Unit 05: Signs

Content Area: **English Language Arts**
Course(s):
Time Period: **Trimester 1**
Length: **4-6 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Brief Summary of Unit

This unit, focused on signs, is designed to guide exploration through several key investigations and culminate in a celebration of learning. The curriculum is structured to help participants:

• Explore the Topic: Take a walk around the building or neighborhood to look for signs.

• Investigation #1: Notice and learn the characteristics of signs.

• Investigation #2: Visit a grocery store.

• Investigation #3: Take a walk to look for signs and signals that help keep people safe near roads.

• Investigation #4: Invite a classroom visitor who uses signs in his or her work. Take a site visit to a sign-making or print shop. Invite a classroom visitor who uses sign language.

• Celebrate Learning: Conclude the study by sharing acquired knowledge and experiences. Invite peers and family members to visit for the celebration.

The unit incorporates a variety of learning experiences, including outdoor exploration, family partnerships, and diverse activities focusing on movement, discussion, and literacy

Essential Questions

- What do we know about signs? What do we want to find out?
- What shape is this sign? (Display a “Do Not Enter” sign.)
- Do you know what this sign means? (Display a stop sign.)
- Which of these is a sign? (Display a sign and a cover of a book.)
- What signs did you see today?
- What does this sign tell us?
- What are the characteristics of signs?
- What is your favorite color?
- What shape is this sign?

- Which picture is the arrow pointing to? (Display two pictures with an arrow sign pointing to one of them.)
- How many pencils wide is this sign?
- What does this sign mean? (Show a stop sign from another country).
- Where are signs found?
- Where is this sign? (Show image of a sign around the school.)
- What store do you like to visit?
- What will you look for on our site visit?
- Where did we see this sign? (Show a picture of a location sign from the site visit.)
- What number is on this sign? (Show a speed limit sign.)
- How do signs help?
- What does this sign tell us?
- What does this mean? (Display a picture of "walk" and "don't walk" signs.)
- How many signs do you see? (Display a picture of a city street.)
- Can you add to this pattern? (Use signs to create a pattern.)
- Who works with signs?
- Who do you want to ask our visitor?
- What will we see at the print shop?
- What letter is this hand making? (Show sign language letter L, O, C, V, or W.)
- What word would you like to learn in sign language?
- How many people do you think saw our sign in the entrance of the school?
- What was your favorite part of the study?

Enduring Understandings

Through this unit, students will develop understandings about:

- The basic characteristics of signs and signals, including their shapes, colors, symbols, and meanings (e.g., stop signs are red and octagonal; exit signs are green; symbols show actions or ideas).

- How people use signs and signals to communicate, including traffic signs, classroom visuals, body language, hand gestures, and basic American Sign Language (ASL) signs.
- How signs and signals help people stay safe, such as crossing at crosswalks, following emergency exit signs, using hand signals when biking, or understanding visual cues in the classroom.
- The different ways we send and receive messages without speaking, like waving hello, pointing, using facial expressions, or signing words with our hands.
- The idea that signs are everywhere—in schools, homes, communities, and on devices—and help people know what to do, where to go, or how to behave.
- That sign language is a complete language used by many people to communicate, and learning some simple ASL signs helps us connect, include, and respect others.
- The role of visuals and symbols in communication, such as pictograms, picture schedules, emojis, or universal symbols (e.g., restroom signs, "no" signs, or arrows showing direction).
- That people create signs and signals to share information clearly—designing and using them requires thought about color, placement, and purpose (in age-appropriate terms).
- That many professions use signs and signals to do their jobs—like crossing guards, firefighters, pilots, teachers, and construction workers—and sometimes use sign language too.
- The ways signs and signals support community life, helping people understand rules, stay organized, and interact respectfully and safely.
- The importance of using signs and gestures respectfully, including practicing kindness in communication, taking turns, and recognizing the needs of people who communicate differently.

Students Will Know

Students will gain knowledge of:

- Vocabulary: "sign," "signal," "gesture," "communication," "expression," "symbol," "hand," "visual," "meaning," "message," "safety," "direction," "warning," "body language," "attention," "talk," "listen," "respond," "ASL" (American Sign Language), "hearing," "deaf," "expression," "stop," "go," and "help"
- Types of Signs and Signals: Different types of visual signals and signs used in classrooms, communities, and homes (e.g., stop signs, exit signs, bathroom symbols, light cues).
- How People Use Signs to Communicate: How people share information without speaking—through signs, facial expressions, body language, and hand gestures.
- Basic Sign Language: Introduction to simple American Sign Language (ASL) vocabulary (e.g., "hello," "more," "stop," "thank you") and the idea that ASL is a real language used by many people.
- Safety Signs and Signals: Recognizing and understanding safety-related visuals such as traffic lights,

classroom rules signs, fire exit signs, and emergency symbols.

