

***Applause Series* CURRICULUM GUIDE  
CIVIC CENTER OF GREATER DES MOINES**

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**MARCH 30, 2010**

# Nobody's Perfect

## Dear Teachers,

Thank you for joining us for the Applause Series presentation of *Nobody's Perfect*. We are very pleased that you have chosen to share this special experience with your students and hope that this study guide helps you connect the performance to your in-classroom curriculum in ways that you find valuable.

In the following pages, you will find contextual information about the performance and related subjects, as well as a wide variety of discussion questions and activities that tie into several curriculum areas. Some pages are appropriate to reproduce for your students; others are designed more specifically with you, their teacher, in mind. As such, we hope that you are able to "pick and choose" material and ideas from the study guide to meet your class's unique needs. As a final note, we have used Character Counts! as the framework for the included character development activities, but the activities can easily be adapted to fit whatever program is in place in your school.

See you at the theater,  
Civic Center Education Team

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This study guide was compiled and written by Karoline Myers; edited by Emily Gruis, Eric Olmscheid, and Dawn Taylor. Based on *Nobody's Perfect Cuesheets* by ARTSEdge, a program of the Kennedy Center Education Department.

# ABOUT THE AUTHORS

## Marlee Matlin and Doug Cooney



Photo: Carol Pratt

### Marlee Matlin, Co-Author

Movie and TV star Marlee Matlin received worldwide critical acclaim for her film debut in Paramount Picture's *Children of a Lesser God*, for which she received the Academy Award® for Best Actress. Since then, Matlin has starred in numerous features, including, *The Player*, *Hear No Evil*, the AIDS drama *It's My Party*, and most recently the independent feature hit, *What the Bleep Do We Know*.

Matlin guest starred on NBC's award-winning drama, *The West Wing*, and most recently executive produced *Eddie's Million Dollar Cook Off* for the Disney Channel. In 2008, Matlin broke new ground, joining the sixth season cast of ABC's *Dancing with the Stars*.



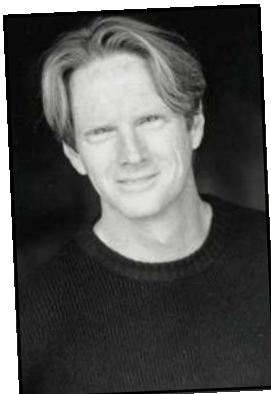
Marlee Matlin.  
Photo courtesy of marleematlinsite.com

Matlin, who became deaf at eighteen months, has written three books to help all kids learn more about growing up deaf. *Deaf Child Crossing*, *Nobody's Perfect*, and *Leading Ladies* star ten-year old Megan Merrill, a character largely inspired by Matlin's personal story.

Matlin currently serves as the national spokesperson for The American Red Cross and was instrumental in passing legislation in Congress in support of Closed Caption in 1992. She also serves on the boards of a number of charitable organizations including The Children Affected by AIDS Foundation and Easter Seals.

### Doug Cooney, Co-Author and Stage Adaptation

Doug Cooney is a Los Angeles-based playwright, screenwriter and novelist. His plays and musicals include *Imagine* (South Coast Rep), *The Beloved Dearly* (Lincoln Center Institute), *The Very Persistent Gappers of Frip* (Kirk Douglas Theatre), and *The Legend of Alex* (Mark Taper Forum). Additional productions include *Battledrum* (Eckerd Theater Company), *Here and Now* (Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park), *Long Story Short* (Florida Stage), *Innocent Until* (Florida Stage), and *The Final Tour* (Sundance Theatre Labs).



Doug Cooney.  
Photo courtesy of dougcooney.com

Cooney has written screenplays and television scripts for Paramount Pictures, Nickelodeon Films, SONY Pictures, SONY Animation, Disney Channel and Fox Television.

He is the author of several books for young readers, including *The Beloved Dearly*, published by Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, as well as books co-written with actress Marlee Matlin, *Nobody's Perfect*, *Leading Ladies* and the forthcoming *Deaf Beth*. He also wrote the stage adaptation of *Nobody's Perfect* for the Kennedy Center's theatrical production.

# ABOUT THE CREATORS OF THE MUSICAL

Putting it all together...  
a group effort!



Photo: Carol Pratt

*Nobody's Perfect* is a new musical produced by The



John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington D.C. as part of the center's mission to contribute to the development of new plays and musicals for young audiences. For more than 15 years, Kennedy Center Theater for Young Audiences on Tour has been a leader in bringing imaginative and original works to youth around the nation. Many students who see the productions may not have the chance to visit the nation's performing arts center, but can still experience the quality theater and talent that have become the trademarks of Kennedy Center Theater for Young Audiences through the touring programs.



Working with the Kennedy Center, VSA arts also commissioned and produced the musical adaptation of *Nobody's Perfect*.

VSA arts is an international nonprofit organization founded in 1974 to create a society where people with disabilities learn through, participate in, and enjoy the arts. Each year millions of people participate in VSA arts programs through the organization's nationwide network of affiliates and presence in 55 countries around the world. VSA arts of Iowa was founded in 1977 and works to connect Iowans of all abilities through arts education and programming.

