

IHEA-USA Bow Hunter Education Standards – Addendum to approved Hunter Education Standards

Recommendations Submitted by the Standards and Evaluations Committee

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BOW Hunter Education - IHEA-USA Minimum Content Standards

Core course content designed for students to be instructed and assessed according to performance-based learning objectives related to safe, legal, and responsible BOW hunting (core curriculum captured in blue boxes)

Reasons and Justification for Bow Hunting

Basic Equipment

Safe Handling of
Bows and Arrows

Tree Stand and
Outdoor Safety

Safe

Bow Hunting
Regulations &
Basic
Responsibilities

**Legal,
Responsible**

Taking a Good
Shot

Game Recovery
and Care

Responsible

1. Reasons and Justification for Bow Hunting

Curricula Category	Subtopic(s)	Learning Objective(s) Students will be able to:	Specific Content	Outcome Intended to Impact
Justification	Why bow hunter education is important	Identify the purpose and importance of Bow Hunter Education	<p>The purpose of Bow Hunter Education is to train safe, responsible and law abiding bow hunters. Bow Hunter Education is important because it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreases archery and bow hunting incidents. • Promotes responsible bow hunter behavior, including compliance with bow hunting laws and regulations. • Helps students identify specialized equipment, considerations and techniques to become effective and responsible bow hunters. • Helps bow hunters recognize their limitations with bow hunting equipment and identify ways to improve their bow shooting skills such as continual practice. • Recognizes that before bow hunter education, formal opportunities to learn special knowledge and skills required for bow hunting are limited. 	Safe, Legal and Responsible
Challenge	Bow hunting challenges	Identify the differences in hunting with a bow from hunting with a firearm	<p>Three (3) ways bow hunting differs from hunting with a firearm:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source of power is from bending the limbs of the bow, rather than from gunpowder. • Bow hunters must typically get closer to the game. • Bow hunting relies on cutting and bleeding to produce humane kills, rather than shock. 	Responsible
Benefits	Bow hunting motivations	Describe why people want to bow hunt	<p>Motivations to bow hunt include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added challenge. • Extended seasons. • Gain access to more properties. • Getting outdoors at different times of the year. • Comradery with bow hunting family and friends. 	Responsible
Bow Hunter's Role in Wildlife Conservation	North American Model of Wildlife Conservation"	Describe central principles of the <i>N Amer. Model of Wildlife Conservation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fish and wildlife are public resources and every citizen has the opportunity to pursue them within legal limits. • Wildlife populations are sustained and scientifically managed by professionals in government agencies. 	Responsible

	Conservation funding for wildlife management, habitat management and bow hunter education	Describe how license fees and excise taxes support wildlife conservation	Wildlife management is funded largely by users who directly benefit from the resource. Two primary funding sources for wildlife management are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excise taxes on hunting equipment and ammunition from 1937 Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act. Revenue from state natural resource agencies, including hunting license fees. 	Responsible
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2. Basic Equipment

Curricula Category	Subtopic(s)	Learning Objective(s) The Student will be able to:	Specific Content	Outcome Intended to Impact
Basic equipment - bows and arrows	Bow types/materials	Identify common types of bows, components and characteristics of each type	<p>Three (3) type of bows used for bow hunting include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Longbow Recurve Compound <p><i>NOTE: Other bows may include crossbows and others (please check state/provincial regulations for definition of 'archery equipment' allowed within the jurisdiction). Crossbow standards and other methods are generally addressed in other hunter education programs and materials, as well as by the IHEA-USA in partnership with specific organizations formed to support such methods.</i></p> <p>Bows use the bow hunter's body as a drawing/cocking and shooting platform.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Longbows and recurves have a pair of simple limbs connected by a string and the force required to pull the string increases with the distance pulled. Compound bows have eccentric wheels and/or cams connected to limbs, cables, and string that provide a reduction in force required to hold string at full draw. All bows have limbs, strings, grip area, handle/riser area, and sight area. Longbows and recurve bows are generally made of wood. Many times recurve limbs will be of a fiberglass/wood composite. Recurve handles may also be metal. Compound bows usually have handles/stocks made of metal and limbs made of carbon/polymer composite materials. 	Safe, Responsible

