

PIPPIN

Book by Roger O. Hirson
Music and Lyrics by Stephen Schwartz
Music Direction and Arrangements by Steven Landau
Directed and Choreographed by Jeff Calhoun
Co-produced with Deaf West Theatre
January 15 - March 15, 2009
Mark Taper Forum

Teaching Instructions



A WILDLY THEATRICAL MUSICAL PERFORMED IN
SPOKEN ENGLISH AND AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE.



How to Use the Discovery Guide

TO THE TEACHER

The Discovery Guide for *Pippin* has been developed as a prompt-book for a standards-based unit of study appropriate for grades six through eight. The specific learning activities in Theatre Arts can be readily integrated with other content areas, particularly Language Arts and History-Social Sciences, to accelerate teaching and learning.

THE DISCOVERY GUIDE IS A STARTING POINT

Please adapt the material and extend the learning activities to meet the needs of your particular community of learners. Our hope is that the structure and content of this guide will not be merely functional, but also inspiring — and that teachers and students will share the thrill of learning through theatre arts.

HOW TO USE THE DISCOVERY GUIDE

The Discovery Guide is not designed as an independent workbook. It is a resource for learners to develop skills in storytelling, literary analysis and collaboration that are essential in Theatre Arts, Language Arts, History-Social Sciences and other content areas. Oral discussion and writing prompts are designed so that students may relate key ideas to their personal experiences and the world around them. Teachers are encouraged to adapt or extend the prompts. Teachers may choose some prompts for small group discussion and others for the whole group.

WRITING APPLICATIONS

Many of the prompts in the guide are easily adaptable to match writing objectives your class might already be studying. Written responses to the prompts may range from short expository answers in complete sentences to formal, five-paragraph persuasive essays.

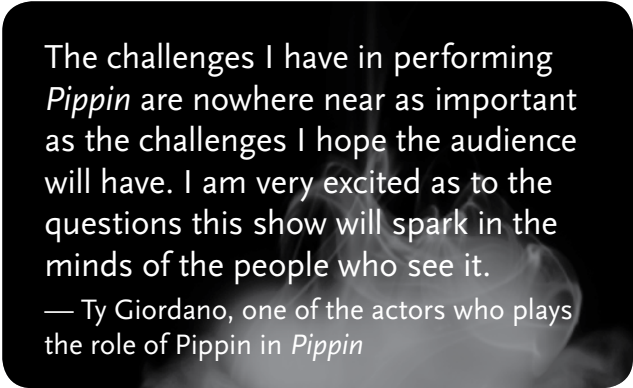
ORAL APPLICATIONS

Pippin, with music and lyrics by Stephen Schwartz and book by Roger O. Hirson, follows a young medieval prince on his quest to do something extraordinary with his life. The story is framed as an “Everyman” play of sorts, performed by a traveling troupe of players. In this production, *Pippin* is performed in spoken English and American Sign Language by a company of hearing, hard of hearing and deaf actors. The notion of medieval miracle plays being staged in the town square creates

opportunities for oral exercises with your students, whether they’re writing their own plays or sketches or trying their hand at existing scripts. The layer of deaf communication that informs this particular production provides a different opportunity altogether. When exposed to the challenges of the deaf world, students may cultivate an appreciation for the relative advantages of oral communication. At the same time, students will witness and experience an exciting and distinct approach to essential communication through sign language. Exercises in the Discovery Guide are designed to give your students an opportunity to learn elements of American Sign Language, as well as to recognize the presence of sign language in everyday life and to create their own sign language expressions.

In addition, the Discovery Guide examines the nature of “coming of age” stories such as *Pippin* and encourages students to put their own “coming of age” story into words.

The activities are designed to be completed in sequence, but feel free to adapt the guide to best suit the needs of your class. The activities on pages four through 13 are designed to be completed before the students see the production of *Pippin*. The discussion and writing prompts on pages 14 and 15 and the Resources on page 16 are intended to stimulate reflection, analysis and further inquiry after students attend the play.



The challenges I have in performing *Pippin* are nowhere near as important as the challenges I hope the audience will have. I am very excited as to the questions this show will spark in the minds of the people who see it.
— Ty Giordano, one of the actors who plays the role of Pippin in *Pippin*

How to Use the Discovery Guide

THE GOALS

Pippin considers the process of “coming of age” from the perspective of a young prince as he samples all the options that life might provide: war, adventure, romance, indulgence, espionage, family and simplicity. What does one learn when one “comes of age”? At what age does someone “come of age”? Does the “coming of age” experience happen repeatedly during a lifetime? By considering these questions, students will be actively engaged in a process of self-reflection and self-assessment, even as they learn about the structures of stories and myths. In this particular production of *Pippin*, students will be challenged to respond to American Sign Language, a different form of communication. The students’ experience as audience members will raise the opportunity to consider the essential nature of communication. Do we glean information from spoken words alone? Or are we responding to the context of the statement, the tone of voice, the facial attitude? Are we still able to appreciate emotions, attitudes and context when spoken words are removed from communication? Charted below are some big ideas and big questions that can be raised before, during and after students’ experience at the performance.

Big Ideas	Deaf culture comprises a large and exceedingly diverse community of people whose limited hearing is no obstacle to their ability to communicate, to forge relationships, to sing, to dance, to perform, to create art and to interact with the world.	“Coming of age” stories are those in which a hero or heroine encounters a new task or responsibility that awakens a degree of maturity and forges a lesson in life and a new perspective on the world.
Big Questions	<p>How is the world in which deaf people live similar to or different from the hearing world?</p> <p>How might one include a deaf person in a social situation?</p> <p>In what everyday ways do we communicate silently?</p> <p>What does American Sign Language add to one’s experience of a musical?</p>	<p>What is a “coming of age” story and how is it different from other forms of stories?</p> <p>What are the important moments in a story without which there would be no story?</p> <p>What events in your life have shaped who you are today?</p>

How to Use the Discovery Guide

THE STANDARDS

Teachers should “bundle” one of the recommended theatre focus standards with a focus standard from another content area to help design their classes’ integrated units of study.

