

Title: WaterLit Poetry Path and Winter Activities!

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Image references:

Pictures taken from Microsoft clipart.

Introduction

Two ideas: poetry path & winter activities



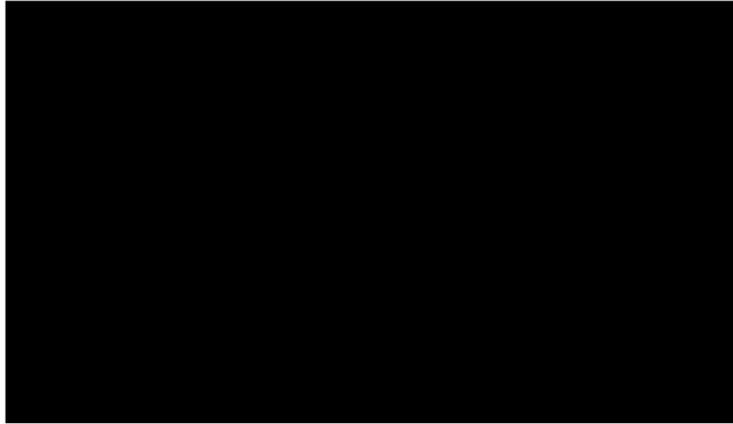
Hi everyone, my name is Jessica and these are my partners Candice and Jansen. Today, we are going to propose a poetry path and some winter-themed ideas for Waterloo Park! Throughout the presentation, we'll discuss how these activities can benefit children's language development, problem-solving skills, and general learning.

Image references:

<https://www.montrealfamilies.ca/29-fun-games-kids-can-play-in-the-snow/>

<https://www.nps.gov/ever/learn/news/everglades-national-park-celebrates-national-poetry-month.htm>

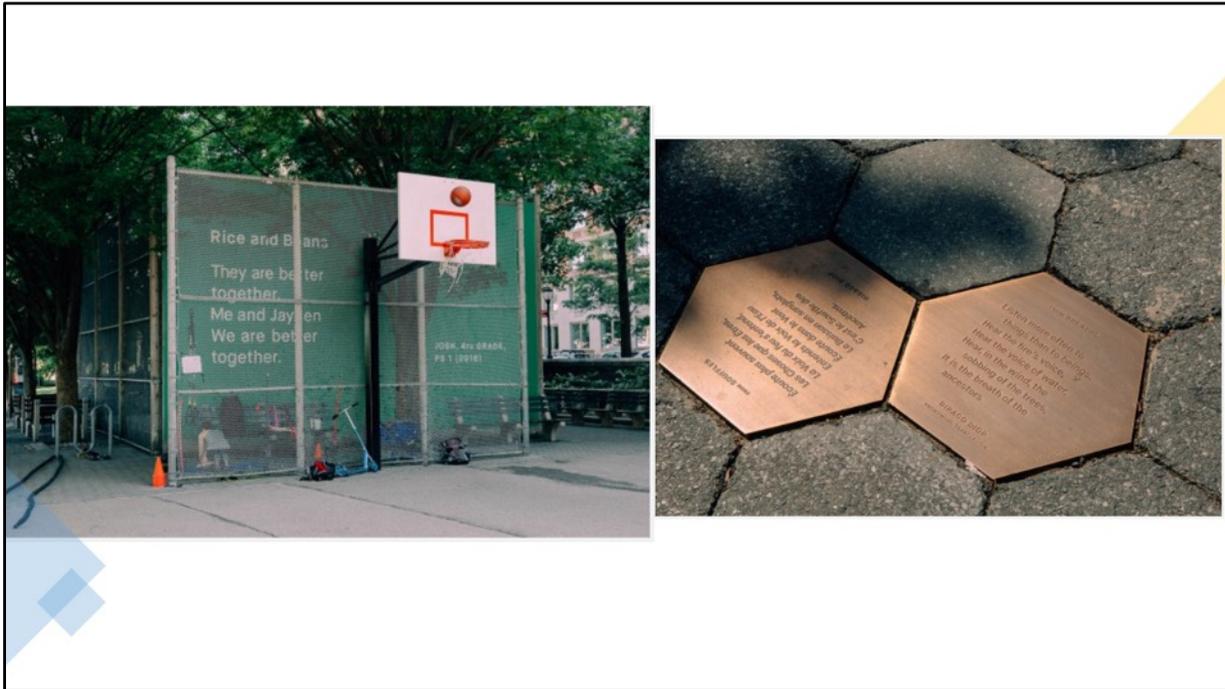
Poetry Path in Rockefeller Park



To start, let's look at an example of a poetry path in Rockefeller Park, New York. As you will see in the video, poetry is displayed in numerous creative ways throughout the park, with the pieces ranging in how permanent they are.

Video reference:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uR2IsUyOfgl>



Here are some examples of how poetry is displayed in Rockefeller Park. On the left, we have a mural behind the basketball net. This is a simple poem, but it can generate a lot of discussion! For example, parents can prompt their child about what other things can go well together, like hot chocolate and a cold winter day. On the right, we have poetry etched into tiles on the ground. This would be harder to implement compared to the mural, but it's a neat concept to consider.

