

Companion Guide

“Be What We See! Interpreting Street Signs through Movement” *Morgan Sendek, Wolf Trap Teaching Artist*

*In this short video **Wolf Trap Teaching Artist Morgan Sendek** shares **drama and movement strategies** that link naturally with select **early literacy and STEM skills** and guides us on an **imaginary journey**, providing an opportunity for **role play** and **gross and fine motor exploration**.*

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

- Engage in an arts-integrated experience that promotes active learning.
- Explore connections between dramatic play and language/literacy, cognitive development, STEM, and motor development learning goals.

Target Age: Pre-K, ages 3 to 5

Key Vocabulary: rhombus, habitat, forest, lake, river, shore, imagine, imagination, role

Connections to Early Childhood Learning Goals

- **Language and Literacy:** Child attends, understands, communicates, speaks, 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/Scientific Inquiry:** Child describes observable phenomena and engages in scientific talk.
- **Motor Development:** Child develops awareness of body in space, develops large/small muscles, movement, and coordination. Child develops and practices fine/gross motor skills.

Arts Concepts Highlighted in this Experience

- **Drama (Role Play):**
 - Children use their imaginations, voices, and bodies to create characters.
 - Children participate in a dramatic movement experience a scene or setting (in this case, an animal habitat) and dramatize how different characters behave and interact in an environment.
- **Dance/Movement:**
 - Children use creative movement and explore locomotor (moving through space) and non-locomotor (moving in place) movements.

Extending the Experience

- Share additional animal signs such as the ones below. Dramatize animal attributes and consider their habitats.



- Add enhancements to the dramatic scene such as props and photos to encourage observation and conversation. For example, teaching artist Morgan Sendek uses pieces of colored cloth as props to represent the parts of a scene, such as a blue cloth to represent water.
- Sharing photos of an animal in its habitat provides an additional opportunity for observation and encourage conversation.
- Look for signs on a walk or a field trip! Do children find any animal signs? What other images and words do children see on signs? Children can dramatize what they see.

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 could I do this experience? 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?

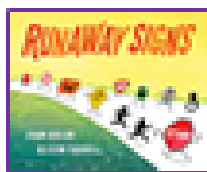
Reflections for Inclusive Practice

- Do I need to adjust this experience for the mobility, sensory, or processing needs of children or adults in my class or group?
- Would 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 in a way that considers 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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