

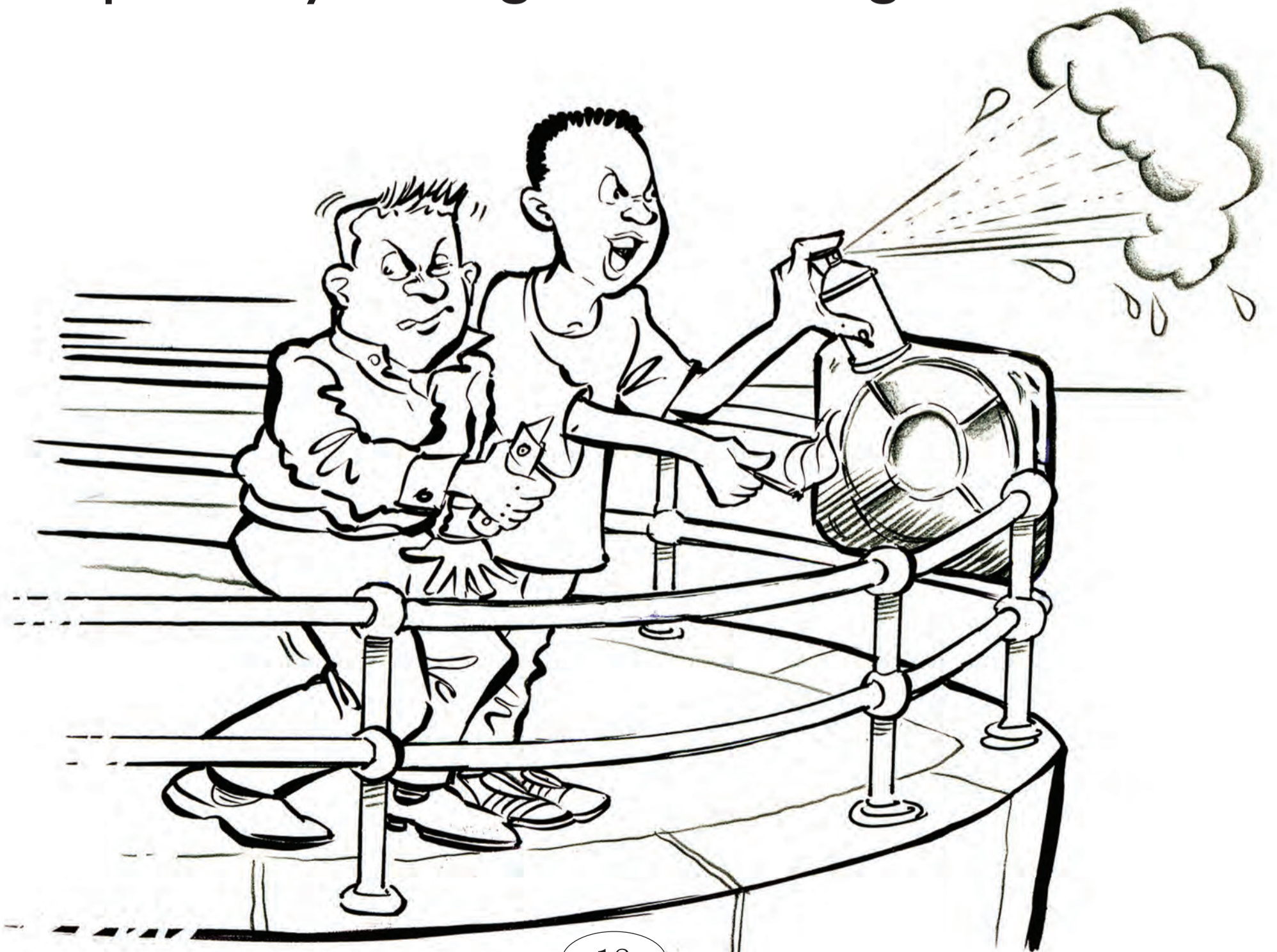


The river is home to  
lots of birds,  
fish and animals.





