

Unit 1

Introduction to American Sign Language & the Deaf Community.

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DEAF AWARENESS QUIZ

Instruction: Circle the best answer (some will have more than one).

1. What is American Sign Language (ASL)? (circle two answers)
 - a) a code similar to Braille
 - b) a shortened form of English
 - c) a language incorporating a lot of mime
 - d) a language capable of expressing any abstract idea
 - e) a language using picture-like images to express ideas and concepts
 - f) a language utilizing space and movement to convey meaning
2. Historically, American Sign Language is related to:
 - a) British Sign Language
 - b) Swedish Sign Language
 - c) French Sign Language
 - d) German Sign Language
3. American Sign Language is used by most Deaf people in which of the following countries? (circle all that apply)
 - a) Canada
 - b) United States
 - c) Mexico
 - d) Brazil
4. What percent of Deaf people have Deaf parents?
 - a) 10 percent
 - b) 25 percent
 - c) 50 percent
 - d) 75 percent
 - e) 90 percent
5. American Sign Language and Deaf culture are transmitted to Deaf people from generation to generation primarily through:
 - a) family
 - b) Deaf adults in the community
 - c) residential Schools for the Deaf
 - d) Sign Language teachers
6. The role of facial expressions, head movements, and eye gaze in American Sign Language is primarily:
 - a) grammatical
 - b) stylistic
 - c) emotive
 - d) attention getting

7. While watching another person sign, it is appropriate to focus on the signer's:
- a) hands
 - b) chest area
 - c) face
8. Among ASL signers, fingerspelling is mainly used in what ways?
(circle all that apply)
- a) interchangeably with any sign
 - b) to specify brand names
 - c) as an artistic form of signing
 - d) to give names of people and places
9. ASL makes use of the space in front of a signer's body to:
(circle all that apply)
- a) indicate sentence types
 - b) convey distance
 - c) contrast two people, places, things, or ideas
 - d) express time concepts
10. To get the attention of a Deaf person who is looking the other way, you should:
- a) yell as loud as you can
 - b) tap him/her on the shoulder
 - c) wave in his/her face
 - d) go around and stand in front of the person
11. If your path is blocked by two signers conversing with each other, you should:
- a) wait until they stop talking before you pass through
 - b) bend down very low in order to avoid passing through their signing space
 - c) go ahead and walk through
 - d) find another path
12. Which of the following are considered rude by Deaf people? (circle two answers)
- a) touching a person to get attention
 - b) looking at a signed conversation without indicating you know Sign Language
 - c) describing a distinctive feature of a person to identify him/her
 - d) talking without signing in the presence of Deaf people
13. In general, the least effective communication strategy between Deaf and hearing people is:
- a) speech and lipreading
 - b) using Sign Language
 - c) writing back and forth
 - d) using interpreters

14. Which of the following are valued in the Deaf community? (circle all that apply)
- a) for Deaf people to govern their own affairs
 - b) being kept informed about the community and its members
 - c) restoration of hearing loss
 - d) group cohesiveness
 - e) individualism
15. Other than the word "deaf," a culturally appropriate way to identify Deaf people would be to say they are:
- a) deaf and dumb
 - b) deaf mutes
 - c) hearing impaired
 - d) all of the above
 - e) none of the above
16. Historically, Deaf people have faced discrimination in the following areas:
- a) job hiring and promotion
 - b) obtaining a driver's license without restrictions
 - c) getting fair insurance rates
 - d) getting decent housing
 - e) obtaining access to public services, information, and entertainment
17. Some of the issues the National Association of the Deaf has fought for are: (circle all that apply)
- a) using Sign Language in the classroom
 - b) maintaining a high proportion of Deaf teachers at the elementary and secondary levels
 - c) the right of Deaf people to adopt children
 - d) giving double tax exemption to Deaf people
18. What was the purpose of the protest rally at Gallaudet University in March 1988?
- a) to improve interpreting services
 - b) to give priority to Sign Language research
 - c) to assure that Deaf people be placed in top level decision-making positions
 - d) to mainstream more hearing students at the University

As you go through this workbook and read the Grammar and Culture/Language Notes, you will find the correct answers to the questions above.

CULTURE/LANGUAGE NOTES

Introduction to American Sign Language

Many people mistakenly believe that American Sign Language (ASL) is English conveyed through signs. Some think that it is a manual code for English, that it can express only concrete information, or that there is one universal sign language used by Deaf people around the world.

Linguistic research demonstrates, however, that ASL is comparable in complexity and expressiveness to spoken languages. It is not a form of English. It has its own distinct grammatical structure, which must be mastered in the same way as the grammar of any other language. ASL differs from spoken languages in that it is visual rather than auditory and is composed of precise handshapes and movements.

ASL is capable of conveying subtle, complex, and abstract ideas. Signers can discuss philosophy, literature, or politics as well as football, cars or income taxes. Sign Language can express poetry as poignantly as can any spoken language and can communicate humor, wit, and satire just as biting. As in other languages, new vocabulary items are constantly being introduced by the community in response to cultural and technological change.

ASL is not universal. Just as hearing people in different countries speak different languages, so do Deaf people around the world sign different languages. Deaf people in Mexico use a different sign language from that used in the U.S. Because of historical circumstances, contemporary ASL is more like French Sign Language than like British Sign Language.

ASL was developed by American Deaf people to communicate with each other and has existed as long as there have been Deaf Americans. Standardization was begun in 1817 when Laurent Clerc and Thomas H. Gallaudet established the first School for the Deaf in the U.S. Students afterwards spread the use of ASL to other parts of the U.S. and Canada. Traditionally, the language has been passed from one generation to the next in the residential school environment, especially through dormitory life. Even when signs were not permitted in the classroom, the children of Deaf parents, as well as Deaf teachers and staff, would secretly pass on the language to other students. ASL is now used by approximately one-half million Deaf people in the U.S. and Canada.

