Drumming up our deaf heartbeat.

American Sign Language

Deaf Culture
The Past to Present: Deaf African American Contributors in American Sign Language and Deaf Culture

**Unit Title:** The Past to Present: Deaf African American contributors on American Sign Language (ASL) and Deaf Culture.

**Subject Level Focus:** American Sign Language Levels 1-3

**Grade Level:** 9-12

**Essential Learning and Grade Level Expectations:** Essential Learning and Grade Level Expectations: Students will be able to perform, create signs as well as, history that show the connections between Deaf African American contributors. This 9-12 course is connected to expectations formed around Reading, Writing, and Research.

**Next Generation Sunshine State Standards:** This curriculum framework incorporates the grades 9-10 reading and writing literacy standards in the first two courses of this ASL program and grade 11-12 reading and writing literacy standards in the third and fourth courses of this ASL program. The standards for Language skills describes varieties of expertise that educators at all levels should seek to develop in their students. These practices rest on important “processes and proficiencies” with longstanding importance in language education. This curriculum framework incorporates the appropriate language skills in the first three courses of this ASL program.

- WL.K12.IH.1.2: Demonstrate understanding of the main idea and supporting details on familiar and unfamiliar topics.
- WL.K12.NM.1.4: Demonstrate understanding of simple information supported by visuals through a variety of media.
- WL.K12.IH.1.4: Confirm understanding of the message and purpose of a variety of authentic sources found in the target culture such as TV, radio, podcasts and videos.
- WL.K12.IM.2.4: Recognize many high frequency idiomatic expressions from a variety of authentic texts of many unknown words by using context clues.
- WL.K12.NH.3.1: Engage in short social interactions using phrases and simple sentences.
- WL.K12.IL.3.1: Initiate and engage in a conversation on familiar topics.
- WL.K12.IL.4.5: Present a short skit or play using well-structured sentences.
- WL.K12.AM.4.4: Prepare and deliver presentations based on inquiry or research.

**Bench Marks:** See Benchmarks for Next Generation World Language Standards
**District Scope and Sequence:** The following lesson plans can either be broken down and incorporated throughout the year as it pertains to Deaf Culture, American Sign Language History, reading, writing, and geography. This can be combined as a Unit-taught during the month of February as it pertains to “Black History Month”.

**Goals:**
1. Allow students to explore Deaf African American culture through American Sign Language program.
2. Provide a well-rounded curriculum unit for teachers to use in its entirety or as individual units.
3. Provide students a variety of lessons with varied teaching methods to allow success for all learners.

**Specific Objectives:**
1. Students will be able to perform various Sign Language skills in order to comprehend receptive and signing skill in American Sign Language.
2. Students will be able to identify specific contributors of Deaf African Americans.
3. Students will be able to track the geography of Deaf Schools in Africa.
4. Students will be able to compare influential past and present Deaf African American contributors.

**Cultural Content/Contextual:** One of the major goals of this unit is for students to learn about American Sign Language/Deaf Culture in preserving and paying homage to the collective Deaf black heritage through student research, interactive demonstrations, and performing signing skills. These diverse African Americans contributors include educators, writers, athletics, lawyers, activist, and performing artist. These Deaf black individuals are the beneficiaries of a rich culture that have influence many individuals that use American Sign Language to communicate. The following page is a list of famous Deaf African Americans. This list is Teacher background information pertinent to each student lesson.
**Education**

**Andrew Jackson Foster** (1925 - 1987) Missionary to deaf African people for more than 30 years, in 1956, Foster founded the Christian Mission for the Deaf African. Later in Accra, Ghana, he established the first school in Africa for the deaf. Foster was the first African American deaf person to earn a bachelor's degree from Gallaudet College (now Gallaudet University) and the first African American deaf person to earn a master's degree from Eastern Michigan University.

