

Deaf Awareness Activities for Children

Did you know that we measure how loud or noisy something is in special units called Decibels?

If you were sitting quietly in a library reading a book, the noise level would be about **30 Decibels**.

Try shouting as loudly as you can....

Shouting is about **80 Decibels**.

Only people who can't hear us shouting like that are actually **deaf**. There are about 180,000 deaf people in the UK.



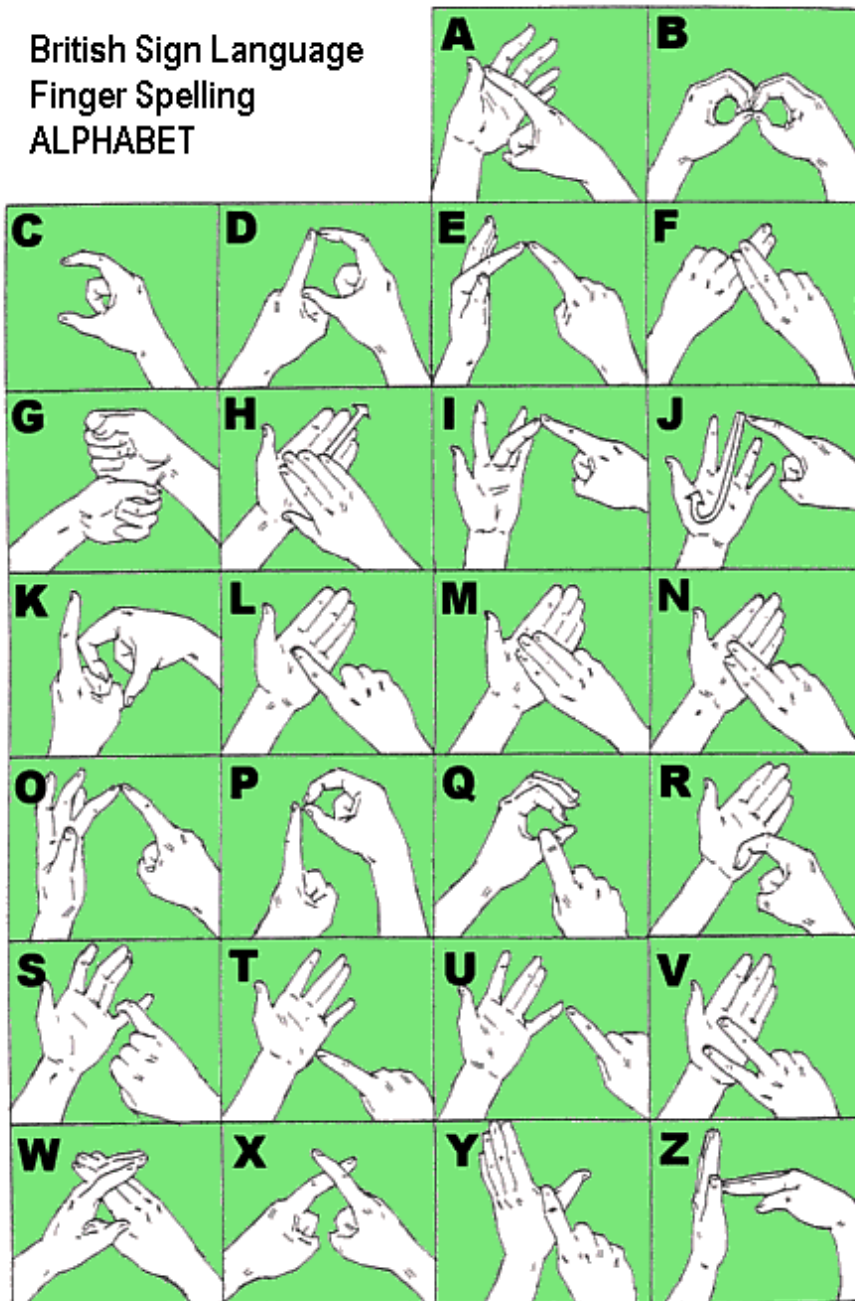
Lip-reading

When we speak our lips move to make shapes to form the words. Some deaf people can watch your lips and understand what you are saying. This is called lip-reading. Why not try this with a friend. Choose a picture and say the word without making a sound. See if your friend can guess which one it was. Now try some more. Some of the words look the same, which ones?



Sign Language

Some deaf people do not speak, instead they use a special language called **British Sign Language** (which we sometimes call BSL). The words are made by making shapes with their hands. The BSL Fingerspelling Alphabet is below. See if you can copy the pictures to make the letters.



Write down your name _____

Now see if you can spell your name with the fingerspelling alphabet. Try your friend's names too!

Understanding each other

If you wanted to chat with a deaf person who couldn't speak, and you didn't know sign language, you could ask a **Sign Language Interpreter** to help you. An Interpreter is a person who can speak English *and* sign BSL. Their job is to sign the things you say in BSL so the *deaf person* can understand, and say the things the deaf person is signing so that *you* can understand.

Time to think!

Now imagine what it would be like if you were deaf. Think about all the things you would not be able to hear. Draw 4 things that you would **miss hearing most** in the boxes below.

Extra help

Deaf people have special equipment to help them with some things. Imagine for a moment that you are deaf again.

- **How would you know if someone was knocking at your door if you couldn't hear them?**
- **How could you use the telephone if you couldn't hear or speak?**
- **How would you know there was a fire if your smoke alarm was beeping but you couldn't hear it?**
- **How would you know it was time to get up if you couldn't hear your alarm clock?**

Well here is some of the special equipment that deaf people have to help them:



Flashing Doorbells

When somebody rings the doorbell this lamp flashes on and off! Some deaf people have their doorbell connected to their house lights so that the lights in every room flash on and off!

Minicom (textphone)

Deaf people can make telephone calls using a minicom or textphone. They type in what they want to say and the words appear on the screen of the minicom at the other end. You can call a deaf person using an ordinary phone as well by calling a service called *Typetalk.



Smoke Detectors

This special smoke detector has a very bright flashing light and a pad which goes under the deaf person's pillow at night. If the alarm goes off, the pad shakes and wakes the person up!

Alarm Clocks

This smart little clock is called the "Shake Awake" and yes, you've guessed it! It goes under your pillow and shakes to wake you up!



Another little helper!

There is something else which deaf people can use to help them. Join the dots to find out what it is:



Some deaf people have a specially trained dog called a **Hearing Dog**. When the dog hears a sound such as the telephone ringing or somebody at the door, he will touch his owner with his paw to attract his attention. The dog would then lead his owner to where the sound is coming from. Clever eh?

Things to remember!

If you meet a deaf person, remember the following things:

- **Face the person while you are speaking, don't turn away.**
- **Speak clearly without shouting.**
- **If the person can not understand you, don't give up! Write it down or draw a picture.**

This fact sheet was prepared by Linda Isaac

**Typetalk is a telephone relay service provided by the RNID. For more information telephone 0800 7 311 888 or 0800 500 888 (text)*