



# DISNEY

**S O N G S**  
IN ASL

**DISCUSSION GUIDES  
FOR DHH STUDENTS**



# Disney's Songs in Sign Language

## DISCUSSION GUIDES FOR DHH STUDENTS

### Background

In 2026, Disney+ released a series of music videos that represent a huge leap forward in inclusive media. They moved beyond the traditional "Interpreter Box," we are used to seeing in the corner of videos and collaborated with Deaf West Theatre and the Disney team to completely re-animate the original characters we love. The director, Hyrum Osmond is a CODA (Child of Deaf Adult)!

In these versions, the characters themselves (Moana, Anna, and the family Madrigal) perform in American Sign Language. This project highlights Deaf Gain for the world, showing how ASL and DHH perspectives don't just provide "access," but really enhance the beauty and emotional depth of the animation for everyone.

### Where to View

These three videos are available to stream on Disney+ as a part of their subscription. There are additional videos and resources listed on the final page of this guide.

### Alignment with Expanded Core Curriculum

#### *Self-Determination and Advocacy*

- Students will identify and discuss positive representations of DHH culture and language in mainstream media to foster a healthy self-concept and sense of belonging.
- Students will evaluate different models of accessibility (e.g., integrated animation vs. picture-in-picture interpreting) to determine which formats best support their personal access needs.
- Students will develop self-awareness by identifying personal preferences in communication modes and how they relate to their identity within the DHH community.

#### *Social-Emotional Skills*

- Students will analyze non-verbal communication, including facial expressions, body language, and "visual prosody," to infer emotional intent and narrative subtext.
- Students will compare and contrast varying communication styles within the DHH spectrum to build empathy and peer-to-peer social awareness.
- Students will develop self-awareness by identifying personal preferences in communication modes and how they relate to their identity within the DHH community.

#### *Communication & Compensatory Skills*

- Students will analyze the linguistic properties of ASL in a performing arts context, focusing on the use of signing space, classifiers, and conceptual translation.
- Students will demonstrate visual efficiency by utilizing environmental and visual cues to supplement auditory information and enhance story comprehension.
- Students will describe the relationship between auditory "tone" and visual "expression," identifying how rhythmic patterns are conveyed through movement.

#### *Technology & Media Literacy*

- Students will evaluate the evolution of assistive technology in media and propose "Universal Design" solutions that improve accessibility for all DHH learners.
- Students will analyze the impact of the "Deaf Lens" in media production, specifically how the involvement of DHH/CODA creators influences the authenticity of the final product.

# Disney's Songs in Sign Language

## DISCUSSION PROMPTS FOR DHH STUDENTS

### Elementary Learners (K - 5)

- How did it feel to see a Disney character signing just like you? Did they look the way you expected?
- Did you notice any signs the characters used that are the same ones you use at school or at home?
- In ASL, our faces tell the story as much as our hands do. Which character had the best facial expression in your opinion?
- If you could pick any other Disney character to learn ASL, who would it be and why?
- (For those with hearing aids/CIs) Did the way the characters moved match the sounds you heard in your ears?
- Can you show me your "Moana face" (brave) or your "Bruno face" (mysterious) without using any words?
- If you were the director at Disney, what is one song or movie you would re-imagine next to make it perfect for the DHH community?
- If a 4-year-old Deaf child watches these videos as their first introduction to Disney, how might their future dreams be different than yours were at that age?

### Secondary Learners (Grades 6-12)

- We know ASL isn't just English on the hands. What's a specific moment where the visual sign explained the feeling better than the lyric?
- How does re-animating a film for ASL create a better experience for everyone, rather than just being an "add-on" like we are used to with the interpreter box in the corner?
- Discuss the flow of the signs. Talk about how animators use signing space to show different things.
- What's a detail that felt authentically Deaf?
- When a company as big as Disney validates ASL as a cinematic language, what does that do for the status of ASL in society?
- Does seeing any DHH representation make you feel more included?
- Did you feel you needed to rely on the captions even though there was a signed message within the video? Why do you think that is and how do you feel about it?
- If you were the director at Disney, what is one song or movie you would re-imagine next to make it perfect for the DHH community?
- In these videos, the characters have to sign while moving, dancing, or even holding things. How does this compare to real life? What 'shortcuts' did the animators take, and what felt incredibly realistic?
- A lot of times, a sign can represent a whole concept that usually takes five words in English. Can you find a moment where the visual metaphor of a sign felt more powerful than the spoken word?
- Usually, a DHH person has to look away from the action to see an interpreter. With this new format, the action and the language are in the same place. How does this change the emotional flow of the story for you?
- If a hearing person who doesn't know ASL watches these, what do you think they learn about your language? Can they learn something through these videos that they might not learn in a textbook?

