Introduction

There are approximately 16 million deaf and hearing-impaired individuals in the U.S., two million of whom are totally deaf. Of this number, many individuals had the advantage of hearing while they were young and have normal speech. The half million persons who are prelingually deaf are individuals who must live in an oral world without having had an opportunity to develop language, which is essential for communication.

There are many reasons why a person is born deaf or becomes deaf at a later time. German measles, meningitis and a high fever are a few of the most common reasons.

Because approximately one-third of the words in the English language are not clearly distinguishable from the lips, some deaf find functioning in an oral environment unsatisfactory and undesirable. The deaf prefer to have speech supplemented with signs that combine to form a language that is immediately understandable and is adequate for communication.

Sign language is the third most used language in the world and is accepted as a language by colleges and universities. Sign language is a system of hand signs, facial and body gestures persons may use in order to communicate with one another.

There are many words that have a specific sign. Some signs look very much like the word they represent.

The *Sign Language Honor Book* has been designed for Pathfinders and other individuals who are interested in receiving an honor in the language of signs.

This book has been prepared to make it convenient for individuals to receive the sign language honor.

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