Image reference:

<https://poetshouse.org/poetry-path/>



As we can see from these examples, it doesn't have to be poetry that we display in the park! Here we have words strung up along the railing. Most of the words are related to emotions and feelings, which can be a great conversation prompt for parents as they walk with their children. Another way we can display poetry is to etch it into park benches. This can spark conversation as children and their families sit down.

Image reference:

<https://graphicarts.princeton.edu/2020/12/12/walking-the-poetry-path/>



Lastly, we wanted to include an alternative example of how poetry can be incorporated into the park, through pop-up stands. This is a project called Poetry in Parks, based in Vancouver. Community members, like the children in this photo, can create poems with professional poets. Once the poems are composed, the writer can read it out loud or have the poet read it to them. Additionally, Poetry in Parks is sponsored by the Vancouver Public Library, so if this idea is adopted, we can collaborate with the Waterloo Public Library.

The main takeaway is that we can incorporate a wide range of surfaces and spaces all across Waterloo Park to display poems and generate more conversations with children. It is important to provide opportunities for language development because language is related to a number of emergent academic abilities. Children with the strongest language delays have been found to have the worst performance across academic domains, such as math (Nelson et al., 2010). Furthermore, explanatory talk is associated with children's later vocabulary and reading achievement scores (Snow & Beals, 2006). The poems in the park will likely contain unfamiliar words, which can provide opportunities for the children to ask questions, such as "What does exquisite mean?" and receive explanations from their parents. Similarly, adding poems to the park can encourage more abstract conversations, which are predictive of oral

language skills and literacy (Leech & Rowe, 2021).

Image references:

<https://freshlocalpoetry.weebly.com/gallery.html>

<https://vancouver.ca/parks-recreation-culture/poetry-in-parks.aspx> (the website for more info)

Abstract Conversations Inspired by the Path

Adult-Child

Adult: What do you think the theme of the poem is?

Child: What does theme mean?

Adult: It means what is the big idea of the story; what is it trying to tell you?

Child: Ok... the theme is that he lost his shoe and uhh... found it again.

Peer-to-Peer

Child 1: What is this ...uh word in the poem [predict]?

Child 2: I think it means you're ...uh not sure about something and you want to see if it might work.

Child 1: I think... yes that's it.

To provide a better picture of what conversations could look like on the poetry path, here are a few examples. On the left, we have an abstract conversation between an adult and a child discussing the theme of a poem. On the right, we have a peer-to-peer conversation which is less sophisticated, but still deals with abstract concepts. The fact that these conversations are removed from the here and now is important, since research has shown that high quality turn-taking in conversation is highly predictive of children's later brain and behavioural outcomes (Leech & Rowe, 2021). There's lots of conversational opportunities that can occur on our poetry path!

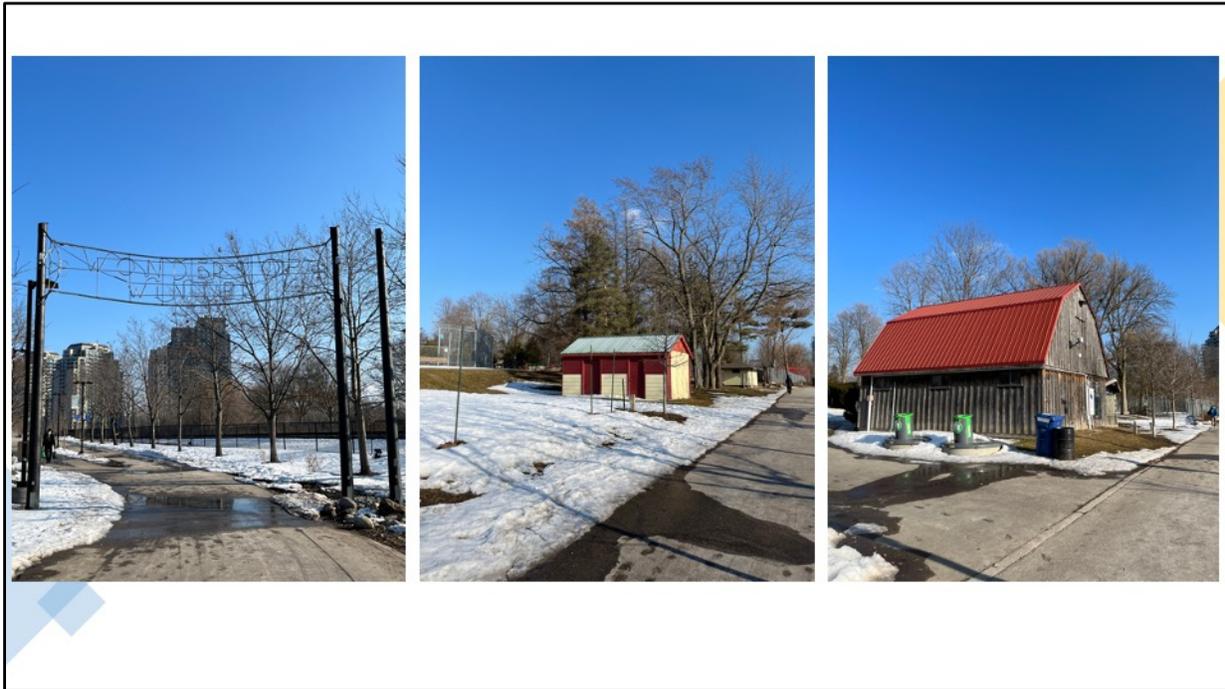
Video reference:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EafOik5k44g>