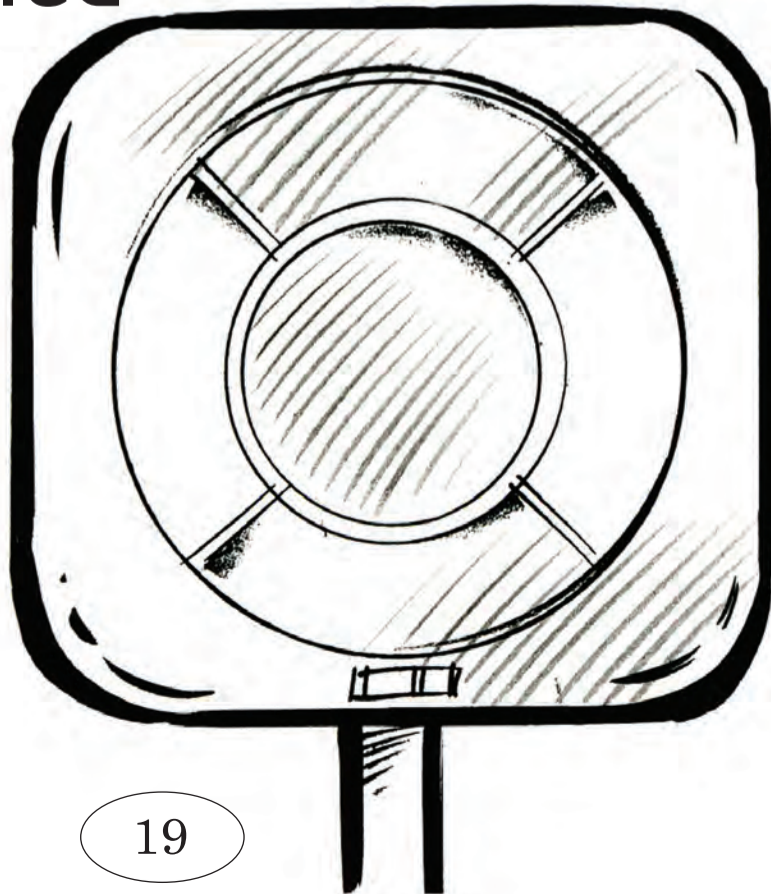
Report any damaged or missing lifebelts.



# Vandals put lives at risk.



It is hard to read a safety notice if someone has scribbled on it.



If someone is in trouble

No swimming

Don't throw rubbish

Walk down steps or ramps

Getting off the foreshore

Wear shoes or boots

Watch out for mud

Strong currents

Report vandalism

Cover cuts and scratches

# Teachers's notes

## The Riverside Code – SPLASH

**Spot the dangers.** The River Thames is deep and moves very fast indeed. Its currents will sweep a person away in just a few minutes, and the water is very cold. If you get into trouble in the water you may become so cold that you can't swim anymore.

The foreshore is the muddy land by the River's edge. You should avoid going onto the foreshore as the mud can be very deep.

You could easily get stuck or cut off by the tide. If you do have to go onto the foreshore, stay close to the steps or stairs and remember that mud or slime can make them slippery.

**Pick up advice.** Look out for warning signs and notices. Read them and understand what they mean.

**Learn how to help.** If you see anyone in trouble, tell an adult or dial 999 and tell the operator what has happened. (The coastguard deals with water rescues.)

**Always go with an adult.** If somebody needs to be rescued get help from an adult first.

**Stay safe and keep on the path.** Always wear boots or shoes and if you find a needle or syringe – **DO NOT TOUCH IT.** Tell an adult where you saw it.

**Have fun by the river.**

Page 2

All points of the Riverside Code are in this illustration so the class can have a general discussion about them.

*(pages 3 to 5 are suitable for children aged 5 to 6)*

Page 3

**Always walk down steps or stairs to the river.**

Don't run and never go on the foreshore alone.

Not all steps and stairs are kept in good condition by their owners and even those that are looked after quickly become slippery with algae and mud. Children should never go onto the foreshore alone.

Page 4

**Beware of muddy areas – they are soft and deep.**

Every year, the Police, Fire Brigade, RNLI (via the Coastguard) and the Port of London Authority (PLA) have to rescue people who are trapped in the mud.

Children should be aware that struggling in mud makes them sink more quickly, if one member of a group gets into trouble one of the group should stay nearby and the others should go for help. **Under no circumstances should they go onto the mud themselves.**

Page 5

**Always wear shoes or boots on the foreshore.**

There is often rubbish on the foreshore, both natural and man-made, which can be sharp and cause serious injuries.

*(Pages 6 to 19 are suitable for children aged 7 and over.)*

Pages 6 and 7

**If you see anyone in difficulty in the river, dial 999 and tell the operator what has happened.** In urban areas, it's more likely to be the Coastguard (they may also involve the Police or the Fire Brigade or both) who responds to an emergency on the River Thames.

Most public phone boxes have signs that give details of where the phone is but it may be useful to get children to think about where they are. (i.e. location or if unknown what they can see/describe.)

It can be confusing for children when they suddenly have to give important information about an emergency and decide which emergency service they need. (Listen to what the operator says.)