# Disney's Songs in Sign Language

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



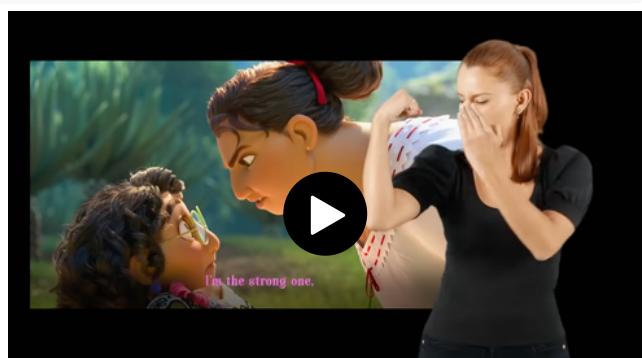
### Video

Interview with Hiram Osmond (Director of Disney Animation Songs and Signs) and DJ Kurs (Artistic Director of Deaf West Theatre) to discuss the groundbreaking collaboration bringing ASL to the forefront of Disney animation. They discuss the personal journey behind this project—from Hiram's own connection with his deaf father to the team's relentless pursuit of authenticity. This isn't just about interpretation; it's about creating a new art form that fosters a sense of belonging and representation for the deaf and hard-of-hearing community.



### Site

Explore Deaf West's website to learn more about and explore the portfolio of the theatre company that choreographed these songs. They are the same group behind the Spring Awakening (and many others) on Broadway.



### Video

Watch Encanto's Surface Pressure. This is an older version where a human interpreter is the focus. Have students compare this to the new re-animated songs to discuss the evolution of media access.



### Article + Videos

A technical look at how 20+ animators used custom sign-language references to make sure the characters' movements were linguistically accurate. This is great for older students, especially those interested in animation or tech.



### Video Series

Great for younger students. Hands Land helps explain the concept of visual prosody (how ASL has its own rhythm and "music") without needing sound. Some are on YouTube, also available on Prime Video.

# Disney's Songs in Sign Language


## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### Learn more about some of the Deaf creative talent that supported this project


"This is 100% artist-made. That's important to us-really using Deaf performers was crucial. We knew when we started this, we had to do it right. We weren't gonna just take some hand signs, throw it on top of what's there. This really was a re-imagining of those sequences with the Deaf community.

-Hyrum Osmond, Director + CODA

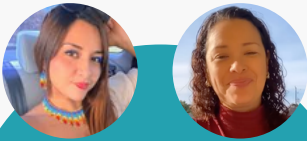
click their names to check out their IG profiles



[Leilani Silva-Ewan](#) as Moana for "Beyond"

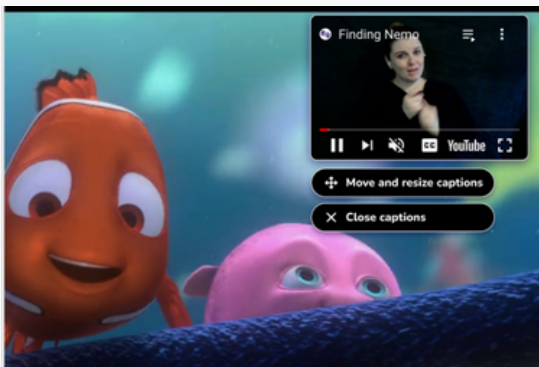


[Deanne Bray](#) as Anna for "The Next Right Thing"



[Nataly Barahona](#), [Andrea Rodriguez](#), [Felipe Carrera](#) as Mirabel and multiple other characters for "We Don't Talk About Bruno"

### [Sign Up Captions for Disney+ and Netflix](#)



This extension allows you to overlay videos of American Sign Language interpreting onto Disney+ and Netflix videos.

