

FOMR Paddling and River Skills Self-Assessment

1. Using any stroke, I can swim ____ feet unassisted (no PFD) in a swimming pool without stopping.

- Non-swimmer
- 16 ft. (5 meters)
- 49 ft. (15 meters)
- 82 ft. (25 meters- e.g. Staunton YMCA pool)
- 164 ft. (50 meters- e.g. full Olympic size pool)

For Comparison

What would the **Boy Scouts of America** say?

- Can swim less than 25 ft.? = "a Beginner"
- Can swim 25 to 100 ft.? = "a Learner"
- Can swim 300 feet or 100 yds.? = "a Swimmer"

Read more about Scouting swim requirements [HERE!](#)

2. I am comfortable swimming in Class ____ rapids, wearing a PFD (*ALWAYS!*).

- Non-swimmer
- Not comfortable swimming in rapids
- Class I - *moving water, small waves, few obstructions*
- Class II - *clear channel, rocks & waves easily avoided*
- Class III - *moderate irregular waves, open canoes will swamp, strong currents, complex maneuvers needed*

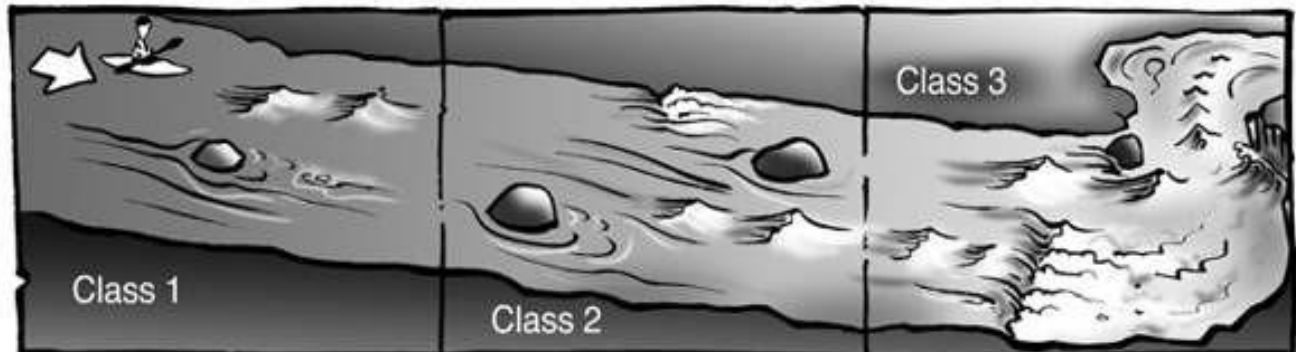


Image credit: Ken Whiting & paddling.com

For Comparison

Middle River typically has Class I and occasional Class II rapids at normal water levels.

[HERE](#)'s a video from **American Whitewater** that shows different classes (levels of difficulty) of rivers.

What does the Safety Code of American Whitewater say? Read it [HERE!](#)

3. In calm water (no wind), I can paddle my canoe or kayak forward in a straight line for ____ feet.

- 25 ft.
- 50 ft.
- 100 ft.
- 200 ft.
- 400 ft.

For Comparison

The **American Canoe Association** says a Level I canoeist can paddle forward straight for about 225 ft. or about 15-20 boat lengths. Level I is the fundamental level on which advanced competency builds.

4. In calm water (no wind), I can paddle my canoe or kayak backwards in a straight line for ____ feet.

- 10 ft.
- 20 ft.
- 30 ft.
- 50 ft.
- 100 ft.

For Comparison

The **American Canoe Association** says a Level I canoeist can paddle backwards straight for about 45 ft. or about 3-4 boat lengths.

5. In calm water (no wind), I can paddle my canoe or kayak sideways for ____ feet to either side.

- 1 ft.
- 5 ft.
- 10 ft.
- 20 ft.

For Comparison

The **American Canoe Association** says a Level I canoeist can paddle sideways on either side for about 10 ft.

6. In calm water (no wind), I can stop my canoe or kayak within ____ feet while moving in a straight line.

- I have difficulty stopping my boat.
- I can stop my boat, but it will not go straight
- 50 feet
- 30 feet
- 10 feet

For Comparison

The **American Canoe Association** says a Level I canoeist can stop a canoe in about 30 ft. or 2 boat lengths.

7. In water with a temperature of 40-50 degrees F (4.5-10 degrees C), a person becomes unconscious after _____.

- less than 15 minutes
- 15 to 30 minutes
- 30 to 60 minutes
- 1 to 2 hours
- 2 to 7 hours

For Comparison

Check out the hypothermia table [HERE](#) as per the University of Sea Kayaking, the answer to the above is 30-60 minutes without protective gear worn.

Read more about cold water paddling [HERE!](#)

8. On the outside of a bend in the river, I can expect to find_____.

- The fastest current
- The deepest water
- Fallen trees and other obstacles
- The highest banks, usually
- All of the above

Learn More about Hazards

The following 3 sites list good overviews of common river hazards: [Paddling.com](#), [Whitewater Guidebook](#) and [Texas Rivers.org](#)

9. If my canoe or kayak capsizes on the Middle River, I should _____.

- Swim on my back
- Keep my feet downstream
- Stay upstream of the boat, but hold on if possible
- Only stand up in shallowest water
- All of the above

Learn More about Accident Response

Basic Whitewater Safety video [HERE](#) by American Whitewater.

Read more at [Safety Code of American Whitewater](#) and [Survival Common Sense](#)

10. Now, having reviewed and reflected on the ideas presented above, I rate my paddling and river skills as _____

- beginner
- novice
- intermediate
- advanced
- Olympic class

Developed by Reese Bull and the Friends of the Middle River Safety Committee, 2022.