

# Companion Guide

## “What Does That Say?”

### *Using Dramatic Movement to Interpret Signs and Symbols”* *Morgan Sendek, Wolf Trap Teaching Artist*

*In this short video, **Wolf Trap Teaching Artist Morgan Sendek** shares **drama and movement strategies** that link to select **language, literacy, cognitive, STEM, and motor skills**. Together, we take a quick **imaginary journey**, investigating street signs, and **observe, embody, compare, and contrast** what we see.*

**This experience is designed to provide educators an opportunity to:**

- Engage in an arts-integrated experience that promotes active learning.
- Use role play, imagination, and movement strategies to enhance an investigation of signs and symbols and practice observation and comparison.

**Target Ages:** pre-K, ages 3 to 5

**Key Vocabulary:** shape, angle, side, rhombus, compare, contrast, bicycle, swim, forward, role, imagine, imagination

#### \*Connections to Early Childhood Learning Goals

- Language and Literacy: Child attends. Child understands, communicates, and builds vocabulary. Demonstrates an understanding that print conveys meaning. Identifies common signs and logos.
- Cognitive Development: Child uses imagination and uses and extends imagery. Child exercises creativity and creative self-expression.
- STEM/Compare and Categorize: Child categorizes objects and groups based on attributes such as appearance and function.
- STEM/Geometry and Spatial Sense: Child names and describes shapes in terms of length and number of sides. Child correctly recognizes and names basic shapes regardless of size and orientation.
- Motor Development: Child develops awareness of body in space, develops large/small muscles, movement, and coordination. Child develops and practices motor skills.

#### Arts Concepts Highlighted in this Experience

- **Drama:**
  - Children use role play to investigate signs and symbols.
  - Children use their imaginations, voices, and bodies to create characters.
  - Children use their imaginations to dramatize a setting or environment.

- **Dance/Movement:**

- Children explore locomotor (moving through space) and non-locomotor (moving in place) movements.

### Extending the Experience

- Share additional street signs like the examples below. Dramatize what children see!



- Explore a similar activity, using signs that children create themselves.
- Take a neighborhood walk to observe signs and symbols. Children can dramatize what they find during your exploration.
- Identify letters and words found on common signs and dramatize the meaning of the words.

### Getting Ready to Try this Experience with my Classroom or Group

- Is there anything I need to do to prepare children and adults for this experience? Where would I do this experience with my group? Do I need to make adjustments to my space to make it successful?
- Do I need to have any special materials?
- When would this experience work best for my class or group?

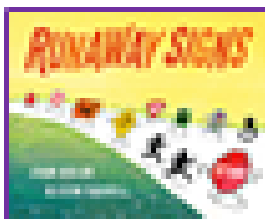
### Reflections for Inclusive Practice

- Do I need to adjust this experience for the mobility, sensory, or processing needs of children or adults in my class or group?
- Do I want to change the content or context of this experience to make it more relevant or accessible to the children and adults I work with?
- How can I implement this experience to consider the language needs of the children and adults I am working with?

### Resources



Savage, S. (2019). Sign off (First edition). Beach Lane Books.



Holub, J. (2020). Runaway signs. Nancy Paulsen Books.

## Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/interactive-head-start-early-learning-outcomes-framework-ages-birth-five>

## Virginia Standards of Learning: Reading K-6

<https://www.doe.virginia.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/18702/638041056464230000>

### *Notes from the Teaching Artist:*

**Morgan Sendek:** “When I created this experience, I was hoping to spark children’s imaginations, encourage their curiosity, and observe their surroundings—the signs, symbols, and shapes that share information and guide our understanding of the places we explore. I enjoy sharing this experience with early childhood educators because leading children in dramatic play offers children a unique way to build observational skills and practice mathematical and scientific concepts and vocabulary.”

***Morgan Sendek is a New York City-based drama and music artist and a Wolf Trap Teaching Artist. She enjoys creating arts experiences that connect children and adults to the communities around them.***

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