



THE DANGERS OF SPEEDING

Grades 9-12 | Lesson 3

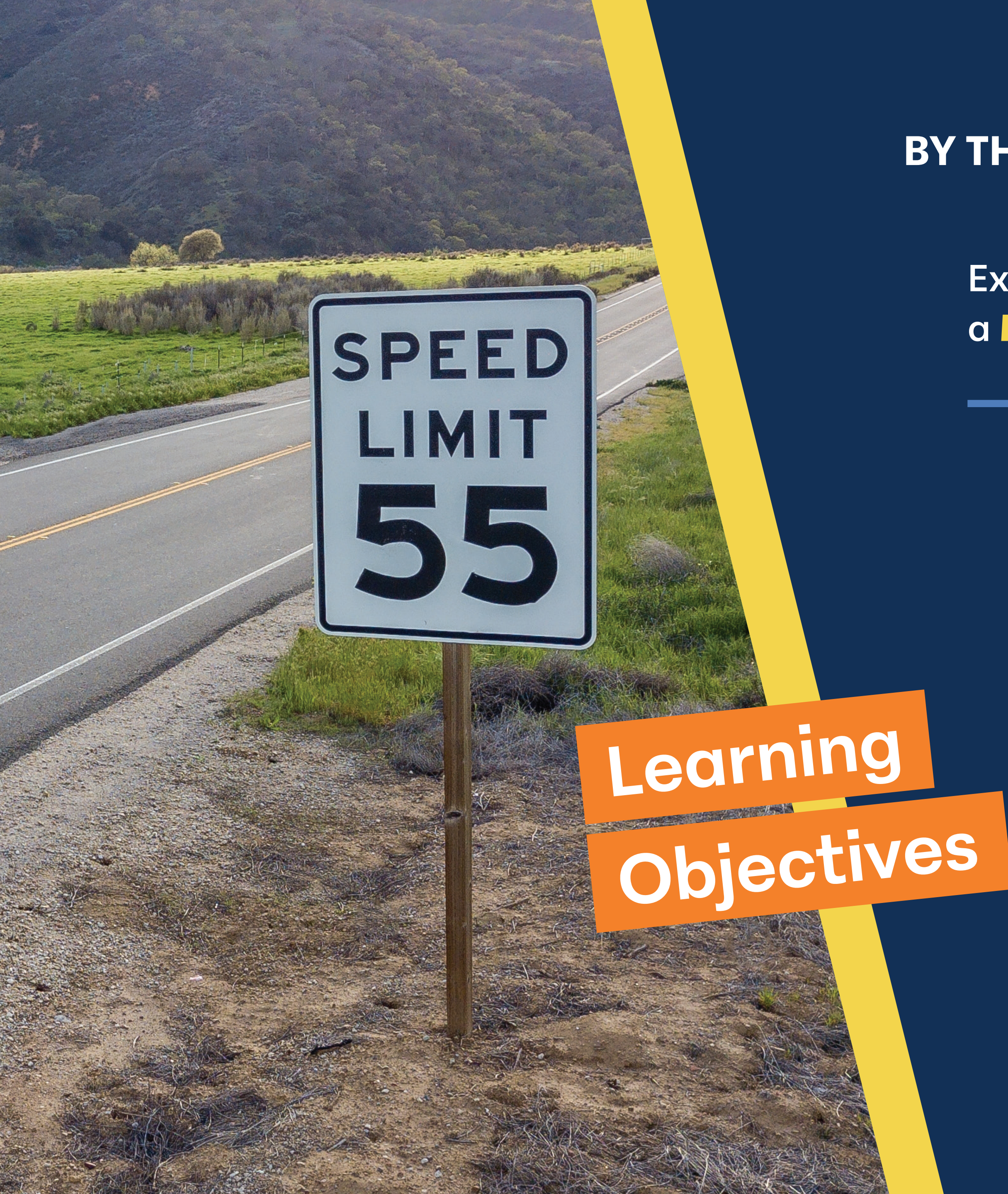


Lesson Overview

In the Street Smart video, Chris asks Piper: “You know speeding is dangerous — but do you really know WHY?” This lesson answers that question.

