Kayaking Terms

1. The different types of craft.
   a. Sea kayaks – these types can hold either one or two persons. They are typically very stable and are designed to hold a lot of cargo therefore they have several hatches in the hull. These can be made of plastic or fiberglass (typically) and are a bit heavier than those that are designed for speed and maneuverability. Due to the longer size, there is a limited amount of maneuverability.
   b. Whitewater/surf kayaks – these are designed for one person to use. They are smaller than the sea kayaks and are more maneuverable to enable riding of waves or whitewater on the river. There may be some cargo hatches but they will not take up the bulk of the hull due to the weight. These can be made from plastic, fiberglass, or a composite type of material.
   c. Racing kayak – these are designed specifically for racing and can be long but very lightweight comprised of fiberglass. There are no extras in these boats, they do not have comfortable seats and there are no cargo hatches. They are very unstable and easy to tip for the beginner.
   d. Sit on top v. deep well seats – There are some kayaks that are open on the top and are easily dismounted when you tip by just slipping off. These types are called sit-on-top kayaks. These increase safety for the beginner because they do not have to learn to roll because they cannot get caught in the kayak upside down. Deep well seats can sometimes be a little more comfortable and offer a little more maneuverability but they often require the user to learn the “roll” so that they can get out of the kayak if they get tipped over and are upside down.

2. The different pieces needed to launch a successful kayak trip.
   a. Probably the most important piece of equipment that an individual needs to have when planning a trip on a kayak is a personal flotation device (PFD). The US Coast Guard requires them for all boats on the water. There are various styles from vests to over the head. Find one that fits comfortably and well and do not get on the water without one.
   b. You cannot use a kayak well if you do not have a paddle. There are various styles of paddles to use. Some of them are shorter, some are longer, there are the type that allows you to adjust the handle according to personal fit.
   c. Helmets are not required for all type of kayaking but are highly recommended for surf paddling and are a requirement for most whitewater paddling especially when going into a group tour.
   d. Spray skirts are used for some kayaks that have deep well for you to sit in. The skirts allow the user to stay drier and reduce the amount of airflow in the seat. When you use a skirt, you must be able to effectively roll the boat over if you turn it upside down.
3. Basic Paddling strokes used consist of:
   a. Forward stroke – the stroke that is used most frequently in paddling to get us moving forward. In order to determine proper hand placement, take the paddle in hands with the arms overhead, elbows should be at 90 degrees and at shoulder height. When hand placement is determined, the best way to take a proper stroke, torso should rotate, paddle goes into the water perpendicular to it and pull blade of paddle backwards with oblique muscles. Paddle should exit where the hip sits. Rotate to the other side and perform stroke in same manner.
   b. Back stroke – a forward stroke, performed backwards. This is accomplished by rotating the body as above and pushing the blade forward with the oblique muscles being used to push through the water.
   c. Sweeps – these strokes are used to turn the boat in one direction or another (right or left). Sweeps are forward strokes that are started out further in front of the boat and pulled back through as if making a “C” in the water.
   d. Sculling – this is a technique used to pull your boat towards another boat with some precision. The sculling motion is performed through drawing a small figure 8 at the side of the boat. Begin with the paddle close to the boat and draw small figure 8’s in order to get the boat moving sideways to another boat. Used in rescue attempts.
   e. The draw – also used to bring one boat towards another boat. The movements are a larger motion. They are performed by bringing paddle to the side of the boat and methodically reaching out to catch some water and pull the boat through the water to bring our boat closer to another boat.

Be able to determine the other important safety accessories that are essential for a successful kayaking trip. Compass, cell phone, flares, waterproof bags for extra clothing.