

Life With Deafness



Image by Will C. Fry

A little boy named Benjamin spells his name using American Sign Language.

Do you know anyone at your school or in your neighborhood who is deaf or hard of hearing? You might have a grandparent who has lost some of his or her hearing over the years and now uses a hearing aid.

For Deaf History Month, March 13 through April 15, The Mini Page learned more about living with deafness.

A person is considered deaf if he or she can't hear other people speak, even when using a hearing aid.

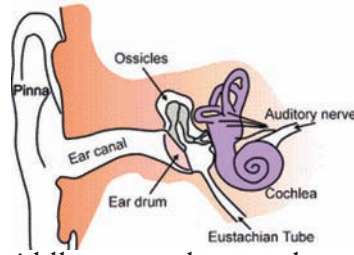
Why are some people deaf?

Hearing loss happens for different reasons. Some people are deaf or hard of hearing from birth. Their hearing loss might be caused by damage in the brain or in the ears, or it might be inherited. Others may have worked at very loud jobs, which hurt their hearing over time.

Listening to loud music can ruin our ability to hear. Deafness can also be caused by diseases, infections or fluid in the ears.

Ears at work

Just beyond the part of the ear you can see is the ear canal, where sound enters our brain. The waves of sound meet the eardrum and the ossicles (AH-sih-culs), small bones in the middle ear, and cause them to vibrate. Those vibrations make tiny hair cells in the cochlea (KOH-lee-ah) move and send electrical messages to our brain through the auditory nerve. Then our brain takes over to understand the sound.



Helping deaf students

Almost 400 years ago, a Spanish man named Juan Pablo Bonet developed a way for people with hearing loss to communicate with each other.

In the mid-1700s, a Frenchman, Charles-Michel de l'Épée, used Bonet's signs to develop an alphabet. He also started a school for deaf children in Paris.

Laurent Clerc was a graduate of l'Épée's school. In 1815, he traveled to London and met Thomas Gallaudet (gal-uh-DEHT), a teacher who wanted to help deaf people learn.

Clerc and Gallaudet came to the United States and started the American School for the Deaf in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1817. Today, Gallaudet University is in Washington, D.C. In the United States, many people use American Sign Language. The alphabet is shown at right.



Image by Isaac Hohlamme

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Try 'n' Find

Words that remind us of deafness are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:

AID, BRAIN, CANAL,
CAPTION, COCHLEA,
DAMAGE, DEAF,
DISEASE, EARDRUM,
EARS, FLUID, HEAR,
HISTORY, INFECTION,
LANGUAGE, LOSS, LOUD,
MUSIC, OSSICLES, SIGN,
TECHNOLOGY, TOOLS.

A H Z M U R D R A E N I A R B
E I S V N N O I T P A C D I A
L S E A R S D I S E A S E D X
H T P Y B P C I S U M D E A F
C O L A N A C L O S S V U M V
O R L O U D W E G A U G N A L
C Y N O I T C E F N I H E G X
R D D F L U I D N G I S C E N
R A E H T E C H N O L O G Y L
T O O L S H S E L C I S S O R



Cook's Corner

Frozen Vanilla-Mango Bars

You'll need:

- 2 cups low-fat vanilla yogurt
- 2 cups cubed mango
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

What to do:

1. Combine all ingredients in a blender and puree until smooth.
2. Pour the mixture into four ice-pop molds (about 1/2 cup in volume each) and freeze until firm, about 1 hour. Serves 4.

Adapted from "The Robin Takes 5 Cookbook for Busy Families" with permission from Andrews McMeel Publishing (andrewsmcmeel.com).



* You'll need an adult's help with this recipe.

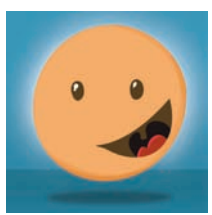
7 Little Words for Kids

Use the letters in the boxes to make a word with the same meaning as the clue. The numbers in parentheses represent the number of letters in the solution. Each letter combination can be used only once, but all letter combinations will be necessary to complete the puzzle.

1. madness (5) _____
2. way of dressing (5) _____
3. keep in your mind (8) _____
4. idea (6) _____
5. when the sun rises (4) _____
6. ask to come to a party (6) _____
7. finds at fault (6) _____

IN	EM	TE	LE
NOT	BER	BLA	WN
ER	MES	ANG	ION
DA	STY	VI	REM

Answers: anger, style, remember, notion, dawn, invite, blames.



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Living with deafness

People who don't hear well are sometimes frustrated by how hearing people act toward them. Kids who see another child wearing a hearing aid might make fun of him. They might ignore him because they think he won't be able to understand what they're saying.

Many people with hearing loss have learned to overcome this challenge. They use tools such as hearing aids, lip-reading or sign language to communicate. They appreciate people who talk directly to them so that they can watch lips and facial expressions.

Technology has made a big difference in helping people communicate.

- Closed-captioning makes it possible to read what the people on TV are saying.
- TTY or TDD is a special type of telephone. One person types in a message, and the other person can read it on a screen.
- Captioned telephones work something like TTY. They are faster because software changes the spoken words to text.
- Texting, email and instant messaging are great tools for people with hearing loss.

Some tools are less high-tech, but they still work. Flashing lights and vibrating alarms can alert people to a fire or a ringing phone. Service dogs may be used to warn their owners of dangers.

Resources



On the Web:

- bit.ly/MPhearing1

At the library:

- "Some Kids Are Deaf" by Lola M. Schaefer

Mini Jokes



- Wendy: What do you call a person who washes whales?
Will: A blubber scrubber!

Eco Note



The distinctive blue color that Earth presents to the universe may be altered by the end of this century due to effects of a warmer climate. Scientists predict that blue regions, such as the subtropics, will become more blue, while areas nearer the poles may turn a deeper green as warmer waters stimulate larger and more diverse blooms of phytoplankton.



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For later:

Look in your newspaper for items that might help deaf people.

Teachers: For standards-based activities to accompany this feature, visit: bit.ly/MPstandards. And follow The Mini Page on Facebook!



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