For instance, you might be able to “bundle” one of the recommended History-Social Sciences focus standards with a focus standard from Theatre Arts and another content area such as Language Arts to help design the classes’ integrated units of study.

THEATRE

Artistic Perception:

Development of the Vocabulary of Theatre

1.1 Use the vocabulary of theatre, such as ensemble, proscenium, thrust, and arena staging (such as action/ reaction, vocal projection, subtext, theme, mood, design, production values, and stage crew) to describe theatrical experiences. (Gr. 6, 8)

Comprehension and Analysis of the Elements of Theatre

1.2 Identify dramatic elements within a script, such as foreshadowing, crisis, rising action, catharsis, and denouement, using the vocabulary of theatre. (Gr. 7)

Creative Expression: Creation/Invention in Theatre

2.2 Use effective vocal expression, gesture, facial expression, and timing to create character. (Gr. 6)

2.3 Create characters, environments, and actions that exhibit tension and suspense. (Gr. 7)

Aesthetic Valuing: Critical Assessment of Theatre

4.1 Develop criteria and write a formal review of a theatrical production. (Gr. 8)

ENGLISH-LANGUAGE ARTS

Literary Response and Analysis: Narrative Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Text

3.2 Analyze the effect of the qualities of the character (e.g., courage or cowardice, ambition or laziness) on the plot and the resolution of the conflict. (Gr. 6)

3.2 Identify events that advance the plot and determine how each event explains past or present action(s) or foreshadows future action(s). (Gr. 7)

3.3 Analyze characterization as delineated through a character’s thoughts, words, speech patterns, and actions; the narrator’s description; and the thoughts, words, and actions of other characters. (Gr. 7)

3.2 Evaluate the structural elements of the plot (e.g., subplots, parallel episodes, climax), the plot’s development and the way in which conflicts are (or are not) addressed and resolved. (Gr. 8)

Writing Applications:

2.1 Write fictional or autobiographical narratives: a. Develop a standard plot line (having a beginning, conflict, rising action, climax and denouement) and point of view. (Gr. 7)

2.1 Write biographies, autobiographies, short stories, or narratives: a. Relate a clear, coherent incident, event, or situation by using well-chosen details. (Gr. 8)

HISTORY-SOCIAL SCIENCE

Ethical Literacy: Recognize the sanctity of life and the dignity of the individual.

Cultural Literacy: Understand the rich, complex nature of a given culture.

Participation Skills: Develop group interaction skills.

How to Use the **Discovery Guide**

VOCABULARY

Familiarity with the following words will enhance students' appreciation of the play and these supporting materials. Review the vocabulary with the students. Discuss the meaning of each word by asking for examples to gauge students' comprehension of the concept.

Extraordinary	<i>adj.</i> Highly exceptional; remarkable
Antiwar	<i>adj.</i> Opposed to war or to a particular war
“Coming of age”	Reaching adulthood, maturity, respectability or recognition
Translate	<i>v.</i> To restate in one language something written or spoken in a different language
Interpret	<i>v.</i> To provide meaning in one language for what is said in another Note: Translation and interpretation are often used interchangeably, but the meanings are subtly different. Interpreting involves the communication of meaning or a particular understanding. Translating tends to be more literal or straightforward.
Protagonist	<i>n.</i> The main character in a novel, play, story, movie or other literary work, sometimes known as the hero or heroine
Antagonist	<i>n.</i> A major character in a novel, play, story, movie or other literary work whose values or behavior are opposed to or in conflict with those of the protagonist

“The sheer beauty and sense of dance in [American Sign Language] add a fluidity and lyricism that heightens both the acting and the musical numbers. The effect is more profound than words can describe. Perhaps, like most special moments in life, this is one of those things that need to be experienced rather than discussed.”

— Jeff Calhoun, director of *Pippin*

Before the Play

Welcome to Pippin

“I have to start doing something meaningful — but I don’t know what it is.” —Pippin in Pippin

DiscoveryGuide

OBJECTIVES OF THIS DISCOVERY GUIDE

- Explore the world of Deaf culture and American Sign Language
- Reflect on the function of self-discovery
- Appreciate the function of “coming of age” in storytelling
- Examine the ways in which American Sign Language adds meaning to a theatrical performance
- Experiment with the process of translation and interpreting a story in another language

WELCOME TO PIPPIN: Page 2

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“Gotta find my corner of the sky.” —Pippin in Pippin

PIPPIN

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Page 2: Welcome to Pippin

Rationale: Students will be better able to enjoy the performance and to appreciate the particular context of this production of *Pippin* if they have a clear understanding of the way in which American Sign Language and spoken English have been combined to allow a deaf theatre company to perform a musical. They will also benefit by an awareness of the objectives of the Discovery Guide and the exercises contained in each unit.

Exercise: Read and discuss the objectives of the Discovery Guide with the class.

Exercise: Read and discuss the quotation on page 2 by Tyrone Giordano, one of two actors portraying Pippin in this production. Ask the students if they understand the statement. Are they familiar with anyone who is deaf or the larger disabled community? Are they aware that hearing people and people without disabilities sometimes have a complicated response to deaf people? What questions do they anticipate that such people might have about watching a musical performed by deaf people? Students should be encouraged to recognize and retain the specific questions that arise while watching *Pippin* as audience members and while reflecting on the show after the performance.

Exercise: Read and discuss the quotation on page 3 by Pippin, the main character in *Pippin*. Ask the students if they understand each statement. What does it mean to find a “corner of the sky”? If the students were to occupy their “corner of the sky,” what might that be?