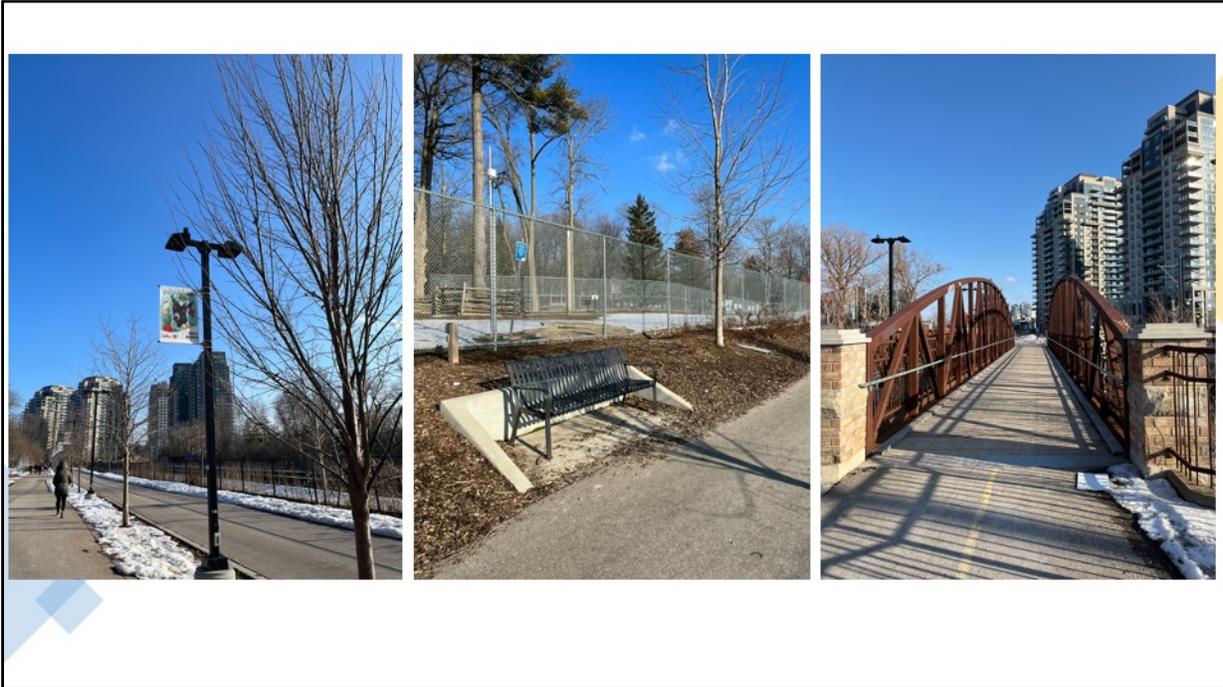
Proposed Pathway in Waterloo Park



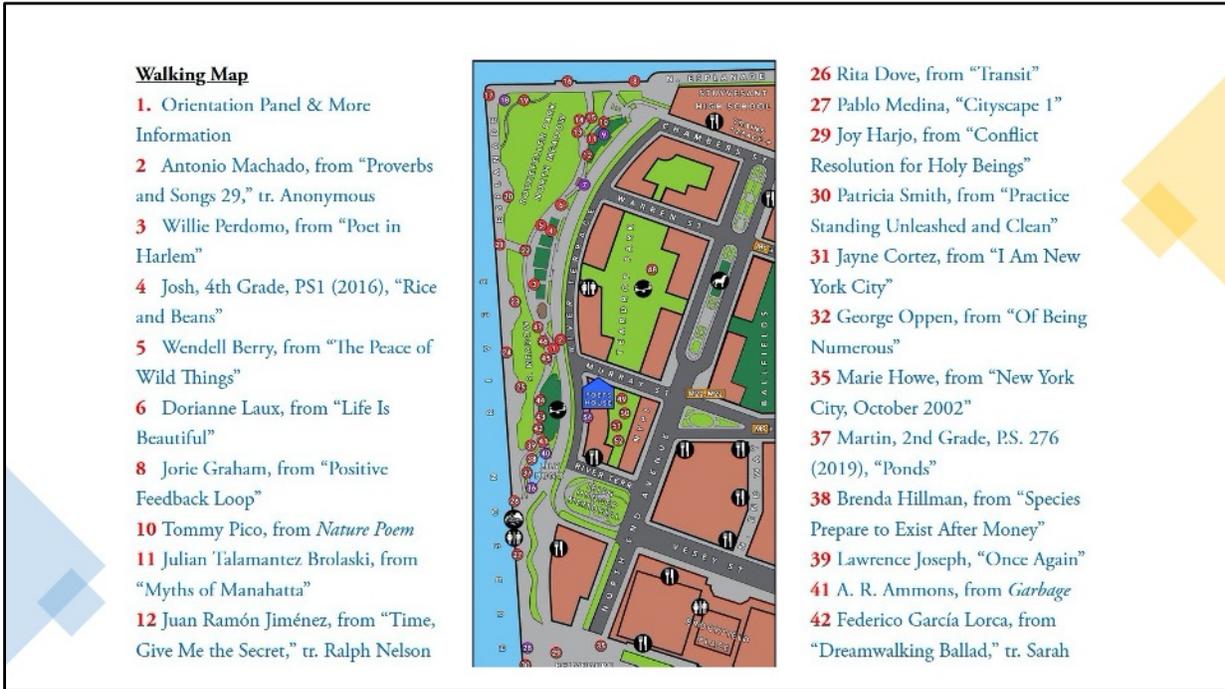
Now we will discuss where these poems could be displayed in the park.



