

# SIGNPLAY

IBM PC Jr. with at least 128K



# **SIGNPLAY**

## **An Interactive Sight-Reading Game For Young Children**

**©Compu-Teach Inc., 1984  
240 Bradley Street  
New Haven, Ct.**

*Signplay* will run on any IBM PC jr. with DOS 2.1 (16 sector), one disk drive and 128K of memory.

This booklet contains:

Instructions for starting up .....	2
Playing <i>Signplay</i> .....	3
Choosing a game to play .....	3
The <i>Signplay</i> games, and how to play them .....	3
Educational principles .....	7
The Compu-Teach philosophy .....	8



## INSTRUCTIONS FOR STARTING UP SIGNPLAY.

\*\*\*PLEASE NOTE: On the IBM PC jr., the RETURN key is sometimes called the ENTER key. It is to the right of the letter keys and has a right-angled arrow on it.

Depending on whether your computer is ON or OFF, follow either instructions 3 or 4 accordingly.

1. Lift the door of the disk drive and gently slide in the DOS 2.1 disk, oval-cutout end first, label side up. (DOS means Disk Operating System.)
2. When the disk is completely inside, close the catch on the disk drive. If it doesn't close easily, don't force it; take the disk out and try again.
3. If your system is OFF, first turn the display monitor ON; then turn the computer ON.
4. If your system is already ON, hold down the CTRL-ALT keys, and then press the DEL key. Release all three together. This is called a "warm" start and is described in your reference manual. (If your previous disk was a Compu-Teach game, you may see on-screen instructions to simply insert the DOS disk and strike any key.)
5. Wait until on-screen instructions ask you to type in the date and the time. You may do this or simply press the RETURN key.
6. This will bring the "A>" prompt on screen.
7. Remove the DOS disk and carefully insert the *Signplay* disk.
8. Type SIGNPLAY. The screen should show: A>SIGNPLAY. Then press the ENTER key.

Please be patient while the program is loading. The Compu-Teach "seesaw" logo will appear on the screen. When a screen with a list of options appears, the game is ready to be played.

9. When you have finished playing, carefully remove the disk (make sure the red light on the disk drive is NOT ON) and replace it in its protective envelope; then turn the computer OFF.



## PLAYING SIGNPLAY.

This *Signplay* game helps your child learn many common words found on everyday signs, first by helping him make the connection between the shapes and contexts of the signs and the words on them. Then, using this recognition vocabulary which links the words to their signs, a variety of games shows the child ways in which the words can be formed independently of the shapes of the signs themselves. Seven different games are listed on the Game Menu for the child to choose from.

## CHOOSING A GAME TO PLAY.

- When you start *Signplay*, the screen will list eight options to choose from, seven games and the EXIT option to use when you have finished playing.
- Alongside the first game title is a large RED ARROW indicating that this is the current selection.
- To move the arrow and change the selection, press the SPACE BAR, the long bar beneath the letter keys.
- If the arrow moves past the title of your choice, simply continue pressing the SPACE BAR and the arrow will move around again.
- When the arrow points to the option of your choice, press ENTER.
- To return to this Options Screen at any time during any of the games, press ESC, the Escape key.
- If you press an inappropriate key, the computer will just BEEP and wait for you to press the proper key.

## THE SIGNPLAY GAMES, AND HOW TO PLAY THEM.

To help you and your child in your choice of games, here is a brief description of how each game is played.

### SEE SIGN AND NAME (The Introductory Game).

In this game, a sign with the proper word describing its pur-



pose or function is displayed. For example, a yellow triangle bears the word YIELD, and a red octagon reads STOP, just as they both do when used as road signs. As each sign is displayed, you should help the child read the words shown, explaining the harder words, if necessary.

- To move on to another sign and word, press the SPACE BAR.
- When you have seen all the signs and want to choose another phase of the game, press ESC to return to the Options Screen.

\*\*\*IMPORTANT NOTE: All the other games expect some input from the child. When the input is correct or appropriate, the computer will produce a musical fanfare and the screen will flash briefly with different colors.

If the input is incorrect, the computer will produce a flat buzzing sound to signify an inappropriate answer. The child will be allowed up to FOUR tries to input a correct answer, but if the fourth is still incorrect, the computer will provide the answer. This should be used as a learning experience and not as a right-or-wrong situation. This routine applies to all the games but the first.

## SEE A SIGN AND CHOOSE A NAME.

In this game, a sign will appear, but the word on the sign may not be correct; for example, the words NO PARKING may appear on a mailbox. The word on the sign may be changed by pressing the SPACE BAR until the child thinks that the word showing is the correct one; then he should press ENTER. The routine for correct or incorrect input, as described earlier, will take place. Once the word and sign are matched correctly either by the child or by the computer, you can go on to another sign and word pair by pressing ANY KEY.

## SEE A NAME AND CHOOSE A SIGN.

This game is similar to the "See a Sign and Choose a Name" game, except that words remain the same while the sign



changes until the two match. To change the sign, press the SPACE BAR. When the child thinks that the word and sign are a correct match, he should press ENTER. The same routine for correct or incorrect input, as described earlier, will take place. Once the word and sign have been matched correctly either by the child or by the computer, you may go on to another sign/word pair by pressing ANY KEY.

#### FILL IN THE FIRST LETTER.

In this game, the words on the sign are correct, but the first letter is missing; for example, \_\_\_TOP may appear on the red octagon. The child should press the letter key which will correctly complete the word on the sign. The same correct/incorrect input response routine will take place. If the child presses an inappropriate key, such as a number or function key, this is not counted as a wrong answer and the computer will just BEEP until you press the correct letter key.