**Dr. Glenn B. Anderson** - is commonly known as the first Deaf African-American in the United States to earn his doctorate degree. Born and raised in the South Side of Chicago, he became deaf at the age of seven. Encountering barriers and obstacles during his childhood, his parents told him "you have to be twice as good as anyone else to be successful." Dr. Anderson earned his bachelor’s degree in Psychology at what was then known as the Gallaudet College in 1968 and went on to earn his master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling at the University of Arizona in 1970. He began his professional career after graduation in 1970 as a Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselor for the Michigan Rehabilitation Services in Detroit, MI. From 1972 to 1975, he was the Coordinator of the Referral Counseling Program at New York University’s Deafness Research and Training Center and from 1975 to 1982, he worked at LaGuardia Community College (LaGCC) – City University of New York where he was instrumental in establishing the LaGCC Program for Deaf Adults, a continuing education program benefitting deaf adults interested in returning to school to further their education and/or to obtain two-year college degrees.

**Entertainment**

**Michelle Banks** Deaf at 1-year-old, Banks attended Kendall Demonstration Elementary School, Model Secondary School for the Deaf and Gallaudet University. She graduated from the school of drama at State University of New York (SUNY). In 1990, she created the first deaf theater company in the U.S. for people of color, the Onyx Theater. She has appeared in the movies "Malcom X" and "Compensation," a silent film in which she starred.

**C.J. Jones** -As an entertainer, has performed a Tony Award-winning play on National Tour, directed deaf kids from high school to kindergarten in their own productions, acted in TV and written several one-man shows that have toured the U.S. and internationally and given motivational speeches to colleges and corporations.

**Prinz-D** The self-proclaimed "first deaf rapper," combines vocal rapping with American Sign Language. In music videos he adds the element of closed captioning, making hip hop even more accessible through his work. Regardless of the barriers that have been placed in his way, Prinz-D continues to show the ability to overcome obstacles. As a result, he has become widely known nationwide with a sizeable following overseas and in Nordic countries –
Melvin Patterson - Patterson has most recently appeared in the Deafhood Monologues, an episodic play of deaf experiences, chronicles and reflections delivered through poetry, stories and presentations in American Sign Language. Patterson is also the co-host of "Deaf Perspective," a program on Sorenson Communications' Video Center.

Evon Black - Educator and performer Black holds a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's degree in educational technology. Black has been a performer since 1986. She uses folktale stories from around the nation to teach values, elevated understanding and acceptance of other cultures. Black has worked primarily in student development - from residential deaf schools to Gallaudet University - for the past 22 years. She is also a public speaker.

Jubil Khan, a Native of Philadelphia, received a Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) in Dance from Temple University. Captivated by African and Hip Hop, she participated in renowned African American Deaf Dance Company (Wild Zappers) and Kan Kouran West African Dance Company in Washington, DC. She then expanded her dance training in Modern and Ballet dance techniques at other renowned dance schools and studios such as Philadanco, University of the Arts, Dance Theater of Harlem and more. Furthermore, she did fashion modeling and also won First Runner-Up for Miss Black Deaf America in 2000. She is now pursing her acting career, in the creating process of developing a One Woman Show. Among her credits in Film/TV include extra roles in "Baby Mama Drama", "Men in Black III", "Law & Order", and "Blue Bloods". She had speaking roles in independent films "The Shattered Mind" as Imani and "Parallax" as Melanie Bardo, both deaf roles. Jubil has some stage work credits, including a role in a thrilling play, "Fetes de la Nuit", which received a Drama Desk Award in 2010, and the challenge of playing four different characters in an off-Broadway play "Almost Maine". Jubil recently performed on tour with Sign Stage on Tour Company (owned by Windwood Productions) for a month and a half performing "The Ugly Duckling". Currently, she is also pursuing another avenue in building a business team that will help families and individuals build a secured financial and wealthy future or, as we call it, build a legacy.