<p>Basic equipment - bows and arrows</p>	<p>Arrow types/materials Arrow points types/uses</p>	<p>Identify and describe components of a finished arrow, uses of each component, and types of arrow points used in shooting/hunting</p>	<p>All finished arrows have 4 distinct parts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shaft • Fletching • Nock • Point <p>The length, flexibility (spine), and physical weight of a finished arrow is matched both to the shooter and the bow being shot.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Shafts</u> - may be wood, tubular aluminum, tubular carbon fiber, tubular fiberglass, solid fiberglass, or a combination of aluminum and carbon fiber. • <u>Fletching</u> - may be made of plastic or feathers and is attached to the opposite end of the arrow from the point. • <u>Nock</u>: the part of the arrow which attaches to the bow string. This point on the bowstring is called the nocking point. An arrow nock is most commonly made of plastic. A consistent nocking point aids in shooting accuracy. • <u>Arrow Points</u> - are designed for functions such as target practice, games and small and big game hunting. It is critical that for hunting, the practice points and hunting tips are of the same grain weight. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Practice Points</u>: Bullet shape or field tip shape points are designed to shoot into most back stops made of foam or other synthetic type materials. Practice points are economical to shoot for frequent practice. ○ <u>Small Game/Fish Points</u>: Used for small game or when field shooting (roving) such as wire-protrusion, blunt tips and/or bow fishing points. ○ <u>Broadheads</u>: Used for hunting big game. All broadheads must be kept razor sharp and handled with extreme care due to their potential cutting ability. There are 3 (three) types: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Fixed Blades</u> have maximum cutting efficiency with lower draw weight bows. Blade is not removable. - <u>Removable Blades</u> are designed with grooves on the center portion of the head (ferrule) which hold the blades in place. Blades may be replaced if damaged without discarding entire broadhead. 	<p>Safe, Responsible</p>
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mechanical or Expandable Blades have blades retracted close to the ferrule and therefore a lower profile in flight. Blades open upon impact to expose cutting areas. These types of broadheads are only recommended for bows having a draw weight of 50 pounds+ due to the energy required to expose the blades upon impact. 	
Matching bows and arrows	Matching equipment	List 3 (three) ways bow hunting equipment must be properly matched	<p>For maximum performance, accuracy and safety:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A bow is matched to a bow hunter's size, strength, shooting style, and game hunted. • Arrows are matched to the bow being shot, the archer shooting, and the game being hunted. • All arrows must match each other. 	Safe, Responsible
Basic Equipment - Accessories	Bow sights; arrow quivers; finger & arm protection	Describe the benefits of stated accessories	<p>There are many archery accessories available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bow Sight: Improves accuracy of shot placement. • Arrow Quiver: Allows safe transport of arrows when hunting by covering sharp broadhead points. Most common quivers attach/detach easily to/from bow. • Finger and Arm Protection: Shooting tabs or mechanical string releases help protect fingers when shooting higher poundage bows. Mechanical releases result in a higher degree of accuracy as string is released precisely in the same manner each time drawn. Arm protection helps improve accuracy by keeping clothing contained and may also help prevent injury to the archer's arm when the string is released and archer is not using proper form. 	Safe, Responsible

3. Safe Handling of Bows and Arrows

Curricula Category	Subtopic(s)	Learning Objective(s) The Student will be able to:	Specific Content	Outcome Intended to Impact
Archery/Bow hunting Incidents	Major causes of bow hunting incidents	List the common types of bow hunting injuries and how to prevent them	<p>The number one cause of major injury or death while bow hunting is falling from elevated stands (see Tree Stand Safety).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hunting from or hauling equipment while on the stand • Climbing up to and down from stand. <p>Falls may also be caused by equipment damage due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weathering or stress. • Insufficient familiarity with the equipment. • Weather. <p>Injuries can occur when using a crossbow if the thumb and fingers are in the path of the string.</p> <p>Other bow hunting injuries include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bleeding Injuries – prevented by the proper use of hard, plastic quivers, broadhead wrenches, and cautious and careful use of knives. • Dry firing bow – allowing the string to go when at full draw on a bow without an arrow (while on range, in a bow retail store or anytime “trying out” a bow). 	Safe
Safe handling of archery equipment	Handling of bows and arrows	Describe how to properly inspect bows and arrows and use a quiver and a broadhead wrench for safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspect bows and arrows prior to and immediately after shooting exercises. Things to look for include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cracks, bends, loosening of bolts, nuts and accessories on bows. ○ Cracks, splinters and bends (aluminum) in arrows. ○ Frayed strings, strings and cables too close to vanes/feathers on arrow on rest. ○ Loose or damaged fletching on arrows. ○ Nonfunctioning rests, quiver inserts, cams/wheels. ○ Dull or damaged broadheads/points. 	Safe
Safe handling of archery equipment	Proper storage and transportation of bows and arrows	Explain why proper storage and transportation is important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sturdy bow cases are a must for safe transport of bows in vehicles, on planes, ATV/UHVs, and in boats. • In many jurisdictions, it is required to have bow cased while in an ATV/UHV and/or vehicle. • Proper storage of broadheads is in a protective quiver and bows away from heat or anything that can damage or bump cables and strings, sights and rests. 	Safe

