

# INSIDE OUT

A STUDY GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS



# TRIBES SYNOPSIS

“BILLY: You’re all laughing about something and I have to say “what, what, what. I’m tired of saying “what, what” all the time.”

*Tribes.*

*Tribes* is a thoughtful portrayal of how one family navigates the fact that their son Billy is deaf. This unconventional family has tried to raise him as part of the hearing world, teaching him to read lips but neglecting to use sign language in their home. Now Billy has returned from university and is struggling again to integrate into his hearing family. When Billy meets Sylvia, a young woman who is becoming Deaf but has been raised by Deaf parents, he finally discovers what it means to be heard. She teaches Billy how to sign and exposes him to a whole new community of others who are Deaf or hard of hearing. The play follows Billy’s attempt to be a part of many worlds at once; his family’s, Sylvia’s and the Deaf community, all the while striving to find his own identity.



## INSIDE OUT

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Douglas Langworthy ..... Editor  
Sally Gass ..... Contributing Writer  
David Saphier ..... Education Contributor

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*TRIBES* was commissioned and first presented by English Stage Company at the Royal Court Theatre on 14 October 2010.

*TRIBES* was presented by Barrow Street Theatre, New York, NY in 2012.

*TRIBES* is presented by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc., New York.

**OCT 9 - NOV 15**  
**RICKETSON THEATRE**

# THE PLAYWRIGHT — NINA RAINE

“I was thinking Deafness is just one example of a kind of community, and there are loads of others.”

Nina Raine, from *The Royal Court Teacher's Guide*.

Nina Raine began her career as a trainee director at the Royal Court Theatre after graduating from Oxford. She dramaturged and directed *Unprotected* at the Liverpool Everyman (TMA Best Director Award, Amnesty International Freedom of Expression Award). Her debut play, *Rabbit*, premiered at the Old Red Lion Theatre in 2006 and transferred to the West End before going to New York. *Rabbit* won the Charles Wintour Evening Standard and Critics Circle Award for the most Promising Playwright. Raine also directed her second play, *Tiger Country*, at Hampstead Theatre. She also directed *Jumpy* at the Royal Court Theatre, later transferring to the West End. Her commission for the Royal Court Theatre, *Tribes*, directed by Roger Mitchell, won an Obie award and was also nominated for both the Olivier and Evening Standard Awards for best new play. *Tribes* opened to rave reviews in New York and won the

New York Drama Critics Circle Award for Best Foreign Play. It is currently one of the top produced plays of 2014. Nina recently opened *Longing* at the Hampstead Theatre, and is currently directing Moses Raine's play *Donkey Heart* in a return to the Old Red Lion Theatre.

In a Royal Court Theatre article Raine explains how she came to write *Tribes*. “I watched a documentary about a Deaf couple. The woman was pregnant. They wanted their baby to be Deaf. I was stuck by the thought that this was actually what many people feel, Deaf or otherwise. Parents take great pleasure in witnessing the qualities they have managed to pass on to their children. Not only a set of genes. A set of values, beliefs. Even a particular language. The family is a tribe: an infighting tribe but intensely loyal. And just like some religions can seem completely mad to non-believers, so the rituals and hierarchies of a family can seem nonsensical to an outsider.”

<http://www.royalcourttheatre.com/news/articles/nina-raine/why-i-wrote-tribes>.

# AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE

“The inability to hear is a nuisance; the inability to communicate is a tragedy.”

Lou Ann Walker, *A Loss for Words*.

American Sign Language (ASL) is a complete, complex language that uses signs made by moving the hands combined with facial expressions and poses of the body. It is the primary language of many North Americans who are Deaf; it is one of several communications options used by people who have hearing loss. No one form of sign language is universal. Different sign languages are used in different countries or regions. For example, British Sign Language (BSL) is different from ASL; Americans who know ASL may not understand BSL.

The exact beginnings of ASL are not clear, but some suggest that it arose more than 200 years ago from the intermingling of a local sign language and French Sign Language (LSF), or Langue des Signes Francaise. Today ASL includes some elements of LSF that over the years have melded and changed into a rich, complex and mature language. The French believe Abbe Charles Michel de L'Apee invented sign language while the Americans credit the Deaf community on Martha's Vineyard.