WARREN "WAWA" SNIPE, PERFORMING ARTIST This multi-talented performer with a fan base across the nation and beyond is originally from Philadelphia, now residing in the Washington, DC area. This consummate entertainer has been performing since childhood and has done, and does, nearly everything in the entertainment world, plus traveled the globe for the past dozen years. Known affectionately as "WAWA", Warren Snipe has written powerful poems and songs and his passion for music grew to a point that he had to share with the world. So watch out...Wawa's doing what he does best...breaking down barriers and taking on challenges. He's the type that likes to break down barriers, every day in every way, moving one step closer to his life's personal goal.
Literature

**Connie Briscoe** - Writer a full-time published author for more than 20 years, Connie Briscoe was born with a hearing impairment. Briscoe never allowed that to stop her from pursuing her dream...writing. Since leaving editing to become a writer, Briscoe has made the New York Times, Chicago Tribune, Washington Post, Boston Globe, Boston Herald, USA Today and Publishers Weekly best sellers lists.

**Dr. Ernest Hairston & Linwood Smith.**

*Black and Deaf in America, Are We That Different? (1983)* this first known book by and about the Black Deaf people. It provides an in-depth look at some of the difficulties of the Black Deaf community. The book includes interviews with prominent Black Deaf Americans who share their joys, fears and hopes for the future. Also includes an important chapter on signs used in the black community.

**Mary Herring Wright**

*Sounds Like Home: Growing Up Black and Deaf in the South (1999)* Her account adds an important dimension to current literature in that it is a story by and about an African American deaf child. It is unique and historically significant because it provides valuable descriptive information about the faculty and staff of her school from the perspective of a student as well as a student teacher. Mary Herring Wright began to lose her hearing when she was eight and a half years old, and was completely Deaf by the age of ten. At that time, she began to travel back and forth from her home in Iron Mine, NC to Raleigh, where she attended a residential school for black deaf and blind children from the mid-1920s to the early 1940s.

**Dr. Carolyn McCaskill.**

*The Hidden Treasure of Black ASL: Its History and Structure (2011)* this book and DVD companion describe the linguistic features of a variety of American Sign Language (ASL) used by African American signers known as Black ASL. Four-year research project on the differences between Black and White signers in the South during segregation that occurred in the education of Black and White deaf children.

**Dr. Glenn B. Anderson**

*Still I Rise: The Enduring Legacy of Black Deaf Arkansans Before & After Integration (2006)*

This combination DVD and booklet tells compelling stories of the experiences of Black deaf students prior to and after the Supreme Court’s Brown vs. the Topeka Board of Education decision in 1954. Before the Brown decision, Arkansas was one of about 15 states, mostly in the South, that maintained separate schools for White and Black deaf students. The memories and stories compiled in the DVD and book range from an
alumnus who attended school during the segregation era in 1919 to those who were among the first group of Black students to integrate the Arkansas School for the Deaf in 1965 and afterward.

**Fashion Designer**

**Natasha Ofili** First-generation African American designer who lost her hearing at age 2, Ofili has always been interested in art. Her love for surrealist art has emerged in fashion. After graduating from the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising, Ofili immediately began working as a product development coordinator for BCBG MAXAZRIA where she was responsible for four different lines and worked closely with each design team –

**Sports**

**Derrick Coleman** NFL Football Player is an American football running back for the Seattle Seahawks of the National Football League, and the first legally deaf offensive player in the NFL. – This guy has his own TV advert, looks like he could tear you to pieces and has won the Super Bowl. It’s Seattle Seahawks fullback Derrick Coleman. From being bullied as a kid and overlooked for a pro career when he left college, Coleman fought all the way back and now he’s at the very top. He says his deafness made him what he is today, and that’s rock hard, dedicated and likeable.

**Tony Tatum** Professional Arena Football Player Cleveland Gladiators defensive back and jack linebacker, Tony Tatum attended Gallaudet University where he was one of the top players on Gallaudet's basketball team and cornerback for the Gallaudet football team. After college, he played defensive back for the Utah Blaze arena football team before being transferred to the Cleveland Gladiators. Currently in training, Tatum's first season with the Gladiators begins March 2014. –

**Kenny Wayne Walker** (born April 6, 1967) is a former defensive lineman for the Denver Broncos and the first Deaf player to have played in the Canadian Football League and one of only three to have played in the National Football League. Walker became profoundly deaf from a bout with meningitis. He is the second of only three deaf players in the history of the National Football League. Bonnie Sloan, who played in the 1970s, and Derrick Coleman of the Seattle Seahawks are the other deaf NFL players. Walker starred at the University of Nebraska, playing in the Senior Bowl in January 1991. At his final home game at Nebraska, the capacity crowd showed their appreciation for Walker by signing “applause” to him in unison. Three months after the Senior Bowl, the Broncos selected him in the eighth round (200th overall) of the 1991 NFL Draft.