4. Tree Stand and Outdoor Safety

Curricula Category	Subtopic(s)	Learning Objective(s) The Student will be able to:	Specific Content	Outcome Intended to Impact
Tree stand safety	Elevated Stands	Identify the causes of falls from an elevated stand	<p>The number one cause of injury or death when using elevated stands is falls. Falls from elevated stands are caused by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Errors in the placement and use of equipment. • Errors made while climbing into or out of the stand. <p>Falls may also be caused by equipment damage due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weathering or stress. • Insufficient familiarity with the equipment. 	Safe
Tree stand safety	Elevated Stands	Identify safe practices for hunting from an elevated position	<p>Always use caution when off the ground Stay attached with a full body harness/fall arrest system (FBH/FAS) whenever off the ground. A full body fall arrest system should include a FBH with a tether strap and lineman's belt and a suspension relief system. Users should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the manufacturer's instructions. • Practice at ground level before climbing. • Inspect the stand and accessories before each use. • Use three points of contact when climbing. • Use a haul line to pull up bows or other equipment. 	Safe
Tree stand safety	Full Body Harness/Fall Arrest Systems	Explain how the fall arrest system/full body harness is essential for reducing the risk of serious injury	<p>A properly used full body harness/fall arrest system (FBH/FAS):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevents the wearer from falling to the ground. • Includes shock absorbing feature built into the tether. • Includes suspension relief to avoid suspension trauma. • Allows the wearer to re-enter the tree stand. <p>Some systems allow a safe and gradual descent to the ground in the event that it is not possible to re-enter the stand.</p>	Safe
Tree stand safety	Full Body Harness/Fall Arrest Systems	Describe how to recover from a tree-stand fall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not panic—the full body harness/fall arrest system (FBH/FAS) will hold you. • Take action to avoid suspension trauma immediately. If a hunter cannot quickly get back on the platform or the ground, the FBH/FAS should have a suspension relief strap. Step into the loop and stand up to relieve pressure caused by the leg straps. If a suspension relief strap is not available, try to keep legs moving. 	Safe

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signal/Call for help. • Formulate a plan and get back on the platform as quickly as possible. 	
Outdoor safety	Outdoor preparedness	Identify items that should be included in every survival kit	<p>Every survival kit should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire building device. • Method of procuring safe water for drinking. • Personal first aid kit. • Signaling device, material for shelter construction. • Map & compass. • Emergency food. <p>Additional Items will vary based on hunting conditions and personal preferences</p>	Safe
Outdoor safety	Outdoor preparedness	Describe the STOP principle and how it helps if lost outdoors	<p>During an emergency situation a hunter should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop—remain calm and analyze situation. • Think—what should be done now? • Observe—survey terrain and look for familiar land marks. • Plan— what’s the next best course of action? <p>A hunter should remember and follow the STOP principle.</p>	Safe
Outdoor safety	Outdoor preparedness - Prepare a hunt plan	Identify reasons for preparing and following a hunting trip plan	<p>A hunter should prepare and follow a hunting trip plan in case of becoming:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lost. • Sick. • Injured. <p>A hunter should leave the hunting trip plan with a friend or family member so that searchers will know where to find the hunter.</p>	Safe
Outdoor safety	Outdoor preparedness - Physical conditioning	Explain the importance of personal preparedness when outdoors	<p>Preparation is important for reducing the likelihood of serious emergencies while hunting. Staying in shape can prevent exhaustion and heart attacks. Carrying medication for known medical conditions allows immediate treatment in the field. Proper clothing and a survival kit can be used to reduce the effects of harsh weather conditions.</p>	Safe
Outdoor safety	Outdoor preparedness	Identify causes, symptoms and treatments of hypothermia and heat exhaustion	<p>Hypothermia is a decrease in the body’s core temperature caused by cold, wind and wet conditions. Signs and symptoms of hypothermia are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mild hypothermia: uncontrollable shivering. • More severe hypothermia: confusion and lack of judgment. <p>To treat hypothermia: remove the victim from cold, windy and wet conditions and:</p>	Safe

