



## SIGN LANGUAGE 'MUST KNOWS'

### COMMON TERMS

**ASL (American Sign Language)** - the official visual and gesture-based language, having its own semantic and syntactic structure, used by deaf people in the U.S. and English-speaking parts of Canada.

*NOTE: There are other official forms of Sign Language used in and unique to other countries and regions.*

**C.A.S.E. (Contextually Accurate Signed English)** - A form of American Sign Language (ASL) often used by interpreters that borrows signs from ASL but uses spoken English word order. Another name for this is called Pidgin (pronounced Pigeon).

**Dominant/Non-dominant Hand** - For every signer, the DOMINANT HAND will be the 'writing' hand and is the primary hand used in signing. The opposite hand is the NON-DOMINANT HAND used for 2-handed signs.

**Fingerspell** - Using the ASL Manual Alphabet (see below) to spell out words or names either to clarify or because there is no associated sign.

**Manual Alphabet** - This is A-B-C's of American Sign Language used to spell out proper names or words where there is either no sign or the sign is unknown by the user.

*NOTE: Each form of sign language may use its own form of manual alphabet. For Example, British Sign Language (BSL) used in Great Britain and Australia has a completely different manual alphabet and signs.*

**M.C.E. (Manually Coded English)** - This borrows ASL signs and alphabet but stays with strict English word order. (Similar to CASE and SEE listed here.)

**Rochester method** - This form of signing uses ONLY the manual alphabet and excludes the use of sign. It was created to help and teach deaf learn proper English word order and spelling.

**S.E.E. (Signing Exact English)** - This form is usually reserved for legal or medical situations where exact translation of English to Sign is required to decrease the chance of meaning being lost through the interpreter. This is usually used for medical, legal or for international translation to avoid any misunderstandings from the exact spoken words.

**SIM-COM (Simultaneous Communication)** - This happens when a person is speaking in English and using the matching signs in ASL, usually for a mixed audience of hearing and deaf.

**SHOULDER SHIFT (also known as ROLE SHIFT)** - In ASL, location and use of space is critical to separate ideas and thoughts from each other. Shifting slightly from one side to another keeps these ideas clear.

**TOPIC-COMMENT** - This is the core of ASL Grammar. Sentences start with the main idea, then signs clarify and fill in details so that the reader can understand from the beginning of the conversation where the signer is going and follow along.

### 5 PARAMETERS OF SIGNS

For each sign used in ASL, there are 5 key things that the signer must pay attention to when signing:

- 1. Hand Shape** - The shape that the hand and fingers needs to take to communicate the sign.
- 2. Palm Orientation** - The direction that the palm faces when making a sign (ex. - towards the signer, towards the reader, facing upward, etc.)
- 3. Location** - This is where the signs are formed (ex. - in front of the chest, near the forehead, etc.)
- 4. Movement** - For some signs, the location of the hands will change from sign start to end.
- 5. Non-Manual Signals** - ASL relies heavily on accompanying facial expressions, body movements, and even speed or size of the signs to convey meaning. These are the same as changing vocal tone, pitch, and volume in spoken language, and are required to clarify meaning, ask questions, show emphasis, and even tell a joke or story.



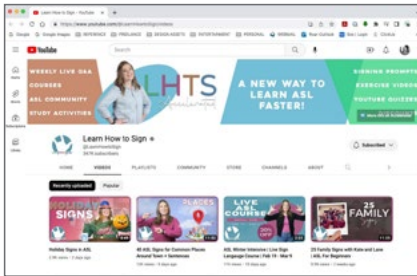


## ONLINE RESOURCES



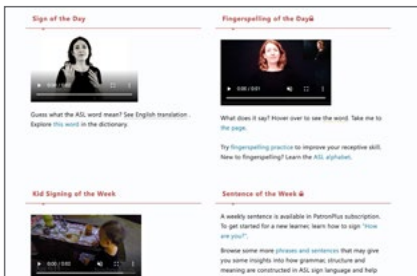
### SMALL GROUP WEB PAGE - <http://triliumdesign.com/sign>

We set up a page off the Trilium Design web site that can be continually updated as new information and resources become available. It's intended to be a one-stop location with links to everything needed for our small group directly from your phone or computer.



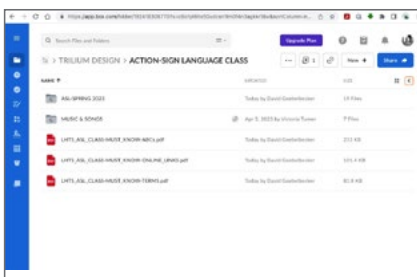
### LEARN HOW TO SIGN - <https://www.youtube.com/@LearnHowtoSign/videos>

A wonderful YouTube channel created and hosted by Meredith Rathbone, one of the best on-line ASL instructors we've seen for free. We'll be using her short videos teach vocabulary based on various topics along with offering ASL practice sentences. Although we'll taking a few of these topics into our group, there are many more to choose from on your ASL journey. Always so much to learn!



### HANDSPEAK - <https://www.handspeak.com>

Think of this web site as our 'Webster's Dictionary' of ASL signs. Not only does it offer short videos with how words and phrases are signed, but there are a lot more resources available—daily words, information about deaf culture, tutorials and blogs about deaf history, tips on grammar and even sign language storytelling. Make sure you take time to explore all it has to offer.



### 'HANDS IN ACTION' BOX.COM PORTAL <https://app.box.com/s/c6o1pl6hx5Oudcsn1m0f4n3agkkr5bv>

This online cloud-based folder contains downloadable copies of all of the small group resources from lessons to worship songs. Where the contents will grow and change, this link will always be available.

