

# “Hands-On-Adventure”

(ASL signed role playing gaming)

*Role-Playing Gaming Adapted for the Deaf Using American Sign Language  
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## **Overview**

Provide a social activity to deaf, hard of hearing, and any signing-capable (hearing) participants through a social recreational event to help reduce isolation and encourage interaction in a cooperative, fun, team/friendship-building series of activities using role-playing gaming with American Sign Language (ASL).

RPGs (Role Playing Games) meet this goal by providing an unprecedented range of benefits for a leisure activity, including: social cooperation with diverse peoples/cultures/backgrounds on common goals, leadership, walking in others' shoes/experiences, religions, histories, languages/linguistics, multicultural mythologies, learning to follow the rules while also "thinking outside of the box", intellectual challenges (math, reasoning, problem solving), technical and creative reading/writing, many types of engineering and sciences, demographics, warfare tactics and strategies, past and present architecture and technologies, creative areas such as theatrics/acting and many other social, creative, and intellectual benefits.

## **Appropriate Setting:**

Safe, quiet, comfortable, non-distracting room, or outdoor setting. Seating reasonably close enough and sufficient lighting for everyone to see each others' signing. Seating usually best in the shape of a circle or a square rather than a rectangle so signing can be seen by all fairly equally (compared to long rectangle making it a bit more difficult to see everyone).

## **Population:**

Deaf and hard of hearing, or anyone who can sign in ASL (or any signing language) with sufficient proficiency. Ages can range in groups from 8 to 13, 14 to 21, and 21 on up. Both male and female can equally participate.

## **Explanation of activity:**

- Participants gather around a table for an interactive shared imaginary adventure(s) using just paper, pencil, dice, agreed-upon rules/game-system and their imaginations.
- In this particular variation of the role playing gaming theme, an added difference is that participants will be using sign language to communicate rather than verbal communication.
- Also for maximum therapeutic benefit the adventure setting must be cooperative not

competitive, and all participants must play “good” aligned characters rather than “neutral” or “evil” alignment.

- The game referee/narrator, commonly known as the Game Master meets with the players in a comfortable setting around a table, or anywhere they find comfortable, and begins with a description of the imaginary setting.
- An example game start: *"You and your friends have just walked into the courtyard of an ancient building. The courtyard is approximately forty feet square. The walls, built of a tan colored stone material apparently indigenous to the area, are built to the points of the compass. They are about thirty feet high. You entered from an opening in the south wall. You see the north wall has some stairs going up, and the east wall on your right has what appears to be a solid metal door hanging open on rusted hinges. The walls are crumbling in places, and much is overgrown with ivy and weeds. In the center is a large fountain about fifteen feet high in what appears to be the form of a series of three flower-like terraces. Surprisingly, the fountain is currently spouting clear and cool-looking water. Viewing the water, you're more acutely aware of how dry your mouths are after the long day's hike to arrive here, with no water previously in sight. The wind is picking up as a storm from the south, with lightning and dark clouds gathering, quickly approaches. It is getting colder by the minute. What do you do?"*
- At this point, those playing in the game each take turns telling the GM and the other players what actions they take. Some will have mundane results, others could have surprising consequences. Dice are used to simulate the random events that can occur in life. For example, someone may decide to climb the stairs, there are some loose steps, and depending on how agile the player's made-up "character" is, with a roll of the dice, that character may leap to the top unscathed, or may have a bit of a fall to deal with. Of course, there also could be trouble in the form of "ill-intentioned bandits" lurking within the entrance of the door to dispense with...

#### **Activity costs:**

Entry/participation is free. Food and beverages will be provided by sponsors and/or participants in a “pot luck” style to share with other participants.

#### **Leadership necessary:**

One person to play the role of referee/narrator, also known as Game Master or Dungeon Master (GM or DM). Typically a ratio of 1 GM per 1-8 “players”.

#### **Equipment:**

Required equipment:

- Table(s)
- Chairs (enough for GM and as many players participating)
- Paper
- Pencils

- Polyhedron dice
- Player and GM rulebooks

Optional additional equipment can include:

- Gridded and/or hexagonal “battle mats”
- Miniature figurines.

#### **Evaluation procedures:**

GM and participants fill out evaluation forms provided at the end of each gaming session covering mostly subjective information. Additionally event organizers fill out a form related to statistics and other measurable areas.

The questionnaire would include for example (see attached sample combined evaluation form):

- Rating of fun factor
- Level of interaction with others
- Comfort level
- Number of participants and type
- Level of opportunity for involvement
- Challenge level
- Suggestions for improvements
- Ratios of hearing, deaf, etc.

**Suggested sponsors:**

EWDHHC (Eastern Washington Deaf and Hard of Hearing Center)

- Could providing gaming facilities
- Could provide ASL translators if non-hearing participants a little weak in ASL

Could generally promote the event(s)

Merlyn's Games & Hobbies

- Provide gaming facilities
- Could provide prizes

- Provide gaming materials

Hobbytown

- Could provide gaming facilities
- Could provide prizes - such as a miniature used to represent their player character
- Could provide gift certificate for discount on role playing gaming purchases.