How Language can Include or Marginalise People

Deaf History Collections

LEARNING AREA:	English
YEAR LEVEL(S):	10

CONTENT DESCRIPTIONS	CONTENT ELABORATIONS
Language for interaction: understand how language can have inclusive and exclusive social effects, and can empower or disempower people AC9E10LA01	• identifying language that seeks to align the listener or reader; for example 'of course', 'obviously', 'as you can imagine' • identifying the use of first person ('I', 'we') and second person pronouns ('you') to distance or involve the audience • identifying language used to reference or indicate shared assumptions • identifying language that appeals to shared cultural knowledge, values and beliefs • Identifying examples of language that are inclusive or marginalising

LEARNING INTENTION/S
I will compare texts to identify how they use language with the aim to include or marginalise people.

SOURCES
'Why Deaf People Must Write' by Karen Lloyd (1980s)
Letter to the Editor by Eli Noble (1950)
Public letter to members of the Australian Association for the Advancement of the Deaf by M. O. Wilson (1930s)
'Deaf and Dumb Land' by Ernest Abraham (early 1900s)

INSTRUCTIONS
1. Download *Handout 1 - Language for Empowerment* and *Handout 2 - How Language can Include or Marginalise People*.
2. As a class, review some of the language strategies that are used to include or marginalise the reader. Consider:
   a. Use of pronouns – first-person ('I', 'we'), second-person ('you') and third-person ('he', 'she', 'they', 'them')
   b. Phrases that align the reader with the writer: 'of course', 'obviously', 'as you can imagine', 'as we know'.
   c. Making assumptions that a view is shared.
   d. Language that appeals to shared knowledge, beliefs and values.
3. In small groups, read 'Deaf and Dumb Land', written in the early 1900s by Ernest Abraham.
   a. Identify the language he uses to align himself with the reader.
   b. Identify the language he uses to describe deaf people.
   c. How might this text make deaf readers feel included or marginalised?
4. Read one of the other sources above and ask the same questions:
   a. How does the writer align themselves with the reader?
   b. How does the writer talk about deaf people?