

Signs Keep Us Safe

by Dot Meharry





Overview

This book uses clear graphics and simple text to show how signs in the community help keep people safe. (Big idea: People take care of themselves by keeping safe.)

Suggested purposes

This book supports the following **comprehension strategies**:

- making connections between prior knowledge and the text 
- summarising the main ideas. 

It supports the following **non-fiction strategy**:

- getting information from graphics.

Key vocabulary

The vocabulary that is focused on includes:

- Anchor words – *rules, safe, signs*
- Content words – *help, pictures, seen, tell, words*
- High-frequency words – *have, made, not, some, they, us, what*

Features of the text

- Non-fiction features:
 - cover flap, which provides support for identifying the big ideas and anchor words
 - the topic (signs), which expands on pages 14 and 15 of the anchor book *Taking Care of Yourself*
 - preview question on the back cover
 - graphic illustrations, photographs, and symbols
 - glossary
- Word study:
 - opportunities to build knowledge of letter-sound patterns and practise cross-checking decoding strategies
 - digraphs – “th” and “wh”
 - “ee” rime in “keep”
 - italicised word “not” on page 9
- Question mark on pages 2 and 11 and the back cover



Setting the scene

If you have already introduced the topic using the Whole-class Introduction and the anchor book (*Taking Care of Yourself*), you can review the discussion and show the students pages 14 and 15 of the anchor book.

Talk about the things that help keep us safe in places that are very busy. *What signs might you see on your way to school? What do those signs tell you? What signs might you see at a park? What do they tell you?*

ELL support

As ELL students acquire more language, they will listen attentively to stories and information and will identify important details and concepts through verbal and non-verbal communication.

Introducing the text

Front cover – Discuss the cover photograph. *Why is the girl holding the sign?* Read aloud the title and the author's name.

Back cover – Read aloud the preview question. Lead a discussion to build the students' background knowledge.

Using the flap – Read aloud the text on the flap, and (if relevant) remind the students that they have read this in *Taking Care of Yourself*. Read aloud the anchor words on the other side of the flap. Tell the students that they can point out the anchor words when they find them in the book. Ask them to leave the flap open as they read.

Title page – Read aloud the title. The students might notice some of the anchor words in the title. Discuss the photograph. *What does this sign tell the cyclist?* (The students may need help with the word "route".)

The first reading

SUM **Pages 2 and 3 – (Summarising the main ideas)** Discuss the picture. *The boy and his mum have noticed some signs. What do the signs tell us? What do you notice about them?* Prompt the students to use the glossary for an explanation of the "caution" sign. Read aloud page 2. Encourage them to respond to the question.

SUM **Pages 4 and 5 – (Summarising the main ideas)** *Where are the boy and his mum?* Discuss the signs. *What do all of these signs have in common?* (pictures) Use the word "symbol" when pointing to the signs. Compare them with those on pages 2 and 3, emphasising the similar shapes. *How do all of these signs help the boy and his mum?* Note that the marking on the road is a sign too. Refer to the glossary to clarify the meaning of a red circle with a cross through it.

MC **Pages 6 and 7 – (Making connections)** Discuss the picture. *What is the boy's mum doing? What has the boy noticed? What are the blue and white signs called? What do they tell us? What do "St" and "Rd" mean?* Read aloud the sign below the street signs. *Where have we seen "caution" before? Why do you think this sign is in capital letters?* (Refer to page 2 and the glossary.)

SUM **(Summarising the main ideas)** *What do all of these signs have in common?* (words)

MC **Pages 8 and 9 – (Making connections)** *Where is the boy? What is the man in the chair doing?* Encourage the students to read the signs, including the one on the path. *How do these signs help the boy. Point to "not".*

How is this word different? Why has the author done this? Look at the red circle with the cross through it. How has colour been used to show something?

Pages 10 and 11 – (Making connections) Discuss the picture. *What is the boy doing? How is he keeping safe?* Encourage the students to read the signs, including the one on the path. Clarify the "ducks crossing" sign using the glossary. Encourage the students to respond to the question. **MC**

Summarise what the students have learned about signs:

- Write a checklist for a good sign. *What makes a good sign? What things help to give a strong, clear message?* (symbols, shapes, strong colours, capital letters) Then have them design their own signs, using the checklist.

