Traffic Engineering in Children’s Literature

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Many children are naturally drawn to the concerns and subject matter of our profession.
But they finally found it.

**GO! GO! GO!**

**STOP!**

It was the perfect amount of **GO!** and **STOP!** to get things done.
Traffic controls

Stop! Go! Yield! One way! Dead end! Around the world, signs and signals enforce traffic rules, and safely direct motor vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians on the roads. The simple words, bright colors, and bold graphic symbols ensure that road users quickly understand what the instruction means.

Pedestrian crossing (the Netherlands)
This is called a "zebra crossing" in the USA and UK because of the stripes.

No parking zones (Australia)
This area is restricted to buses and vehicles loading goods.

Double lines (UK)
Yellow double lines indicate "no parking" zones.

No entry (France)
Traffic is not allowed to proceed any further.

Wild elk (Canada)
Animals such as wild elk can be a hazard on forest roads.

Melting snow (Canada)
Heavy snow melting from rooftops can be dangerous to passersby.

Wild bears (Japan)
Forest visitors are warned that bears are in the vicinity.

Speed limit (France)
The speed limit on many urban roads is 18.6 mph (30 km/h).

Stop sign (Morocco)
Red octagons signal "stop" in many parts of the world.

Signpost (USA)
Signposts can be crammed with traffic information.

Bike lane (Austria)
Only bicycles can travel in this designated lane.

Directions post (Ireland)
Road users are given the distances to towns in all directions.

BUS ZONE
3.00 PM - 6.30 PM MON - FRI

Loading zone
7.00 AM - 1.00 PM MON - FRI

ATTENTION!
Some of my favorite transportation themed authors and illustrators
Miroslav Sasek (1916-1980)
Richard Scarry (1919-1994)
The mayors of the two towns went to the road engineer and told him that they wanted to have a new road. The townspeople had agreed to pay the road engineer and his workers to build the new road.
Streetlights were put up so that drivers could see the road clearly at night.

The workers put up guardrails to keep cars from going off the road.

They posted many signs. Some signs remind drivers to drive safely. Some signs show which way to go.

A dividing line painter painted a line down the middle of the road. Dividing lines remind drivers to keep on their own side.

Everyone wanted to be first to drive on the new road. But Grandma Cat was the first! Wasn't she lucky?

All right, you two fellows! Stop talking and finish covering up that underground gasoline storage tank!
Virginia Lee Burton
(1909-1968)

BIG MACHINES
THE STORY OF VIRGINIA LEE BURTON
by Sherri Duskey Rinker
illustrated by John Rocco

How Mike Mulligan's Steam Shovel and Friends came to life
Then one fine morning in Spring
along came the great-great-granddaughter
of the man who built the Little House so well.
She saw the shabby Little House, but she didn’t hurry by.
There was something about the Little House
that made her stop and look again.
She said to her husband,
“That Little House looks just like the Little House
my grandmother lived in when she was a little girl,
only that Little House was way out in the country
on a hill covered with daisies
and apple trees growing around.”
Jinnee makes more lines... This time wavy and curvy, swoopy and swervy... like music, lines flow along...

Color joins in, free and watery...

And soon
—Ting, Ting, Ting!—
there is Maybelle the cable car, climbing up and down the giant hills of San Francisco. “Our day’s not done... it’s just begun!” she sings. While Aris and Michael wave
—CLINGETY-CLANG!—
Maybelle rolls away to do the job she loves.
Sally Sutton
Raise the signs. Raise the signs.
Drag and hoist and ram.
Force them down into their holes.

Thwack! WHOP! WHAM!
Kate Ascher
Streets

Street Signs

Street signs abound in New York and are a key element in the city's efforts to manage its vehicular flow. Signs indicate where to turn and where not to, where to park and for how long, where to catch a bus, how fast to travel, etc. They also, of course, tell pedestrians or drivers what street they're on.

There are over one million signs on New York City streets, with parking and street-cleaning signs the most predominant. Just as a stop sign is universally recognized, other street signs are also required to have a consistent shape, color, style, and meaning. Nearly all New York City signs are produced at DOT's sign shop in Manhattan.

Only very rarely does a New York City sign maker have a chance to be creative. The most recent opportunity came with the initiation of the "thru streets" initiative in midtown Manhattan in 2002. After much deliberation, the color purple—not yet a nationally designated color—was chosen for the new signs.

The Evolution of a Street Sign

1. The division of signs and markings is given a system. In this case, it was the express street concept.
2. A plan for the sign layout is devised.
3. Green letters, without distinction, are chosen for marquee. To order to make it look as if the words were moving.
4. The word "thru" is given a large, bold, and upper-case letter.
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6. Colors are chosen.
7. The space for each sign is determined.
8. The sign specifications are sent to the sign shop in Manhattan.
9. Approximately 300 signs, including those for changes in parking regulations, are made.
10. The signs division installs most areas for the signs.
11. Inspectors from the planning unit are sent to study compliance and to make traffic counts. The Police Department also sends officers to maintain the traffic.
12. Maintenance records are begun. Sign lost approximately 20 years.

Counting the Signs

New York is home to a world of street signs—over a million. Some, like those governing alternate side of the street parking, are fashioned specifically for city streets.

Street Sign Types

- Street name signs: 15.3%
- Prior regulatory signs: 17%
- Traffic control signs: 12.5%
- Priority regulatory signs: 17%
- Street name signs: 17%
- Other parking regulations: 15.4%
- Snow emergency: 3.3%
- Street name signs: 3.3%
- "Do not enter" signs: 3.3%
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Next Turn Permitted

At 3 Ave
10AM-6PM MON-FRI

Out of Service

Wall St
The bus stops downtown. Busy commuters rush off.

Can you find a helicopter?
Numbers help us understand the rules of the road.

And numbers also show the distance.
Christian Robinson
“Boy, what do we need a car for? We got a bus that breathes fire, and old Mr. Dennis, who always has a trick for you.”

The bus creaked to a stop in front of them. It sighed and sagged and the doors swung open.
And then Ed said, “We could try building more roads, and wider roads.”
I said, “But that really would mean even more cars—everywhere!”
But it wasn’t always like this. In the 1970s, Amsterdam, like most big cities, had a lot of vehicle traffic, and the roads were starting to become too dangerous for cyclists.

You're too old-fashioned. Speed up!

So how did Amsterdam become the bike capital of the world? Well, it took some very special people to make that change. Young moms like Maartje Rutten and her friends—and their children.
And what happened to Maartje Ratten?
Well, today her name is Maartje van Putten,
and you can still see her whizzing around the streets of Amsterdam on her bike.
Now that’s pedal power!
But what is a traffic engineer, you wonder?
Children's Books for Little Traffic Engineers

Ricardo Olea