- Communication Signals: How signals help us know when to start, stop, wait, or pay attention—such as clapping patterns, bells, or visual timers used in classroom routines.
- People Who Use Signs and Signals in Their Work: Learning about professionals who use visual signals or sign language to help others—like teachers, crossing guards, interpreters, police officers, and firefighters.
- Visual Schedules and Symbols: Using classroom schedules and pictorial signs to understand daily routines and transitions.
- How Signs Help in the Community: How signs help us find places, stay safe, follow directions, and understand rules in shared spaces like schools, parks, and stores.
- Respectful Communication: Learning that people communicate in many ways, and that we can be kind, patient, and inclusive when someone uses signs, gestures, or different methods to express themselves.

Students Will Be Skilled At

- Observing and Identifying: Identifying different types of signs, gestures, and signals in the classroom, school, and community (e.g., stop signs, exit signs, visual cues, hand gestures); observing how people communicate nonverbally and follow signals.
- Exploring Safely: Using classroom materials (visual timers, sign language flashcards, gesture cards, light cues) to practice recognizing and responding to different signals and signs in safe, playful ways.
- Drawing and Documentation: Making observational drawings of signs and symbols; taking photos or short videos of signs in the environment; documenting experiences with sign language or visual communication in journals or charts.
- Discussion and Shared Writing: Engaging in discussions about how people use signs and signals to communicate and stay safe; participating in shared writing about signs they see or how to express basic needs using gestures or ASL.
- Comparing and Contrasting: Comparing different types of signs (shapes, colors, purposes); comparing spoken language to sign language and exploring how both are used to share ideas and feelings.
- Caring for the Environment: Learning how to keep shared spaces safe and accessible by recognizing and respecting visual instructions (e.g., clean-up signs, safety posters); participating in role play around responsible use of signals and signs.
- Reading and Research: Reading books about sign language, symbols, and communication; exploring resources that show how people use signs all around the world, including ASL picture books.
- Physical Movement: Moving in response to visual cues and gestures (e.g., freeze when you see a red card, sign "stop," copy this sign); playing games like “Signal Simon Says” or gesture charades.

- Pattern Recognition: Identifying and completing patterns using signs, hand shapes, or color signals (e.g., stop-go-stop-go, red-hand-yellow-hand); creating sequences with sign language motions or visual icons.

- Measurement and Quantity: Measuring distances between signs, counting the number of signs seen on a walk, or comparing the number of gestures learned over time; estimating how many signs are used in a classroom routine.

- Sorting and Categorizing: Sorting signs by purpose (safety, direction, feeling), shape, or color; categorizing ASL signs by topic (e.g., greetings, feelings, actions).

- Asking Questions: Generating questions to ask community members who use signs and signals in their work (e.g., ASL interpreters, firefighters, crossing guards, teachers).

- Creative Expression: Creating books, posters, or murals about signs and signals; designing their own signs to communicate messages; building simple signboards or visual communication tools using art and recycled materials.

Evidence/Performance Tasks

- Observational Drawings: Students create drawings based on walks and observations of signs, gestures, and communication signals in the school and community (e.g., exit signs, hand signals, classroom signs, and visual cues).

- Discussion and Shared Writing: Contributions to daily large group discussions and shared writing activities reflect understanding of how people use signs and signals to communicate and stay safe, including the use of sign language.

- Class Communication Book/Science Journals: Children’s entries in their science journals and the collaborative class book, "All About Signs and Signals," serve as ongoing records of their learning, observations, and use of visual and gestural communication.

- Question of the Day Responses: Daily responses to the "Question of the Day" prompts (e.g., "What signs do you know?" or "How do you say 'hello' in sign language?") provide insight into comprehension and engagement.

- Safety and Signal Practice: Demonstrating knowledge and safe behavior during outdoor or classroom play by recognizing and responding to visual and auditory cues (e.g., stop signs, hand signals, classroom light systems).

- Hands-On Communication Projects: Participation in projects such as creating classroom signs, learning and using basic sign language vocabulary, or designing their own visual communication systems.

- Photography Walks: Engaging in walks to observe and photograph signs and signals in the environment (e.g., school signs, community signs, body language cues), then discussing their meaning and purpose.

- Exhibits/Displays: The final "Celebrating Learning" event showcases children’s sign drawings, sign language vocabulary posters, communication journals, and collaborative projects about how we use

signs and signals to understand the world.