## SCRIPT AND LYRICS

Doug Cooney, who co-wrote the original book with actress Marlee Matlin, wrote the lyrics and stage adaptation for the musical version of *Nobody's Perfect*.

## MUSIC

The music in *Nobody's Perfect* was written by Deborah Wicks La Puma. Her musicals for adults and children have been performed across the country. She is an active musical director, performer, and orchestrator. She has won numerous awards, including a Parent's Choice Award and an iParenting media award for her work on *Nobody's Perfect*.

## DIRECTOR

Coy Middlebrook is the director of *Nobody's Perfect*. He has directed main stage productions and readings and has developed new works for The Actors Studio, Adobe Theatre, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Music Theater International, The Neighborhood Playhouse, and The Stamford Performing Arts Center. Coy is currently the associate director for the American, United Kingdom and Australian Tours of Disney's *High School Musical*.

## ASL TRANSLATION

Alexandria Wailes provided the ASL translation for *Nobody's Perfect*. She is a professional actress who has worked in live theater and television.

# ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

## NOBODY'S PERFECT!



*Nobody's Perfect* is a musical about a fourth grader named Megan Merrill. A musical is a story that is acted out on stage with actors, words, and songs.

### SYNOPSIS

All the girls in the fourth grade are excited to attend Megan's 10<sup>th</sup> birthday bash. Megan's "positively purple party" is going to be the social event of the year, but the arrival of a new girl in school throws everything into question. To Megan, Alexis has it all: beauty, brains, and athletics—she's practically perfect in every way. Though Megan tries to be nice to her and invites Alexis to her party, Alexis turns down the invitation! Without the "perfect" new girl, it looks like Megan's party might be ruined, and Megan can't help but wonder if Alexis doesn't like her because she is deaf.

It doesn't look like Megan and Alexis are ever going to get along. When the two girls are assigned to be partners for the school science fair, they struggle to understand one another and to come up with an idea for an experiment that they can both agree on. As they slowly learn to work together, Megan learns that Alexis has a secret. Can they pull off their science experiment? Will Megan's party be a success? Is Alexis' secret really so bad? And what does it really mean to be 'perfect'?

### TWO LANGUAGES

*Nobody's Perfect* is written so that it can be enjoyed by people who can hear and by people who are deaf. The cast performs the show simultaneously in two languages: American Sign Language and spoken English. While the actor who plays Megan is signing, another actor will speak or sing the words of what she is saying. This is the first production in the United States to tour with a built-in captioning screen. The words for all spoken and sung lines will scroll in sync with the performance on a sign that is built into the set, much like captioning on TV.



Megan signs about how excited she is for her birthday. Her words appear on a captioning screen. Photos: Carol Pratt.

### SONGS

**Purple-** Megan's favorite color and the theme for her birthday party.

**Perfection-** Is Alexis perfect, like the girls think she is?

**She Said No-** Megan is upset that Alexis won't come to her party.

**Cats and Dogs-** Can Megan and Alexis agree on a topic for their science project?

**Fine with Nine-** Megan decides it is too much trouble to turn 10.

**Hamster Panic-** The girls can't find Zippity, their classroom hamster.

**Purple-** It's time to celebrate!

# DEAFNESS AND THE DEAF COMMUNITY (Page 1 of 4)



Photo: Carol Pratt

All humans are social creatures. We have a deep desire to connect and communicate with one another. Often when we think of what it means to communicate, we only think about talking. For people who are deaf (unable to hear), communication through speech is not always possible. Although not being able to hear can cause certain challenges, people who are deaf manage to communicate and live full and meaningful lives.

It is important to remember that people who are deaf are not all the same. Just like people who can hear, deaf people have their own personalities, likes and dislikes, and talents. Furthermore, not every hearing disability is the same. For example, some people are born unable to hear any sounds at all. Other people lose their hearing because of an accident or from being sick.

“My ears aren’t broken. They didn’t work in the first place. I only remember being deaf. So that’s what I am.”

-Megan  
*Nobody’s Perfect*

Some people can hear some, but not all, sounds, and might use hearing aids or headphones to make sounds louder.

## AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE

Megan and many people who are deaf communicate using **American Sign Language**, or ASL. ASL is a visual language that can be seen with the eyes. In ASL, instead of using your voice to talk, you “talk” with your hands, body, and facial expressions. The signer also uses the space around them to describe places and people who are not present.

Not every deaf person around the world understands or speaks American Sign Language. Instead, each country has one or more distinct versions of sign language, and regions may even have their own dialects. Just like spoken languages, ASL has its own grammar, syntax, and rules. It is a living language that continues to grow and change.

American Sign Language is used primarily by people living in the United States and in parts of Canada. However, ASL does not correspond with English directly. For example, even though English is spoken in both the United States and in the United Kingdom, American Sign Language is different than British Sign Language.