Exercise: Have the students identify the name of the Discovery Guide writer and graphic designer.

Before the Play



INTRIGUE, PLOTS TO BRING DISASTER:
Page 4

Pages 4–6: Intrigue, Plots to Bring Disaster

Rationale: Students will be better positioned to appreciate *Pippin* if they are equipped with a basic understanding of the story and cast of characters. *Pippin* tells a relatively simple story but the deaf theatre approach to storytelling, combining American Sign Language and spoken English, will be a new experience for many students. Some characters are double-cast with hearing actors and deaf actors both playing the same role. Other characters are portrayed by deaf actors speaking in sign language, shadowed by hearing actors who simply “voice” the role. At other moments, the performance is presented solely in sign language

with no spoken words whatsoever. Students who are firmly grounded in the essential narrative will be more readily able to access the interpretive expression that deaf theatre brings to this work. In addition, students who are familiar with the story and its characters will be better prepared to appreciate the particular literary devices employed in *Pippin*. The work applies the framework of a “play-within-a-play.” It is important that the students be familiar with the theatrical device of a performance in which a troupe of players portrays many other characters. Students should also be aware that plays can sometimes be situated in a historical context without attempting to be historically accurate. *Pippin* is loosely based on the true story of King Charlemagne and his sons, Pippin and Louis. Students may be surprised to learn that the real Pippin was actually of illegitimate birth, a hunchback who was banished to a monastery after leading a rebellion against his father.

Exercise: Pop Quiz: The Deaf World
Review the exercise titled “Pop Quiz: The Deaf World.” Read the statements and instruct students to respond “true” or “false.”

Exercise: Meet Pippin
Read and discuss “Meet Pippin,” the introduction to Tyrone Giordano, the deaf actor cast as Pippin. Review the answers to the true/false quiz and Ty’s substantive comments following each answer. Ask students to consider the source

of misconceptions about the deaf community. Engage the students in a discussion about deaf people. Do they know anyone who is deaf among their families and friends? Have they ever encountered a deaf person in a public place — or noticed someone who is deaf? Have they ever spoken to someone who is deaf? Do they have any experience with American Sign Language?


Exercise: Intrigue, Plots to Bring Disaster

Read the synopsis “Intrigue, Plots to Bring Disaster.” Discuss the concept of the “play within a play.” Students should be able to name examples of other plays or movies that employ a similar device (examples: *Princess Bride*, *The Wizard of Oz*). Discuss the concept of historical settings used to tell a timeless or contemporary tale rather than to depict historical events. Again, students should be able to name plays and movies that employ a similar device (examples: *Shrek*, *A Knight’s Tale*, *Mulan*). Ask students to draw a chart of Pippin’s family tree, including his grandmother, his father, his stepmother, and his stepbrother — down to his relationship with Catherine. Students can also construct a chart of the major chapters or events in Pippin’s “life and times”: politics, ambition, war, women, farming, etc. Teachers may want to revisit the synopsis during later sections of the Discovery Guide concerning “coming of age” stories and dramatic narrative.

Before the Play

Exercise Pop Quiz: The Deaf World

- The deaf world is full of sound. T F
- All deaf people use sign language. T F
- Sign language is the same all over the world. T F
- It must be sad to be a deaf child. T F
- All deaf people would rather be able to hear. T F



Meet Pippin

Tyrese Cordano plays Pippin. He also played Much Face in *Deaf West*. Theater's Broadway production of *Big Fish*, based on Steve Bauer's *The Adventures of Handicapped Fish*. "I was born into a Deaf family," says Tyrese. "As a Deaf kid, I don't hear really well and at that time, my deaf dad with some hearing was encouraged to always let me speak. Unfortunately, I learned to both speak and sign fluently, which often doesn't happen in cases like mine."

Need help on that pop quiz?
Tyrese has all the answers.

- The deaf world is full of sound.
TRUE. "You can measure distance like sight. Sometimes things in the distance are blurry, otherwise you can't see in front of your nose. Hearing is the same way. Deaf people don't see 'no silence' even though it sounds crazy to say so. Still, there is a world full of visual noise, and plenty of deaf people hear to some extent, sometimes enough to enjoy music!"
- All deaf people use sign language.
FALSE. "It depends. Some deaf people grow up learning how to speak only, some grow up only signing. I grew up with both speech and sign."
- Sign language is the same all over the world.
FALSE. "Many countries have their own national sign language. For example, French Sign Language and Japanese Sign Language. Interestingly, American and British Sign Languages are different, even though English is spoken in both countries. Why are all sign languages different? Because they all developed separately from one another."
- It must be sad to be a deaf child.
FALSE. "It might be sad for someone who could hear and then suddenly finds himself completely deaf and unable to cope. But even then, you have a choice to make the best of your life. Many deaf people have never heard sound, so it's difficult to feel sad for or miss something you've never experienced."
- All deaf people would rather be able to hear.
FALSE. "Many people are proud to be Deaf. You may notice the capital 'D' in that word. This is very similar to spelling people with a capital 'I.' It has to do with cultural pride, and many people center that pride not just on the fact that they are deaf, but because they use ASL."

CENTER THEATRE GROUP (Discovery Guide)

MEET PIPPIN: Page 5

The New Me

Stories that concern a person's transition from adolescence toward adulthood are commonly referred to as "coming of age" stories. The age doesn't really matter. The main character could be eight turning nine, 15 headed for 16 or 19 going on 20. It's all about growing up. Typically, the young hero or heroine tackles a new task or responsibility, is forced to see the world differently as a result and learns a lesson about life. The switch might be from a simple guppy chaperones to world-wise — or from a child's innocence to a more sophisticated appreciation of "the way things work." Along the way, of course, the hero or heroine is likely to suffer disappointment in the new discovery or shattered ideal. This disillusionment is often called a "loss of innocence," referring to childhood, rather than just "a loss of coming of age stories, the young person leaves childhood behind as he advances through the trials and tribulations of growing up. Pippin is one of these stories.