**Curtis John Pride** (born December 17, 1968 in Washington, D.C.) is a former Major League Baseball outfielder and is currently the head baseball coach at Gallaudet University. He batted left-handed and threw right-handed. Deaf at birth from rubella, graduated from John F. Kennedy High School in Silver Spring, Maryland. He excelled in baseball, basketball, and soccer in high school. After high school, Curtis Pride attended
the College of William and Mary. He was the starting point guard on the basketball team. He also was an excellent soccer player who played for the United States at the 1985 FIFA U-16 World Championship in China and scored two goals in the tournament, including the match winner against Bolivia.\footnote{He was named one of the top 15 youth prospects in the world for that year and was a 1986 Parade Magazine High School All American soccer player.} He was named one of the top 15 youth prospects in the world for that year and was a 1986 Parade Magazine High School All American soccer player.\footnote{Pride uses his 5% residual hearing to help him speak and is a fluent lip-reader. Pride was originally signed by the New York Mets, but reached the major leagues with the Montreal Expos in 1993. At that time, he became the first deaf player in the majors since Dick Sipek in 1945. A left-handed hitter, with good plate discipline, and considerable speed, he never played regularly in the majors. Instead, he pinch hit or played in the outfield, usually left or right, as an injury replacement, and is regarded as an excellent fielder with a strong arm. His first Major League hit was September 17, 1993 in Montreal. Pride's first four hits in his major league career were a double, triple, home run, and single.}
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**Government**

**Claudia Gordon** when the White House in 2013 announced the appointment of Claudia Gordon, Esq. as the Associate Director for the Disability Community in the Office of Public Engagement, National Black Deaf Advocates was thrilled. Gordon is the first Black Deaf woman in America to become an attorney. Claudia previously served as the Vice-President of the National Black Deaf Advocates from 2002-2005 and was a Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary for the Office of Federal Contracts and Compliance Programs at United States Department of Labor (DOL) and later became a senior policy advisor for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties. Among her accomplishments and honors: first deaf student to graduate from the American University (AU) Washington College of Law, in Washington, DC; recipient of the Paul G. Hearne Leadership Award from the American Association of People with Disabilities; and Skadden Fellow, a fellowship for law graduates for her work at the National Association of the Deaf Law and Advocacy Center. In 2013, NBDA honored Claudia with the Linwood Smith Humanitarian Award.

**Recommended Student Lessons:**

1. Influential Deaf African Americans
2. Deaf Schools in Africa
3. The Father of Deaf Education
4. Animals in Africa
5. The Difference: African Americans VS. White signs
**Critical Thinking Skills:**

Bloom's Taxonomy

Lesson 1: Understanding, applying, analyzing and creating

Lesson 2: Understanding, applying, analyzing and creating

Lesson 3: Understanding, applying, analyzing and creating

Lesson 4: Remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing and creating

Lesson 5: Evaluating, understanding, applying, analyzing, creating

**Technology skills:**

https://www.dcmp.org/ai/366/

https://dcmp.org/ai/366/

http://www.nbda.org/content/black-deaf-history

ifmyhandscouldspeak.wordpress.com
Lesson Objectives

In these lessons, students will examine the various roles of Deaf African Americans and Deaf culture. Students will read articles about the lives of Deaf people living in United States and also explore Deaf schools in Africa. Students will create an interview/creative performance based on the information of Dr. Andrew Foster. Students will brainstorm and create a list and learn the different signing systems used by Deaf Black and white culture in the United States. In addition, the lessons come from, specific contributions, geography locations, and lessons on how to sign animals that are in African countries. These lessons is designed to broaden the students’ appreciation in not only how Deaf African Americans communicate but also the accomplishments of the lives of Deaf African Americans.