Left: A sign language interpreter uses ASL. Photo courtesy of nclil.org.

### ACTIVITY: MORE THAN WORDS

American Sign Language uses more than hand signs to convey meaning. Nonverbal cues, such as the signer’s facial expressions, posture, and the size of gestures provide important cues to the signer’s intent. Similarly, in spoken language a person’s inflection, tone, and nonverbal expressions also convey extra layers of meaning. With a partner, explore how we communicate using more than words by saying “You’re having a party” with the following variations: as a statement; as a question; as if you are excited; as if you are mad; as if you are surprised; etc. What changes each time? The tone of voice? Facial expressions? Body language? Compare and contrast your observations with what you know about the components of American Sign Language.

# DEAFNESS AND THE DEAF COMMUNITY (Page 2 of 4)



Photo: Carol Pratt

## talk, Talk, TALK!

Sign language isn't the only way! There's also...

### Spoken English

Just because a person is deaf does not mean that their vocal chords do not work. Even though not all people who are deaf learn to speak, most can still make the sounds of spoken language. Megan will sometimes speak during the performance. For audience members who can hear, her voice may sound unusual. That's because she cannot hear her own voice. Have you ever thought about how much you depend on sound to help you pronounce words exactly right?

### Finger spelling

In finger spelling, a signer spells words in English using signs for the letters of the alphabet. The signs for the alphabet are known as the manual alphabet. Finger spelling is used for almost all proper nouns and for name people or places. Words may also be spelled for emphasis of the word's importance.

### Writing

People who are deaf can write and read just like people who can hear. Megan can write on paper, on a screen, or in a text message, email, or instant message.

### Lip reading

In the performance, Alexis will ask Megan to watch her lips to figure out what she is saying. This is a process called lip reading. Just like we learn to recognize the shapes of letters and words to read written language, people who are deaf sometimes learn to read lips. By carefully observing the shapes that a person's mouth makes as he or she speaks, a person who reads lips can figure out what the person said. Lip reading is very hard because many words look the same when spoken. Only about 6% of what is said can be understood through lip reading.

## THE MANUAL ALPHABET



Graphic courtesy of missouristate.edu.

## ACTIVITY: SPELL IT OUT

Learn the manual alphabet using the chart above. Try spelling your name and other words. Can you figure out what your friends are spelling just by watching their hands? Once you've mastered the different signs, try having a class spelling bee using the manual alphabet.

Need some extra help? Try an online American Sign Language dictionary featuring video demonstrations of the manual alphabet and other signs. Check out the 'Resources' page for more details.

# DEAFNESS AND THE DEAF COMMUNITY (Page 3 of 4)



Photo: Carol Pratt

## DEAF CULTURE

We often think of cultures as being defined by a shared place or region where people live. However, every group of people that shares something in common has a culture of its own. Your family has its own culture. Your community has a culture. Even your classroom has a culture. Although people who are deaf interact and live with people who can hear, there is a unique culture shared by people who are deaf as well. This culture is known as Deaf culture.

### History

In the 1800s, many people lived in small towns or on farms. Because children who were deaf lived so far apart from one another, they often did not have access to teachers who could meet their special needs. As a result, many deaf children began to attend residential schools. These schools played an important role in the creation of Deaf culture.

Many students traveled great distances to learn and live together. At the schools, all of the teachers and students used sign language both in and out of the classroom. In addition to sharing a common language, the schools developed their own customs and traditions. These became the basis for the Deaf culture that is still present in our country today.

### Today

In *Nobody's Perfect*, Megan lives with her family and attends a school where the other students are able to hear. Her friends and family know sign language, and Megan has a classroom interpreter who translates what the teacher says into American Sign Language so that Megan can understand what is said at school. Today, many students who are deaf attend school with hearing students, but some still choose to attend schools specifically for the deaf. The Iowa School for the Deaf, located in Council Bluffs, is a residential school which serves students with hearing disabilities from preschool through age 21.

*'Deaf Culture' continued on page 9*

**Deaf culture has its own:**

**Language  
Folklore  
Poetry  
Stories  
Games  
Jokes  
Etiquette**



Above: The first residential school for the deaf in the United States opened in Hartford, Connecticut in 1817. The school is still in existence and is now known as the American School for the Deaf.

Below: Deaf children often had to travel great distances to school. Some stayed for nine months of the year, returning home only during summers. Ivy Stewart Shipman, a 1916 graduate of the Missouri School for the Deaf, used this trunk to bring her belongings— dresses, combs, nightclothes, and two dolls— with her to school.

Images courtesy of gallaudet.edu.





# DEAFNESS AND THE DEAF COMMUNITY (Page 4 of 4)



## TRAITS OF THE DEAF COMMUNITY

### Identity

The members of Deaf culture view themselves in a particular way. For instance, Deaf people do not perceive themselves as having lost something (hearing). They rarely think of themselves as handicapped or disabled. In fact, they are often offended by the term “hearing impaired” because it suggests that they are broken or inferior. Instead, they often prefer to be called Deaf, spelled with a capital ‘D’. They take pride in their identities as members of American Deaf culture and celebrate their shared history and language. Identifying themselves as Deaf is a way to show that pride.