Exercise Step It Up

Everyone faces challenges. Think of an event that happened in kindergarten, third grade or fifth grade — or maybe this year — in which you had to tackle something you'd never done before. It might have been in the classroom, on the playground or at a sporting event. Make it didn't happen at school at all. Maybe you were at home or at the beach or at an amusement park. Describe a "coming of age" moment that happened to you.

- Where were you? What was going on?
- What was the challenge? What were you expected to do?
- What were the stakes? What were the consequences if you had failed?
- And then what happened? What went according to plan? What happened that you didn't expect to happen?
- How did you "step up"? What obstacles did you overcome? Who helped you? If you managed on your own, how did you prepare? How much did luck factor into your success? How does one succeed when "flying by the seat of your pants"?
- What did you discover about yourself that you didn't know before? How do you know when you feel "more grown up" at the end of the experience than at the beginning? Why was it important to tackle the challenge? Do you wish to be let you were better, or are you glad to be older and wiser?

Pippin

THE NEW ME: Page 6

Exercise: The New Me

Read and discuss the article on page 6 entitled "The New Me." Ask students if they are familiar with the concept of "coming of age" stories. Students should be well acquainted with a number of "coming of age" stories. Almost every Disney animated feature serves as an example of the form. Ask students to identify the trials and tribulations that Simba encounters on his journey in *The Lion King*. Students should be able to identify the moment when Simba suffers a "loss of innocence" and later sets his childhood aside in order to become king.

Exercise: Step It Up

Read the exercise entitled "Step It Up." Ask students if they are familiar with episodes that constituted a "coming of age" experience in their own childhoods. Students should be able to identify tests or challenges that function as a "rite of passage" in transitioning from elementary school to middle school — from a "tween" to a teen. Allow time for students to sort through their memories. Teachers might encourage students to revisit thoughts of fifth, fourth, third grade — even kindergarten years — by drafting a short list of memorable events, favorite songs, movies or television programs, or the names of particular teachers or "best friends." (You might ask: Where did you live? What was the name of your school?) Teachers can guide students through questions about any challenges that arose during those years that might serve as a "coming of age" tale for these purposes.

The "Step It Up" exercise serves as the foundation for subsequent exercises in the Discovery Guide: "Silent Storytelling" (page 13) and "Interpreting an Interpretation" (page 15).

Before the Play

An Exchange of Words

Exercise Director Jeff Calhoun claims that words cannot describe the beauty, the humor and the visual poetry that happens when sign language meets with the spoken word. Prove him wrong! As you watch the performance of *Pippin*, try to think of words that describe your experience of watching the spoken word and American Sign Language blend together. Write those words in the space provided below. How would you describe that moment to your parents? Your friends? Your siblings?

As often as somebody writes the first book, somebody else started interpreting it. In a sense, all reading is a form of interpretation, re-writing for meaning in someone's words and adjusting them to your own understanding. As soon as somebody shared that first book with someone from another culture, it had to be translated.

Interpretation and translation often go hand in hand. Literary translation is an art form unto itself—mixing the meaning and dynamics of the original author and attempting to convey that same experience using the vocabulary, grammar, syntax and idiom of another language. Students whose parents or family members don't speak English are already well acquainted with the juggling act that happens in converting the meaning and context of spoken English into Spanish, Chinese, Japanese or Korean—or vice versa.

The task gets a little more complicated when spoken English is converted into American Sign Language. On top of the vocabulary, sign interpreters must add in all the attitude and intention that tone of voice conveys—like happiness, humor, sarcasm, desperation, compassion or sadness. Much of this is achieved with facial expression and posture. The matter gets even trickier with song lyrics because translators not only have to master the rhythm but also the heightened emotions that are conveyed when people burst into song.

The exciting aspect of sign translation is that two languages can be spoken at the same time. Director Jeff Calhoun says sign language "generates" the performance in profound ways. Sign language, he asserts, impacts an audience whether they technically understand the language or not. "The great beauty and sense of awe in it," observes Calhoun, "is a fluidity and lyricism that brings us both the acting and the musical numbers." For audiences, the experience can be deeply moving. In his book, *Seeing Voices*, noted playwright Glenn Feldman asserts that sign language is a superior form of communication, full of intricacies and wonder. "Those of us who can hear and speak, he suggests, take language for granted. The sophistication of ASL packs layers of information, insight and emotion into a wordless, physical exchange. "The effect," says Calhoun, "is more profound than words can describe. Perhaps the most special moments in life, this is one of those things that need to be experienced rather than discussed."

"Finally, a chance to be part of something important."
—Pippin in Pippin

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CENTER THEATRE GROUP (TheatreWorks)

AN EXCHANGE OF WORDS: Page 7

Me: My Life and Times

Exercise Refer to the exercise "Step It Up" on page 6 to create a simple story of self-discovery loosely based on you. Just as Pippin is loosely based on history, feel free to assign a mythical or madcap name to your main character and to introduce fantastical and creative elements.

The Fingerspelling Alphabet

Deaf people also use fingerspelling, a method of indicating letters of the alphabet by the position of the fingers on one hand. Fingerspelling is often used to communicate proper names or to create a short hand for slang.

© Pippin

ME: MY LIFE AND TIMES: Page 8

Pages 7–8: An Exchange of Words

Rationale: Deaf theatre is distinguished from other forms of plays-performed because the act of translation is literally incorporated into the audience's experience of the work. The script-in-translation is not handled separately by some unseen adaptor of the words. Given the performative aspects of sign language, the translation occurs actively and energetically onstage. Because the act of translation is "front and center" in this production, students should appreciate the interpretive aspects of any translation of text from one language into another. Students should appreciate that translation requires an interpretive task of separating the literal meaning of words from their associative meaning when used in a particular context.