Since the late 1800's, Deaf people have been discouraged from using ASL. Many well-meaning but misguided educators, believing that the only way for deaf people to fit into the hearing world is through speech and lipreading, have insisted that deaf children try to learn to speak English. Some have even gone so far as to tie down deaf children's hands to prevent them from signing. Despite these and other attempts to discourage signing, ASL continues to be the preferred language of the Deaf community. Far from seeing the use of sign as a handicap, Deaf people regard ASL as their natural language which reflects their cultural values and keeps their traditions and heritage alive. In this class, you will see how ASL has shaped and is shaped by the culture of Deaf Americans.

Introduction to American Sign Language Questions

1. You have read that many people have mistaken beliefs about American Sign Language (ASL). What were two of the beliefs discussed in the reading?
2. Is ASL a universal language used around the world?
3. Does ASL have a grammatical structure?
4. Since the late 1800's, educators have discouraged the Deaf from using ASL. What is the reason for this?
5. What did you learn about how the Deaf regard ASL?

Introduction to the Deaf Community

In the spring of 1988, student protesters at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C. sent a loud and clear message to the world: "Prejudice is believing that deaf people have to be taken care of."

Gallaudet trustees had set the spark for this campus protest by ignoring the wishes of Deaf students that a Deaf person be chosen as the 124-year-old college's seventh president. Instead, the trustees chose as president a person who is not only hearing, but also unable to communicate in Sign Language. Students erupted in a rage. They boycotted classes and blockaded entrances to the college signing "Deaf Power." The protest quickly mushroomed into a national debate over the civil rights of Deaf people. The students received support from Deaf communities around the world. The reason is that Gallaudet, which was founded by an act of Congress in 1864, has become one of the world's foremost educational centers for Deaf people. Yet it has never had a Deaf president - the result, said students and staff, of the paternalism of the hearing world that perpetuates the myth that Deaf people cannot function on their own.

Faced with such opposition, the newly appointed president resigned, a Deaf chairperson of the Board of Trustees was appointed and, three days later, the board voted to hire as president, I. King Jordan, the former dean of the College of Arts and Science, a Gallaudet graduate with a Ph.D. in Psychology.

That night, the new president, the chairperson of the Board of Trustees, and the student body president talked about the future of the 2,123-student university. As the three emerged from the president's office, the teary-eyed student body president said, "There was no interpreter." None was needed because for the first time in the school's history, Deaf people held the fate of the nation's only university for the Deaf in their own hands.

During this eight-day protest, Deaf students demanded that the hearing world respect their right to govern their own lives. They showed that deafness is not a disability, but rather the quality that unites Deaf people into a cohesive, vibrant community. At the heart of this community is its language, ASL. This language embodies the thoughts, experiences, traditions, and values shared by the community. Deaf people themselves are poets, carpenters, mechanics, farmers, artists, teachers, ministers, lawyers, business people and journalists. Deaf people have their own community organizations, professional associations, theatres, and churches. And as the hearing world learned, the Deaf community has its own leaders.

A note on terminology. Over the years, different terms have been used to refer to Deaf people. Some older terms are offensive today and should be avoided, especially "deaf and dumb" and "deaf mute." The term "hearing impaired" is often used by public institutions and political groups as an inclusive term to refer to all people with any degree of hearing loss. This term, however, does not distinguish between people with hearing loss and Deaf people. Deaf people, because of their language and cultural identity, prefer to be called "Deaf."

Introduction to the Deaf Community Questions

1. In 1988, there was a protest by Deaf students at Gallaudet University. What is the name of the city that Gallaudet is in? When was the college founded?
2. During the 1988 protest, the students boycotted classes and blockaded entrances to the college signing "Deaf Power". What was the reason the students protested?
3. As a result of the protest, Gallaudet's Board of Trustees changed their vote. What was decided by their vote?
4. That night, there was a meeting with the chairperson of the Board of Trustees, the new president, and the student body president. Because everyone understood ASL, for the first time in the school's history, there was no need for an _____ during the meeting.
5. At the heart of the Deaf community is _____.
6. Over the years, different terms have been used to refer to Deaf people. Some of these old terms are offensive today and should be avoided. Name three of these terms that were mentioned in your reading.

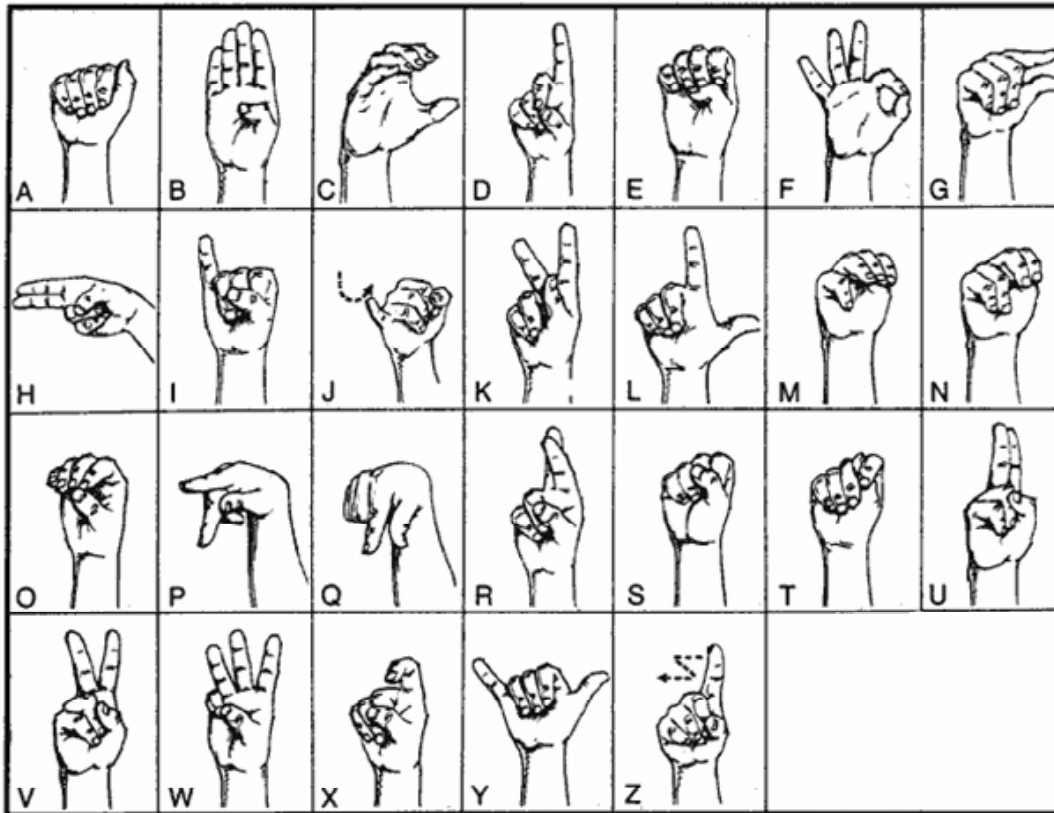
Strategies for Learning American Sign Language