### Rules of Communication

The visual nature of American Sign Language influences the rules of communication in Deaf culture as well. In spoken conversations, the participants do not have to always look at one another to understand what is said. In a signed conversation, the ‘listener’ must always look at the ‘speaker.’ As such, looking away or breaking eye contact can send the signal that you are not interested in what the ‘speaker’ has to say. Body language and touch are also very important components of communication in Deaf culture. Touching another person is used in Deaf culture to greet, say goodbye, get attention, and express emotion.

### Collectivism

Deaf people consider themselves to be members of a group that includes all Deaf people. Within Deaf culture, great value is placed on being a close, interconnected group. Open communication is seen as very important while having secrets is looked down upon because it puts an emphasis on the individual rather than the group.

## COMING TOGETHER

Bound through a culture and common experience, Deaf Americans often enjoy spending time with one another. They’ve established their own newspapers and magazines and even started their own churches. Perhaps most importantly, Deaf Americans have come together to promote their political interests.

Through working together, they have gained better access to interpreting services, film and television captioning, and telephone access. They have also pushed for the passage of important laws that prevent the discrimination of people with disabilities such as deafness.



Deaf Americans gather in Washington D.C. to promote their political interests and to celebrate the progress that has been made. Photo courtesy of [gallaudet.edu](http://gallaudet.edu)

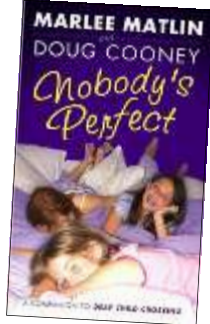
# PRE-SHOW ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION



## Check out the book!

Get a copy or copies of the book *Nobody's Perfect*.

Depending on the number of copies you acquire, read the book aloud in class or have students read the book to become familiar with the characters and events in the show.



## Coll-ab-or-a-tion?

Discuss the idea of collaboration with your students. In the show, they will see characters Megan and Alexis collaborate on a science fair project. It also took a great deal of collaboration to create the musical *Nobody's Perfect*. Using the 'About the Authors' and 'About the Creators of the Musical' sections of the study guide, ask students to identify the different people and groups that worked together to bring *Nobody's Perfect* to the stage. Then ask students to think about a time when they have collaborated with a group or another person. What is good about collaboration? Are there unique challenges involved? What does it take to make collaboration successful?

## Deaf? What's that?

The main character in *Nobody's Perfect* is named Megan. She is a ten-year old girl who happens to be deaf. Ask students to write down everything they know or think they know about deafness. Compile a list of their thoughts and display it somewhere in the classroom. Next, ask students to generate questions they have about deafness. Display these questions as well, leaving room to fill in answers as you and your class learn more about the subject through the study guide, the performance, and other resources.

## Remember when?

Alexis is a new girl in Megan's class, and Megan tries to become her friend. Encourage students to think about a time when they were new or with a group of people they didn't know very well. How did they feel? Did anyone try to help them feel welcome?

## How will they...

Encourage your students to think about how the actors will present the story of *Nobody's Perfect*. Ideas to think about include:

The company will help the audience imagine the places where the musical takes place, such as Megan's bedroom, Alexis' bedroom, the classroom, and the shopping mall. Have students work together to plan simple ways to set the stage for each location. Encourage them to draw their ideas.

There are more characters in the show than there are actors, and some actors will play more than one character. In fact, all the boys' roles are played by the same actor! Discuss how one actor can change quickly from one role to another. How will the actor show which character they are at different times?



Megan's friends try to convince Alexis to come to Megan's party. Can you figure out where this scene is taking place based on the set pieces?

Photo: Carol Pratt.

# VOCABULARY



**musical:** a story acted out on stage with actors, words, and songs.

**culture:** the beliefs, values, learned behavior, language, and customs of a group of people passed on from generation to generation.

**Deaf culture:** shared ways of living, use of visual language, shared history and stories, and common values among people who are deaf.

**American Sign Language:** a visual language that utilizes hand signs, facial expressions, and the body. American Sign Language is used by people who are deaf in the United States and in Canada.

**finger spelling:** a way of spelling a spoken or written word of another language, such as English, using signs for its written alphabet.



The alphabet signs for ASL, which is an abbreviation for American Sign Language. This is an example of finger spelling.

**interpreter:** a person who translates what is said in one language into another so that people conversing in different languages can understand one another.

**lip-reading:** the reading or understanding of spoken words by watching the movement of a person's lips without hearing the sounds made.



Can you figure out what sound or word this person is saying from the shape of their lips?

**captioning:** written text that accompanies spoken words, often displayed on the bottom of a television screen, so that people who are deaf can read what is said.

**collaborate:** to work together in a joint effort.

**autism:** a disorder that affects the ways in which a person experiences the world, often marked by difficulties communicating or making connections.

