

THE ASL PHRASES WORKSHOP

A Guide to ASL

- It is a common misconception that ASL is merely the finger spelling of English words. Fingerspelling – using the manual alphabet to spell out entire words letter by letter – is occasionally incorporated into ASL, but the vocabulary of ASL consists of signs.
- The format of this workshop is not that of a traditional foreign language. There are no formal grammatical exercises or drills, and there are no vocabulary lists to memorize. **Rather, this is a guide to conversation with deaf people. It contains phrases, expressions, sentences, and questions that come up in casual, everyday conversations. These phrases enable you to begin talking with deaf people without first having to master the grammar of the language.**
- It covers the major components of ASL grammar. It is not a complete grammar of ASL. *It is intended to help you better understand the structure of the sentences, but it is not necessary that you understand the grammatical structure before you begin signing those sentences.*



A Guide to ASL

This workshop covers the basic topics that occur in the ordinary course of our lives. (The section on health also includes some expressions that are needed in emergency situations.)

If you wish to assimilate the phrases, the most efficient way is to study one chapter thoroughly, practicing the sentences until you can do them without looking at the pictures. The next step is to use them immediately in conversation. This will help fix them in your memory. To become fluent in ASL, it is important to study and converse in a regular, consistent manner. Do not be afraid of making mistakes, for everyone errs while learning a new language. Deaf people do not expect perfection and usually will cheerfully help you correct your errors.