A little more speed creates a LOT more crash force. Small increases in speed eliminate the safety margins that keep drivers alive.





Learning Objectives

BY THE END OF THIS LESSON, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO:

Explain why a small increase in speed creates a **MUCH LARGER** increase in crash force.

Compare **STOPPING DISTANCES** at different speeds and understand what those numbers mean in real road situations.

Identify conditions that require driving **BELOW** the posted speed limit.

Apply speed management thinking:
“What is the **SAFE SPEED** here?” not just
“What is the legal speed?”

Key Vocabulary

CRASH FORCE:

Energy released in a collision — increases much faster than speed itself. Small speed increases = big increases in crash force.

BRAKING DISTANCE:

Distance from the moment brakes are applied until the vehicle stops completely.

TOTAL STOPPING DISTANCE:

Reaction distance (before brakes engage) + braking distance — the full space needed to stop safely.

SPEED MANAGEMENT:

Adjusting speed based on conditions, visibility and hazards — not just the posted limit.

FOLLOWING DISTANCE:

The time-space cushion between your vehicle and the one ahead — at higher speeds, safe following requires much more room.

Stopping Distance

At **30 MPH**

stopping distance is
approximately **75 FEET**
on dry pavement.

vs.

At **60 MPH**

(only 2× the speed)
stopping distance is
approximately **300 FEET**.

Before brakes even engage, reaction time
adds **60+ MORE FEET** at highway speed.

DOUBLE THE SPEED. FOUR TIMES THE STOPPING DISTANCE.
The math doesn't negotiate.

**300 FEET is almost the
length of a football field.**
(Driven completely blind if
you're not watching).





A LITTLE MORE SPEED = A LOT MORE CRASH FORCE

You don't need a formula to understand this.
The numbers make it undeniable.

IN 2024

speeding killed

11,288 PEOPLE

in the United States.

Not because drivers intended harm, but because
the laws of physics leave no margin for error.

Speed Increases Your Chances of Crashing

In the video, Chris explains it simply: If you're speeding, you can't keep a safe distance, increasing your chances of crashing, or worse.

Speeding endangers **EVERYONE** — not just the driver. Other drivers, cyclists and pedestrians all share the risk.





The posted speed limit is
the maximum for IDEAL
conditions — conditions
change constantly.

SAFE FOLLOWING DISTANCE

requires more room at higher speeds — speeding compresses that cushion dangerously.

- If the car ahead brakes suddenly and you're speeding, the math of **REACTION** + **BRAKING** simply doesn't work.
- **WET ROADS** add 50–80 feet to stopping distance — the posted limit was set for dry conditions.
- If someone behind you is driving faster, don't match their speed — wait and **SAFELY MOVE OVER** to let them pass.



Conditions, Consequences & Smart Choices

Speed management means asking
“What's the safe speed here?”
— not just “What's the limit?”

RAIN, ICE, FOG, CONSTRUCTION:

Each condition requires reducing speed below the posted limit.

BAD WEATHER:

Drive slightly slower and increase space behind other vehicles, especially large trucks.

SCHOOL ZONES:

Fines are doubled in Arkansas — children are the most vulnerable road users.

WORK ZONES:

Fines doubled when workers are physically present.

A SPEEDING TICKET

CAN RAISE INSURANCE

PREMIUMS 20-30%

AND IF SOMEONE IS

INJURED, CRIMINAL

CHARGES FOLLOW.

Class Discussion

1

In the video, Piper says, “Sounds kinda dangerous to speed now.” What specifically changed her mind? What piece of information actually landed?

2

Chris tells Piper that driving is a responsibility not just for yourself, but for everyone on the road. How does that framing change how you think about speed decisions?

3

Why do people speed if they know the risks? Which reason do you hear most often — and when you’re honest about it, is it actually a good reason?

Key Takeaways

- A little more speed = **A LOT MORE CRASH FORCE.**
Doubling speed quadruples stopping distance.
- In 2024, speeding killed **11,288 PEOPLE.**
Speed removes the margins that keep you safe.
- Speed limits are the max for **IDEAL CONDITIONS.**
Conditions always vary.
- Smart drivers ask “What’s the **SAFE SPEED** here?”
— not just “What’s the limit?”



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