In spoken language, words are produced by using the mouth and voice to make sounds. For Deaf people, the sounds of speech are unheard, and only a fraction of speech sounds can be seen on the lips. Sign languages are based on the premise that vision is the most useful tool a Deaf

person has to communicate and receive information. ASL is completely separate and distinct from English; it has its own rules for pronunciation, word order and complex grammar. For example, “adjectives follow nouns as in Romance languages. In sign, one says ‘house blue’, establishing a picture of what is being described and then embellishing on that. (—)The movement of the shoulders, the speed of the hands, the facial expression, the number of repetitions of a sign combine with actual signs to give meaning to the language.”<sup>1</sup> Just as with other languages, specific ways of expressing oneself in ASL vary as much as ASL users do. In addition to individual differences in expression, ASL has regional accents and dialects.

Parents are often the source of a child’s early acquisition of language, but for children who are Deaf, additional people may be models for language development. A Deaf child born to parents who are Deaf and already using ASL will begin to acquire signing as naturally as a hearing child picks up spoken language from hearing parents. However, for a Deaf child with hearing parents who have no prior experience with ASL, language may be acquired differently. In fact, nine out of ten children who are born Deaf are born to parents who hear. Some hearing parents choose to introduce sign language to

their Deaf children. Hearing parents who choose to learn sign language often learn it along with their child. Surprisingly, children who are Deaf can learn to sign quite fluently from their parents, even when their parents might not be perfectly fluent themselves.

Parents should introduce a child who is Deaf or hard of hearing to language as soon as possible. The earlier any child is exposed to and begins to acquire language, the better that child’s communication skills will become. Research suggests that the first few years of life are critical for establishing successful communication.

The National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD) is studying Al-Sayyid Bedouin Sign Language, a sign language used over the past 75 years by both hearing and non-hearing people in an isolated Bedouin village in Israel. Because it was developed among a small group of people with little to no outside influence and no direct linguistic input, ABSL offers researchers the opportunity to document a new language as it develops and evolves.

Walker, Lou Ann. *A Loss for Words: the Story of Deafness in a Family*. New York, NY: Harper Perennials, 1987.

[www.start-american-sign-language.com/who-invented-sign-language.html](http://www.start-american-sign-language.com/who-invented-sign-language.html)

<http://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/hearing/pages/asl.aspx>

## TIMELINE—A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE DEAF

**360 B.C.:** Socrates is quoted by Plato in “Cratylus”. He mentions the Deaf who express themselves in gestures and movements, depicting that which is light or a higher sphere by raising the hands or describing a galloping horse by imitating its motion.

**44 B.C.:** Quintus Pedius is the earliest Deaf person in recorded history known by name.

**131 A. D.:** Galen, a Greek physician from Pergamum wrote, “Speech and hearing share the same source in the brain.”

**700:** St. John of Beverley in England is

purported to have restored speech in a Deaf boy by making signs of the cross across the tongue and taught him how to speak the alphabet.

**Dark and Middle Ages:** Deaf adults are objects of ridicule and are committed to asylums because their speech and behaviors were viewed as being possessed by demons.

**1400:** Teresa de Cartagena, 15<sup>th</sup> century Spanish nun who became Deaf, confronted her disability and gained fame as a religious writer (one of the earliest feminist writers.)

**1500s:** Geronimo Cardano was the first physician to recognize the ability of the Deaf to reason and tries to teach his son using a set of symbols.

**1550:** Pedro Ponce de Leon is credited as the first teacher of the Deaf as he developed a form of sign language and successfully taught speech to Deaf people from birth. He taught Deaf pupils in Spain to speak, read and write.

**1640:** George Dalgano proposed a totally new linguistic system for use by Deaf mutes, which is still used today in the United States.