[How-To Video](#)

[Sign-Up Media](#)

Learn about **more** Famous and Notable Deaf and Hard of Hearing People

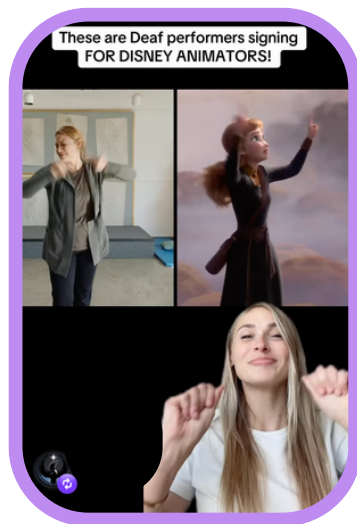


[Mini Unit + Activities](#)

## See what the Deaf community is saying about the new Disney ASL videos

Not everyone feels the same way about creative interpretation of mainstream media. **Click the image of the video to go to the link** and hear from some popular Deaf influencers and stars on social media.

*Note: Representation is a journey, not a destination. By asking these tough questions, we aren't being 'mean' to Disney; we are practicing Advocacy. We are showing that the ASL language is complex and deserves the same precision as the animation itself.*



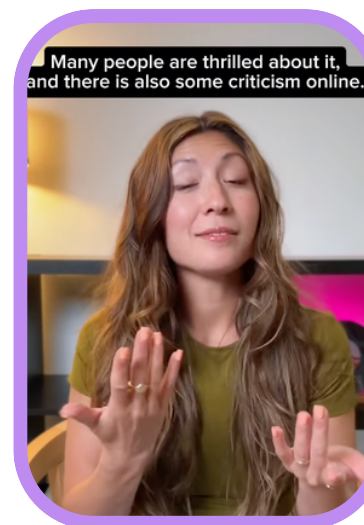
[@ChrissyMarshall](#)



[@danielndurant](#)



[@shan\\_no\\_nosays](#)



[@hifi\\_deafie](#)

### Additional Questions to Consider:

- Did learning any of their thoughts change how you feel about the videos?
- What do you think about what Rogan (@shan\_no\_nosays) shared about Deaf community sometimes feeling guilty criticizing representation?
- What are some big wins for the Deaf community that come along with this kind of representation?
- What changes (if any) would you make to the production of any future Disney songs in ASL as a DHH person?
- Were you able to follow along and understand the video without captions and only signing?
- Native signers use their faces for grammar. Do the Disney characters use cartoon expressions or ASL grammar expressions? Can you tell the difference?
- Some influencers call for Disney to be more transparent about who the Deaf consultants and performers were. Why is knowing the credits important to the Deaf community?

# Beyond the Magic

## Partnering for Student Success with Triumph



At Triumph Educational Consulting, we know that resources like this Disney guide are just one piece of the puzzle. Providing high-quality, inclusive education for DHH and special education students in Minnesota requires more than just great lesson plans—it requires a holistic, expert partnership.

Based in Minnesota, we bridge the gap between school, home, and student to ensure no child is limited by their unique needs.

### How we support students with unique needs in Minnesota:

- ASD, DCD, D/HH, and SLP evaluations led by licensed experts.
- Staffing for many low-incidence disabilities and students with multiple unique needs: onsite and virtual. We also cover long-term leaves for teachers.
- IEP team support and consultation on classroom interventions, data tracking, due process, and scheduling.
- Targeted behavior strategies and interventions for complex student needs.
- Independent Educational Evaluations (IEEs) for neutral, high-quality third-party assessments.
- Professional development on special education programming.

### Our team

Expert support from a highly collaborative team including:


- Teachers of Deaf/HH
- Autism Specialists
- Speech/Language Pathologists
- School Psychologists
- Occupational Therapists
- Special Education Teachers
- Behavior Specialists
- Reading Specialists

### Let's work together!

Are you an educator or school administrator looking for specialized consultation, or a parent seeking to unlock your child's full potential?

Visit us at: [TriumphEducationalConsulting.com](https://TriumphEducationalConsulting.com)

Reach out online or call **612-584-9606**

 Serving students and schools throughout Minnesota and South Dakota

*"Unlocking potential, one child at a time."*