Exercise: An Exchange of Words Read and discuss the essay entitled "An Exchange of Words." A musical production performed in American Sign Language will immerse students in an immediate and visceral experience of the interpretive challenges of translation. How might translation enhance the work? How might translation impede the work? Ask students if they perform translation services for anyone among their family or friends. Are they obliged to re-interpret statements from English into another

language — or to explain American slang or sayings to someone from another culture? Ask students if they recognize the issues presented and whether their own experience mirrors the statements in the essay. Attempt to parse the nuanced differences between translation and interpretation.

Exercise: Now I Get It This exercise will be completed after the play; however, it is important to introduce the assignment in advance. Director Jeff Calhoun asserts that the experience of watching a performance in spoken English and American Sign Language can be indescribable. Ask students to be mindful of their own impressions of the experience because they will later attempt to document it in words.

Exercise: Me: My Life and Times Students should refer to their answers given in the exercise entitled "Step It Up," and incorporate those responses into a narrative for their own personal "coming of age" stories. Students may feel free to embellish their stories with imaginative flourishes in the same manner that the creators of *Pippin* added fantastical and creative elements to their storyline.

This story is the source material for a later assignment about interpreting verbal expression into visual expression.

Before the Play



SEE WHAT I MEAN: Page 9

Pages 9–11: See What I Mean

Rationale: Deaf culture encompasses a large and vibrant community of people — but most hearing people have limited exposure to the deaf community because of their inability to share communication. The first step in cultivating an appreciation of deaf culture is to familiarize students with the nature, history and prevalence of American Sign Language (ASL). ASL is not the only form of communication available to the deaf community. However, students should be aware that many deaf people view their deafness with a sense of cultural pride — and are therefore reluctant to embrace any form of communication that seeks to “normalize” their behavior and eliminate their identity as a deaf person. As with any culture, the deaf community seeks to protect its heritage and to be treated with dignity and respect.

Exercise: Read and discuss the quotation on page 9 by George Veditz. What does the phrase “people of the eye” mean to your students? Why is “the eye” important to the deaf community? If they were to similarly classify themselves, what would your students be the people of?

Exercise: See What I Mean
Read the essay. Students may be surprised to learn that deaf people had to struggle to have ASL recognized and respected in America. Interestingly, ASL is now becoming increasingly popular as a second-language component in school curriculums. Students may well be familiar with Alexander Graham Bell as the inventor of the telephone but not be familiar with his significance in the deaf community. Teachers might want to cultivate students’ appreciation of the apparent irony in Bell’s respective campaigns to launch the telephone and to eliminate ASL. The efforts to quash ASL might also be compared to the political battles over bilingual education in California.

Exercise: Meet Tyrone
Review the brief essay entitled “Meet Tyrone.” Students’ ability to appreciate and contextualize the experience of deaf people in America will be enhanced by a degree of familiarity with Tyrone Giordano, one of the actors who portrays Pippin. Tyrone’s experience as a deaf individual, growing up in hearing society, reveals surprising insights into the biases and misconceptions of the hearing world. Encourage students to identify deaf or hard of hearing people in their families or

communities. It might be worthwhile to have hearing students wear cotton as earplugs during a musical presentation in the classroom and attempt to still “hear” the music in the room. Do they rely on the pounding bass beat? Do they perceive sound vibrations emanating through the floor boards?

Exercise: Tips for Hearing People
Review the section entitled “Tips for Hearing People.” Ask students if they have ever engaged with deaf people and whether they found themselves questioning their own behavior in that context. Students might create a scenario for each tip in the classroom, acting out the situation. Students with deaf friends or family members might be able to consult their deaf acquaintances for additional tips to add to the list.

Exercise: Fingerspelling Alphabet
Review the table entitled “Fingerspelling Alphabet.” Many children are familiar with the fingerspelling alphabet from early education programs. Some students might recall the fingerspelling alphabet without having to consult the table. Students who are being exposed to fingerspelling for the first time might try to familiarize themselves by spelling their names and the billboard signs or license plates that they encounter in traffic.

Before the Play

Exercise **The New Kid on the Block**

In deaf culture, "sign names" are assigned in sign language by signifying the first letter of a person's first name and combining it with a gesture, sign or movement. Sometimes, it conveys some aspect of the person's looks, behavior or personality. For example, a girl named Betty with beautiful hair might be given a sign name that takes the signifying for "B" and gestures through the hair. Technically, a sign name can only be assigned by someone within the deaf community. Many people go far years without receiving their official sign name. But for the sake of an unorthodox experiment in deaf culture, why don't you try it?

Divide into pairs and come up with a sign name for each other.



Do You Hear What I Hear?

Exercise **Middle School Sign Language**

ASL was created by combining American Sign Language with the "home-grown" sign language system by deaf students in Connecticut. Many people talk with their hands all the time. Handful gestures develop simple signs to relay messages between players and coaches. Among messages in familiar with hand signals for "Thumb-up," "Okay," "Hello," "Goodbye," "Call me" and "SLU."

Invent your own sign language for the following expressions:

- See you at lunch.
- Test me.
- My dad died.
- Who was voted off American Idol last night?
- Did you study for the test?
- One small step for a man. One giant leap for mankind.

Try your hand at your own sign language. Reference words you already know from American Sign Language, introduce signs from handoff, gestures that move something in your family or something you make up. Remember to engage your facial expressions and body language to what you are trying to communicate with your signs. Teach each other new words and gestures. Take your new language for a test-drive in a "no talking" zone — like a library, a waiting room or a movie theatre. Relay messages back and forth in your new sign language. (Technically, sign language is still talking so try not to get in trouble.)