**flaw:** an imperfection or defect.

**humble:** not proud or arrogant.

**spat:** a petty quarrel or dispute.

**experiment:** a test or trial to discover something new or to confirm a theory.

**resign:** to quit or step down from a position, such as a job.

**panic:** to be frantic with fear or worry.

**'flew the coop':** escaped or got away.

**gnaw:** to bite or chew on. Hamsters and other rodents are known for their gnawing behavior.



A hamster gnaws on a stick to grind down its teeth.

**tide:** the rise and fall of the ocean level approximately every 12 hours.

**allergic:** to have a bad physical reaction to a substance. Some people are allergic to pollen, dust, medications, and certain plants and animals.

# POST-SHOW ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What did you notice about the actors' use of sign language? Was it what you expected or were there things about it that surprised you?
2. In the song "Cats and Dogs," Megan and Alexis sang about how they are different and do not get along with one another. What do you think they could have learned from one another?
3. Why do you think the authors chose the title *Nobody's Perfect*?
4. Why did Alexis feel like she needed to be perfect? Why did she want to keep her brother a secret? Was that fair of her?
5. Compare and contrast the interactions between Megan and her brother Matt to the interactions between Alexis and her brother Justin. What do your observations lead you to conclude about the two relationships? Did either relationship change by the end of the performance? How?



The girls can't wait for Megan's "positively perfect purple party." It's going to be the party of the year. Photo: Carol Pratt.

6. In the performance, Megan says many things about being deaf. She tells one of her friends that being deaf is not "who" she is, but she also says to Alexis, "I only remember being deaf. So that's what I am." What do you think Megan means in those two statements? What is the difference between deaf being "what" Megan is as opposed to "who" Megan is? Use the activity below to help you think about how being deaf is part of Megan's identity but not all that she is.

## ACTIVITY: THE WHOLE PICTURE

Put together a jigsaw puzzle but do not put the last piece in. Now pretend that the puzzle represents Megan and that the piece off to the side represents her deafness. As you look at the puzzle, think about how the puzzle is not complete without the final piece. What about the remaining piece? If you were to just look at it, would you know what the entire puzzle looks like? Like the last piece and the puzzle, being deaf is part of Megan's identity, but it is not the complete picture of who she is.

You can create a puzzle to represent your own unique identity. Start by drawing your self-portrait on one side of a piece of tag board. When you are done, cut the portrait into approximately a dozen "puzzle" pieces. Then, on the back of each piece, write a word that describes who you are, such as son, daughter, smart, fast, creative, etc. All of these characteristics come together to create something totally unique: You!

# CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS: Ideas for Teachers



Photo: Carol Pratt

## ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS

1. In *Nobody's Perfect*, Megan makes special invitations to her birthday party. Ask students to imagine that they are hosting a party with a theme of their choice. Have them write and design an invitation. Remind them to include the important information of who, what, when, where, and why. Encourage them to use lots of descriptive words so that their guests will be very excited to attend.
2. In *Nobody's Perfect*, Megan isn't just having a birthday party. She's having a "positively perfect purple party!" Explain to your students the concept of alliteration—when two or more words in a row begin with the same consonant. Encourage students to think of other alliterations, such as in well-known tongue twisters or slogans, and to create their own phrases with alliteration. Have them share examples that they find as they read on their own or as a group.
3. Author Marlee Matlin created the character of Megan because she wanted kids to understand what it was like to grow up deaf. Ask each student to write a short story about an event or experience in their life that could help kids in the future to understand what it was like for them when they were growing up. Stories could be about friends, family, school, activities, or important lessons and challenges.

## THEATER/MUSIC

1. Encourage each student who saw the production to take five minutes to think about the thoughts and feelings that the show inspired in them. Have students artistically express these feelings in a poem, picture, story, or letter. Let them choose whichever form of expression they feel will best represent their individual experience. Encourage them to share these reflections with the other students in their class.

## SCIENCE

1. Alexis and Megan are assigned to come up with a science experiment together. Have students create their own science experiments working in pairs or groups. Together, ask them to come up with a proposal and hypothesis, to identify their materials and steps, to conduct the experiment, and to analyze and present their results.
2. Because Megan is unable to hear, she relies on her other senses to know what is going on in the world around her. Have students research the five senses of sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch. How do our brains process the information that we gather from each of these senses? Next ask students to consider what happens when one or more of our senses is missing. Take them outside to a playground or other grassy area and have them sit on the ground and close their eyes. What do they notice about what is going on around them? Ask them to think about what they hear, feel, smell, and taste. After a few minutes, invite them to open their eyes and journal about their experience. Were they more aware of what their other senses were telling them when they couldn't rely on their eyes?
3. Have students research different types of technology that people who are deaf may utilize. Ideas include hearing aids, cochlear implants, text messaging, teletypewriters (TTYs), video phones, and closed captioning. What are the advantages or drawbacks of each? Which technologies were developed specifically to help people who are deaf? Which technologies were developed for the general public but are also accessible to people who are deaf? Have them share what they learn with one another.