**It is important to stress how dangerous giving a false 999 call can be. It could delay help going to a genuine incident.**

Pages 8 and 9

**Do not swim in the river.**

Many children have only swum in the safety of a swimming pool or a holiday beach, but the Thames is different from those safe environments in a number of ways.

Although the Thames looks slow and flat, it is really moving extremely quickly. Anyone in the water can be swept out of sight within a very few minutes. These strong currents can also drag people underwater where they can easily become trapped.

The water in the Thames can be around 20 metres deep. (Three houses on top of each other.)

The water is extremely cold even in the summer. Anyone who goes into the water is at risk of hypothermia and cold water shock. Once a body becomes very cold (which can take only a few minutes in the Thames), energy levels drop sharply and swimming becomes virtually impossible.

A large number of boats use the Thames every day. These boats range from small rowing boats to huge container ships which cannot manoeuvre quickly and have limited visibility. Their captains will not be able to see swimmers that are in their way.

Pages 10 and 11

**Beware of muddy areas – they are soft and deep.**

Every year the RNLI, Police, Fire Brigade and the PLA have to rescue people who are trapped in the mud.

Children should be aware that struggling in mud makes them sink more quickly, if a member of a group gets into trouble one of the group should stay nearby and the others should go for help.

**Under no circumstances should they go onto the mud themselves.**

Page 12

**Always make sure you can get off the foreshore quickly.**

The foreshore is the ground which is revealed when the

tide goes out and is covered again when the tide comes in. The tide comes in faster than it goes out. Anyone who is on the foreshore should keep close to the stairs or steps and make sure that they can get to them easily. The waves from a passing ship could drag even an adult into the river.

At many points along the river, children will see looped chains hanging from the walls. These are 'grab chains' for people to hold onto if they are in the water while awaiting rescue.

**Children should never go onto the foreshore on their own.**

Page 13

**Always walk down steps or stairs to the river.**

Not all steps and stairs are kept in good condition and even those that are looked after quickly become slippery with algae and mud. (Most steps or stairs are privately owned and you should tell the children that they may be trespassing.)

Pages 14 and 15

**Always wear shoes and boots on the foreshore.**

There is often rubbish on the foreshore, both natural and man-made, which can be sharp and cause serious injuries.

There is a very small risk of catching Weil's disease, which is spread in the urine of infected rats. The disease enters the body through cuts and grazes, and can also be spread to the mouth from the fingers. If it is not treated, Weil's disease can kill.

Children who are going onto the foreshore must make sure that they put a water proof plaster on any cuts or broken skin.

They should wash their hands and arms as soon as possible and certainly before eating and drinking.

Syringes can be washed up on the foreshore. They are very dangerous because the person who used the needle may have contaminated the needle with their blood.

Children who find syringes should leave them alone and tell an adult who can inform the Local Authority concerned for the area, or the Police where they found them. They should do the same if they find any other sharp object.

**Every year many syringes and other sharp objects are removed from the river and foreshore for safe disposal by the PLA, Local Authorities and Police etc.**

Pages 16 and 17

**Don't throw rubbish in the river.**

A lot of wildlife live in and around the Thames, including birds, mammals, amphibians and a wide variety of fish. Like all animals they can be injured by rubbish.

At one count there were at least 116 types of fish, there have also been dolphins and seals spotted as far up the river as Richmond.

Wildlife may become tangled up in items such as nylon fishing line or may try to eat items which will either choke or poison them.

Boats and rowers can also be put in danger if they run over floating rubbish.

Pages 18 and 19

**Report vandalism to the Police.**

Children should be aware that what may seem like a prank could cost lives.

There is lifesaving equipment along some stretches of the river which includes lifebelts, throwing lines and grab chains. Children should be aware that these lifebelts are heavy and difficult to throw.

Although there are lifebelts along most of the Thames, it is impossible to prevent them from being stolen or vandalised. Some councils have removed lifebelts where they have been repeatedly vandalised. Children should realise that interfering with a lifebelt or any other rescue equipment may cost lives.

If there is an emergency, valuable minutes can be lost if a life belt has been removed or is damaged. The current is so strong that a person in the river may be swept away before anyone can find a lifebelt.

Many piers and landing stages also have ladders which are designed to help people climb out of the water.

Writing on or defacing a safety notice may mean that people cannot read important information.

People may be at risk of falling into the river if safety barriers have been damaged. Children must be encouraged to tell an adult if they see anyone vandalising safety notices or life saving equipment.

Back Cover

**Don't jump into the unknown.**

The risk of injury and even death to persons from the act of 'Tombstoning' particularly from structures which are over tidal waters is well documented. The Marine Coastguard Agency (MCA) and other agencies/ organisations are continually trying to raise awareness of these potentially hazardous and regrettably often foolhardy incidents.