To increase your language learning in the classroom, develop the following habits:

- 1) Follow all conversations whether they are between the teacher and class, teacher and student, or student and student.
- 2) Focus on the signer's face, not on the hands. Don't break eye contact while in a signed conversation.
- 3) Develop active listening behaviors, i.e., nodding, responding with "huh?" "wow," "really?" Your teacher may stop to repeat information because you do not nod to indicate you are following along. This is not teacher/student behavior - it is cultural. Listeners have very active roles in signed conversations.
- 4) Participate as much as possible by adding comments, agreeing or disagreeing, etc. The more you participate, the more you will retain what you learn. Don't worry about mistakes. They are part of the learning process.
- 5) Try not to worry about a sign you missed. Work on getting the gist of the conversation. If a particular sign pops up over and over, and you haven't a clue to its meaning, then ask the teacher. Try to avoid asking your classmate for a quick English translation. You would lose out on valuable communication experiences that can strengthen your comprehension skills.
- 6) Leave English (and your voice) outside the door. Try not to translate in your head as you watch someone sign. Don't worry about memorizing, as repetition and context will help you acquire the language.
- 7) Try to maintain a signing environment during class breaks, before class begins, and whenever Deaf people are present.
- 8) Try not to miss class, especially at the beginning. Your class strives to form a language community; the cohesiveness of the group influences how rich the language exchange is in the classroom. Missing class makes it difficult to achieve this interactive environment.

The Handshapes of American Sign Language

Manual Alphabet Handshapes

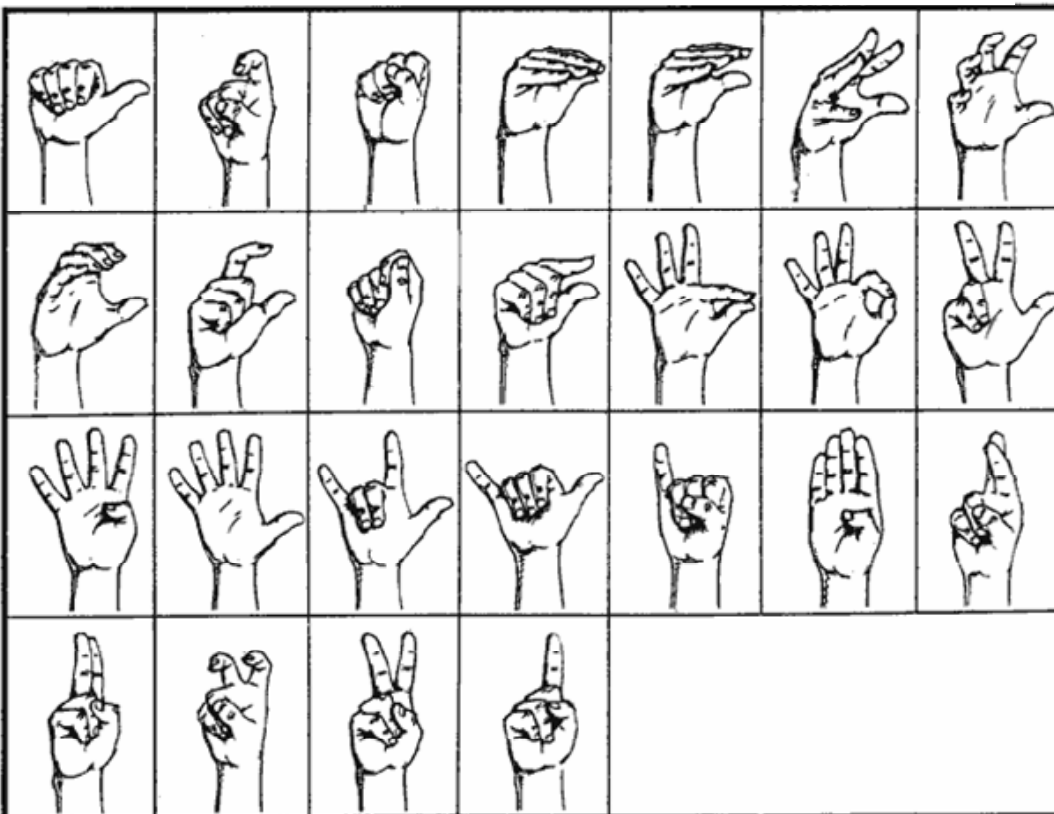


The handshapes on this page are used to produce almost all of the signs of ASL.

Some handshapes are also used to produce signs that represent letters of the English alphabet.

These signs are used to "spell" English words - this is called Fingerspelling.

Classifier Handshapes



Some handshapes are used to produce a special group of signs called "classifiers".

Classifiers are signs that represent nouns.

ASL has an extensive classifier system used to represent:

- whole objects
- surfaces
- perimeters
- use of the noun
- degree or extent
- on-surface

Handshape is always paired with Movement to create the classifier

FINGER SPELLING RULES, HINTS & TRICKS

Sure Success!

- Keep your hand in front of your shoulder, not your chest or face.
- Keep your hand position steady—don't "bump" out your letters.
- Move only your fingers. Shoulders and arms aren't used in Fingerspelling.
- Spell slowly and clearly: It is better than fast and sloppy.
- Pause between fingerspelled words and try to hold the last letter of the word slightly.
- Say the word mentally/silently while you Fingerspell it—Do NOT focus on the individual letter.
- When words have double letters (i.e..Happy, Jolly), the double letter is dragged to the right slightly.