So where could the poetry path go in Waterloo Park? Many visitors come in from the north entrance by the Seagram parking lot. At the start of the trail, there is a sign overhead that's used for the "Wonders of Winter" display. This would be **the perfect** location to indicate to visitors the start of the WaterLit poetry path. We can also paint poetry onto the roofs of these sheds shown on the right.



We can also display the poems on these lamp posts. They are at a higher vantage point, so it can encourage people to be present and notice things around them. We can also etch poems into the park benches. Since this trail gets **a lot** of foot traffic, this would be the perfect place to incorporate poetry onto the ground, whether that's by adding tiles or painting the ground. Lastly, we can paint the bridge or hang words along the side, like in the Rockefeller example.



Here is an example of a map from Rockefeller Park that could be used as a model for what we could provide to visitors of Waterloo Park, which outlines the different displays, including poet name and poem title. The map also shows nearby restaurants, providing families with options for rest during a day in the park. The poetry could come from contests to let anyone have the opportunity to showcase their work! For children, it would be incredibly amazing and rewarding to see their own name displayed on the map, providing strong motivation for children to practice their writing skills and showcase their abilities to the community. Moreover, it's a child-friendly example because it's colourful and relatively easy to read. This map is a great model for Waterloo Park to use as inspiration.

Image reference:

<https://graphicarts.princeton.edu/2020/12/12/walking-the-poetry-path/>

How does this poem make you feel?

What is the main idea of this poem?
 Why did the poet talk so much about the colour blue?
 How does the structure of the poem contribute to the main idea?

Here is an example route for the poetry path in Waterloo Park. It passes through many of the different areas throughout the park, including forests, sports areas, the lake, and the animal farm. This allows for many pieces to have the possibility of being placed in an area related to its theme, creating clusters of similar ideas that teachers could use in their classes on field trips to the park. There are also several loops within the design for families who do not want to walk the whole path.

Questions could be included near the poetry to help parents read interactively with their children by referring to the plot or themes, which has been shown to assist in children’s reference to such sociocognitive themes (Aram et al., 2013). The unique questions placed near the poetry help to scaffold conversations between parents and children, encouraging a high-level literary experience for all visitors. This is important to consider since a study found that in two separate libraries located in two areas of differing overall socioeconomic status, the literary resources were used to differing levels effectiveness even though they were of the same quality and equally accessible (Neuman & Celano, 2012).

Image references:
 Map: <https://www.waterloo.ca/en/things-to->

[do/resources/Documents/Parksandfacilities/Waterloo-Park-amenity-map.pdf](#)
Feelings chart: <https://www.raisingboysandgirls.com/buy/feelings-chart-digital-copy>

Field Trips and Community Engagement



Up next, we're going to talk about some ways to draw in the community with the poetry path!

A Day in Waterloo Park!

- ❖ Walk the poetry path and read the beautiful pieces
- ❖ Journal your thoughts – words, drawings, or even a poem of your own!
- ❖ Analyze the poems
- ❖ Write a class poem about your day in the park
- ❖ Create an art piece inspired by your favourite poem in the park



There's a reason why so many popular children's books involve nursery rhymes and short poetic stanzas, and it's because of the incredible learning opportunity this form of literature presents. In order to draw a wider audience to the park and capitalize on the great learning opportunity this poetry path presents, Waterloo Park could partner with the local school boards and organize a morning field trip in the park.

For the field trip, classes could visit the park and spend the morning walking the poetry path and reading all of the beautiful pieces in the park. After reading each poem, children can be given the chance to put their thoughts and feelings to the page in their English books, and after, the class can work together as a team to analyze the poem, promoting conversation and teamwork. A list of guiding questions can be made available online and in the park for teachers and parents to reference in order to prompt discussion of both plot aspects, such as the vocabulary or main message of the poem, and socio-cognitive aspects, such as the author's emotional expression or the child's own feelings towards the poem. This type of guided reading has been shown to elicit rich conversations between children and adults, enhance children's vocabulary, increase narrative comprehension, and improve children's social and emotional understanding (Aram et al., 2013). Finally, students can choose their favourite poem from the park and spend the afternoon creating an art piece inspired

by the poem. By doing so, children will have to synthesize the main message of the poem in order to determine what to focus on in their art piece. This can increase children's narrative understanding by prompting them to think more deeply, and enhance their vocabulary more than just straightforward reading, both of which contribute to children's future reading comprehension abilities (Luo et al., 2014).

Image references:

O'Neill, D. (2022). Waterloo Park in Winter. [Photograph]. *Learn*.



