

This is an additional unit for DreamBIG Teaching and Learning Resource 2021. You can access a full copy of this resource at: <http://tiny.cc/DreamBIGFest>



VISUAL ARTS 5–10: SIGN DESIGN

AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM: THE ARTS

ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS – Learning Area: The Arts

Years 7–8 Visual Arts ... identify and analyse how other artists use visual conventions and viewpoints to communicate ideas and apply this knowledge in their art making.

... explain how an artwork is displayed to enhance its meaning.

... evaluate how they and others are influenced by artworks from different cultures, times and places.

... plan their art making in response to exploration of techniques and processes used in their own and others' artworks.

... demonstrate use of visual conventions, techniques and processes to communicate meaning in their artworks.†



IDEAS FOR ASSESSMENT

Adapt and differentiate as appropriate to the year level and learners' diversity.

- Create an artwork in response to the exploration of materials, techniques and processes used and analysed for signage.
- Prepare a short artist's statement to explain how they have used the design process, visual conventions and techniques.
- Collaborate to curate a display of these signs.

EXAMPLES OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Students will focus on the use and awareness of the elements of visual arts, building on the knowledge and skills developed previously.

Years 7–8

Representation

Structure

- **Subject matter:** safety, communication, designing
- **Forms:** cross-media – drawing, design, photography
- **Styles:** simplification
- **Techniques:** using the design process – a brief, research, idea generation, refinement, final concept, evaluation; form vs function
- **Visual convention:** identifying, using and interpreting a selection of design elements and design principles
- **Materials:** understanding of possibilities and restraints of minimal use of paper and card

Practices

- **Spaces:** recognising the meaning of studio, and adopting appropriate behaviour in the studio as a specialised space, eg cleaning up, organising materials, naming work and exhibiting work



- **Display:** presenting artworks in formal and informal spaces to enhance meaning; influence of viewpoints and audience on artworks; form and function

Skills

- **Expressive:** interpreting subject matter through various contexts and/or viewpoints to enhance understanding and create a personal response to stimuli
- **Conceptual:** developing an idea into a visual representation
- **Practical:** using visual arts materials, equipment and instruments

Processes: investigating, conceiving, experimenting, selecting, refining, predicting, testing, evaluating, comparing, analysing, identifying, evaluating, judging and displaying

Viewpoints

- **Expression:** physical, psychological, sensory, intuitive
- **Contexts:** recognising artists, artworks and audiences that promote a conceptual understanding. Referring to artists, artworks and audiences from different cultures, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and from Asia.‡

TEACHER NOTE

Signage is an important component of our lives. We need signs to point out entrances and exits, steep or slippery roads, speed limits, danger or safety, and when to slow down or stop.

Signs that include pictures (ie graphics or symbols) can be recognised world-wide. Think about the skull and crossbones symbol for poison (or for pirates), the red stop sign or the slippery road sign. These symbols and their meanings are clear despite the country or language they might be displayed in.

Symbols need to be recognised instantly to point something out, or to communicate and inform us.



RESPONDING AND VIEWPOINTS

With the class, discuss and reflect on the following suggestions before asking students to each document their individual thoughts:

Evaluate your design.

- What did you have to do (what was the brief (or task set)?)
- Describe the steps you took to create your design, starting from when you chose a spot and a need for a sign.
- What were the challenges in the design process and how did you overcome them?
- What did you enjoy or learn about the process?

- Do you think your design is successful? Give reasons.
- If you were going to do this again, what would you do differently?

Further suggestions to explore with the class, when and as appropriate for your learners, include:

- *Forms and elements:* What colours were used? How is the colour used, and why is it used in this way? How does the artwork use visual conventions to convey meaning? What should signs be made of? What needs to be considered?
- *Meanings and interpretations:* What did this design make you think about and why?

What figures/shapes can you see in the artwork? What is the sign made of? How does the choice of material enhance the audience's understanding of the sign's intention?

- *Societies and cultures:* What clues in the sign tell you where it was made, who made it, and why? ie: Where would you not see such a sign, and why not?
- How would you use symbolic images to pass on advice about the environment to your future children? †



INQUIRY QUESTION

How can I support students to:

- understand how signs and symbols contribute to people's safety and wellbeing?

LEARNING EXPERIENCES TO ENGAGE, CHALLENGE AND SUPPORT

LESSONS 1-4 – SIGN DESIGN

TEACHER (prepare in advance) images and items from the Resources list at the end of this unit.

Show and examine with the class a number of **signs** (prepared earlier). Include:

- signs with a double meaning
- signs that are similar across a range of cultures – to demonstrate the **universal language of graphics**
- 'signs' for people with a visual impairment.

Brainstorm and **facilitate** discussion:

- What other signs can you think of? What ones have you seen?
- What are some signs from various fast-food outlets? Describe them.
- Where do we see signs?
- What is their **purpose**?
- How important is signage? Where can it be used?
- What might be some challenges with signage?
- What 'signs' exist for people with visual impairment?