Closure

- Closure simply means filling in the gaps.

Example: Mary just bought a new car. It is a F _ _ d.

- Using our common sense we can figure out that the word is F-O-R-D. By the *context* of the sentence, we've "read" the Fingerspelling, even though we did not actually "see" every letter. This is NOT cheating! It is closure!

Example: When John was hunting, he shot a b _ _ r.

Choice 1. Beer (That wild Reineer Beer was dangerous! Good thing he shot it!)

Choice 2. Bear (Makes more sense.)

- If you have been following the "gist" of the signed conversation, the receptive part of Fingerspelling will not be that hard. When you see the hands come up to spell a word—DON'T PANIC!
- If you are still stuck—go ahead and ask for repetition! It's ok!

When Do I Use Fingerspelling?

- With proper nouns (i.e. John, Kramer Street, Safeway, Toledo.)
- With titles to books and movies (Gone With the Wind, Top Gun.)
- When you want to emphasize your point (*Example: Final paper write finish me! F-I-N-S-H!*)
- When the sign being used is not understood.

Practice! Practice! Practice!

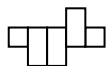
Fingerspell every word you hear while driving in the car. Drill yourself with like sounding words (ie fat, cat, vat, rat.) Watch how your fingers make the different shapes. Use pneumatic to aid in remembering the letters. Watch others as they spell, especially Deaf friends! If you have a computer, consider buying the Fingerspelling program to tutor you. Expressive and receptive Fingerspelling is a must in ASL.

REMEMBER: YOU CAN DO THIS!!

Fingerspelling Hints

Receptive:

1. Look for the shape of a word, and let it help tell you what the word is



apple



beer

bear

2. Look for the whole word.
3. Look for recurring patterns: ing, tion, th, sh, ch, double letters, etc.
4. See how the fingerspelled word fits with the rhythm of the whole sentence. Think of it as another sign with a different form.
5. Be sure and get the first and last letters. Remember that vowels are often dropped especially in the middle of a word.
6. If you don't know, make a good guess. Use closure to help you recognize a word. "John was out hiking and saw a big b_ _ r."

1. beer 2. bear

Use what information you already have to recognize the word.

"Mary just bought a new car. She used to own a F_ _ d, but wanted better gas mileage so she's bought a H_ n_ a."

Expressive:

1. Fingerspelling takes very little effort. Do it easily.
2. Better slow and clear than fast and sloppy.
3. Listen to a song- each letter gets it's own beat.
4. Pause one beat between fingerspelled words.
5. You only need to move your fingers. Shoulders and arms are not used for fingerspelling.
6. Spell the word. If a long word, spell it syllable by syllable.
7. Think through to the end of the word. Keep the word in mind, syllable by syllable as you spell it out- NOT letter by letter.
8. When signing and you have a word to fingerspell, remember that you have plenty of time to do it easily and clearly.
9. When platform interpreting it is a good idea to be sure that any fingerspelling has a dark background. If the background behind you is not adequate, consider moving your hand in front of your dark shirt to provide a good background, especially for terminology type words.

Fingerspelling 2 letter Drills

<u>is</u>	<u>it</u>	<u>in</u>	<u>ip</u>	<u>ir</u>	<u>ob</u>	<u>od</u>	<u>oe</u>
his	bit	bin	dip	fir	bob	bod	doe
sis	fit	din	hip	sir	cob	God	foe
	hit	fin	lip		fob	hod	hoe
	kit	gin	nip		job	nod	Joe
	lit	pin	pip		mob	pod	toe
	mit	tin	rip		rob	rod	woe
	pit	win	sip		sob	sod	
	rit		tip				
	sit		zip				
	wit						
<u>og</u>	<u>or</u>	<u>ot</u>	<u>ow</u>	<u>ox</u>	<u>ue</u>	<u>ub</u>	<u>ud</u>
bog	for	cot	bow	box	cue	cub	bud
cog		dot	cow	fox	due	dub	cud
dog		got	how		hue	hub	mud
fog		hot	mow		rue	pub	sud
hog		jot	now		sue	rub	
jog		lot	row			sub	
log		not	sow			tub	
tog		pot	tow				
		rot					
<u>um</u>	<u>on</u>	<u>ug</u>	<u>un</u>	<u>up</u>	<u>ur</u>	<u>us</u>	<u>ut</u>
bum	bon	bug	bun	cup	bur	bus	but
gum	hon	dug	cun	pup	cur	cus	cut
hum	mon	hug	fun	sup	fur	jus	gut
mum	non	jug	gun		our	ous	hut
rum	ron	lug	hun		sur	sus	jut
sum	son	mug	jun				mut
	ton	rug	nun				nut
	won	tug	pun				out
	yon		run				put
	zon		sun				rut
							tut

Fingerspelling 3 letter Drills

ab

cab
dab
fab
gab
jab
lab
nab
tab

ad

dad
fad
had
lad
mad
pad
sad
tad
wad

ag

bag
fag
hag
jag
lag
nag
rag
sag
tag
wag

am

bam
cam
dam
ham
jam
lam
mam
pam
ram
sam
tam
yam

an

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Fan
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Ted
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lee
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bid
did
hid
kid
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rid

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die
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pie
tie
vie

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big
dig
fig
pig
rig
wig

im

aim
dim
him
rim
Tim
vim

ASL Numbers 0-10



0



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10

FYI Numbers 1-5 always face me unless I'm signing:

- addresses
- telephone numbers
- a series of numbers in a group

3 *Number challenge.* Focus on developing rhythm and maintaining a consistent speed start to finish.

1. sign numbers 0-10 without looking at your hand and without making a mistake
2. sign numbers 10-0 without looking at your hand and without making a mistake
3. sign the even numerals

ASL Numbers 11-19



11



12

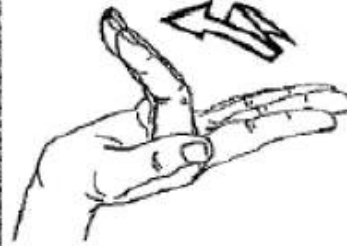
The numbers 11 and 12 are formed by flicking the necessary fingers up from the S handshape. Flick the fingers once.