Vocabulary activity

Focus word: signs

1. Reread page 2. *Signs are made to help us.*
2. Say "signs" with me.
3. Explain that a sign can be a diagram or symbol. It may or may not have words. It is usually in a place where everyone can see it.
4. Explain that the word "sign" can be used in other ways, such as when a person writes his or her name. *This is called signing your name.* "Sign" can also describe the way someone lets you know something important, for example, when a police officer raises a hand to tell a car to stop.

Another meaning for “sign” is the language that deaf people use. *Sign language uses quick hand movements in place of words.* Explain that all of these uses of “sign” give a message in a quick, clear way. Tell the students that signs that keep us safe are reminders or warnings. Other signs give us information, such as the names of streets or towns.

5. Tell them to think of signs they see at school. *What signs are inside? What signs are outside? Can you see any signs now?* Have the students share their ideas with a partner. Listen to the discussions and ask a few students to share their thinking. Take a walk around the school looking for signs.
6. *What’s the word you’ve been learning that means a quick, simple message about something important?* Have the students say “signs” with you.

ELL activity

Language objective: Supporting understanding of the anchor word “rules”

- Reread the text with the students.
- Turn to page 2. *Let’s read this page together.* Reread the sentence, “They tell us what the rules are.”
- *Say rules with me. What is a rule?*
- Support the students in their understanding. *What is one rule for our classroom? One rule for the playground?* Record the rules on the board.
- Look at page 9. *Look at the signs on this page. Tell your partner the rules at the pool.* (no running, no diving)
- *Why do they have these rules at the pool? (to keep safe)* Rules keep us safe. *Let’s say that together – rules keep us safe.*
- Ask the students to tell a partner one rule they follow to keep safe. Share the rules.
- *Now, let’s draw a sign for your rule.* (Use a checklist for a good sign if you have one.)
- The students can write or you can scribe the rule for the sign. They can read their rule to the group. The signs can be placed in the classroom if the rules are appropriate.

Ideas for revisiting the text

1. Review and check

- Listen as the students reread the text, observing their fluency and decoding strategies.
- Review the anchor and content words. Check that the students know what the words mean and how they are used in context.

2. Stop and learn

a. Decoding/word attack activities

Practising onset and rime

- Write “keep” on the board and say it aloud.
- Have the students build up a word family by thinking of other words that use “-eep”.
- Write the words on the board. (You may need to explain that words such as “leap” sound the same but are spelled differently.)

BLM – Using word families. Make word cards to put on the word wall. Make picture cards to match the words. (whale, wheel, whiskers, whistle, white) The students can fill in the spaces to complete the word families “eep”, “een”, and “eet”.

Practising digraphs

- Read pages 8 and 9. Write “what” on the board.
- Read page 10. Write “where” on the board.
- Ask the students to look at each other as they say the words. What does the “wh” sound look like?
- Brainstorm other words that start with “wh”.
- The students can play a word card game. You will need a dice and a marker.
 - Make a set of word cards using words beginning with “wh”. Write the word on one side and draw a picture of it on the other side.
 - Place the cards side by side, with the words facing up.
 - The students can take turns rolling a dice and moving a marker. When the student lands on a word, they must say the word. They can check whether they are correct by looking at the picture on the other side. The first to reach the end wins.

b. Comprehension activities

- Discuss the important messages in this book. Have the students share their experiences with signs. Tell the students that they are going to summarise the text. Explain that a summary has only the most important idea. Review what signs do.

BLM – Identifying facts and summarising

From the list, the students can copy the sentence that best summarises what signs do. They can then draw a picture of a sign and write a sentence that describes it.

c. Writing activity

- Take a walk around the school and around the neighbourhood. Make a class book about the signs. Draw pictures. Write a sentence for each page.

3. Suggestion for further activities

- Write a story about a person who is lost or in trouble. A sign helps the person to find their way or get out of trouble.