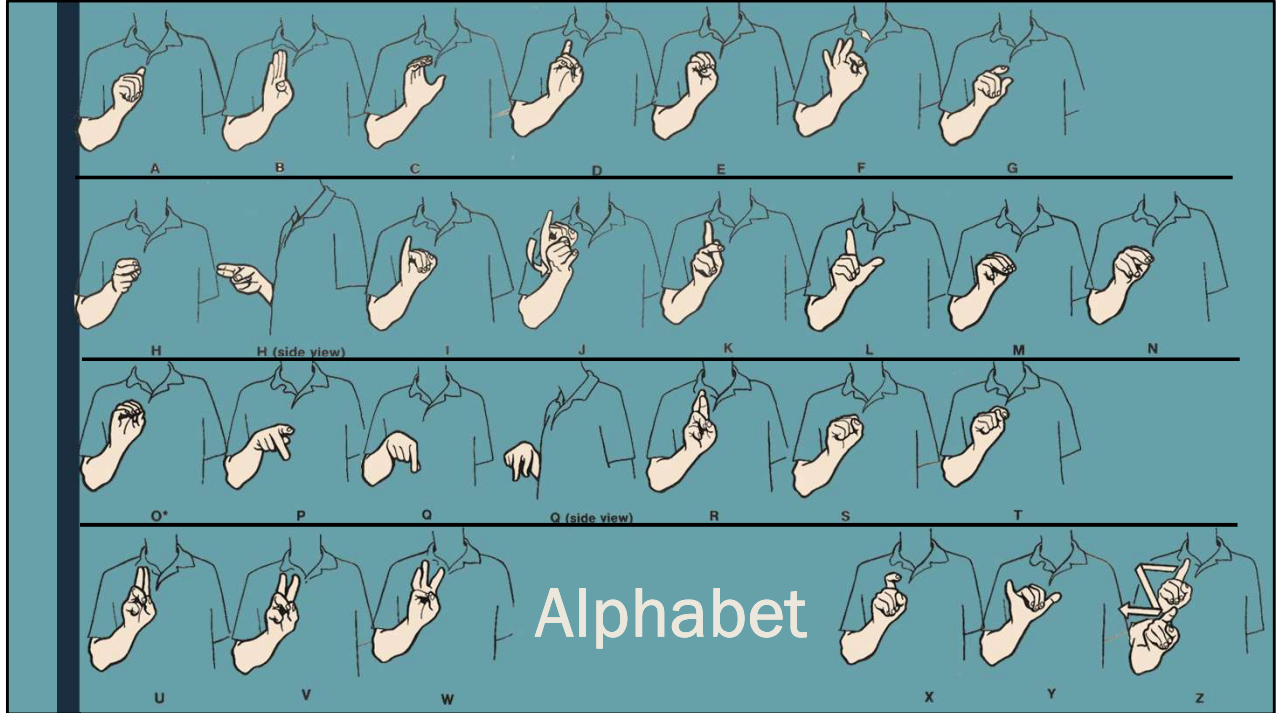
Some Do's And Don'ts

Try to avoid any bright light shining directly into the face of the person watching you. Bright lights are to deaf people what noise is to hearing people.

To get a deaf person's attention, stamp on the floor (if it is wooden), tap the table, or gently touch the person on the shoulder. If they are at a distance, wave your arm or blink a light off and on.

Make sure you do not stand or sit in the middle of someone else's conversation. This often happens in a crowded room or when two deaf people are seated far apart from each other.

Avoid such nervous behavior as drumming your fingers on a table or tapping your shoe on the floor. If you do such things, the deaf person will constantly turn to look at you to see what you want. Deaf people are extra sensitive to vibrations, so avoid making unnecessary ones.



The Manual Alphabet

The manual alphabet allow us to fingerspell English words. When there is not a sign for an idea, then fingerspelling is used. This occurs most often with proper names. Mastery of fingerspelling is relatively easy if you form good habits from the very beginning.

Here, in summary, are the tips to follow:

1. Relax.
2. Keep your elbow in and your hand in front of you.
3. Maintain a constant rhythm, but do not bounce your had.
4. Pause for one-fourth of a beat at the end of each word.
5. Do not try to fingerspell rapidly.
6. Mouth or speak the word, not the letters.
7. Practice with someone so you can gain experience reading fingerspelling. (In this kind of practice, do not mouth or speak the word aloud.)
8. Look for the whole word, not individual letters.