A teletypewriter, or TTY.

# CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS: Ideas for Teachers



## SOCIAL STUDIES

1. Culture is a term that is not limited to a shared ethnicity or region. Although people who are deaf often live and interact with people who hear, their shared experiences have contributed to the creation of a distinct culture of their own. To help students understand that there are many types of cultures based on shared experiences, have them brainstorm a list of attributes of their classroom culture. Invite them to consider language, rules, expectations, music, and routines that make their class what it is.

2. Help students visualize the large number of sign languages used around the world by using the chart on page 14. Assign each student one or more of the countries from the list and have them write each assigned countries' sign language on a note card. Then ask them to identify the country on a world map and tape the note card to the correct location. What do they notice about the map when they are done? Remind them that this is just a partial list of the number of sign languages used around the world.



## CHARACTER COUNTS

1. Invite students to think about the different CHARACTER COUNTS pillars: Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship. Have students contribute examples of each trait that they saw in the show. For example, Megan demonstrated caring when she was kind to Justin. Students can also contribute examples of times when the characters could have displayed better character. For example, Megan did not do a very good job of being trustworthy when she told Alexis' secret. Post the examples and then ask each student to write a letter to one of the characters, congratulating them for a time they demonstrated good character. Have them include in their letter a suggestion for how the person could handle one of the situations better the next time as well.

2. Megan and Alexis had to learn to cooperate in order to finish their science project. Try this fun activity to get your class working together. Divide students into groups of five or six. Have each group form a circle and hold hands. Toss a balloon to each group. Instruct the group to keep holding hands and to keep the balloon in the air using different body parts as you call them out, such as hands, elbows, knees, heads, and feet. After the activity, discuss how teamwork requires all six CHARACTER COUNTS! pillars: Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship. Invite students to talk about the activity and identify the ways they demonstrated the different character traits as they worked together to keep the balloon in the air.

More information on each CHARACTER COUNTS! pillar on page 15.

# SIGN LANGUAGES AROUND THE WORLD (For use with Social Studies Activity #2 on page 13)

Argentina	Lengua de Señas Argentina
Australia	Australian Sign Language
Austria	Austrian Sign Language
Belgium	Belgian-Flemish Sign Language
Belgium	Belgian-French Sign Language
Bolivia	Bolivian Sign Language
Brazil	Brazilian Sign Language
Canada-Anglophone	American Sign Language
Canada-Francophone	Langue de Signe Quebecois
Canada, Maritime	Maritime Sign Language
Bulgaria	Bulgarian Sign Language
Chile	Chilean Sign Language
China	Chinese Sign Language
Colombia	Colombian Sign Language
Czech Republic	Czech Sign Language
Denmark	Danish Sign Language
Ecuador	Ecuadorian Sign Language
Ethopia	Ethiopian Sign Language
Finland	Finnish Sign Language (Viittomakieli)
France	French Sign Language (Langue des Signes Française)
Germany	German Sign Language (Deutsche Gebärdensprache)
Iceland	Icelandic Sign Language
Ireland	Irish Sign Language
India	Indian Sign Language
Ireland	Irish Sign Language
Israel	Israeli Sign Language
Italy	Italian Sign Language (Lingua dei Segni Italian; Lingua Italiana dei Segni)
Jordan	Jordanian Sign Language
Japan	Japanese Sign Language (Shuwa or Temane; Nihon Syuwa)
Kenya	Kenyan Sign Language

Korea, South	Korean Sign Language
Kuwaiti	Kuwaiti Sign Language
Latvia	Latvian Sign Language
Lithuania	Lithuanian Sign Language
Malaysia	Bahasa Isyarat Malaysia
Mexico	Mexican Sign Language
Nepal	Nepalese Sign Language
Netherlands	Nederlandse GebarenTaal
New Zealand	New Zealand Sign Language
Norway	Norwegian Sign Language; Norsk Tegnspråk
Panama	Panamanian Sign Language; Lengua de Señas Panameñas
Peru	Peruvian Sign Language
Poland	Polish Sign Language
Portugal	Portugese Sign Language
Romania	Romanian Sign Language
Singapore	hybrid of American Sign Language, Sign English and others
Spain	Spanish Sign Language
Sweden	Swedish Sign Language
Switzerland (French-Speaking)	Swiss-French Sign Language
Switzerland (German-speaking)	Swiss-German Sign Language
Uganda	Ugandan Sign Language
Ukraine	Ukrainian Sign Language
Thailand	Thai Sign Language
United Kingdom	British Sign Language
United States	American Sign Language
Uruguay	Uruguayan Sign Language
Venezuela	Venezuelan Sign Language
Yugoslavia	Yugoslavian Sign Language
Zimbabwe	Zimbabwe Sign Language

\*Chart adapted from [handspeak.com](http://handspeak.com)

# THE SIX PILLARS OF CHARACTER (For use with Character Counts Activities on page 13)



- Be honest. Don't deceive, cheat or steal.
- Be reliable. Do what you say you'll do.
- Have the courage to do the right thing.
- Build a good reputation.
- Be loyal. Stand by your family, friends, and country.