**1640 to 1653:** John Bulwer proposed educating the Deaf using “Chirologia; or the natural language of the hand.”

**1664:** Thomas Willis discovered the role of the cochlea in relation to hearing.

**1690-1880:** 200 immigrants from Kent County that carried either dominant or recessive genes of Deafness settled at Martha’s Vineyard. All the inhabitants established the American School for the Deaf.

**1760:** Abbe Charles-Michel de L’epée founded the first free school for the Deaf with sign language as a method of communication. This model of school spread across Europe for the next 100 years.

**1760:** French Sign Language established.

**1778:** Samuel Heinicke of Leipzig, Germany promoted Oralism, a method of teaching Deaf children spoken and written language through speech and lip-reading exclusively.

**1817:** The American School for the Deaf was founded in Hartford, Connecticut. This was the first school for children with disabilities anywhere in the western hemisphere.

**1857:** The Columbia Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf, Dumb and Blind (known today as Gallaudet University) opened.

**1864:** The U.S. Congress authorized the Columbia Institution to confer college degrees and President Abraham Lincoln

signed the bill into law. Edward Miner Gallaudet was made president of the entire corporation.

**1872:** Alexander Graham Bell promotes Deaf education and opens a school for Deaf people.

**1880:** The World Congress of the Educators of the Deaf met in Milan, Italy and passed a resolution to promote Oralism in Deaf education all over the world.

**1880:** National Association of the Deaf (United States) established.

**1892:** Electrical hearing aid invented.

**1960:** William Stokoe wrote the first linguistic book and defense of American Sign Language as a language.

**1964:** Telephone for Deaf invented by Robert Weitbrecht, who was also Deaf.

**1972:** Program captioning introduced by the Caption Center at WGBH in Boston; the first captioned program was *The French Chef*. By 1980 closed captioning is developed and by 1993 the U.S. Federal Communications Commission requires all newly manufactured televisions to have a decoding chip.

**1973:** The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 includes a section requiring that the disabled be given access and equal opportunity to use the resources of organizations that receive federal funds or that are under federal contracts.

**1975:** Education of All Handicapped Children Act passed including public school education for the Deaf.

**1990:** Americans with Disabilities Act passed.

**2011:** All online programs must be closed captioned.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deaf\\_history](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deaf_history).

Marschark, Marc; Lang, Henry G., and Albertine, John A. *Educating Deaf Students: from Research to Practice*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2002.

# EDUCATING THE DEAF

“The Deaf believe there is nothing wrong. The hearing believe that something needs to be fixed.”

Reverend Jesse Jackson

It is very important that a Deaf child have early access to language, spoken or sign, social interactions, diversity and flexibility in all experiences and strong parent advocacy that is the best predictor of a child's success.

The parents of a Deaf child will have to choose the kind of school they want their child to attend. Residential schools provide interaction with Deaf children and adults who act as role models. Special programs are provided outside the school. There is an active use of ASL and interaction with the Deaf culture. In 1975, the Education of All Handicapped Children is mandated in public schools

for all children with disabilities. The law specifies that the disabled children should be educated with able children to the maximum extent possible. Consequently, the Deaf child spends some time in a regular classroom, referred to as mainstreaming. The best situation for mainstreaming is when a Teacher of the Deaf is present to help the regular classroom teacher understand the needs of the Deaf; so all the students have equal access to the information.

1. Marschark, Lang, Albertini, pp.67-70.

Marschark, Marc; Lang, Henry G., and Albertini, John A. *Educating Deaf Students: from Research to Practice*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002

Mathur, Gaurow and Napoli, Donna Jo. *Deaf Around the World: the Impact of Language*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

# AMERICAN DEAF CULTURE

“The Deaf Community comprises those Deaf and hard of hearing individuals who share a common language, common experiences and values and a common way of interacting with each other and with hearing people.”<sup>1</sup>

American Deaf culture centers on the use of American Sign Language and identification and unity with other people who are Deaf. The Deaf community has specific values, behaviors and traditions which include:

- Promoting an environment that supports vision as the primary sense used for communication at school, in the home and in the community.
- Valuing Deaf children as the future of Deaf people and Deaf culture. Deaf Culture therefore encourages the use of ASL, in addition to any other communication modalities.