Lesson 1- Students will research given contributors that are important in the lives of Deaf African Americans. They will gain a better understanding on why they are important in Deaf culture. Students will compare and contrast, as well as be able to
Sign/Fingerspell succinct information on their specific contribution is in American society.

**Lesson 2.** Given the sign of various locations of Deaf Schools in Africa, students will analyze African signs of the location where they have Deaf schools. Students will be able to perform those signs and how they related on body linguistically using the parameters of ASL.

**Lesson 3.** Students will create an interview based short story/performance about Dr. Andrew Foster which demonstrates the facts of his life growing-up as a Deaf African American.

**Lesson 4.** Students will brainstorm and create a list of animals from Africa. Students will learn the signs and identify the movement of a sign based on the attribute of a particular animal.

**Lesson 5.** Students will compare and contrast the different signs used in Deaf African American Culture and Deaf White culture.

**Lesson plan 1:**

**Title:** Current contributors and their impact on Deaf Culture in the United States.

**Goal:** Students will read about current Deaf African American including where they came from and how they got to where they are today.

**Objectives:**

Students will be able to:

1. Identify 5 Deaf African American in the United States.
2. Compare and contrast Deaf individuals' lifestyles and include where they live, born deaf/HOH, have hearing parents and what they do today.

**Procedure:**

Materials: notebook paper, pen, and the reading article: 
https://www.dcmp.org/ai/366/

1. Ask the students if they know the names of any influential Deaf African American. List these on the board. Once they generate a list of names then ask them which of those they think may be African American from the list.
2. Distribute a reading article “The Black Deaf Community: Recent Accomplishments and Recognition” or use the teacher background information.

3. Once the students complete reading the article, ask them to choose one Black Deaf recognition and write a biography about that person.

4. Once completed, students can create a Venn diagram comparing/contrasting 2 different Deaf African American from other student biographies.

**Assessment:** The biographies will be turned in for grading based on teacher made rubric.
Lesson Plan 2:  *Students will be able to:*

**Title:** Investigate and present (sign) some current data related to Deaf African Schools and its location.

**Goal:** Students will learn about the geography and various schools throughout the countries of Africa. Students will create a group report and presentation (sign) to the class.

**Objectives:**

Students will be able to:
1. Locate on a world map selected African places that have Deaf Schools.
2. Be able to Sign and Fingerspell the African countries that have Deaf Schools.
3. Learn and identify the color of nation’s flag.
5. Locate on map selected African places where the Deaf schools are located.

**Procedure:**

Materials: Map of Africa, notebook paper, pencil, and the worksheets of the various schools SIGNS pertaining to the location.

1. Ask the students if they know the names of places in Africa. List these on the board. Once they generate a list of names then ask students which of those they think they may be able to locate on a map.
2. Ask students, one-by-one if they can circle the location on the map of the Deaf schools in Africa.
3. Once the students have circle the particular location on the map, show students the Signs to these various locations and explain the meaning of the signs.
4. Once completed, have students get in groups to share the Signs and fingerspelling they learned and the location of the Deaf Schools.

**Assessment:**

1. In groups of 4, students will be assigned a place of a Deaf School.
2. Students will share their location demonstrating the signs/fingerspell with another group.
3. The students will use this location and apply it to a simple sentence.
4. Each group will present basic information about their location with the other students in class.

**Extensions:**
Various Deaf Schools in AFRICA

Vocabulary Words

Rwanda Sign Language
In 2009 Rwanda produced its first Dictionary of Amarenga y’Ikinyarwanda (Rwandan Sign Language). This was the culmination of three years’ research funded by DFID and administered through Voluntary Services Overseas. It involved study into regional signs across all five provinces of the country in a Deaf-led project by the Rwandan National Association of the Deaf.