Deafness expresses itself in different ways. People might be born deaf or become deafness later in life. A lack of hearing can be total or mostly partial. Some deaf people utilize hearing aids; others choose not to. Apart from the particular nature of their hearing, deaf people are as diverse as the mainstream population: white, black, brown, yellow, male, female, young, old, rich, poor, gay, straight, of all religious faiths and cultural backgrounds. Anybody can be deaf.

Deaf culture encompasses anyone who identifies as deaf or hard of hearing as well as those hearing individuals with sign language skills and the children of deaf parents. Deaf culture embraces a positive attitude about being deaf. For this reason, many deaf people consider the term "hearing impaired" to be outdated and offensive because they don't view their deafness as a disability. Instead, they view deafness as a unique attribute that shapes and defines who they are as individuals. Immigrants who want to hold on to their culture are not unlike the deaf community wanting to hold on to deaf culture.

Despite the obvious difference, deaf kids can do everything that hearing kids can do. They just don't hear as well. They can listen to music through sound/vibrations that deaf people can still feel. (It helps if the bass speakers are throbbing.) They can dance by sensing vibrations or counting the beats. Deaf kids play sports, read books, watch television, hang out at the mall and spend too much time on the computer. They still panic, play tricks, get in trouble and throw tantrums when they're upset — just like any other kid.

Sometimes, deaf people experience loneliness and isolation when they are surrounded by hearing people who ignore them. Other times, a sign language conversation between two deaf people is mistaken for subtle physical aggression. Deaf people often tolerate stammered rude behavior by hearing people — when someone purposely ignores a deaf person, for example, or stands in an impolite manner.

DO YOU HEAR WHAT I HEAR?: Page 11

Exercise

Each culture comes with its own heritage — as well as its own traits, quirks, preferences and particularities. Cultures can be defined by race, gender, religion, nationality, neighborhood, ethnicity, special interests like athletics or the performing arts, special needs or disabilities, sexual orientation or membership in a group, among many other identifying factors.

- Pick a culture that you belong to: _____
- How are you part of that culture? _____
- Describe some traits of your culture: _____
- What do people in your culture like to be called? _____
- What do they not like to be called? _____
- What makes you proud to belong to your culture? _____
- What aspect of your culture is difficult to live with? _____
- Name a common misconception about your culture: _____
- Name an undeniable fact about your culture: _____
- Identify three traditions that your culture holds on to — and refuses to let go:
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
- Name a notable representative of your culture: _____

— Page —

Page 12

Pages 11–12: Do You Hear What I Hear?

Rationale: Students will be better prepared to appreciate deaf theatre if they have a context for the deaf community at large. Students who are familiar with the history of the deaf world will be more able to discuss their response to the issues of cultural identity, isolation, language barriers and disability awareness that arise in relation to this production of *Pippin*.

Exercise: Do You Hear What I Hear?

Read the essay entitled “Do You Hear What I Hear?” Teachers should discuss the various conditions of hearing loss, from impairment to complete loss. Students should also appreciate that deafness can surface in people from any walk of life, across age, race, religion, gender or sexual orientation. It is important that students realize that the deaf community doesn’t view deafness as a limitation but as a cultural reality and a point of pride. Review Tyrone Giordano’s quotation regarding the statement that “deaf people live in a silent world” in the sections entitled “Pop Quiz” and “Meet Tyrone” at the beginning of the Discovery Guide. He shares that deaf people are capable of appreciating sound on many levels — and compares a “hearing impairment” to any degree of visual impairment. Students with deaf friends or family members might share stories of their shared activities with deaf people.

Exercise: Review the instructions to the exercise regarding the students’ own cultural heritage. Teachers can assist students in appreciating that cultural groups gather around many points of identification. It can be attributes like race, ethnicity, gender, religion, special needs, sexual orientation or nationality. It can be special interests like athletics or the performing arts. It can be something as fundamental as socio-economic standing. The Discovery Guide provides fill-in-the-blank responses for students to describe their own cultural identification. Teachers might also enlist students in a physical exercise called “cultural mapping.” Without using words to communicate their intention, students are asked to regroup about the room in various clusters based on different identifying factors: eye color, hair color, height, birth order, number of languages spoken, gender or age. It might be advisable to avoid anything so polarizing as race, religion or politics. The point here is to convey to students that cultural attributes are subjectively dependent upon how a person identifies oneself.

Before the Play



Deaf Musicals: So How Does This Work?

Exercise Silent Storytelling

These works would even be known to us if someone hadn't tackled the translation. Let's see what happens when your story gets interpreted. To begin, divide into small groups.

Before director Jeff Calhoun adapts a popular musical for a deaf theatre performance, he does "a quick intuitive emotional evaluation of whether a particular story will be enhanced by using the talents of both the deaf and hearing cultures." He explains, "Typically, musicals dealing with heroes who face an obstacle but overcome circumstances by 'find themselves' are good for a deaf theatre approach. I have to believe that Pippin being deaf will enhance and deepen his journey, his finding his 'inner voice,' if you will, Calhoun asserts.

Calhoun's work with deaf actors "has simply made me a better director." He notes, "In the traditional hearing theatre, many different things can happen on stage at once — and often the tension between these simultaneous events is what makes the experience so exciting." On the other hand, when working with ASL and deaf actors, he comments, "You must not split focus. It is paramount to keep the audience's attention on the actor who is signing. The task of maintaining this singular focus, while not losing the overall excitement, has forced me to be a better storyteller."

