Make the message clear

Brickyard signs | Design, language, and historical evidence

Grades 4-8 | Adaptable for families | **45-minute lesson** + model-building time

THE BIG QUESTION

How can a small sign help people understand a place and what to do there?

STUDENTS WILL

Write a short message for an intended reader; use size and contrast to improve clarity; revise after feedback; identify evidence needed to call a sign historically authentic.

PREPARE

Brickyard-sign PDF or pictures; student worksheet; pencils; red and white drawing materials. For building: the 2-page signs PDF, cardstock, scissors, and glue. Keep the company name visible: Louisville Fire Brick Works.

TEACH IT IN FOUR STEPS

Read (5 minutes). Compare a clear short message with a crowded one.
Plan (10 minutes). Choose a sign's reader and purpose: entrance, loading area, office, or direction.
Design (20 minutes). Draft a red-and-white sign; ask a partner to read it from a few steps away and revise.
Reflect (10 minutes). Share what changed. Discuss the difference between a useful imagined sign and a documented historical sign.

ADAPT AND EXTEND

Younger learners can combine a simple arrow or picture with one word. Older learners can compare a dated photograph with a modern reconstruction and explain which details are supported by evidence.

PRINT AND BUILD

Download the matching model at **restoringwhatwaslost.com/printables**. Print the model on US Letter at **Actual size / 100%**, single-sided; let the printer follow each page's orientation. Print this handout on plain paper. Use child-appropriate scissors and glue; adults should help with small cuts and difficult folds. A single standing sign is a manageable starter build; allow extra time for cutting and drying. These miniature signs are for a display, not for directing real workplace safety.

Free to copy for classroom, community, and home learning. Suggested timing is an estimate, not a tested completion time.

Make the message clear

Brickyard signs | Design, language, and historical evidence

Name: _____ Date: _____

Design brief: Make a sign for our miniature Louisville Fire Brick Works. The collection uses red and white.

1. Choose one message for a miniature brickyard sign. Who needs to read it, and what should they do?

2. Design your sign. Use a short message, large lettering, and strong contrast. Red and white are this model collection's company colors.

3. Ask a partner to read your sign from a few steps away. What did they understand? What would you improve?

4. What evidence would you need before claiming your design matches a sign actually used at Louisville Fire Brick Works?

Make the message clear

Brickyard signs | Design, language, and historical evidence

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

1. Accept a specific reader, message, and intended action; for example, visitors locating the office.
2. Look for short wording, readable letters, contrast, and a clear layout. An arrow should point consistently with the intended direction.
3. Credit a concrete report of what the partner understood and a revision based on that feedback.
4. Useful evidence could be a dated photograph, original sign, company drawing, catalog, or another reliable record showing the sign in use.

KEEP HISTORY AND THE MODEL DISTINCT

Louisville Fire Brick Works is the name supplied for this project. Red and white are the chosen company colors for this model collection. The printable signs are educational designs, not authenticated reproductions of surviving historical signs. A plausible old-fashioned appearance is not proof that a sign existed.

QUICK CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

Hold up a student design and ask a partner to state its message and audience. Then ask: "What would change this from our design into a documented reconstruction?"

SOURCES FOR THE TEACHER

Restoring What Was Lost History Workshop. Current model collection, completed-model illustrations, dimensions, and printing guidance.

https://restoringwhatwaslost.com/printables

Model and lesson design: Restoring What Was Lost History Workshop. Sources document the historical context; they do not endorse or certify these paper models. Free to print and copy for educational use.