AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE · DEAF HISTORY · GRADES 3–5

Meet Laurent Clerc

Read about the Deaf teacher who helped start the first permanent school for the deaf in America, then answer the questions.

Name: _____ **Date:** _____



Read

Laurent Clerc was born in France in 1785. He became deaf when he was a baby. When he was 12 he went to a school for deaf children in Paris, where he learned French Sign Language. He did so well that the school later hired him as a teacher.

In 1816 an American named Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet came to the school. Gallaudet wanted to start a school for deaf children in the United States, and he asked Clerc to help. Clerc said yes. On the long trip across the ocean, Clerc taught Gallaudet sign language and Gallaudet helped Clerc with English.

In 1817 they opened a school in Hartford, Connecticut. Today it is called the American School for the Deaf, the oldest school for the deaf in the United States that is still open. Clerc taught there for more than 40 years and trained teachers who started schools across the country.

The signs Clerc brought from France mixed with the signs deaf Americans were already using. Over many years, this mix grew into American Sign Language.

Answer the questions.

In what country was Laurent Clerc born?

_____

What language did he learn at school in Paris?

_____

Who asked Clerc to come to America?

_____

When and where did their school open?

_____

How did Clerc's signs help make ASL?

_____

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ANSWER KEY · DEAF HISTORY · GRADES 3–5

Answer Key: Meet Laurent Clerc

Answers for grown-ups. Where kids write their own ideas, the key shows one example.



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Answer the questions.

In what country was Laurent Clerc born?

France

What language did he learn at school in Paris?

French Sign Language

Who asked Clerc to come to America?

Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet

When and where did their school open?

1817 in Hartford, Connecticut

How did Clerc's signs help make ASL?

They mixed with signs deaf Americans already used.

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