

Guide to Accessibility Symbols

More and more museums, concert halls, movie theaters and other cultural institutions offer special services for people who are deaf and hard of hearing. These institutions usually advertise their offerings by including an accessibility symbol. But what do all of these symbols mean?



This symbol means an assistive listening device is available – either headsets or neck loops or both. At some movie theaters, this may also mean that they have a T-Coil compatible headset. Helpful Hint: when borrowing an assistive device, check to make sure that the battery in the assistive device is working before you go to your seat. Don't forget to bring a photo ID, which may be needed to borrow the equipment. If you have the time prior to a film or performance, ask if the theater has a pre-show sound test to ensure that your device is working properly.



This is an umbrella symbol for hearing access. You might see this symbol in use; however it is not the preferred symbol as it does not explain which accommodations are available. Because there is no “one size fits all” for hearing access, if you do see this symbol, please be sure to inquire about accessible offerings.



Open Captioning is captioning that is on and visible at all times. This may also include real-time captioning at live performances and lectures.



This symbol means that Closed Captioning or Rear Window Captioning is offered upon request. Rear Window Captioning, available at some movie and IMAX theaters, has a Lucite screen that attaches to the viewer's seat and reflects the captions from the back of the theater. Helpful hint: If you require captioning, be sure to

alert the attendant to turn on the captioning. Come early to obtain the Lucite panel from the service desk. Additionally, the theater may have limited seats reserved for Rear Window Captioning, so be sure to ask.



A symbol indicating that large print transcripts are available probably indicates that regular print transcripts are available to allow a visitor to follow along.



This symbol indicates that sign language interpretation is available.



This symbol means that the room is looped and the individual with hearing loss can turn their hearing aid to T-Coil to receive amplified sound.

Janice Schacter, Chair of the Hearing Access Program, offers some important steps to ensure full enjoyment of culture in New York City. The Hearing Access Program is a collaborative effort between the Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, the League for the Hard of Hearing/a.b.c. and the Hearing Loss Association of America, formerly known as Self-Help for the Hard of Hearing.

1. Plan your visit in advance. Check the website before you go. On most cultural institution's websites, you can find an accessibility section, typically listed under “visit us,” which will provide details on what the venue has to offer. When calling to inquire, ask for the “visitor's service” or the “education department.”
2. Be sure to ask what devices are available. Signs may not be up to date.
3. Be an advocate for yourself or your child. Don't feel afraid to request a service or device.