

# Sign Stage on Tour Story of Dr. Dolittle



Welcome to Sign Stage On Tour's production of *Dr. Dolittle*.

Sign Stage on Tour hopes to create an entertaining and educational experience with an additional awareness of the diverse ways of communicating in our society. This production will use the spatial beauty of American Sign Language and spoken English by Deaf and Hearing actors. Our performance is unique, interactive and the children will never forget what they have seen and heard!

## WHAT IS DEAFNESS

There are varying degrees of deafness or hearing loss. According to the National Association of the Deaf, there are approximately 28 million people in the United States with some degree of hearing loss. Hearing loss can be mild to profound. Deafness can be

congenital or caused by illness, trauma, environmental factors such as loud music, or the aging process.

Sign Stage on Tour actors will be using ASL or American Sign Language in our production. Below is an ASL Alphabet.

## THEATRE ETIQUETTE

Before the performance, please review the following with your students. These guidelines will add to the entertaining and education atmosphere during our performance.

**Noises:** You may not notice it, but candy or cough drop wrappers, whether unwrapped quickly or slowly, make a lot of noise! Please do not un-wrap them during the performance. If you suspect you will need one, have a supply on hand already unwrapped.

**Pictures:** Usually photography of any kind is prohibited during a performance. Check with the theatre, and if they do allow you to take pictures, do not use the flash or the video light. If you would like a picture of the cast, ask the theatre manager. They will probably be happy to assemble the cast after the performance for a short photo session.

**Please remember that this is not a movie.** The people on the stage can hear and see you. Your reactions fuel them. Your negative actions can affect them. You may never see this reaction, because being performers; they are skilled at hiding them. The performers and all those people behind the scenes have worked very hard to create an evening of entertainment for you. Please show them the respect they deserve. Do laugh in the appropriate places!

When you applaud by clapping your hands, our Hearing actors will benefit. To show appreciation to our Deaf actors, **please raise your hands and wiggle them with much enthusiasm! Feel free to do both!**

Story telling is how we pass on our heritage, our family's triumphs, and pain. What is it like to be told a story by someone who is monotone and shows no expression? A good storyteller is a good actor. By seeing this production, you will see how to be better storytellers!

As you watch the interaction between our Deaf actors and Hearing actors, you see that without the shrug of a shoulder, frown, or a big smile, the meaning of a sentence in sign language would be misunderstood. Deaf actor is a wonderful storyteller. Deaf persons not only "speak" with their hands; they use their whole body. Without words, everything is made clear!

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR HUGH JOHN LOFTING

Hugh Lofting was born in Maidenhead, Berkshire County, England on January 14, 1886. In 1912, he married Flora Small and had two children, Elizabeth Mary and Colin MacMahon.

Lofting served during World War I. Under the horrific conditions of the trenches, Lofting would write to his children stories with sketches of the charming Dr. John Dolittle and the amazing creatures he could talk too. These letters served as catalyst for Lofting's Dr. Dolittle books. His first novel was published in 1920: *The Story of Doctor Dolittle*.

## WHO IS DR. JOHN DOLITTLE

Dr. Dolittle who lives in Puddleby-on-the-Marsh could talk to animals and had many friends including people and animals. A few of the characters are: his sister Sarah, Matthew Mugg, the Cat's-Meat Man, Tommy Stubbins, Polynesia the parrot, Jip the dog, Dab Dab the duck, Chee-Chee the monkey and Pushmi-Pullyu, the two headed Lama. Dr. Dolittle preferred animals to human patients. With his ability to talk to the animals, he becomes a naturalist.



## LEARNING ABOUT DR. JOHN DOLITTLE THE NATURALIST

**Naturalist:** an expert in natural history; the scientific study and research of plants and animals in their natural environments. Naturalists' research is predominantly observational. They are physically close with or even live with animals or plants and even insects.

Here listed are a few areas naturalists study:

**Botany:** study of plants

**Zoology:** study of animals with reference to their structure and physiology

**Geology:** study of the earth, including origin of its rocks

**Ornithology:** study of birds

**Entomology:** study of insects

*.....I hear and forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand..... Chinese proverb*

## EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

1. Using the ASL alphabet children will learn to finger spell their names. Copy is attached.

2. Spelling and definition - students look up the following:

Deaf	Communicate	Language	Monotone
Expression	Visual	Explore	Create
Actor	Costumes	Props	Story

3. Discussion and writing exercise:

Ask students if they were a naturalist, which of the below would they study?