#### FILL IN SOME LETTER.

As in the previous game, a letter will be missing, but it may be any letter in the word, not just the first. For example: WRON\_\_\_WAY. The child should press the letter key which correctly completes the sign word. The same correct or incorrect input responses apply, as before.

#### FILL IN THE NAME.

This time the computer will display a sign with dashes instead of letters, and the child should spell out the whole word, one letter at a time. It is quite possible that you may need to help the child in this game. Encourage the child to make his own attempts at the letters, and then work *together* to find the solution. If the sign has two lines, you must press ENTER after the first line. If you wish to enter a blank line, also press ENTER. The same correct/incorrect response will take place, as before.



(PLEASE NOTE: On the DON'T WALK sign, the apostrophe is omitted from the word DON'T, which appears as DONT.)

## MAKE A SIGN.

In this game, the computer will display a blank sign. The child may type any words onto the sign. If the sign has two lines of words, such as the DO NOT ENTER or BUS STOP signs, first fill in the top line, and then press ENTER to enter the words on the second line. When you have finished filling in the sign, press ENTER again. (PLEASE NOTE: To correctly complete the WALK signal, press ENTER before typing in anything else in order to leave the top line blank.) If the child makes an error while typing, you may correct the error by using the BACKSPACE key before finally pressing ENTER. The same correct/incorrect input responses will take place, as before.

## HOW TO LEAVE THE SIGNPLAY GAME:

When you have finished typing *Signplay*, return to the Options Screen by pressing the ESC key, and then select the EXIT option. The computer will then display a sign which says "THE END" and return you to the DOS prompt. You may then remove the game diskette and replace it in its protective envelope.

## OTHER OPTIONS:

### 1. Turning the Sound ON or OFF:

To turn OFF the sound effects, press ALT-S. That means you hold down the key marked ALT at the bottom left of the keyboard and press the S letter key at the same time; then release both keys. To turn the sound back ON, press ALT-S again.

### 2. Repeating an Exercise:

Sometimes you may want to repeat a certain exercise or part of a game, perhaps to practice or emphasize a more difficult word or concept, or just to repeat a particular favorite.



To repeat, press ALT-R (press and release simultaneously the ALT key and the R letter key) before continuing with the next sign/name pair.

## EDUCATIONAL PRINCIPLES.

As children learn to read, they eagerly begin reading all the words in the world around them. Signs are quite prevalent in our everyday world, and a child soon learns the most common among them. Children also learn in school to obey specific signs such as WALK and STOP signs. The *Signplay* game uses common signs to teach a child to make connections between words and signs with distinctive shapes or significance, such as a BUS STOP or STOP sign. As the child's understanding matures, the game then encourages the child to understand the letters on the signs as words independent of the sign's shape or color.

The game first helps the child match a distinctive shape, such as a red octagon, with the word found on that sign, combining the shape and word into a STOP sign like the ones he sees every day. Next, the child must see the letters in the word STOP and match them to the proper shape. This requires that he recognize the pattern STOP as the word which matches the red octagonal sign.

The game next presents a sign bearing the proper word with one letter missing. This encourages the child to learn the words on the sign by spelling them. Next, the child is shown a sign that has dashes instead of letters, and is asked to spell out the words on the sign, one letter at a time. The game congratulates the child or corrects each letter typed in, ensuring that the proper word is spelled on the sign.

With its most abstract game, "Name a Sign," *Signplay* allows the child to type the entire sign words on the correct sign. The child should feel free to type his name or any other familiar words onto the sign. However, the game shows that although a sign can have any word at all on it, there is still only one correct answer for each shape/sign.



## THE COMPU-TEACH PHILOSOPHY.

Learning is an active process. Children learn by doing. Ideally, education should utilize these principles. In school, children learn basic reading and arithmetic skills primarily by repetitive drills. While constant practice of new skills is important, it should be done in a way which does not destroy the excitement of learning.

Children enjoy the challenge of intriguing problems. Therefore, the first step in our educational strategy is to develop interesting and challenging problems that are presented in an instructional situation. How can we best harness a child's interest and direct it into an educational experience?

Compu-Teach believes that we should use a child's natural motivation to have fun and play games.

We design our educational programs to be entertaining as well as instructional, so that children will enjoy using them. To make a program entertaining, we must consider what a game is to a child. Not all children's games involve winning or losing; children also enjoy simple challenges, like throwing a ball back and forth. Compu-Teach advocates teaching children by presenting them with enjoyable and highly interactive situations, or, in another word, *games*.

To make the most of the interactive process, Compu-Teach programs teach not by rote drilling, but by challenging the child's understanding and abilities. Our computer scientists and graphic artists create learning experiences that encourage the child to play longer; this extends the period of exposure to the instructional materials. Our educational experts ensure that each game teaches important concepts. We also gear the presentation and challenges of each game to the age and abilities of the child playing it. So, when a child plays our games, he is rewarded not only by the graphics, animation, and sounds of the program but also by the excitement and satisfaction of mastering new abilities and discovering new ideas.

Compu-Teach programs entertain a child, challenge him, and reward his performance.



## CREDITS

Produced by Roger Schank, Ph.D.

Designed by Roger Schank, Ph.D. and Elliot Soloway, Ph.D.

Program by Joaquin Marques

Graphics by Robert Kissel

Design Support by Christopher Reisbeck, Ph.D. and James Galambos, Ph.D.

Documentation by Robert Parker

Edited by David Lilly