Deaf theatre also makes for funny surprises. During auditions for Pippin, Calhoun recalls, "the script called for Pippin to close his eyes then open them when Catherine says, 'Okay, you can open your eyes.'" After a while, he admits, "we realized that with his eyes closed, Pippin could not see Catherine sign her line. The same went on for quite some time with Pippin's eyes closed."

"The biggest misconception that some hearing people have of a musical produced with deaf performers," Calhoun comments, "is that they will somehow have less of a musical experience. The music is still there and every word of dialogue is heard. The truth is that if you like musicals, the experience is actually more satisfying. You actually see the music as well as hear it." Sometimes audience members have admitted to Calhoun that "they never knew how silence could speak to them."

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DEAF MUSICALS: SO HOW DOES THIS WORK?: Page 13

Page 13: Deaf Musicals: So How Does This Work?

Rationale: Students are bound to approach a deaf theatre production with questions as to how deaf people are able to effectively perform in the musical theatre. It is best to tackle some of those questions in advance so that students are better able to enjoy the theatrical experience. Students already familiar with deaf actors from television shows should also appreciate that deaf performers are capable of song and dance. Songs are “sung” in sign language. Dance exists without music.

Students will also benefit by practical exercises in the process of interpreting statements into another language so that a translation stays true to the intent of the original author or speaker.

Exercise: Deaf Musicals: So How Does This Work?

Have the students read the essay. Director Jeff Calhoun’s personal experience in staging Broadway musicals with combined casts of deaf and hearing performers can only enhance a students’ appreciation for the boldness of this approach. Calhoun comments on the need for singular focus onstage in the deaf theatre. Teachers could enlist students in demonstrating examples of a group-tableau that has “split-focus” or multiple points of focus — and then an example of a group tableau that has a “singular focus.” In particular, review Calhoun’s comment about the experience of deaf theatre, repeated below. Ask students if they understand what Calhoun means. Remind students to ask themselves these questions during the course of attending *Pippin*: How did the silence speak to you? What was it like to see the music as well as to hear it?

“The biggest misconception that some hearing people have of a musical produced with deaf performers,” comments *Pippin* director Jeff Calhoun, “is that they will somehow have less of a musical experience. The music is still there and every word of dialogue is heard. The truth is that if you like musicals, the experience is actually more satisfying. You actually see the music as well as hear it.” Sometimes audience members have admitted to Calhoun that “they never knew how silence could speak to them.”

Exercise: Silent Storytelling

Review the instructions to the exercise. Divide students in small groups. Within each small group, instruct students to share their stories, carefully listening for four moments to dramatize in tableaux: the goal, the obstacle, the strategy and the outcome. One story may strike the group as “the one” — the story that most lends itself to tableau. With that story, allow students time to write down their assessments of those four moments. Students should take time to discuss their responses regarding the story so that they reach a group consensus as to the four tableaux moments. Finally, the students create physical tableaux for all four moments in the selected story. It is helpful to remind students of the powerful communication tools utilized in sign language: the face, the hands, the energy, the expression. Teachers should impress upon students that the fourth step is the act of “interpretation,” freely translating a verbal story into a visual language. Teachers might want to discuss the word “interpretation” in terms of actors and directors in the theatre who interpret playwrights’ words with their bodies, voices and movements. Students should be encouraged to honor the intent and spirit of the original story in their interpretation — so that each tableau remains faithful to the story.

Before the Play

An Introduction to Tableau

In theatre arts, a tableau is a frozen picture. Students might appreciate this concept more readily if teachers describe it as a “snapshot,” a group of people assembled in a situation that conveys information to the viewer. To prepare students for this exercise, teachers may want to conduct some physical warm-up activity (like a mirror exercise) to release inhibitions and to trigger creative impulses. Simple trust exercises will permit the students to engage in respectful physical contact with each other, an essential factor in staging a tableau. The objective of each tableau is for students to use their bodies to communicate an idea, theme or story. Obviously, an important component in the exercise is the viewer. Students who are not actively engaged in staging a tableau will be called upon as “audience members” to reflect on the varied interpretations of the idea, theme or story conveyed in the presentation.

In practical terms, students should be divided into pairs or small groups. One student is designated as the “Artist/Sculptor.” Remaining

student(s) are the “Clay” or the sculpture itself. Teachers might instruct the Sculptors to create a statue of the Clay on the theme of “the future” which, for example, could result in a simple greeting like “hello” or an attempt to create a flying car. Students should be encouraged to free their imagination to make sculptures ranging from realistic and representational to symbolic and imagistic. In the same regard, the scope or frame of reference in each sculpture can range from the personal to the global (e.g., graduation or world peace). Each student should title their sculpture and present it to the class. The exercise should be repeated so that each student has an opportunity to participate as Artist/Sculptor and Clay. Students should be encouraged to use their face and their bodies to communicate emotions and action.

Once students have acquired basic tableau skills, they can be challenged to create a narrative in a series of tableaux that convey a Beginning, Middle and End. The objective is to tell a familiar story (Jack and Jill, for example) in three frozen pictures. Everyone in the group should be in each picture.

Alternate Exercise: Silent Storytelling

This exercise in interpretation may also be done as an individual storyboarding assignment. In this case, students exchange stories and draw a four-panel cartoon for their partner’s story, using the same four moments identified in the previous exercise.

After the Play

After the Play
War, War, War

Exercise

How was war presented in *Pippin*? How was it realistic? How was it theatrical?

Why do you think the director and his team chose to present war in this way?

How is the depiction of war in *Pippin* similar to or different from your own understanding of war? How does seeing war presented in this way impact your perceptions?

Why did Pippin want to go to war?

When is war justified?

If your country is at war, do you have to go to war too? Why or why not?

Exercise: Picking Up Sign

What sign language did you learn from watching the performance of *Pippin*? Describe how words that were repeated to often that you caught onto the sign that went with it to recall the signs that went with the following words and phrases.

