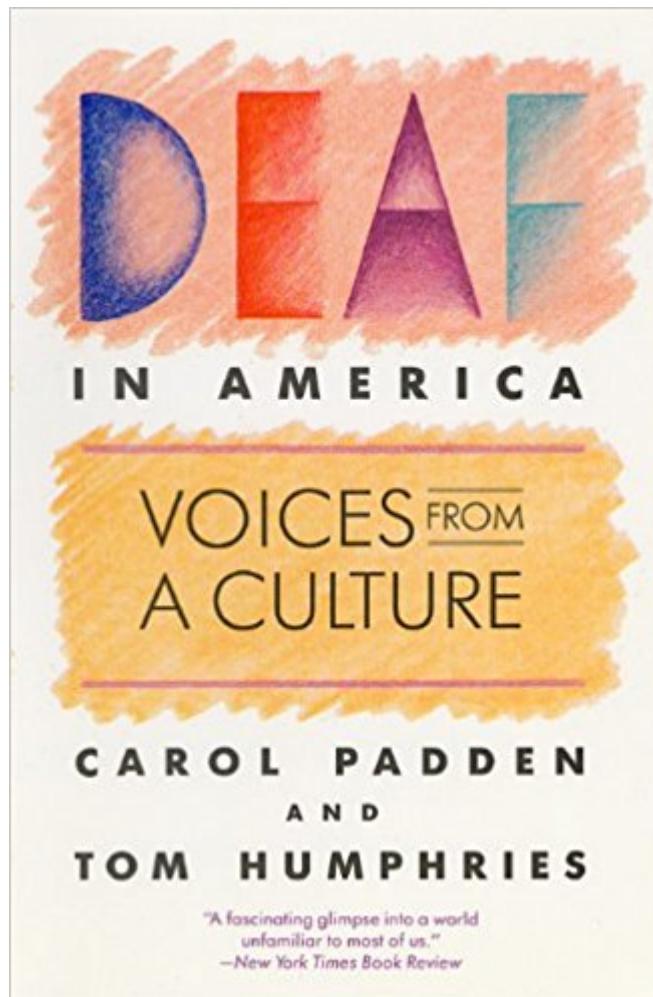


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# Deaf In America



## **Synopsis**

Written by authors who are themselves Deaf, this unique book illuminates the life and culture of Deaf people from the inside, through their everyday talk, their shared myths, their art and performances, and the lessons they teach one another. Padden and Humphries employ the capitalized "Deaf" to refer to deaf people who share a natural language--American Sign Language (ASL)--and a complex culture, historically created and actively transmitted across generations.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

"Deaf in America: Voices from a Culture," by Carol Padden and Tom Humphries, is a well-written, consistently interesting look at Deaf lives and communities. The introduction notes that both authors are deaf, so this book is very much written from the perspective of insiders. The copyright page notes that the book has a copyright date of 1988 and was in its 12th printing in 2000. Although relatively short (134 + vii pages), this book is packed full of information. Among the topics covered: the difference between being "deaf" (lowercase) and "Deaf" (capitalized), the origins of American Sign Language, Deaf theater and poetry, the work of Deaf filmmaker Charles Krauel, controversies

within the Deaf world, and more. The authors maintain that Deaf people have an authentic language and culture. The book is lively and intelligent. I recommend that readers of this book also view the fascinating documentary film "Sound and Fury."

this book is exactly as the title of the review states. It is one that you can fly through and get a good introduction into the ideas of Deaf culture. Early it explains the concepts of deaf and Deaf and it is filled with good anecdotes and a broad range of topics. While it doesn't offer too much for those with knowledge of Deaf culture and cultural issues, it does provide a great start for those that want to learn a little about Deaf culture and will offer a jumping off point for beginners. Because of it being a quick read and many good tales, for those with a strong knowledge of Deaf culture, it certainly offers a light and fast read.

I had to read this book for my college ASL class. Its very good at skimming the top of Deaf culture--but it kind of left things hanging out in the breeze. The style of this book is in telling stories and explaining Deaf culture using those example. I enjoyed reading about the Deaf culture, but I don't think that this book is for anyone who wants straight facts and depth.

I found myself rather disappointed with this book, although it conveyed some important insights. It was a one-night read that didn't give me much new insight into Deaf culture, or the reasons behind the recent surge of Deaf pride and activism, as do such other books as "Journey into the Deaf-World" (which itself--hardly an introductory text--is weakened by an opposite shortcoming, a pingpong organization bouncing from subjects like history [fascinating] and highly technical linguistic theory [not] to real-life current narratives, and back again--but the key point here is that it provides a forum for MYRIAD voices reflecting DISPARATE experiences). I've marked the linguistics chapters--clearly vital, especially in understanding ASL's force as a legitimate language and (e.g.) efforts to end enforced speech training--to read later, but only after I finish my journey into real people's lives sequentially, as a single trip. I had hoped for more of this kind of material from the book under review. The voices we "hear" in the Padden/Humphries book ring primarily like those of the (indisputably well qualified) authors, and not, as the title implies, of the Deaf community at large; and despite a strong beginning, the later chapters grow increasingly superficial and thin. I would recommend this as best suited as an introductory text, for those learning about Deaf culture for the first time.

Padden is a great writer and she explains the Deaf community very well, easy for anyone to understand. I am Deaf myself and she is one of my all-time favorites. She is really well-spoken and we hold her in high esteem in our culture.

This is the book that every person interested in Deaf Culture should read, in my opinion. Its short, very readable, and brave. In fact, given the short attention span of some folks, I'll say just read chapter's 2 and 3. You'll be a smarter and better person for it.

When I first started to take the ASL class last fall of '98, 'Deaf in America' was required reading. This book was both a shock and an eye opener. Shocked, because I couldn't believe how cruel one human could be to another human because of an abnormality. The thing teachers did to Deaf students to make them use words instead of signed language, or gestures. The Deaf community has come a long way to get the things the need to be able to communicate not only among themselves but with the world. I learned a lot.

Deaf In America tells the story of the Deaf from their own perspective. It opens the eyes of the hearing to understand their language and culture and in a time when the medical community is pushing a "cure" for deafness. It is important for hearing people to understand why the Deaf don't want to be "fixed." This book reveals through storytelling, poetry and observation the experience of being Deaf and the differences of opinion within the culture. A real eye-opener. Glad I read it.

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