- Treat others with respect. Follow the Golden Rule.
- Be tolerant of differences.
- Use good manners, not bad language.
- Be considerate of the feelings of others.
- Don't threaten, hit or hurt anyone.
- Deal peacefully with anger, insults and disagreements.



- Do what you are supposed to do.
- Persevere. Keep on trying.
- Always do your best.
- Use self-control. Be self-disciplined.
- Think before you act. Consider the consequences.
- Be accountable for your choices.



- Play by the rules.
- Take turns and share.
- Be open-minded. Listen to others.
- Don't take advantage of others.
- Don't blame others carelessly.



- Be kind.
- Be compassionate and show you care.
- Express gratitude.
- Forgive others.
- Help people in need.



- Do your share to make your school and community better.
- Cooperate.
- Stay informed. Vote.
- Be a good neighbor.
- Obey laws and rules. Respect authority.
- Protect the environment. Recycle.

Adapted from Josephson Institute of Ethics. CHARACTER COUNTS! In Iowa is a project of the Institute for Character Development. Pillar graphics courtesy of CHARACTER COUNTS! In Iowa.



# GOING TO THE THEATER . . .



## YOUR ROLE AS AN AUDIENCE MEMBER

Attending a live performance is a unique and exciting opportunity. Unlike the passive experience of watching a movie, audience members play an important role in every live performance. As they act, sing, dance, or play instruments, the performers on stage are very aware of the audience's mood and level of engagement. Each performance calls for a different response from audience members. Lively bands, musicians, and dancers may desire the audience to focus silently on the stage and applaud only during natural breaks in the performance. Audience members can often take cues from performers on how to respond to the performance appropriately. For example, performers will often pause or bow for applause at a specific time.

As you experience the performance, consider the following questions:

- What kind of live performance is this (a play, a dance, a concert, etc.)?
- What is the mood of the performance? Is the subject matter serious or lighthearted?
- What is the mood of the performers? Are they happy and smiling or somber and reserved?
- Are the performers encouraging the audience to clap to the music or move to the beat?
- Are there natural breaks in the performance where applause seems appropriate?

## THEATER ETIQUETTE

Here is a checklist of general guidelines to follow when you visit the Civic Center:

- Leave all food, drinks, and chewing gum at school or on the bus.
- Cameras, recording devices, and personal listening devices are not permitted in the theater.
- Turn off cell phones, pagers, and all other electronic devices before the performance begins.
- When the house lights dim, the performance is about to begin. Please stop talking at this time.
- **Talk before and after the performance only.** Remember, the theater is designed to amplify sound, so the other audience members and the performers on stage can hear your voice!
- Appropriate responses such as laughing and applauding are appreciated. Pay attention to the artists on stage—they will let you know what is appropriate.
- Open your eyes, ears, mind, and heart to the entire experience. Enjoy yourself!

\*GOING TO THE THEATER information is adapted from the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts study guide materials.

# ABOUT THE CIVIC CENTER OF GREATER DES MOINES



The Civic Center of Greater Des Moines is a cultural landmark of central Iowa and is committed to engaging the Midwest in world-class entertainment, education, and cultural activities. The Civic Center has achieved a national reputation for excellence as a performing arts center and belongs to several national organizations, including The Broadway League, the Independent Presenters Network, International Performing Arts for Youth, and Theater for Young Audiences/USA.

Four performing arts series currently comprise the season—the Willis Broadway Series, Prairie Meadows Temple Theater Series, Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield Family Series and the Applause Series. The Civic Center is also the performance home for the Des Moines Symphony and Stage West.

The Civic Center is a private, nonprofit organization and is an important part of central Iowa's cultural community. Through its education programs, the Civic Center strives to engage patrons in arts experiences that extend beyond the stage. Master classes bring professional and local artists together to share their art form and craft, while pre-performance lectures and post-performance Q&A sessions with company members offer ticket holders the opportunity to explore each show as a living, evolving piece of art.

Through the Applause Series—curriculum-connected performances for school audiences—students are encouraged to discover the rich, diverse world of performing arts. During the 2009-2010 season, the Civic Center will welcome more than 28,000 students and educators to 11 professional productions for young audiences.

**Want an inside look? Request a tour.**

Group tours can be arranged for performance and non-performance dates.  
Call 515-246-2355 or visit [civiccenter.org/education](http://civiccenter.org/education) to check on availability or book your visit.

## DID YOU KNOW?

More than 250,000 patrons visit the Civic Center each year.

The Civic Center opened in 1979. We just celebrated our 30th birthday!

The Civic Center has three theater spaces:

- *Main Hall, 2735 seats*
- *Stoner Studio, 200 seats*
- *Temple Theater, 300 seats (located in the Temple for the Performing Arts)*

No seat is more than 155 feet from center stage in the Main Hall.

Nollen Plaza, situated just west of the Civic Center, is a park and amphitheater that is also part of the Civic Center complex. The space features the Brenton Waterfall and Reflection Pool and the Crusoe Umbrella sculpture.