1. Happy
2. Time
3. Simple
4. King
5. Love
6. "Maggie to die"
7. "There is hope"
8. "I've got to be where my spirit can run free"

WAR, WAR, WAR: Page 14

Page 14: War, War, War

Rationale: Students will want to process their experience of encountering sign language in performance. The questions about deafness and the deaf community that arise in students' minds during this production of *Pippin* will correspond to qualities of empathy, curiosity, compassion and inquisitiveness that should be fostered in each student's own "coming of age" journey. Students attending *Pippin* will also be exposed to a strong anti-war statement, an essential element in the original production. Students will benefit from an appreciation of the anti-war statement as a dramatic device that has been passed down through history. Each generation responds differently to anti-war statements, depending on the political climate

surrounding the present military effort. Anti-war statements "played" differently during World War II, for example, than they do during less popular wars like Vietnam or Iraq.

Exercise: Picking up Sign

Review the instructions to the exercise. Teachers will want to refer back to the brief essay entitled "Deaf Musicals" (page 13) and Jeff Calhoun's quotation regarding the power of silence in the theatre. How did the silence speak to students? What was it like to "see" the music as well as to hear it? Encourage students to mimic the sign language for each of the words listed in the exercise — exactly as they recall the words performed onstage. Sign language incorporates not only the hands, but also the full body as well as facial expressions.

Exercise: Now I Get It (page 7)

Revisit the instructions on page 7. Ask students to share the questions that were raised in their minds about deafness and the deaf community during the performance of *Pippin* or afterwards. Encourage students to state whatever is on their minds, even what might be considered "stupid questions." What surprised them about sign language or deaf people? What made them uncomfortable? What made them comfortable? What was their "favorite part"? Ask students if questions raised by the performance were answered during the course of the performance — or whether they have put any thoughts into the answers since. Ask other students to share answers to the questions based on their own insights.

Exercise: War, War, War

Read "War, War, War." Introduce the concept of anti-war statements to your students. Students might be engaged in a discussion of the impact of war on their lives. Has anyone in their family served in the military? During wartime? Has anyone served in Vietnam? In the Persian Gulf? In Iraq? Students should also appreciate that director Calhoun references the anti-war statement in *Pippin* in relation to the many trials that Pippin endures on his journey toward a meaningful life. How much does military service during wartime dominate an individual's life experience? Does life go on? Do battle scars remain?

Exercise: Teachers should supervise students through their written response to the questions regarding war in general — and the presentation of war in *Pippin*. Students might want to share and discuss their responses aloud in the classroom. Teachers might also want to introduce additional questions for consideration. Why are we fighting the war in Iraq? Why are we fighting the war in Afghanistan? How does society benefit by war? How does society suffer in wartime?

After the Play

The image shows a worksheet titled "Once Upon A Time" with two exercises. The first exercise, "Break It Down," asks students to identify the hero, their goal, obstacles, and how they overcome them. The second exercise, "Interpreting An Interpretation," asks students to return to their tableaux and discuss their interpretations of the story's events and characters.

ONCE UPON A TIME: Page 15

Page 15: Once Upon A Time

Rationale: Students will benefit by an appreciation of dramatic narrative and the particular approach to storytelling in *Pippin*. An understanding of formal narrative structure will enhance students' writing abilities and their ability to comprehend and comment on different literary forms, like novels, poetry and plays. Also, students who are familiar with the principles of goal-setting, internal/external obstacles, strategies and outcome will be able to apply those concepts to their understanding of problem-solving techniques and collaboration skills.

Exercise: Once Upon A Time

Review the essay entitled "Once Upon A Time." Draw particular attention to new vocabulary words

like "protagonist" and "antagonist." In particular, teachers may want to discuss the difference between active and passive protagonists. In brief, active protagonists take charge of their destiny; passive protagonists allow destiny to reach them. Students may be able to list examples of each type of protagonist based on film, television and literature. For example, Luke Skywalker is an active protagonist. Charlie, in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, on the other hand, is passive. Discuss the antagonist in *Pippin*. Is there someone working in opposition to Pippin? Since there is not a clear answer to this question, this is an opportunity for a lively discussion.

Exercise: Review the instructions to the exercise that follows "Once Upon A Time." Students are asked to identify the dramatic elements of *Pippin*. Teachers might want to review the difference between an internal and an external obstacle. Internal obstacles are character traits that impede a hero's positive growth. Students might respond to brainstorming lists of internal conflicts that prevented Pippin's development — or the possible internal conflicts for any character. Examples include shyness, anger, immaturity, laziness, jealousy, vanity and hypocrisy. External obstacles are other people, physical challenges or adverse circumstances. Again, students might list the external obstacles that confronted Pippin. Examples include political power, war, women, marriage, family and relationships.

Exercise: Interpreting an Interpretation

Review the instructions for the exercise. Return to the small groups formed for the "Silent Storytelling" exercise. Each group should perform their four-tableau story (goal, obstacle, strategy and outcome) for the collected classroom. Encourage students to render their tableaux with an emphasis on the attitudes and emotions that will faithfully convey the original author's intent for the story. Following the presentation of each series of four tableaux, the entire classroom will write individual paragraphs recounting the story as interpreted by each student who witnessed it, trying to be as faithful as possible to the images in the tableaux. Again, teachers might want to discuss the word "interpretation" in terms of writers and playwrights who interpret their experience of the world by creating characters, situations, actions and dialogue. Students will share their interpretations with the author of the original story and compare the results. Students should be able to justify their interpretations based on visual cues they received. What aspects of each story changed the most from the original? What gestures or positions were understood most consistently by the viewers?

Alternate Exercise: Interpreting an Interpretation

For classes who have created storyboards, have students give their drawings to a third person to interpret back into text. Compare the interpretation to the original.