Botany: the study of plants

Zoology: study of animals

Geology: the science of the earth

Ornithology: the scientific study of birds

Entomology: study of insects

4. Dr. Dolittle could talk to the animals.

If you could talk to the animals, which animal would you choose to ask a question?

What would your question be?

What do you think the answer would be?

5. Students write short story of an imaginary experience talking to an animal.

6. Have students make a list of animals, i.e.: lion, tiger, wolf, chicken, monkey, parrot, dog, duck, pig, cat, donkey, cow, elephant, etc.

Have students create a “new” animal by combining names of different animals.

Example: a donkpig or a litig.



## ACTIVITY:

Pushmi-pullyou - two students placed back to back. If available, place inner-tube around them. Or, using rope/string or ribbon tie them together. Using two students with an object in their hands (cookie, book, etc.), place one in front of one restrained student and the other in front of student two.

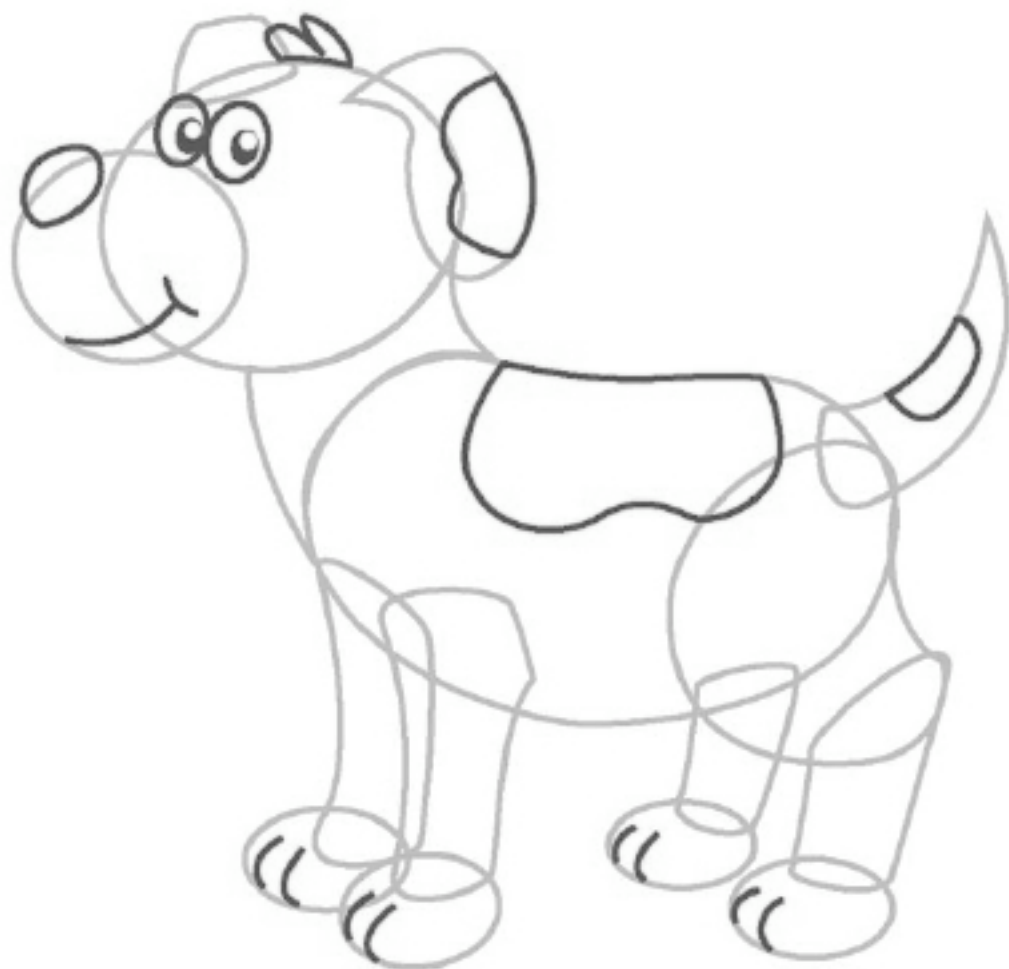
Do the restrained students struggle against each other? Do they cooperate with each other to obtain the objects held by the opposing students?