Considering the Ontario school curriculum specifically includes the goal for children to “enjoy and understand poetry,” there is a significant number of opportunities to connect the poetry path to the curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2021). For example, the literary curriculum of Ontario includes a section dedicated to media and poetry analysis, which involves discerning the purpose, audience, mood, and message of a work, and a heavy focus on learning to consider multiple points of view, both of which are naturally built into the reading of poetry (Ministry of Education, 2022). Students will likely do this type of analysis automatically while reading a poem without even realizing it!

Finally, the poetry path could be used to connect with community members by showcasing the work of local poets! There's a rich literary community here that would love to not only visit such a path, but also play a role in its creation. To really unite the community with the path, Waterloo Park could source the poetry for its path from the local community, whether that be our city's literary journal *The New Quarterly*, Waterloo Alumni and famous poet Rupi Kaur, or local children and poetry enthusiasts who would love to see their work published in the park. The opportunities to connect Waterloo Park with the surrounding community through this poetry path are limitless!

Image references:

O'Neill, D. (2022). Waterloo Park in Winter. [Photograph]. *Learn*.

Connections to The Curriculum

- Use of the path in schools requires connections to the Ontario curriculum
- Language curriculum:



Poem Review

Title: _____ Rating: ☆☆☆☆☆

Poet: _____

This poem is about...

My favourite line in the poem is...

Because...

Feelings and emotions in the poem...

Images that come to mind when I read this poem...

Draw a picture of your favourite line

Adjectives Sound Patterns

ink saving Eco

In reading and writing poetry, children learn to communicate effectively, think critically about what they read, and, most importantly, make meaningful connections between what they feel and what they read. These are all essential skills covered in the language curriculum. Teachers could use scaffolding materials like the one shown on the left as a way to teach children the things they should be thinking about when reviewing poetry. Using this format, questions relating to storyline information, emotion, negative consequences, and themes could be asked. These are all aspects of stories emphasized by different cultures, which support children’s learning regardless of their background (Luo et al., 2014). Supporting story-related questions among adults has been shown to be a good way to develop a child’s own narrative skills, which predicts later academic success, school readiness, and socioemotional development (Luo et al., 2014).

General references:

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/>

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/language18currb.pdf>

Image references:

Connections picture: <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/227-tips-on-helping->

[your-child-build-relationships](#)

Poem Review picture: <https://www.twinkl.ca/resource/poetry-response-activity-sheet-roi2-e-2778>



Up next are some snow-themed activities that can increase engagement in the park during the wintertime. First up is a snowman building station!

Image references:

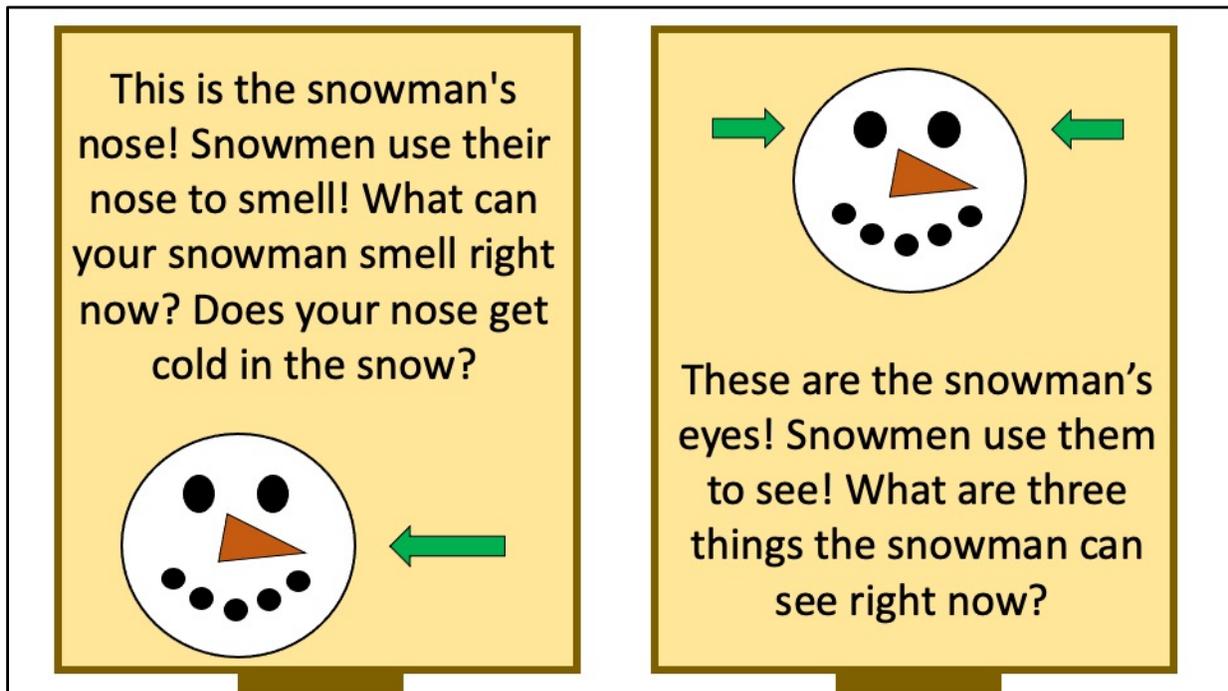
Nolan, T. (2019). 10 reasons to visit Quebec in the winter. [Photograph]. Reader's Digest. <https://www.readersdigest.ca/travel/canada/10-reasons-visit-quebec-winter/>