Working either in pairs or individually, students:

- walk around the school ground looking for potential places that need signage
- take photos of the area and of the possibilities of where the sign could be displayed.

Considerations

- How **high** should the sign be, how **big** and **where** could it be placed?
- Who would be viewing the sign?

Measure the area if necessary.

Plan

STUDENTS create a number of possibilities by **drawing** their thoughts and ideas (at least ten.) They consider:

- Will it contain an image or graphic only? Will it need a word?

They choose the best 2 or 3 of these to seek feedback:

- Which is the most effective?
- Can others recognise what the drawing/sign means?

This can be done within the class, or as a survey of the whole school.

Decide

From their survey, students choose the most successful drawing, refine it and create their sign.

NB Point out to the students that a designer has to satisfy a client or need, rather than themselves. Therefore the designer's favourite might not necessarily be the final choice made.

The Brief

Students identify a place in the school grounds that needs a sign. They create a sign for it.

Signs may be categorised as:

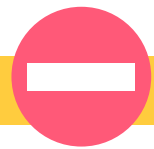
- **directions** – eg where to find the canteen or front office
- **safety** – eg where students need to take care (eg a trip hazard, a need to stop, stairs, crossing a particular area)
- **instructions** – eg where to line up, find sports equipment, eat lunch.



TEACHER CUES

The sign is best made on a yellow background (use yellow card) and the symbol (graphic) cut out from black paper, which is glued onto the yellow background. Words and letters should be kept to a minimum and can be added with black marker pens.





STUDENTS must decide how big the **symbol** needs to be in order to be easily seen from an appropriate **distance, angle** and **direction**.

Add complexity: How would these factors be affected if someone was **travelling** at speed?

Once finished, they can place the sign at the spot in the school they identified initially and take a photo for a visual record.

- Reflect as class and discuss the placement and success (effectiveness) of the signs.

OPTION: Gauge the effectiveness of the sign by observing, from a distance, how peers respond to it.

TFEL TIPS

1.6 Design, plan and organise for learning and teaching.

2.3 Create safe conditions for rigorous learning: Negotiate learning.

4.1 Personalise and connect learning: Build on learners' understanding.

4.3 Personalise and connect learning: Apply and assess learning in authentic contexts.

4.4 Personalise and connect learning: Communicate learning in multiple modes.

FURTHER IDEAS

Students could discuss other potential hazards or risks in the school, either with each other or with the **Student Representative Council (SRC)**, to possibly develop more student/parent-friendly signage for use around the school.

Discuss the **International Code of Signals (ICS)**. What are they? When and how did they come about? When, where and why are they used? eg Flag semaphore.

Auslan – Explore the development and use of international **sign** languages.

English – Explore visual language, language variation. Yr 5, Literature and context ([ACELT1608 - Scootle](#))

Maths – Problem-solving proficiency. Explore and identify what **size** symbol/sign/lettering is most effective. How can it be determined? What are the best **colours** and/or **font** style to use and why?

Science – Communicating science ideas in **symbolic** forms, periodic table.

RESOURCES

Images of a variety of signs selected from the internet, eg road, traffic, no-smoking signs. Include:

- signs that are similar across a range of cultures
- signs that have double meanings

You Will Never Look at these Logos the Same Way Ever Again, Sparkpeople

https://www.sparkpeople.com/mypage_public_journal_individual.asp?blog_id=5619454

Top 10 of the world's most famous logos and what we can learn from them, 99 Designs

<https://99designs.com.au/blog/logo-branding/famous-logos/>

Safety Signs, 22 Oct 2018, HSE Professionals (animation)

<https://youtu.be/FIjS2XtNdRI>

ISO Symbols for Safety Signs and Labels, 25 Oct 2012, Clarion Safety Systems

<https://youtu.be/izeWHwDCUes>

- 'signs' for people with a visual impairment (mp3 files) eg sirens, braille

Pedestrians who are Vision Impaired, Victoria Walks

https://www.victoriawalks.org.au/Assets/Files/Vision_Impaired_Road_Safety_Audit_Tool.pdf

Camera or phone

Sketch book or visual diary

Yellow cardboard

Black card/paper

Scissors, black pens (for lettering)

Paint, glue

Devices to show images, or play other 'signs'.

Be Curious AT DreamBIG CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL

Being in Space: Urban Mind Studio, Commissioner for Children & Young People SA

Big Screens, Little Artists: Online – Statewide Project

Creating a Mural with Elizabeth Close: In School

Express Yourself: AFC Exhibitions & Collections

Finding Robyn: Wendy Todd

Hidden Creature Gallery: Arena Theatre Company

Hidden Treasures: Fabrik Arts and Heritage

Infinite Monster: Terrapin

LEAF Project: LifeCycles Schools Program

One Minute Sculptures: Online – Statewide Project

Ping Pong WoW: The Ball Room Projects

The Hybrid Society and Crate Expectations: Cake Industries

Wild City: Kathy Holowko

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