- Support for bilingual ASL-English education of Deaf children so that they are competent in both languages.
- Perpetuation of Deaf culture through a variety of traditions, including films, folklore, literature, athletics, poetry.
- Inclusion of unique strategies for gaining a person's attention such as touch, waving, or flicking a light switch. “<sup>2</sup>

Deaf individuals can be found at every level of state, public and private enterprise within our communities.

1. Ladd, p.41.

2. www. Gallaudet.edu.

Ladd, Paddy. *Understanding Deaf Culture: In Search of Deafhood*. Toronto: Multilingual Matters Ltd., 2003.

<http://www.galludet.edu/clerc-center/information-and-resources/info/including-Deaf-culture/about-american-Deaf-culture.htm>.

# ORAL EDUCATION VERSUS SIGNING IN THE CLASSROOM

“Only dumb hearing people think that Deaf people are dumb.”

*Children of a Lesser God*  
by Hesper Anderson and Mark Medoff

Following the Civil War educational reformers waged a campaign to eliminate manualism (use of sign language) in the classroom and replace it with oralism, the exclusive use of lipreading and speech. This movement began with the conference of the National Educators of the Deaf in Milan, Italy in 1885. Most residential schools had used the signing method from the beginning; teachers conducted their classes in sign language, fingerspelling and written English. Schools began to offer lessons in speech and lipreading in the 1860s and 1870s, moving toward what they considered a combined method. This did not satisfy the proponents of oralism, however, who opposed the use of signing for any purpose.

Oralists charged that the use of sign language encouraged Deaf people to socialize only with Deaf people and avoid the hard work of learning to communicate in spoken English. They thought that sign language marked Deaf people as different from the hearing population. “It set them apart, discouraged assimilation and invited discrimination.”<sup>1</sup> They worried also that it encouraged Deaf individuals to marry one another causing a significant increase in the prevalence of Deafness.

A fierce debate flared between supporters of the combined method and advocates of pure oralism. In the end, the oralists largely succeeded in their campaign to eliminate sign language. By 1920, 80% of Deaf students were taught without sign language; the teaching staff at residential schools went from being 40% Deaf to less than 15%. In most schools, however, Deaf students continued to use sign language outside of the classroom in spite of efforts to forbid or discourage its use. Outside of schools, sign language remained the dominant means of communication for the majority of Deaf individuals.

At the same time, the desire of parents for children to communicate in English conflicted with their children’s wishes (like Billy’s parents). In an attempt to solve this problem, many institutions have chosen to incorporate signing as a tool for communication; indeed, some schools have found that signing may actually contribute to the success of students’ English skills. More research must be done to prove whether the oralist method does benefit children’s achievement or whether it stymies their education.

1. [www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org).

[www.csusy.edu/wat/journal/2010/Hood-Research-Paper.pdf](http://www.csusy.edu/wat/journal/2010/Hood-Research-Paper.pdf)

<http://www.pbs.org/weta/throughDeafeyes/Deaflife/women.html>

## HEARING AIDS

A hearing aid is a small electronic device that one wears in or behind the ear. It makes some sounds louder so that a person with hearing loss can listen, communicate and participate more fully in daily activities. A hearing aid can help individuals hear more in both quiet and noisy situations. However, only about one out of five people who would benefit from a hearing aid actually uses one.

A hearing aid has three basic parts: a microphone, amplifier and speaker. It receives sound through the microphone, which converts the sound waves to electrical signals and sends them to an

amplifier. The amplifier increases the power of the signals and then sends them to the ear through a speaker.

Hearing aids are primarily useful in improving the hearing and speech comprehension of people who have hearing loss that results from damage to the small sensory cells in the inner ear, called hair cells. This type of hearing loss is called sensorineural hearing loss. The damage can occur as a result of disease, aging or injury.