- Small Group Activities: Performance within various small group tasks such as the "Sign Match Game," "Signal Simon Says," and "Sign Language Story Time."

Learning Plan

The learning plan is structured into daily activities within each major section (Exploring the Topic, Investigations 1-4, and Celebrating Learning).

• Exploring the Topic: 5 days

• Investigation 1: 5 days

• Investigation 2: 5 days

• Investigation 3: 4 days

• Investigation 4: 4 days

• Celebrating Learning: 2 days

Each day typically includes:

Interest Areas: Designated learning centers (e.g., Toys and Games, Discovery, Library, Technology, Music and Movement, Art, Dramatic Play, Block, Cooking) with relevant materials and prompts

Outdoor Experiences: Hands-on activities like inviting children to make and display location signs on the playground, providing traffic signs for children to use to direct traffic on the tricycle paths, “Ways to Travel,” “Red Light, Green Light,” “Clay Engraving,” “Moving Through the Forest,” “Balance on a Beam,” “Stop & Go,” “Obstacle Course,” and “Follow the Leader.”

Family Partnerships: Engaging families through letters, inviting them to bring in sign-related items, assisting with supervision, noticing signs in the community, discussing the name of the street on which they live on, discussing how to be safe passengers, and visiting the classroom to share expertise.

Wow! Experiences: Special events like walks around the school to look at signs, research grocery stores that children can visit to look for signs, a walk to make observational drawings and crayon rubbings of different surfaces, classroom visits from experts (local printers, those fluent in sign language, crossing guards, etc.), site visits to a grocery store and print shop to watch people build or repair a road and see the materials used, and

the final celebration of learning.

Question of the Day: A specific question to focus daily inquiry and discussion

Large Group:

Games: Engaging games like "Stop & Go Colors," “Mr. Forgetful,” “Rainbow Colors,” “What Could This Be?” “Up & Down on the Seesaw,” “Color Clues,” “Listen For Your Name,” “Syllable Surprise,” “Syllable Stroll,” “I Spy With My Little Eye,” “Don’t Forget Your Ears,”

Songs/Poems/Rhymes/Chants: Singing songs such as “Clap a Friend’s Name,” “Finger Flexing,” etc.

Movement: Structured movement activities like "Freeze,” “Step, Hop, and Jump,” “The Name Dance,” “High Knees,” “Action Counting,” “Let’s Make Letters,” etc.

Discussion and Shared Writing: Focused discussions and collaborative writing on topics like "Taking a Look at Signs,” “Exploring Writing on Signs,” “Taking a Walk to Look For Signs,” ”Colors of Signs,” “Shapes of Signs,” “Wordless Signs,” “Looking at Banners,” “Signs From Different Countries,” “Signs Outside of Buildings,” “Signs Inside of Stores,” “Site Visit: Grocery Store,” “Visitor Who Uses Signs,” “Site Visit to See How Signs are Made,” and preparing for/sharing learning at the celebration

Read-Aloud: Nonfiction and fiction books featuring signs, signals, sign language, or related topics are read daily, often with "Book Discussion Cards”

Small Group Options: Two differentiated small group options are provided daily, often linked to "Intentional Teaching Cards" (e.g., "Which Has More?” “Making Numerals,” “The Farmer Builds a Fence,” “Tallying,” “Did You Ever See…?” “Rhyming Riddles,” “Shape Bingo,” “Textured Letters,” “Perler Patterns,” “Treasure Hunt,” “I Went Shopping,” “Number Cards,” “My Shadow and I,” “Nesting Dolls,” “Graphing,” “Guessing Jar,” etc.) covering literacy, math, and science skills

Materials

- Objects/Materials: Toy signs such as road signs or shop signs, cardboard, cardstock, scrap paper, magnetic letters and boards, magazines that have pictures of signs, clean, empty good packages,

flashlights, books about signs or sign language, fabric, stickers, paint, stencils, board games with signs, whistles, paint rollers, craft stickers, safety vest, traffic flags or batons, rolls of paper or fabric, etc.

- Pictures or Videos: interesting signs from other places, signs in your community, people using signs, etc.

Standards

I. Social/Emotional Development

- Standard 0.1: Children demonstrate self-confidence.

0.1.1 Express individuality by making independent decisions.

0.1.2 Express ideas for activities and initiate discussions.

0.1.3 Actively engage in activities and interactions with teachers and peers.

- Standard 0.2: Children demonstrate self-direction.

0.2.1 Make independent choices and plans from a broad range of diverse interest centers.

0.2.2 Demonstrate self-help skills.

0.2.3 Move through classroom routines and activities with minimal teacher direction and transition easily from one activity to the next.