**Nigerian Sign Language**

Nigerian Sign Language is the national sign language of deaf people in Nigeria. It was introduced in 1960, a few years after Ghanaian Sign Language, by Andrew Foster, a deaf African-American missionary, and is based on American Sign Language (and indeed may be considered a dialect of ASL), as there had been no education or organizations for the deaf previously. There is a Ghanaian influence in NSL; both are based on American Sign Language. NSL is unrelated to local Nigerian sign languages such as Hausa Sign Language, Yoruba Sign Language, and Bura Sign Language. Chadian and Congolese teachers for the deaf are trained in Nigeria. There are deaf schools in Chad in N’Djamena, Sarh, and Moundou.

**South African Sign Language**

SASL is the official sign language used by Deaf people in South Africa. It is not an official language of South Africa. The South African government added a National Language Unit for South African Sign Language in 2001 SASL is not the only sign language used in South Africa, but it is the language that is being promoted as the language to be used by all Deaf people in South Africa, although the Deaf in South Africa historically do not form a single group.
Gambia Association of the Deaf & Hard of Hearing

GADHOH was founded in Banjul on the 21st April, 1992 under its former name Gambian Association of the Hearing Impaired. In order to be allowed membership of the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) the organization had its name changed to its present one in 1994.

Lesson 3 - Students will be able to:

- Investigate and share current data about Dr. Andrew Foster, ‘The Father of Deaf Education in Africa’ and learn about the Deaf African Schools he established throughout Africa.
- Review the Signs and have students create a play, poem, PowerPoint or any creative project bout Dr. Andrew Foster.
- Have students select their favorite performance and then have entire class be a part of the winning performance.

Procedure: Materials: notebook paper, pencil and the article of Dr. Andrew Foster.

Assessment:

5. In groups of 4, students will share a basic fact that they remembered about Dr. Foster.
6. One student in each group will their chosen fact to the class.
7. After each group has sign their fact, all students will learn a pertinent fact of another group about the life of Dr. Foster.

https://dcmp.org/ai/366/
Lesson Plan 4:  *Students will be able to:*

**Title:**  Present/Sign African Animals and understand how the signs originated.

**Goal:**  Students will learn about the various animals throughout Africa. Students will sign the animals and explain to the class how each sign is related to the attribute of that animal.

**Objectives:**

Students will be able to:

1. Be able to Sign and Fingerspell the animals.
2. Learn and identify the attributes of each animal.
3. Be able to identify and make a connection of the Sign of each animal.
4. Be able to practice their receptive skills.

**Procedure:**

**Materials:** Pictures/worksheets of various animals.

1. List animals on the board. Once they generate a list of animals.
2. Ask students, one-by-one if they can guess or create a sign based on the animal’s attribute.
3. Once the students have guess. Describe to students that signs are iconic in nature and the signs are derived often by that the animal looks like or acts.
4. Once completed, have students get in groups to share the Signs and fingerspelling what they learned.

**Assessment:**

1. In groups of 4, students will be assigned an animal.
2. Students will share their animal demonstrating the sign with someone.
3. The students will use animal and apply it to a simple sentence.
Lesson Plan 5:  Students will be able to:

Title: African Americans Sign Language is different from that of whites.

Goal: Students will learn about the distinct signing systems—one used by African Americans and signs used by whites. Students will create a list and learn words to sign in class.

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Identify differences in African American signs vs. white signs
2. Expand vocabulary and command of idiom in a foreign language.
3. Provide practice in signing skills and receptive skills.
4. Discover and raise awareness of the practical importance of foreign language skills in a global society.

*Teacher background is at the end of this lesson plan

Procedure:

Materials: Notebook paper, pen/pencil,

1. Ask students, one-by-one if they can think of any words that is different in black and white culture.
2. Once the students have created a list of words. Have a whole-class discussion about the relationship between language spoken within their own communities and why there are so many.
3. Create a display showing how to say these words.

Resources:


http://fusion.net/story/4954/asl-and-black-asl-yes-theres-a-difference/