Start Your Own Rock Snake

A free neighborhood project from the story How Longfellow Got Long

A rock snake is a line of painted rocks that grows every time someone adds one. All you need is one rock with a face, a sign, and a few friendly neighbors.

1 Pick a spot

Your own yard, or a school, library or park with permission. Somewhere people walk past every day.

2 Find a head

A smooth rock about the size of a loaf of bread. Wash it and let it dry.

3 Paint a face

Outdoor acrylic paint or paint pens: two eyes, a smile, maybe a tongue. Finish with clear outdoor sealer.

4 Give it a name

Print the sign, write in the name, and slip it into a sheet protector or laminate it. Mount it on a stake.

5 Add the first rocks

Set one or two painted rocks behind the head so everyone can see what to do.

6 Invite your neighbors

Tell a few families, post in your neighborhood group, or host a rock-painting party.

Kind to neighbors and nature

- Paint only. Skip glitter, glued-on eyes and stickers that wash into yards and drains.
- Use rocks from your own yard or a store, not from parks or creeks.
- Seal each rock so the paint lasts through rain and sun.

Keep it growing

- Count the rocks each week. Kids love keeping score.
- Snap a photo as your snake grows and share it with your neighbors.
- A rock wandered off? That happens. Paint another one.

Inspired by Longfellow, a real rock snake in Kansas City.

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