13



14



15

Numbers 13, 14, and 15 involve opening and closing their handshapes twice. *Note the thumb is not extended for the number 14, unlike 13 and 15.



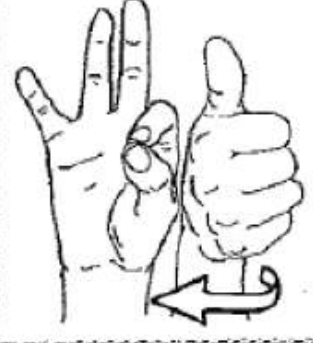
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17

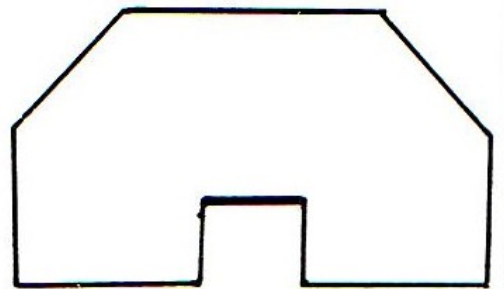
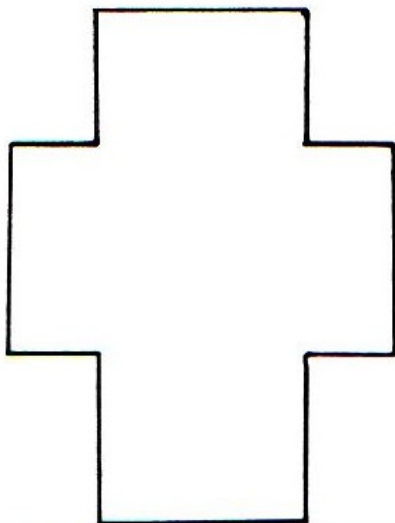
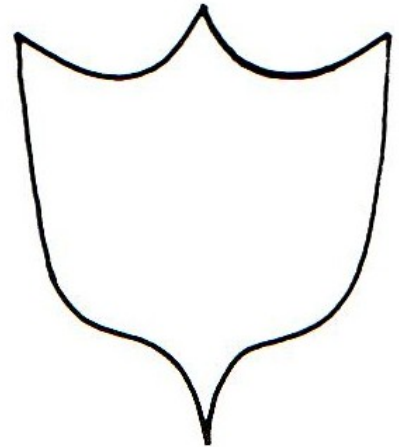
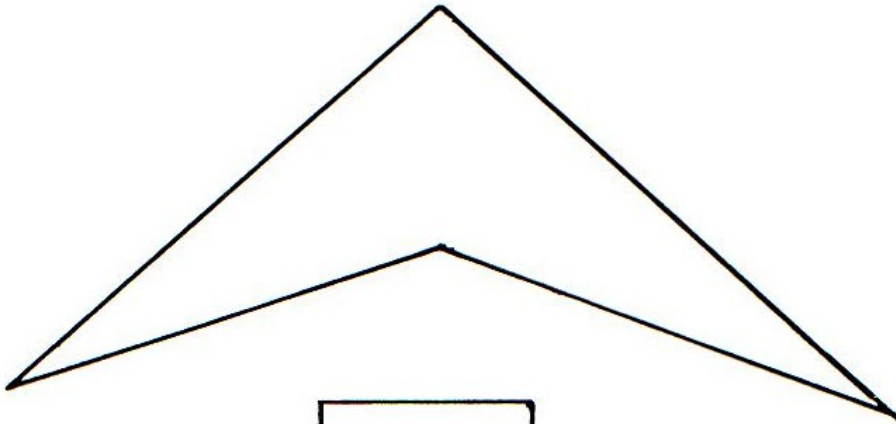
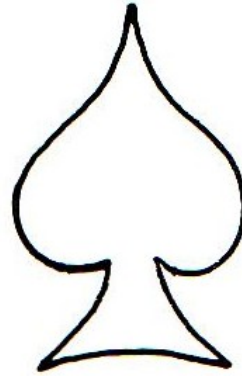
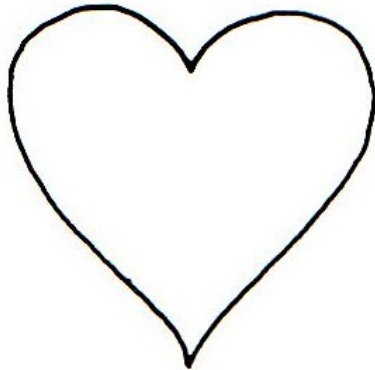
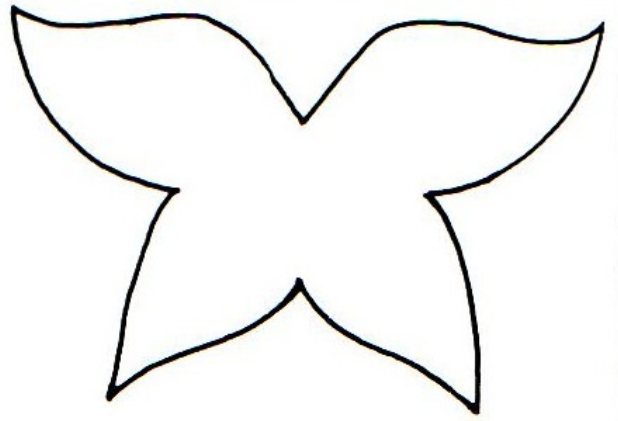
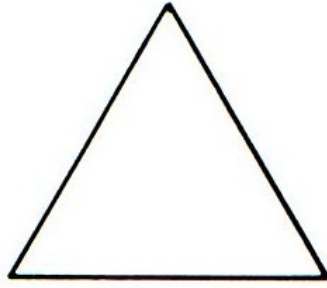
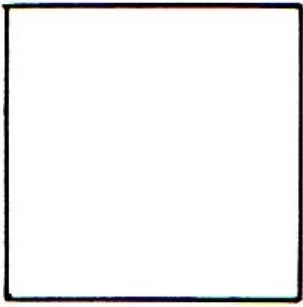


18



19

Numbers 16, 17, 18 and 19 are made by combining the number 10 with 6, 7, 8, and 9. Hold the Number 10 handshape inward, and as you move your wrist outward add the second number. Think of these numbers as 10 and 6, 10 and 7, 10 and 8, 10 and 9.