The message to young persons is clear:

If children jump from piers they risk serious injury or even death.

At low tide the water off piers can be very shallow.

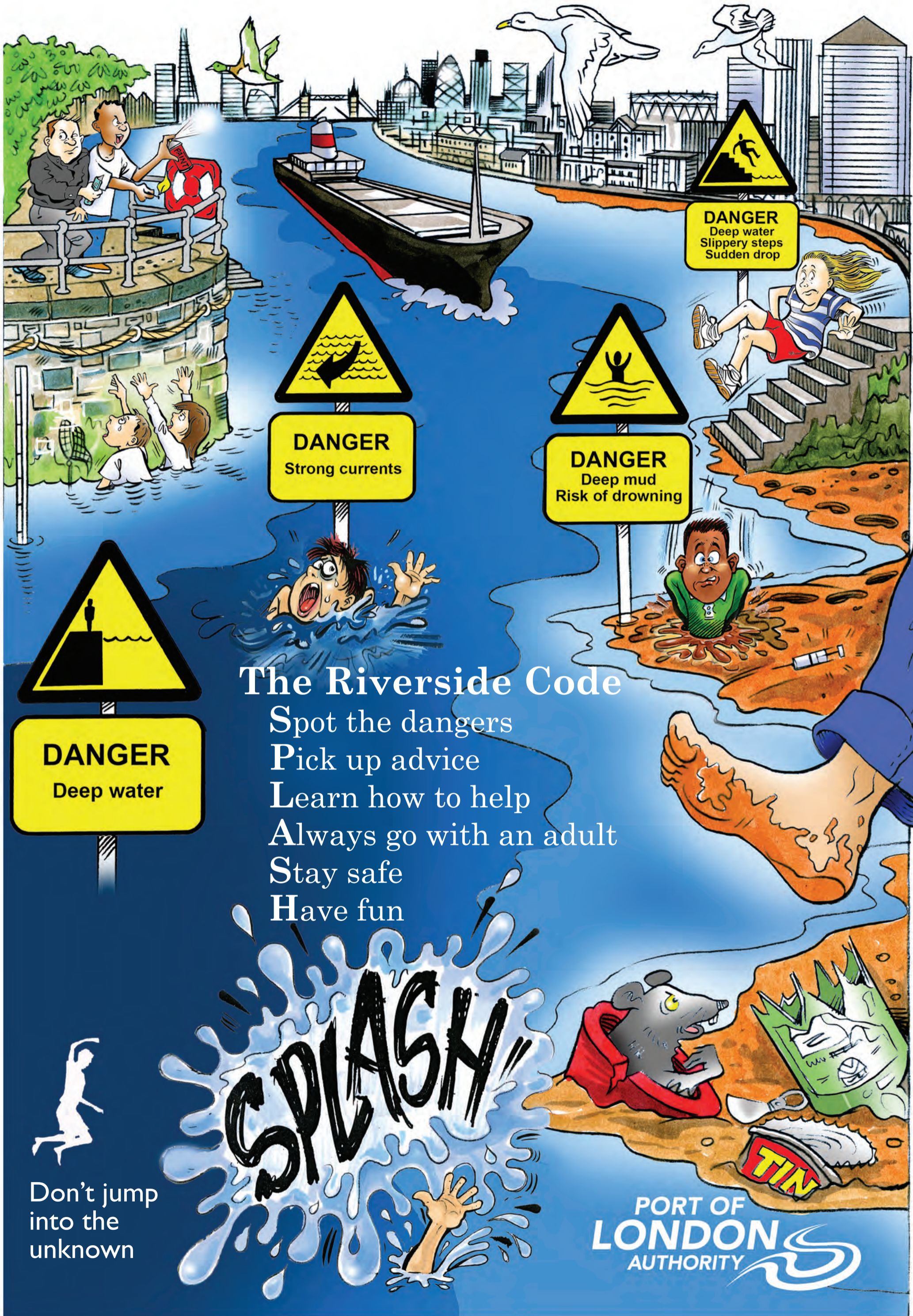
Because tidal waters can be clouded by silt you cannot see what is under the water.

The River Thames is a tidal river with strong currents.

If you climb on piers you can fall and risk serious injury.

**THINK!** others may be injured or killed trying to rescue you.

**Please also refer to the Teacher's notes for pages 8 & 9**



# The Riverside Code

- Spot the dangers
- Pick up advice
- Learn how to help
- Always go with an adult
- Stay safe
- Have fun

Don't jump  
into the  
unknown