We're very interested in sparking some serious snow-related fun in the park, because what says Canadian winter like playing in the snow! So our first idea is a snowman-building station, where we'd set up a designated area in the park specifically for building snowmen, which is a classic beloved winter activity. This would inspire people of all ages to come out to the park each snowfall to work together and show off their creativity, while engaging in playful learning. As well, this activity can encourage self-talk, which is private speech directed to the self, or a vocalization of one's thoughts, as seen in the slide here. Self-talk is incredibly beneficial to children's development, as it enhances children's problem-solving skills and helps them learn how to mentally process and reflect on complex cognitive events (e.g., Winsler et al., 1997; Winsler & Naglieri, 2003).

Image references:

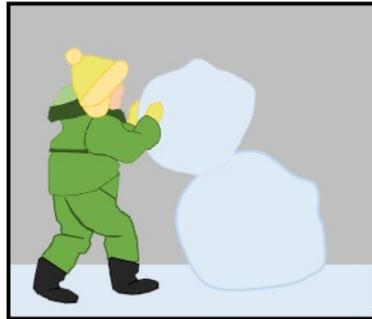
McGarry, B. & Johnson, S. (2017). Central Park Signage. [Photograph]. *Greg Shutters*, <https://www.gregshutters.com/central-park-signage>
O'Neill, D. (2022). Waterloo Park in Winter. [Photograph]. *Learn*.



We envision installing four snow-man building signs around the area, with one in each corner, to provide a great interactive learning opportunity for young children and newbies to snowman building. There's two example signs on the slide. The signs would encourage children to think about and use their senses when building their snowman and take their snow friend's perspective. This would help children to develop their theory of mind and increase their use of speech that is less egocentric and more listener-centered (Barra & Keysar, 2006). This would bring the experience to life for all involved, and spark an increase in conversational turns, since the parent and child will likely start a new conversation at each sign. This back-and-forth conversation is an important addition, because it strongly contributes to children's early social, linguistic, and emotional development (Gomez & Strasser, 2021; Koohi, 2019).

Learning Opportunities!

- Practice Goal-Setting
- Work through Steps
- Try Problem Solving
- Creative Thinking



Snowman building is overall just a really great learning opportunity for children, as they get to practice setting and achieving the goal of building their snow friend, solving problems as challenges arise, such as stacking the heavy snowballs, and working through the ordered steps of rolling the balls, stacking them, and decorating the snowman. To help out families who aren't familiar with the activity, it could be helpful to include a sign with a simple graphic showing the steps of snowman building, like the one at the bottom of this slide.

Snow Igloos



Image reference:

https://playsnow.ca/?gclid=Cj0KCQiArt6PBhCoARIsAMF5waidDRzuMYpPL-8JdcY4mEbBF0YYTU_94_cCL881LOTAFSR-NMHcASEaAjM8EALw_wcB

Snow Igloos

- Children can safely pack snow on it
- Place around the park and make a fun adventure for children to find them all!
- Paint the igloos to inject a pop of colour into the park



Now moving onto snow igloos. As a bit of background, they were created by a Montreal dad, who wanted to give his kids a safe way to build igloos, without the risk of the snow collapsing on them. The snow igloos are pre-assembled plastic structures that can withstand a lot of weight, so children can safely pack snow onto them. They're relatively light and portable, so they can be placed anywhere in the park. The igloos are also versatile since they can be used in the summer to provide shade.

Snow igloos can provide an opportunity for parents to model language use. For example, parents can describe what their child is doing, such as saying, "You're placing the snow onto the igloo." This provides children with the opportunity to hear language in a meaningful interaction, which can benefit their language development (Wing et al., 2007). Similarly, parents can introduce new or uncommon words related to igloos, such as dome or arc. Providing diverse vocabulary, especially with younger children, can be predictive of children's later vocabulary skill (Rowe, 2012).

Image references:

<https://www.wayfair.ca/outdoor/pdp/play-snow-igloo-pays1000.html>

<https://playsnow.ca/?gclid=Cj0KCQiArt6PBhCoARIsAMF5waidDRzuMYpPL->

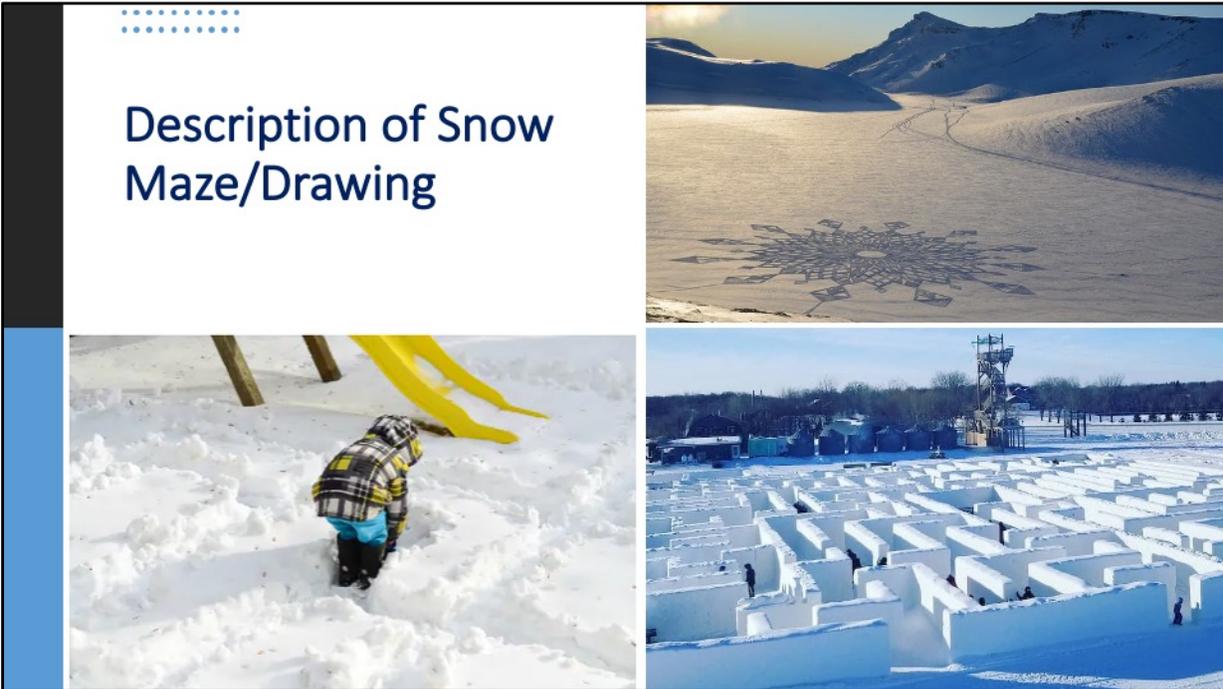
[8JdcY4mEbbFOYYTU_94_cCL881LOTAFSR-NMHcASEaAjM8EALw_wcB](#) (official website of the igloos: more information on price, dimensions, and other details)
<https://www.ctvnews.ca/business/montreal-dad-creates-igloo-frame-for-safe-snow-play-1.3223329> (news article about the creator)



Image reference:

<https://dailyhive.com/vancouver/canada-worlds-largest-snow-maze>

Description of Snow Maze/Drawing



First, we will start with a brief description of what a snow maze/drawing is. They are typically made by shuffling your feet or using shovels to dig trenches through the snow to make the maze paths or lines of the drawing (as shown on the left). These activities require a large area and a large snowfall, making it perfect as a park activity since there are many large, open spaces families can take advantage of. Park staff could include signs (will be shown on next slide) in order to stimulate interest and conversation among park visitors and provide instruction on the activity.

Playing with puzzles has been shown to support the development of spatial visualization/transformation skills (the ability to move things in your mind) (Levine et al., 2012). The design process of creating mazes and drawings can stimulate rich conversations between parent and child, which has been shown to predict socioemotional skills at later ages (Gomez & Strasser, 2021).

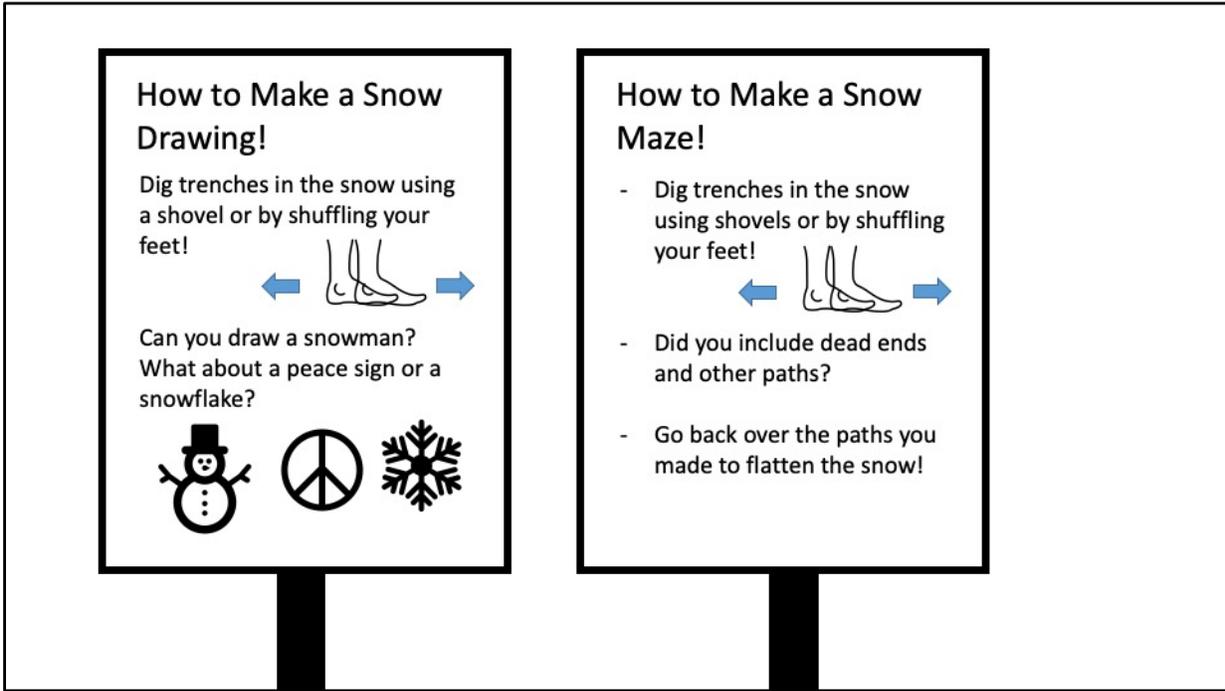
Image references:

Snow Maze: <https://www.cbc.ca/parents/play/view/change-up-winter-play-with-a-snow-maze>

Snow picture: <https://www.pinterest.ca/pin/423127327471091043/>

Largest snow maze: <https://dailyhive.com/vancouver/canada-worlds-largest-snow->

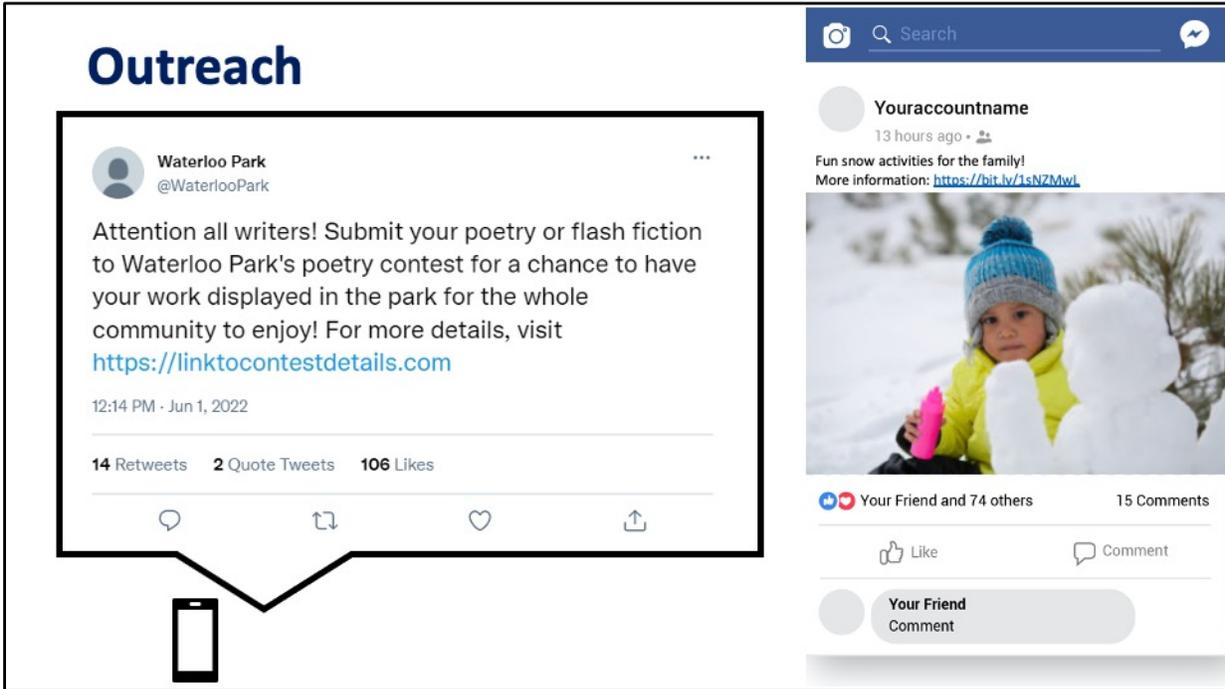
[maze](#)



Here are a few example signs that were mentioned. Pictures are also included to make them easier to understand.

Image references:

Clipart taken from MS icons



We really want to encourage a diverse population to explore the poetry path and our winter activities, which means that some outreach will be needed to make people aware of the activities and provide some instruction. Some examples of possible social media posts are shown here. Links to poetry contest details or instructions for the snow activities could be included on the Waterloo City website. Email could also be used for individuals who do not use social media. This exposure is especially important for the poetry contest format we are suggesting. Several different sources could be targeted to advertise the contest initiative, including: The New Quarterly, our local universities, elementary schools, secondary schools, and the Waterloo Public Library.

Image references:

Image created using <https://www.tweetgen.com/>

Facebook picture: <https://www.freepik.com/vectors/design/> Design vector created by freepik - www.freepik.com

Child picture in Facebook post: <https://www.montrealfamilies.ca/29-fun-games-kids-can-play-in-the-snow/>



So, these are the three main components of our plan to inspire more snow-related fun in Waterloo Park! As well, adding in a poetry path would not only provide a fun casual experience for park-goers, but it could also be developed into a structured learning opportunity for local students to enjoy. These activities are accessible and suited for park-visitors of any age and ability, and would really breathe new life into the park, both in the wintertime and year-round. Thank you so much for listening!

Image references:

O'Neill, D. (2022). Waterloo Park in Winter. [Photograph]. *Learn*.

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<https://www.wayfair.ca/outdoor/pdp/play-snow-igloo-pays1000.html>

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