A hearing aid magnifies sound vibrations entering the ear. Surviving hair cells detect the larger vibrations

and convert them into neural signals that are passed along to the brain. The greater the damage to a person's hair cells, the more severe the hearing loss, and the greater hearing aid amplification needed to make up the difference. However, there are practical limits to the amount of amplification a hearing aid can provide. In addition, if the inner ear is too damaged, even large vibrations will not be converted into neural signals. In this situation, a hearing aid would be ineffective.

There are many types of hearing aids. The behind-the-ear style consists of a hard plastic case worn behind the ear (BTE) and connected to a plastic earmold that fits inside the outer ear. The electronic parts are held in the plastic case behind the ear. Sound travels from the hearing aid through the mold and into the ear. BTE aids are used by people of all ages for mild to profound hearing loss.

In-the-ear (ITE) hearing aids fit completely inside the outer ear and are used from mild to severe hearing loss. The case holding the electronic components is made of hard plastic and may have certain added features such as a telecoil. A telecoil is a small magnetic coil that

allows users to receive sound through the circuitry of the hearing aid, rather than through the microphone. This makes it easier to hear conversations over the telephone. It also helps people hear in public facilities that have special sound systems.

Canal aids fit into the ear canal and are available in two styles. The in-the-ear canal (ITC) hearing aid is made to fit the size and shape of a person's ear canal. A completely-in-canal (CIC) hearing aid is nearly hidden in the ear canal. Both types are used for mild to moderate hearing loss. These aids are not recommended for severe hearing loss because their reduced size limits their power and volume.

Analog aids convert sound waves into electrical signals that are amplified. They are custom made to fit the needs of the user and can be programmed to amplify some sounds more than others from a small quiet room to a crowded restaurant. Digital aids convert sound waves into numerical codes, similar to the binary code of a computer before amplifying them. The aid can be specially programmed to amplify some frequencies more than others.

## HOW THE EAR WORKS

The ear has three main parts: the outer ear (including the external auditory canal), the middle ear and the inner ear. The outer ear (the part you can see) opens into the ear canal. The eardrum (tympanic membrane) separates the ear canal from the middle ear. The middle ear contains three small bones which help amplify and transfer sound to the inner ear. These three bones, or ossicles, are called the malleus, the incus and the stapes (also referred to as the hammer, the anvil and the stirrup respectively). The inner ear contains the cochlea which changes sound into neurological signals and the auditory (hearing) nerve which takes sound to the brain.

Any source of sound sends vibrations or sound waves into the air. These funnel through the ear opening, down the external ear canal, strike the eardrum, causing it to vibrate. The vibrations are passed to the three small bones of the middle ear, which transmit them to the cochlea. The cochlea contains tubes filled with fluid. Inside one of the tubes tiny hair cells pick up the vibrations and convert them into nerve impulses. These impulses are delivered to the brain via the hearing nerve. The brain then interprets these impulses as sounds (music, voice, a car horn, etc.)

<http://www.entnet.org./content/how-ear-works>

# COCHLEAR IMPLANTS

A cochlear implant is a small complex electronic device that can help to provide a sense of sound to a person who is profoundly Deaf or severely hard-of-hearing. The implant consists of an external portion that sits behind the ear and a second portion that is surgically placed under the skin. An implant has a microphone, to pick up the sound from the environment; a speech processor which selects and arranges the sounds; a transmitter and receiver which processes and converts the signals into electric impulses, and an electrode array, which collects the impulses from the receiver and sends them to different regions of the

auditory nerve. It does not restore normal hearing, but can give a Deaf person the ability to understand speech.

A cochlear implant is very different from a hearing aid. Hearing aids amplify sounds so they may be detected by damaged ears. Implants bypass damaged portions of the ear and directly stimulate the auditory nerve. Signals generated by the implant are sent by way of the auditory nerve to the brain, which recognizes the signals as sound. A cochlear implant takes time to learn. However, it allows many people to recognize warning signals, understand other sounds and enjoy a conversation by telephone.

