A DIFFERENT KIND OF LANGUAGE

When Kristin was just 18 months old, her parents found out she was partially deaf in both ears, she couldn't hear well. Kristin is 27 years old now. She graduated from university and she works as a veterinary. Along the way, she overcame many obstacles and has some advice for kids who are hearing impaired — and for other kids who want to know what it's like to have trouble hearing.

When I was 2 years old, I went to kindergarten. It was the first time I realized my hearing problems made me different. My teacher was nice, but I was the only student wearing hearing aids. At first, I just cried when the other kids asked me about my hearing problem. My mom told me that I shouldn't feel ashamed or embarrassed. She said the kids didn't understand about my hearing problem so were only curious.

Later, I learned to communicate very well. One of my high school teachers didn't realize I had hearing problems until the last day of class! I use only one hearing aid now and I know how to read lips. I also learnt sign language to communicate with some of my friends. Some deaf people don't wear hearing aids and they prefer to use signs. Some people think that we have a more limited life but I usually go to the cinema (with subtitles) or go dancing. I even play the drums in my free time!

1. **Read the text. Then try to guess the meaning of the underlined words.**

2. **Write the words from the text related to the deaf culture in this box.**

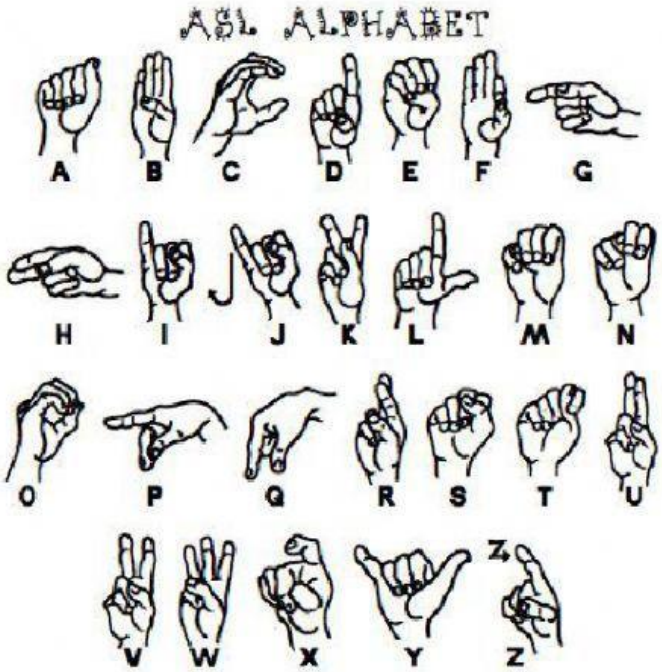
3. **Are these questions about the text *true* (T), *false* (F) or the text *doesn't mention* (DM)?**
   a. Kristin is 18 months old.
   b. Kristin works with animals.
   c. She went to kindergarten when she was 18 months old.
   d. The kids in kindergarten ask Kristin about the hearing problem.
   e. All her teachers knew she was deaf.
   f. She doesn't use hearing aids now.
   g. All deaf people use sign language to communicate.
   h. Kristin learned sign language at university.
   i. Kristin can play a musical instrument.

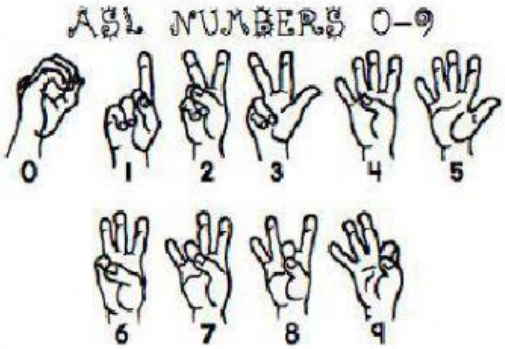
4. **What other difficulties do you think Kristin had when she was your age?**

5. **The hearing impaired just need to make some adjustments to have a normal life. How do you think they use things like the alarm clock, the doorbell or the mobile phone?**

6. **Kristin watches films with subtitles. They are useful for people who want to practice a foreign language too. But when films are not subtitled she can read lips. Try to say a message to your partner with your lips (don't use your voice). Did he/she guess it?**

7. **Kristin learned sign language to communicate with some of her friends. Sign language can be different depending on the country or the area. Many words like *dog*, *hello* or *pizza* have a specific sign. This is a model of the American Sign Language (ASL) alphabet and numbers. It was created in the 19th century. Can you spell your name with signs?**





8. **Non-verbal communication such as gestures, face expressions, etc. is very important in everyday life for both hearing and non-hearing. Can you use any signs to transmit a message without speaking? For example: *Stop and wait there*.**