

*Show Me a Sign*  
**Discussion Guide**  
Grades 3-7

**Before Reading: to activate schema, build background knowledge, and set a purpose.**

***Before using this book with your class or recommending the book to students we suggest reading the book closely to determine if it is a good fit. Consider saying to your students:***

“This book contains topics that may be sensitive. Not all books fit all readers. If you are uncomfortable with this book, you have the right to stop reading it, but please pick another.”

- Mention to students that this is inspired by the true history of a thriving deaf community on Martha’s Vineyard in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- Consider the following sources to support building historical background knowledge:
- “The Life and Death of Martha’s Vineyard Sign Language” from *The Atlantic*.
- *The Chilmark Deaf Community* free resources and lesson plans from the Martha’s Vineyard Museum online collection.

**During Reading: to engage students, check for understanding, and make connections.**

- How would you describe Mary? Use examples from the book to support your thinking. (Ch. 1-3)
- How are Mary and her family different from other English people? What factors might create a family or community bond? (Ch. 4-6)
- How is Nancy and Mary’s friendship being tested throughout these chapters? (Ch. 7-9)
- How are Andrew’s behaviors beginning to show how he may feel towards deaf people? Use examples from the book to support your thinking. (Ch. 10-12)
- What predictions do you have about the letter that was addressed to Andrew? (Ch. 13-16)
- How were your predictions correct or incorrect? Why might have Andrew kidnapped Mary? (Ch. 17-19)
- How might Mary use some strategies to communicate with the people around her? (Ch. 20-22)
- What forms of communication are beginning to help Mary connect with the people holding her captive? (Ch. 23-26)
- How were both Mary’s strategies and her characteristics able to help her be successful in her methods of communication? (Ch. 27-29)
- How did Mary’s relationship with Ezra develop throughout their journey back to Martha’s Vineyard? How about her relationship with her mother upon her arrival? (Ch. 30-33)
- How did the experiences Mary encountered throughout the story allow for the development of her character? Use examples from the book to support your thinking. (Ch. 34-37)

*Show Me a Sign*  
**Discussion Guide**  
Grades 3-7

**After Reading: to summarize, question, and reflect.**

- What are some lessons we can learn from *Show Me a Sign*?
- Mary faced a lot of challenges throughout the story, such as prejudice and discrimination. Have you ever experienced similar challenges? How did you overcome them?

If your students enjoyed this book...

- Encourage them to continue to discuss it and refer to it in other lessons and conversations.
- Have them research the history of Martha's Vineyard and make connections between the true events and what they read in the story.
- Let them explore more about the topic by reading other books with similar themes, structure, characters, or content.
- Read the sequel *See Me Free* also written by Anne Claire LeZotte.
- Take them on a virtual field trip to Martha's Vineyard, utilizing the museum's free resources.