
Reflection Worksheet: Signs We Needed – Mapping Our Academic Entry

Purpose: This worksheet invites women entering academia—and those guiding them—to reflect on the emotional, intellectual, and cultural signs that shaped their journey. It honors lived experience as scholarly knowledge and fosters belonging through shared narrative.

Section 1: Naming the Signs

Prompt: Think back to your earliest moments in academic spaces. What signs—spoken or unspoken—told you that you belonged? What signs made you question your place?

Sign That Affirmed Me Sign That Challenged Me

Section 2: Mapping the Journey

Prompt: Sketch or list the key moments, mentors, and milestones that shaped your entry into academia. Include emotional markers (e.g., joy, fear, pride) and institutional ones (e.g., first syllabus, first critique).

- First moment I felt “academic”: _____
 - A mentor who shaped me: _____
 - A challenge I overcame: _____
 - A ritual I created to survive/thrive: _____
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Section 3: Reflecting on Belonging

Prompt: Use these sentence starters to explore your evolving sense of belonging.

- I used to think academia was for _____, but now I know _____.
- One thing I wish someone had told me: _____
- A sign I want to leave for others: _____

Section 4: Designing Your Own Sign

Prompt: Imagine you're creating a sign for a woman entering academia today. What would it say? Use words, symbols, or images.

 *Draw or write your sign below:*

Section 5: Share + Reflect

Prompt: Who can you share this with? How might this reflection spark dialogue, mentorship, or change?

- I will share this with: _____
 - One insight I want to carry forward: _____
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