A drawing exercise using attached pictures. Have students cut out animal heads and glue them to the bodies of a different animal. Using paint, crayons, color pencils and included pictures, students may color animals in unconventional colors.

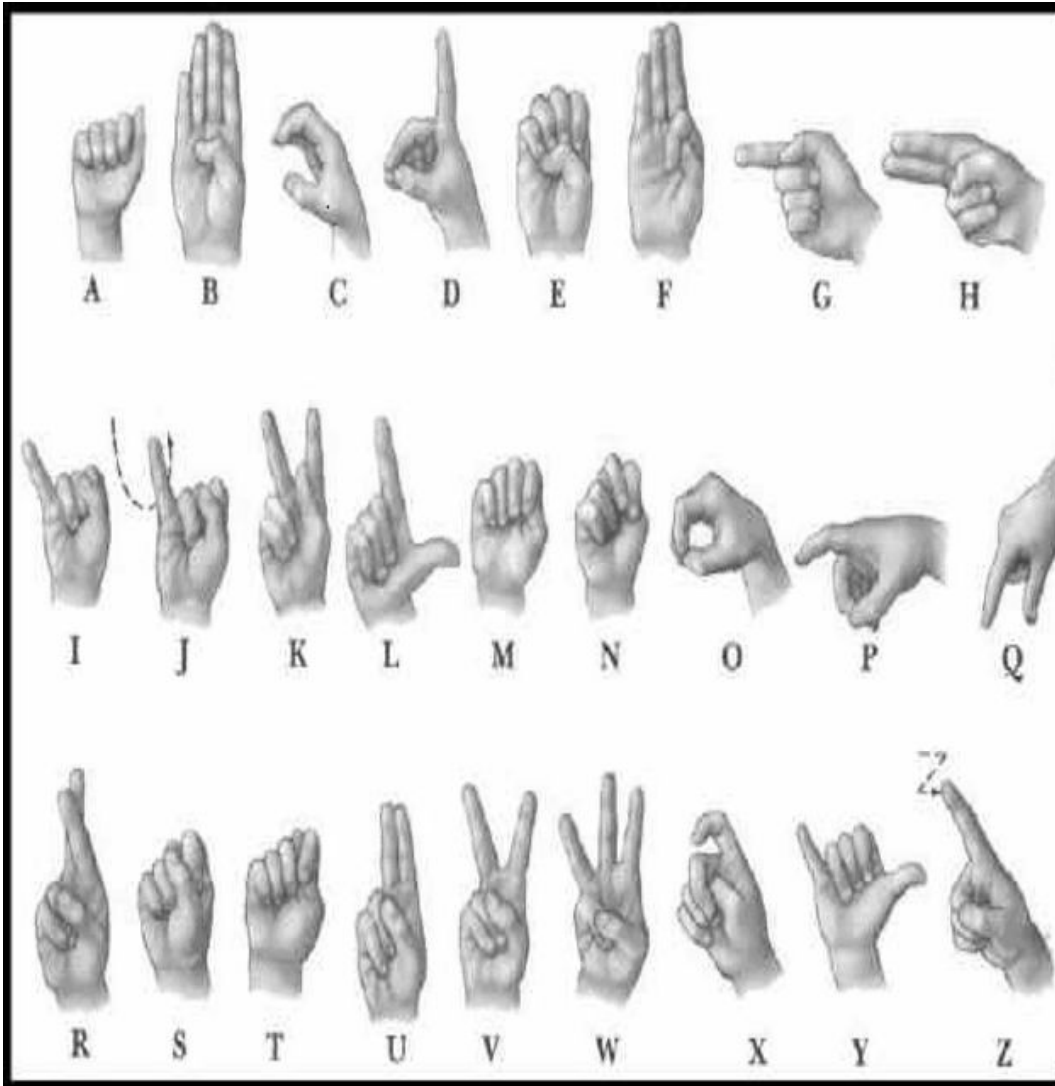












**ASL - AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE ALPHABET**