Sign Parameters

The parts of a sign

Use the table below to produce sets of signs.

Notice that the change in just one parameter will often produce a new sign (but not always).

It is important for new signers to realize that even a slight alteration of one of the parameters can produce an unintended sign.

ASL Sign Parameters	English equivalent glosses
HANDSHAPE (HS)	RESTAURANT TWIN ARIZONA
PALM ORIENTATION (PO)	SCHOOL STOP PROOF
MOVEMENT (MOV)	STOP SOME REJECT
LOCATION (LOC)	SUMMER UGLY DRY
FACIAL EXPRESSION	LATE NOT-YET

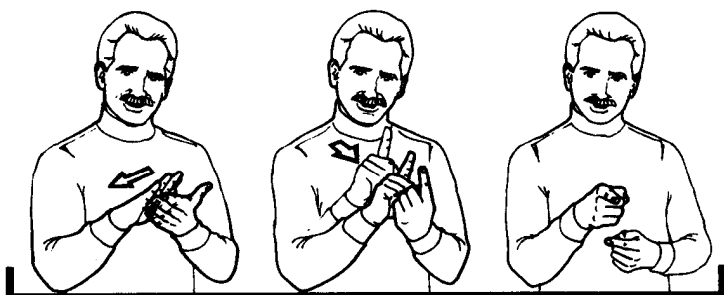
Unit 1 Glosses:

- | | |
|--------------|---------------|
| 1. AGAIN | 16.PLEASE |
| 2. BAD | 17.REMEMBER |
| 3. COPY | 18.SAME |
| 4. CORRECT | 19.SCHOOL |
| 5. DIFFERENT | 20.SLOW |
| 6. FORGET | 21.THANK-YOU |
| 7. GOOD | 22.THEY |
| 8. GO-TO | 23.UNDERSTAND |
| 9. IT | 24.WHERE |
| 10.ME | 25.WHO |
| 11.MEET | 26.WRITE (2) |
| 12.NAME | 27.WRITE-DOWN |
| 13.NO | 28.WRONG |
| 14.NOT-KNOW | 29.YES |
| 15.PAPER | 30.YOU |

KEY PHRASES



Ask for name



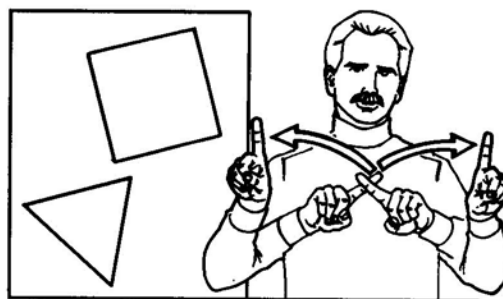
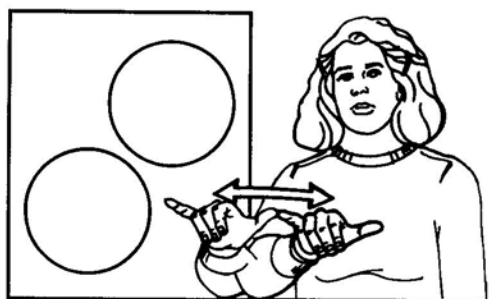
Express pleasure in meeting someone

VOCABULARY REVIEW

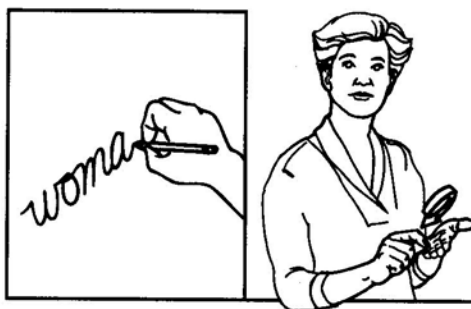
WH-WORD
QUESTION SIGNS



SAME/
DIFFERENT



DRAW/WRITE



Survival Glosses and Phrases for the Classroom

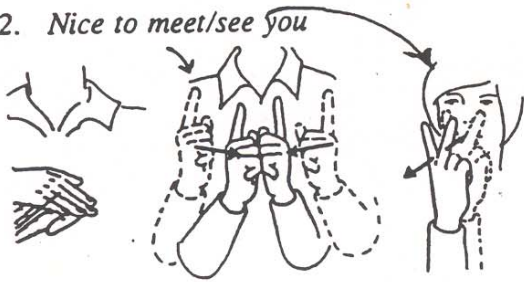
- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. good morning/afternoon/evening | 21. yes |
| 2. nice to meet/see you | 22. no |
| 3. thank you | 23. homework |
| 4. please | 24. test |
| 5. excuse me | 25. grade |
| 6. sorry | 26. practice |
| 7. what's up | 27. study |
| 8. how are you? | 28. tardy/late |
| 9. fine | 29. absent/skip |
| 10. lousy | 30. participation |
| 11. understand/don't understand | 31. activity |
| 12. "over my head" | 32. clueless |
| 13. "It went right by me" | 33. peabrain |
| 14. forget/blank | 34. sign |
| 15. slow down | 35. "so-so" |
| 16. fingerspell again please | 36. bathroom (toilet) |
| 17. missed it | 37. water |
| 18. wait | 38. know/don't know |
| 19. right /correct | 39. again |
| 20. wrong | 40. finish/finished (many meanings) |

American Sign Language
Survival Vocabulary and Phrases for the Classroom

1. Good morning/afternoon/evening



2. Nice to meet/see you



3. Thank you



4. Please



5. Excuse me



6. Sorry



7. What's up



8. How are you?



9. Fine



10. Lousy



11. Understand/don't understand



12. "Over my head"

13. "It went right by me"