- Standard 0.3: Children identify and express feelings.

0.3.1 Recognize and describe a wide range of feelings, including sadness, anger, fear, and happiness.

- Standard 0.4: Children exhibit positive interactions with other children and adults.

0.4.1 Engage appropriately with peers and teachers in classroom activities.

0.4.2 Demonstrate socially acceptable behavior for teachers and peers.

0.4.6 Demonstrate verbal or nonverbal problem-solving skills without being aggressive.

II. Language Arts Literacy

- Standard 1.1: Children participate in conversations and discussions.

1.1.1 Engage in conversations about familiar topics.

1.1.2 Ask and answer questions related to the topic.

- Standard 1.2: Children comprehend and use new vocabulary.

1.2.1 Use new vocabulary related to the topic.

1.2.2 Understand and follow multi-step directions.

- Standard 1.3: Children express themselves through and develop an appreciation of dramatic play and storytelling.

1.3.1 Play roles observed through life experiences.

1.3.3 Participate with others in dramatic play, negotiating roles and setting up scenarios using costumes and props.

- Standard 1.4: Children demonstrate emergent reading skills.

1.4.1 Show interest in books and print materials.

- Standard 1.5: Children demonstrate emergent writing skills.

1.5.1 Use drawing and writing to express ideas.

III. Mathematics

- Standard 3.1: Children use numbers and counting.

3.1.1 Count with understanding and recognize how many are in a set.

- Standard 3.2: Children identify and describe shapes.

3.2.1 Identify and describe two- and three-dimensional shapes.

3.2.2 Understand and use positional words.

- Standard 3.3: Children compare and measure.

3.3.1 Compare and order objects by length, size, weight.

3.3.2 Use non-standard units to measure.

- Standard 3.4: Children sort and classify objects.

3.4.1 Sort and classify objects based on one or more attributes.

- Standard 3.5: Children recognize and create patterns.

3.5.1 Recognize and extend simple patterns.

IV. Science

- Standard 4.1: Children explore and investigate the natural and physical world.

4.1.1 Observe and describe objects and events.

4.1.2 Ask questions about observations.

4.1.3 Conduct simple investigations to answer questions.

4.1.4 Make predictions and test them.

- Standard 4.2: Children understand properties of objects and materials.

4.2.1 Identify and describe properties of objects.

4.2.2 Explore how objects can be changed.

- Standard 4.3: Children understand basic concepts of force and motion.

4.3.1 Explore different ways objects move.

4.3.2 Understand that forces cause changes in motion.

- Standard 4.4: Children understand concepts related to structures and engineering.

4.4.1 Explore how structures are built and designed.

4.4.2 Use tools and materials to design and build.

V. Health, Safety, and Physical Education

- Standard 2.2: Children demonstrate large motor skills.

2.2.1 Demonstrate locomotor skills.

2.2.2 Demonstrate non-locomotor skills.

2.2.3 Demonstrate manipulative skills.

- Standard 2.3: Children demonstrate small motor skills.

2.3.1 Develop eye-hand coordination.

2.3.2 Demonstrate fine motor skills.

VI. Visual and Performing Arts

- Standard 5.1: Children express themselves through and develop an appreciation of dramatic play and storytelling.

5.1.3 Participate with others in dramatic play, negotiating roles and setting up scenarios using costumes and props.

- Standard 5.2: Children express themselves through and develop an appreciation of the visual arts.

5.2.1 Create two- and three-dimensional works of art while exploring color, line, shape, form, texture, and space.

VII. Social Studies, Family, and Life Skills

- Standard 6.1: Children understand themselves and their families.

6.1.1 Share information about themselves and their families.

- Standard 6.3: Children understand their community.

6.3.1 Explore and identify places and people in their community.

6.3.2 Understand the roles of community helpers.

- Standard 6.4: Children demonstrate problem-solving skills.

6.4.1 Identify a problem and generate possible solutions.

6.4.2 Use materials and resources to solve problems.

VIII. Technology

- Standard 8.1: Children use technology tools for learning and communication.

8.1.1 Explore and use various technological tools.

Suggested Strategies for Modifications

SUGGESTED STRATEGIES FOR MODIFICATIONS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS, ELL, AT RISK AND STUDENTS GIFTED STUDENTS.

Using a variety of hands-on activities, movement, small group options, visual activities, along with discussions to support diverse learners and learning styles. Students experience hands-on exploration of technology and materials that provide multiple entry points for learners.

This link includes content specific accommodations and modification for all populations:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1fmQ5llgX1HZdIPa7duX33pfmonGDoVFag9eE2DpbLfM/edit?usp=sharing