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-warm gradually. • Get medical help if severe. <p>Heat exhaustion is caused by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excessive heat. • Dehydration. <p>Signs and symptoms of heat exhaustion include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cool, clammy, pale skin. • Dry mouth. • Fatigue. • Weakness. • Dizziness. • Headache. • Nausea. <p>To treat heat exhaustion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move victim to a cool or shady place. • Provide water or sports drinks. • Keep victim inactive. • Seek medical attention if severe. 	
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5. Bow Hunting Regulations & Basic Responsibilities

Curricula Category	Subtopic(s)	Learning Objective(s) The Student will be able to:	Specific Content	Outcome Intended to Impact
Bow Hunting Regulations	Responsible bow hunters are familiar with and follow hunting and outdoor laws and regulations	<p>Explain why hunting laws and regulations are enacted</p> <p>List official resources that contain bow hunting rules/regulations including federal, state/provincial and county/local information/access</p>	<p>Hunting laws and regulations have been enacted to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect people and property. • Protect wildlife populations. • Ensure fair chase. • Ensure fair distribution of game. • Conservation of resources. <p>Examples of resources include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official state/provincial hunting publications • State/provincial wildlife agency websites • Hunting access guides or booklets • Mapping and related software/apps • Contacts with agency personnel (e.g. wardens) 	Legal, Responsible

Landowner Considerations	Responsible bow hunters are aware of and comply with agency and landowner rules in addition to laws	Know where/how to find agency and landowner rules that apply to bow hunting in addition to regulations	Agency/landowner considerations (examples): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Archery rules. • Practice areas/hunting locations. • What to do if game travels far/across fence lines. • What to do with entrails upon proper field dressing. • More restrictive bag limits that may apply. 	Legal, Responsible
Basic Responsibilities	Bow hunters have many basic and personal responsibilities and a good public image to uphold on behalf of all hunters and hunting	Explain why developing responsible bow hunting behavior is important for every hunter and the future of bow hunting	<p>A bow hunter has responsibilities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People: self, other hunters, future hunters, landowners, non-hunters, etc. • Wildlife and the Environment: game hunted, non-game, habitat. <p>A responsible bow hunter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respects wildlife and the environment. • Respects landowners and property. • Shows consideration for non-hunters. • Hunts safely. • Knows and obeys hunting laws. • Supports wildlife conservation. • Hunts using fair chase methods. • Becomes knowledgeable about wildlife. • Hunts only with ethical hunters. <p>A responsible bow hunter will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Display game in a respectful and responsible manner. • Be aware of how your clothing may impact other people in public places. • Present a professional image when talking to others about hunting. • Avoid alcohol and drugs before or during a hunt. • Be aware of how photos may impact others. • Harvest only as much game as can be used or shared. 	Legal, Responsible

6. Taking a Good Shot

Curricula Category	Subtopic(s)	Learning Objective(s) The Student will be able to:	Specific Content	Outcome Intended to Impact
Proper Equipment	Matching bow to personal capabilities	Describe how to match a bow with an arrow and then to the individual hunter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select the correct arrow for the bow. Choose the correct arrow spine, weight and length. Match the equipment to the individual based on capability and comfort. 	Responsible
Proper Equipment	Matching bow to game hunted	List the proper broadhead/game point for game hunted	Select the correct broadhead / game-point for game hunted.	Responsible
Proper Equipment	Draw weight Draw length	Describe how to adjust a bow to fit the hunter's current physical condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Draw Weight</u>: Select a draw weight that is both comfortable and effective for the game animal being hunted. <u>Draw Length</u>: The correct draw length will enable the archer to have correct form, improving accuracy and consistency. To properly adjust draw length, take equipment to a professional archery shop. 	Responsible
Taking a good shot	Distance estimation	Through field exercises, demonstrate importance of learning to judge distances and incorporate into practice Define the hunter's effective range	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bow sighting and arrow trajectory make accurate distance estimation a very critical element for accurate shooting (Distance judging becomes more critical at longer ranges). Mark the ground in 10 yard increments out to at least 40 or 50 yards and memorize how objects look at these distances. Effective range is the maximum shooting distance that a hunter can consistently and comfortably group arrows within a predetermined space. 	Responsible