14. Forget/blank



15. Slow down



16. Fingerspell again please



17. Missed it



18. Wait



19. Right



20. Wrong



21. Yes



22. No



23. Homework



24. Test



26. Practice



27. *Study*



28. *Tardy/late*



29. *Absent/skip*



30. *Participation*



31. *Activity*



32. *Clueless*

33. *Peabrain*



34. *Sign*



35. *'so-so'*



36. *Bathroom (Toilet)*



37. *Water*



38. *Know/Don't Know*



40. *Finish/Finished (many meanings!)*



Colors & Weekdays:

COLORS= open palm in - wiggle fingers on chin

Blue= B- hand shaking

green= g- hand shaking

yellow= y-hand shaking

Purple= p –hand shaking

Red= index finger going down chin, palm in

Pink= p-hand going down chin

Brown= B-hand down cheek

Tan= t-hand rub down cheek

Orange= o –hand squeezing chin

Black= Index finger making line over eyebrows

White= open palm on chest pulling out to closed fingers

Gray= both hands- open palms in, spread fingers- going back and forth

Weekdays: sign week then day

Monday= m-hand facing in. moving in a circle

Tuesday: t-hand facing in, moving in a circle

Wednesday= w-hand facing in, moving in a circle

Thursday= t-h- facing in, moving in a circle

Friday= f-hand facing in, moving in a circle

Saturday= s –hand facing in, moving in a circle

Sunday= both hands, palm out- above head- move down

Day = left arm horizon & rt.hand 1 or D move from straight up to on left

Week= left hand, palm in –fingers tight pointed side, right hand" 1" rub left hand from heel to fingers

Month= left hand "I " palm out, right hand "I " palm down going down left " I "

Year: both hands, closed palm, right fist around left

VOCABULARY

► Colors



RED



YELLOW



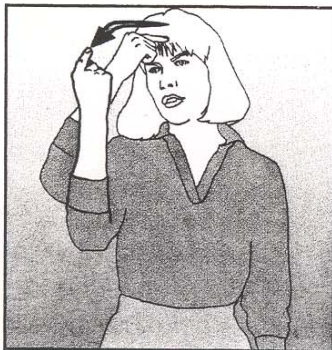
BLUE



GREEN



BROWN- , chocolate



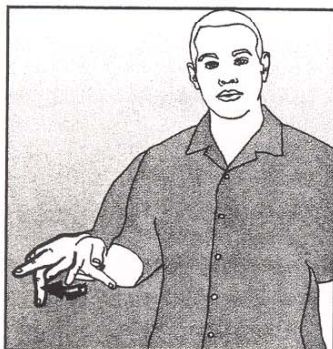
BLACK, black person



WHITE



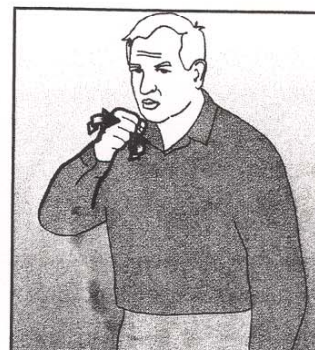
PINK



PURPLE



GRAY

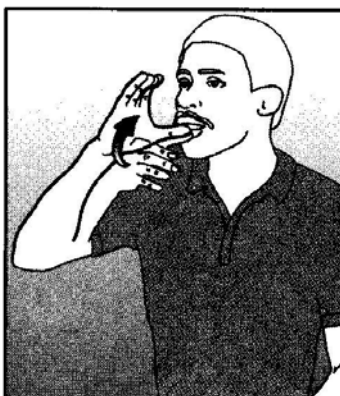
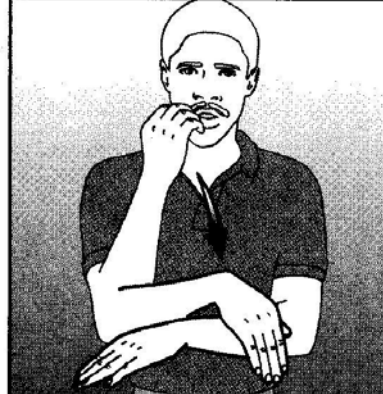
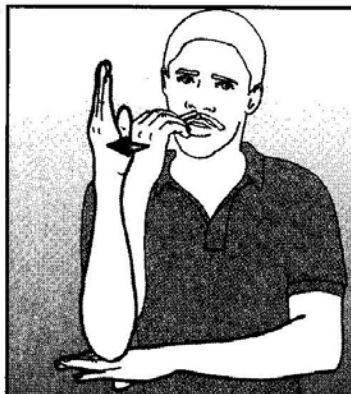


ORANGE

► Days of the Week



► Meals, Cooking, and Food



The Meaning of Deafness

A study of deafness can become very technical and complicated when described in terms of a person's audiological history, educational preparation, communication philosophy and cultural background. More important than understanding any single term about deafness is understanding that *deaf people are people*. □

Deaf People Are People

Deaf people could be considered a minority group. Each individual is unique; the same as in other minority groups. Deaf people have individual preferences, tastes, abilities and personalities.

Some deaf people are very intelligent; some are average; some are athletic; some clumsy; others are personable and vivacious or quiet and reserved; some are high achievers; some are low achievers.

Deaf individuals have families, hold jobs, make installment payments, attend churches, throw parties, own businesses and watch television.

Deaf persons are more *like* you than they are unlike you. Their deafness is only one dimension of their multi-dimensional characters. Each deaf person is as unique as you are.

All deaf people do have one thing in common with one another--some physical impairment has caused a hearing disability, a condition where hearing is not functional for ordinary life purposes. Many hearing people see deafness as just this loss of hearing. It is not that simple. □

The Real Meaning of Deafness

The real handicap of deafness is being cut off from the normal means of acquiring and transmitting the English language. Consequently, communication is affected. The major communication

difficulty for deaf people is not having a language frame of reference when they are learning to speak, write or speechread.

In addition, communication loss occurs by not hearing a radio announcement, not understanding a news or entertainment program on TV, not catching a conversational tidbit through eavesdropping, not sharing the latest joke. All of this affects a deaf person's sophistication about his or her world and results in personal, social, educational and occupational barriers. □

Coping with Deafness

There are many variables which influence what type and degree of language competence is developed. Some of those variables are:

- native intelligence
- personality
- family environment
- age of onset of deafness
- degree and type of deafness
- language background
- residual hearing (many deaf persons have some hearing)
- listening skills
- speechreading and speech abilities
- educational preparation
- type of early communication mode

Each variable adds to the unique way a person deals with his or her deafness.