The Applause Series started in 1996. You are joining us for the 14th season!

# CIVIC CENTER FIELD TRIP INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS



**Thank you for choosing the Applause Series at the Civic Center of Greater Des Moines. Below are tips for organizing a safe and successful field trip to the Civic Center.**

## ORGANIZING YOUR FIELD TRIP

- Please include all students, teachers, and chaperones in your ticket request.
- After you submit your ticket request, you will receive a confirmation e-mail within five business days. Your **invoice will be attached to the confirmation e-mail.**
- Payment policies and options are located at the top of the invoice. **Payment (or a purchase order) for your reservation is due four weeks** prior to the date of the performance.
- The Civic Center reserves the right to cancel unpaid reservations after the payment due date.
- Tickets are not printed for Applause Series shows. Your invoice will serve as the reservation confirmation for your group order.
- Schedule buses to arrive in downtown Des Moines at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the performance. This will allow time to park, walk to the Civic Center, and be seated in the theater.
- Performances are approximately 60 minutes unless otherwise noted on the website and printed materials.
- All school groups with reservations to the show will receive an e-mail notification when the study guide is posted. Please note that study guides are only printed and mailed upon request.

## DIRECTIONS AND PARKING

- Directions: From I-235, take Exit 8A (Downtown Exits) and the ramp toward 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. Turn onto 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and head south.
- Police officers are stationed at the corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> and Locust Streets and will direct buses to parking areas with hooded meters near the Civic Center. Groups traveling in personal vehicles are responsible for locating their own parking in ramps or metered (non-hooded) spots downtown.
- Buses will remain parked for the duration of the show. At the conclusion, bus drivers must be available to move their bus if necessary, even if their students are staying at the Civic Center to eat lunch or take a tour.
- Buses are not generally permitted to drop off or pick up students near the Civic Center. If a bus must return to school during the performance, prior arrangements must be made with the Civic Center Education staff.

## ARRIVAL TO THE CIVIC CENTER

- When arriving at the Civic Center, please have an **adult lead your group** for identification and check-in purposes. You may enter the building through the East or West lobbies; a Civic Center staff member may be stationed outside the building to direct you.
- Civic Center staff will usher groups into the building as quickly as possible. Once inside, you will be directed to the check-in area.
- Seating in the theater is general admission. Ushers will escort groups to their seats; various seating factors including group size, grade levels, arrival time, and special needs seating requests may determine a group's specific location in the hall.
- We request that an **adult lead the group into the theater and other adults position themselves throughout the group**; we request this arrangement for supervision purposes, especially in the event that a group must be seated in multiple rows.
- Please allow ushers to seat your entire group before rearranging seat locations and taking groups to the restroom.

## IN THE THEATER

- In case of a medical emergency, please notify the nearest usher. A paramedic is on duty for all Main Hall performances.
- We ask that adults handle any disruptive behavior in their groups. If the behavior persists, an usher may request your group to exit the theater.
- Following the performance groups may exit the theater and proceed to their bus(es).
- If an item is lost at the Civic Center, please see an usher or contact us after the performance at 515.246.2355.

### QUESTIONS?

Please contact the Education department at 515.246.2355 or [education@civiccenter.org](mailto:education@civiccenter.org). Thank you!

# RESOURCES AND SOURCES



## CLASSROOM RESOURCE RECOMMENDATIONS

### Websites

American Sign Language Browser: <http://aslbrowser.commtechlab.msu.edu/browser.htm>

*A video dictionary site produced by the Communication Technology Laboratory at the University of Michigan.*

ASPro.com: <http://www.aslpro.com/>

*A free, easy-to-use reference tool designed to enhance in-classroom learning for American Sign Language Educators and their students. Includes American Sign Language video dictionary.*

Gallaudet University "History Through Deaf Eyes":

<http://my.gallaudet.edu/bbcswebdav/institution/Deaf%2520Eyes%2520Exhibit/index.htm>

*An exhibit of photographs and information about the history of the American Deaf community.*

Harris Communications: <http://www.harriscomm.com/>

*A source for ordering a wide variety of materials about sign language and Deaf culture. Browse through their inventory for ideas about materials you can check out or look for at your local library.*

### Book

Matlin, Marlee and Doug Cooney. Nobody's Perfect. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2006.

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## STUDY GUIDE SOURCES

Civic Center of Greater Des Moines: <http://www.civiccenter.org>

Kennedy Center Theater for Young Audiences on Tour: <http://www.kennedy-center.org/programs/family/ontour>

VSA arts: <http://www.vsarts.org>

National Association of the Deaf: <http://www.nad.org>

Friends of Libraries for Deaf Action: <http://www.folda.net>

PBS.org "Through Deaf Eyes": <http://www.pbs.org/weta/throughdeafeyes/index.html>

Marlee Matlin Official Website: <http://www.marleematlinsite.com>

Handspeak.com: <http://www.handspeak.com>

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