Taking a good shot	Shot angles	<p>List or view various animal orientations or shot angles</p> <p>Describe why steeper shot angles reduce exposure to vital areas</p> <p>Explain how to properly adjust for uphill/downhill shots</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quartering away, broadside, quartering toward, head-on, rear end. • As the angle becomes more severe, the clear path to the vital area becomes smaller because it is shielded by shoulder bones and spine from above and the sternum from below. • Horizontal distance is what the arrow will travel through its trajectory without any vertical component. However, since gravity pulls an arrow down, it is the horizontal distance an arrow travels, not the actual distance to the uphill or downhill target, that effects arrow trajectory. 	Responsible
Taking a good shot	Shot placement/vital zones	<p>List vital organs found in the chest cavity</p> <p>Identify an aiming spot on an animal diagram for a high-percentage shot in the chest cavity</p>	<p>Vital organs include the heart, lungs and major arteries. The vital zone will vary depending on specific animals hunted and the shot angle. Using a 3-D model or other visual depiction, pinpoint the exact spot within the vital zone that gives the best chance for a double-lung hit. Vary the shot angle of the animal to change the size of the vital organs exposed to the hunter's shot position.</p>	Responsible
Bow hunting preparation and techniques	Bow hunting techniques	<p>Define hunting the wind</p> <p>Describe at least three (3) methods of bow hunting</p>	<p>Keeping the wind in a direction that does not directly blow towards game or the direction the hunter is traveling. Four (4) methods of bow hunting include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spot and stalk. • Still hunting. • Elevated stands. • Ground blinds. 	Responsible
Bow hunting preparation and techniques	Clothing	<p>Describe Layering for both mild and cold weather climates</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Base layers include insulation, outer shell, and waterproof layer. • Materials should be quiet. • Colors should be neutral and match the surrounding environment. 	Responsible
Bow hunting preparation and techniques	Field accessories and considerations	<p>List two (2) decoying techniques that raise safety concerns for a hunter when hunting with or near decoys</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do NOT attach decoys to the hunter or hunting equipment. • Do NOT hunt within close proximity to life-like decoys. 	Responsible

7. Game Recovery and Care

Curricula Category	Subtopic(s)	Learning Objective(s) The Student will be able to:	Specific Content	Outcome Intended to Impact
Game Recovery Skills	Game Recovery – Tracking techniques and reading sign	Describe the basic steps of big game recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wait for a period of time before trailing game Normally this time period is at least 1 hour but depends on where animal was hit; could be min 3 to 8 hours if hit in abdomen. • Make a practice of carefully observing every movement of a game animal after you shoot it. • Once at the site look for signs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bright red or dark blood on the ground or vegetation. ○ Broken twigs or branches, or scattered leaves. ○ A “dew” line if early in the morning. ○ Tracks and spoor. ○ Hair, meat or bone fragments. • Downhill trails, especially towards water. • When a downed animal is found, approach the animal carefully from above and behind the head. • Check the animal’s eyes. The eyes of a dead animal are normally open. • If the animal is still alive it should be finished with a well-placed lethal shot. • Once the animal is dead, follow the state’s regulations for reporting or recording a kill. You may be required to immediately sign, date and affix a tag to the animal. • Comply with all tagging and “evidence of sex” requirements. • Begin field dressing demonstrating safe knife handling. 	Responsible
Care of Game	Proper and legal care of game helps prevent meat spoilage	Describe how to properly and legally care for game harvested and be aware of broadheads that may still remain in game while field dressing	Hunters use harvested game to provide meat for the table Game meat should never be wasted. Big game must generally be tagged immediately. Removing internal organs of all harvested game animals by field dressing should be done as soon as possible after the kill to delay meat spoilage. Heat, dirt and moisture can spoil meat. Latex/rubber gloves protect hunters from wildlife diseases and various parasites while processing game and provide ease for cleanup afterwards.	Responsible