Deaf people learn to compensate for their disability. Their challenge is to adjust to their deafness and develop themselves to their fullest potential.

Deaf people ask just one thing of their hearing counterparts: to be treated equally and provided the dignity of being openly and willingly approached as individuals with unique qualities and skills. □

Understanding the Jargon

There are only a few terms related to deafness that are really important to know and understand.

Hearing impaired: The general term used to encompass all types of hearing defects, ranging from a very minute loss to profound deafness. Hearing impairment is the most prevalent chronic physical disability in the United States, affecting over 22 million persons.

Hard-of-Hearing: A condition where the sense of hearing is defective but functional for ordinary life purposes (usually with the help of a hearing aid).

Deaf/Deafness: A condition in which perceivable sounds (including speech) have no meaning for ordinary life purposes.

Congenital deafness: when a person is born deaf.

Adventitious deafness: deafness occurring sometime after birth.

Prelingual deafness: when deafness occurs before the acquisition of language (usually before three years of age). Such a person will have no language frame of reference when learning to speak, write or speechread.

Postlingual deafness: when deafness occurs after the acquisition of language (usually after three years of age). In most cases, persons who have lost their hearing after this age have a relatively strong language base.

* The *impairment* is the physical damage to the auditory pathway.

* The *disability* is the loss of hearing.

* The primary *handicap* is being cut off from normal language acquisition and transmission, which affects communication. □ □

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Regional Education Program for Deaf Students
1801 Broadway 2NP304
Seattle, WA 98122
(206) 587-4183

Information About Deaf People

The following information clarifies many commonly held misconceptions about deaf people. This may help you when you meet a deaf person for the first time or consider him or her for employment. ■

Terminology

Terms such as "deaf and dumb" or "deaf-mute" are considered offensive by most deaf people. ■

Intelligence

I.Q.: The basic intelligence of deaf people is comparable to the normal distribution of the hearing population. ■

Speech

Voice use: Deaf persons have normal vocal organs. Some deaf persons choose not to use their voices. They either think their speech is difficult to understand or feel they have inappropriate pitch or volume control. However, many deaf people do choose to use their voices in their interactions.

Speech intelligibility: The speech understandability of deaf persons varies greatly depending on their skills, abilities and age of onset of deafness. There is absolutely no correlation between a deaf person's speech abilities and intelligence.

Many deaf persons have speech that seems difficult to understand at first. Most hearing people have found that after being around a deaf person for awhile, his/her speech becomes easier to understand. It's like getting used to someone who has a foreign accent. ■

Hearing

Residual Hearing: Most deaf persons have *some* hearing. This limited amount of hearing that a

deaf person has is called residual hearing. Its usefulness for listening to and understanding speech varies with the individual.

Hearing aid use: A hearing aid amplifies sound; however, not all deaf people benefit from them. The aid's usefulness depends upon the wearer's ability to *discriminate* between speech sounds without an aid. If a deaf person can distinguish speech sounds without an aid, he or she will be more able to understand speech with an aid.

Telephone use: A few deaf persons have enough residual hearing or have developed the speech skills necessary to use the telephone.

In addition, special telecommunication devices have been developed for hearing-impaired and deaf persons for use with the standard telephone. Some of this equipment, such as a telephone amplifier, can be installed for a minimal charge. Deaf persons in Washington may also use the Washington State TDD Relay Service for communicating with hearing parties who do not have TDD's. ■

Speechreading

Speechreading: It is often thought that deaf people can speechread as effectively as persons can hear. However, speechreading (or lip-reading) is a skill in which some deaf persons excel; others have difficulty mastering such a talent. While good speechreading skills can help in communication, approximately 25 percent of all speech is visible on the lips. Even the best speechreaders cannot speechread everything that is being said. Residual hearing is a great asset for a deaf person who depends on speechreading. ■

Language

Many people see deafness as just a loss of hearing. It is far more complicated. The biggest problem of prelingually deafened persons is being cut off from the normal means of acquiring and transmitting the English language. In most cases, English should be regarded as the second language of the deaf. Consequently, communication is affected because deaf people do not have a language base when they learn to speak, write and speechread. ■

Work Performance

Potential: While deaf persons vary greatly in their abilities to cope with their hearing loss, they are generally capable of performing almost any job, if they are given realistic opportunities and adequate training. Deafness itself may be an asset in regards to the issue of concentration on work.

Safety records: Deaf workers have above-average safety records. Most jobs do not involve safety risks for deaf persons. In several studies deaf people have demonstrated that they are usually more visually alert to hazards in their environment than hearing persons because deaf people do not rely solely on sounds to warn them of danger.

Noise on the job: Most deaf persons have some residual hearing. The *right* deaf person can often handle a noisy job a hearing person couldn't tolerate. However, it is inaccurate to think *any* deaf person can work in such a situation. For some, depending on the type of hearing loss, working in a noisy environment could be quite uncomfortable and may impair whatever residual hearing they have. ■ ■ ■

Traditional Introductions

A/B Greeting ("Hello" or "Good morning")

A: Ask for name

B: Give name

A: Repeat for confirmation

B: Confirm or negate

or ask again ("yes", "right" or "wave-no")

B ask for A's name - repeat above

A/B: "Nice to meet you"

Full Traditional Introductions- you ask:

Ask if Deaf or Hearing

Ask if learning sign / which level

Ask where learning sign

Ask who the teacher is

Ask where your teacher learned sign

A/B: "Nice to meet you"

M L S E R A S E R S F R L
 O U L S O M R E H T B E O
 O N I P S Y R A R B I L O
 R C C E S K R S H O E S H
 S H N N M P O B F C S F C
 S B E S E S F O L U L W S
 A A P N S K O O B E T O N
 L G E K P S T J H T T J S
 C R S A R H E S H G X S F
 S E P I E C K G R A D E I
 D E A S T O R E H C A E T
 R H O S O B A C K P A C K
 C Z K B T U C R I A H I K