## HANDS IN ACTION - OUR MISSION

It's our passion and desire serve as a catalyst to reach and connect the deaf and hard-of-hearing with all God has for them and to equip people of any ASL skill level with the tools needed to grow and learn more.

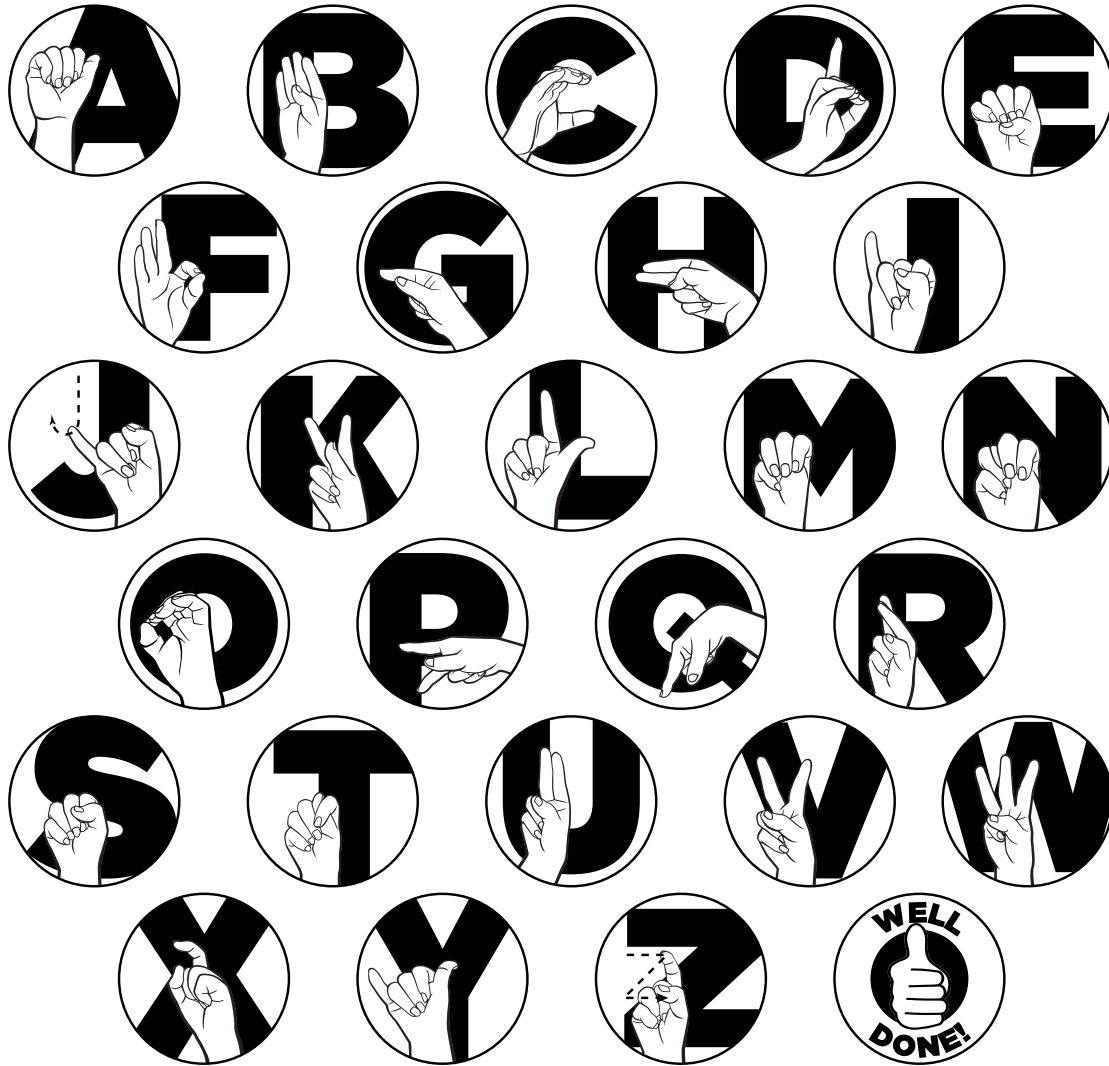
We also hope to raise awareness and understanding of deaf culture and build a community where we can all learn and grow in God together. Everyone deserves a family where they can feel understood, respected and loved.



... more information to come!



## ASL MANUAL ALPHABET



### 12 TIPS TO IMPROVE YOUR FINGERSPELLING SKILLS

1. Read the letters and say their phonetic sound. Learn to read fingerspelling as you would words in a book.
2. For double letters, gently slide your hand to the side. Don't bounce or re-make the letter.
3. Keep your hand relaxed and comfortable. Straining can cause long-term injury.
4. When you make a mistake, simply pause, make a small wipe gesture in the air and start again.
5. For an apostrophe, simply rotate the letter slightly inward. Example, rotate the 's' at the end of Joe's.
6. For multiple words, simply pause between words when fingerspelling them.
7. For hyphenated words, use your dominant hand to gesture drawing a hyphen in the air between words.
8. For a period (like in abc.com), gesture drawing a dot in the air with your dominant hand.
9. Mr. and Mrs. are mainly used in format settings. Deaf usually only use first names.
10. Don't make up signs. If you don't know a word sign, fingerspell the word.
11. If you don't know sign, don't be afraid to ask. (*Sign WHAT SIGN [fingerspell word] + WH question expression.*)
12. Practice, practice and practice again. This is a skill you will use often, so keep it up for when you need it.