# STUDY QUESTIONS

## Pre-Performance Questions

- 1) What are the different ways people communicate with one another? How do we switch the way we communicate with different people? What obstacles do we face when communicating with another person and how do we overcome these obstacles?
- 2) Why do humans have the need to be a part of a group? What is your definition of the word “tribe?” How does the word tribe differentiate from “family,” “group,” or “clique?”
- 3) If you are a member of the hearing community, what do you think it would be like to lose your sense of hearing? Is it better to know what the sense was like or to never have had the sense? If you are a member of the deaf community, what do you think it would be like to gain your sense of hearing? Is it better to know what the sense was like or to never have had the sense?

## Post-Performance Questions

- 1) How does the technical design help the telling of this story?
- 2) How would you define the way the family communicates with one another? What happens when an outsider tries to join in their community? their family?
- 3) How would you define the relationship between Sylvia and Billy? How does the family react to her?
- 4) Why does Daniel believe “language is dead?”
- 5) What are the limitations of spoken language? What are the limitations of sign language?
- 6) What is the significance of Ruth and her career choice?
- 7) How does Beth’s detective novel fit into the story? What does it reveal about the family?
- 8) Why does Sylvia believe that people eventually turn into their parents? What example does she give?
- 9) What role does music serve in the play? How do the characters comment on music?
- 10) How is the Deaf Community described in the play? What similarities and differences are there between the hearing and Deaf Communities?
- 11) What decision does Billy make and how does it affect the family?
- 12) How would you describe Christopher and Beth as parents? What do you think about their choices in raising Billy? In what ways did the play support, challenge, or inform this opinion?

# UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCES

Make your experience unforgettable when you join us for one of these insightful, educational events:

## Insider Perspectives

Get an exclusive insider's perspective of each play when you join us for a professionally-moderated discussion with our creative team. Held at The Conservatory Theatre in the Newman Center for Theatre Education. Free.  
Oct 9 | 6pm

## Talkbacks with the Cast

Join a fun and engaging discussion with the actors directly after select performances. Free.  
Oct 18 | Post-Show

## Talkback with the Higher Education Advisory Council

Participate in a topical discussion led by members of our academic community held directly after select performances. Free.  
Nov 8 | Post-Show

## Theatre & Theology Talkbacks

Join Pastor Dan Bollman of the Rocky Mountain Evangelical Lutheran Synod to examine each show through a theological lens directly after select performances. Free.  
Nov 10 | Post-Show

# WANT TO KNOW MORE?

## The Denver Public Library recommends:

### Read!

*Seeing Voices: A Journey into the World of the Deaf* by Oliver Sacks

Journey further into the complex and fascinating world of the deaf with Oliver Sacks in this enlightening and provocative title. As Sacks writes, “We are remarkably ignorant about deafness...ignorant and indifferent.” Through his writing we are brought closer to a unique, rich and often overlooked culture full of many different modes of communication.

### Watch!

*Beyond Silence* (Miramax 1999)

Nina Raine explained in 2010 that the idea for *Tribes* came to her after watching a documentary about a deaf couple having a child and hoping that the child would also be deaf. In this film, both of Lara’s parents are deaf-mute, and she has had to serve as translator to them from an early age. As her musical career takes off, will her parents also be able to share in her joy and success?

### Listen!

*One Hundred Names for Love* by Diane Ackerman

Communication is a very present theme in *Tribes*, and this book explores in depth when that ability is seemingly lost. After Ackerman’s husband, Paul West suffers a stroke, his former eloquence is replaced by the ability to utter only a single syllable: “mem.” Even various therapies do not seem to be effective for his aphasia; however, using both her knowledge of language and their deep understanding of each other, Diane believes she has found a way to bring Paul back to the world of spoken language and communication.

### Download!

*El Deafo* by Cece Bell

This graphic memoir from author & illustrator Cece Bell chronicles her hearing loss at an early age, and the bulky hearing aid that accompanied it, the Phonic Ear. This device allows her to hear everything, including some things she would rather not. Eventually she learns to harness the power of the Phonic Ear and becomes “El Deafo, Listener for All!,” finding her place in the world along with the friends she has been waiting for. Available for download from [downloadmedia.denverlibrary.org](http://downloadmedia.denverlibrary.org).



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