Avoid Collisions with Trains
Adapted from Safety Tips to Avoid Collision with Trains by Sgt. Kathy Pederson; Ask a Trooper newspaper column of Buffalo Lake/Hector News*Mirror June, 2005

Pre-reading
Questions:
• How can you avoid a collision with a train?
Definitions:
• Hazardous – full of danger or great risk
• Crossbuck – the X-shaped sign located just before a road crosses railroad tracks

Reading
It was a typical evening in the fall of 2004 when, near the small community of Williston, South Carolina, Latrisha Bodie, mother of four, drove four of her co-workers home from their job at the local plant. Bodie tried to make it through the railroad crossing. The two cars ahead of her had gotten through safely. Bodie and her passengers were not as lucky. All five died when a train struck their car.

In the U.S. during 2004, there were over 350 people killed and over 1,000 people injured from collisions with trains. These crashes can be prevented. The easiest way to be safe is to follow the rules of the railroad signs, lights, and gates.

The white crossbucks are warning signs. Many vehicles, such as school buses and vehicles carrying hazardous materials, are required by law to stop at ALL railroad crossings. Be prepared to stop if you are behind one of these vehicles.

Flashing red lights always mean a train is near or is switching tracks nearby. Always stop when the lights begin to flash. When the lights stop flashing, proceed with caution.

When crossing a railroad track, act as though you expect a train at any time. Do not be fooled into thinking a crossing is safe just because you have never seen a train pass by. Freight trains do not run on set schedules. They can be anywhere at anytime going in any direction.

Also, watch for second trains. After one has passed, always look for that second train on another track before moving forward.

It is against the law to drive through, around, or under lowered gates. Do not have someone in your car hold them up for you. You may cross only if there is a law enforcement officer or a railroad person directing you to cross.

Never race a train. Trying to race a train may cost you your life and the life of your passengers. When traveling at 30 miles per hour, a train takes over a mile to stop. A train is bigger than you, and you will be the one that is hurt if you collide.

Level 6.0
Understanding

1. What does the word prevent/prevented mean? ____________________________________________

2. When can you drive around lowered railroad gates? _________________________________

3. How many people were either killed or injured by train collisions in 2004? ________________

4. What does it mean to proceed with caution? ____________________________________________

5. Who must stop at all railroad crossings? Why? _________________________________

6. How can you prevent being hurt in a train/car collision? ______________________________

7. What does the word avoid mean? ____________________________________________

Writing

Option A: Summarize the reading in your own words.

Option B: Write about another train related accident you know of.