0 (ZERO) 1 2 3 4

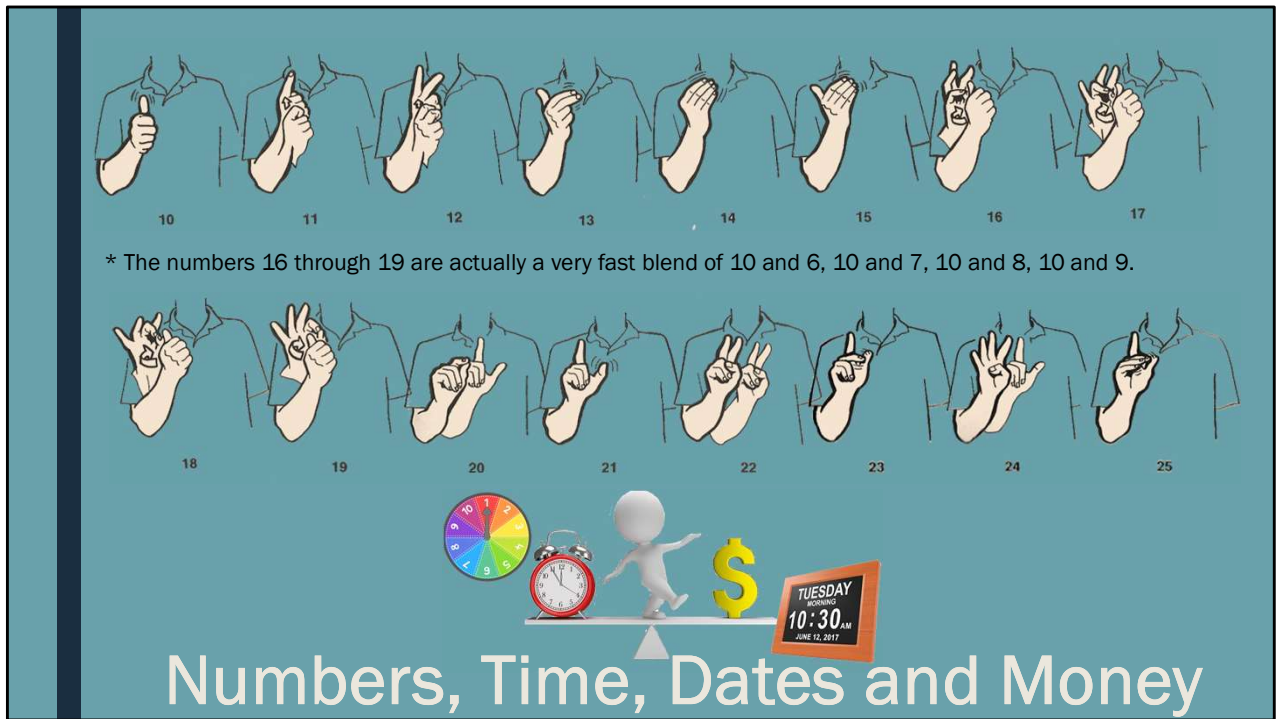
5 6 7 8 9

* The signs for the number 6 and the letter W are exactly the same, and the sign for the number 9 is the same as that for the letter F. Context tells you whether the number or the letter is intended.

Numbers, Time, Dates and Money

Numbers, Time, Dates, and Money

* The signs for the number 6 and the letter W are exactly the same, and the sign for the number 9 is the same as that for the letter F. Context tells you whether the number or the letter is intended.



Numbers, Time, Dates, and Money

* The numbers 16 through 19 are actually a very fast blend of 10 and 6, 10 and 7, 10 and 8, 10 and 9.

26 27 28 29

* That the “2” in the twenties is made with the thumb and index finger rather than the index and second fingers – as it appears in the number 22 – is probably due to the fact that ASL has its roots in the old French sign language. In Europe, even hearing people count one with the thumb, and two with the thumb and index finger.

30 33 41 52 64 75

* The remaining numbers from 30 through 99 are done with the numbers 0 through 9.

86 97 98 99

Numbers, Time, Dates and Money

Numbers, Time, Dates, and Money

100

777 (A)

777 (B)

1,000

1,000,000

* The number 100 is made by signing the number 1 and the letter C.
 * The numbers between 100 and 999 are made in one of two ways. One may make the number "7-7-7" or one may sign "7-C-7-7".

1/2 (A)

1/2 (B)

3/4

10

per cent (%)

10 per cent.

* Fractions are made the same way they are written, one number above another.

Illustrations include a colorful wheel of numbers 0-9, a red alarm clock, a white figure on a balance scale, a yellow dollar sign, and a digital clock showing TUESDAY MORNING 10:30 AM JUNE 12, 2011.

Numbers, Time, Dates and Money

Numbers, Time, Dates, and Money

- * The number 100 is made by signing the number 1 and the letter C.
- * The numbers between 100 and 999 are made in one of two ways. One may make the number "7-7-7" or one may sign "7-C-7-7".
- * Fractions are made the same way they are written, one number above another.

* The sign for the decimal may also mean the punctuation mark "period."

1-.7-5

T-T-Y HAVE
Do you have a TTY?*

* The TTY or TDD is a device that permits one to type messages back and forth over the telephone.

NUMBER WHAT
What's your number?

MY PHONE NUMBER
My phone number is _____.

NUMBERS, TIME, DATES AND MONEY

Numbers, Time, Dates, and Money

TIME It is 4:45. 4-4-5

TIME 10 UNTIL 9
It is ten till nine.

TIME It is 6:15. 6-15

HE/SHE/IT OLD 87
He is 87 years old.

TUESDAY
EVENING
10:30 AM
JUNE 12, 2011

Numbers, Time, Dates and Money

Numbers, Time, Dates, and Money

I BIRTH 19-11
I was born in 1911.

MY BIRTH DAY 3
19-48
My birthday is April 3, 1948.

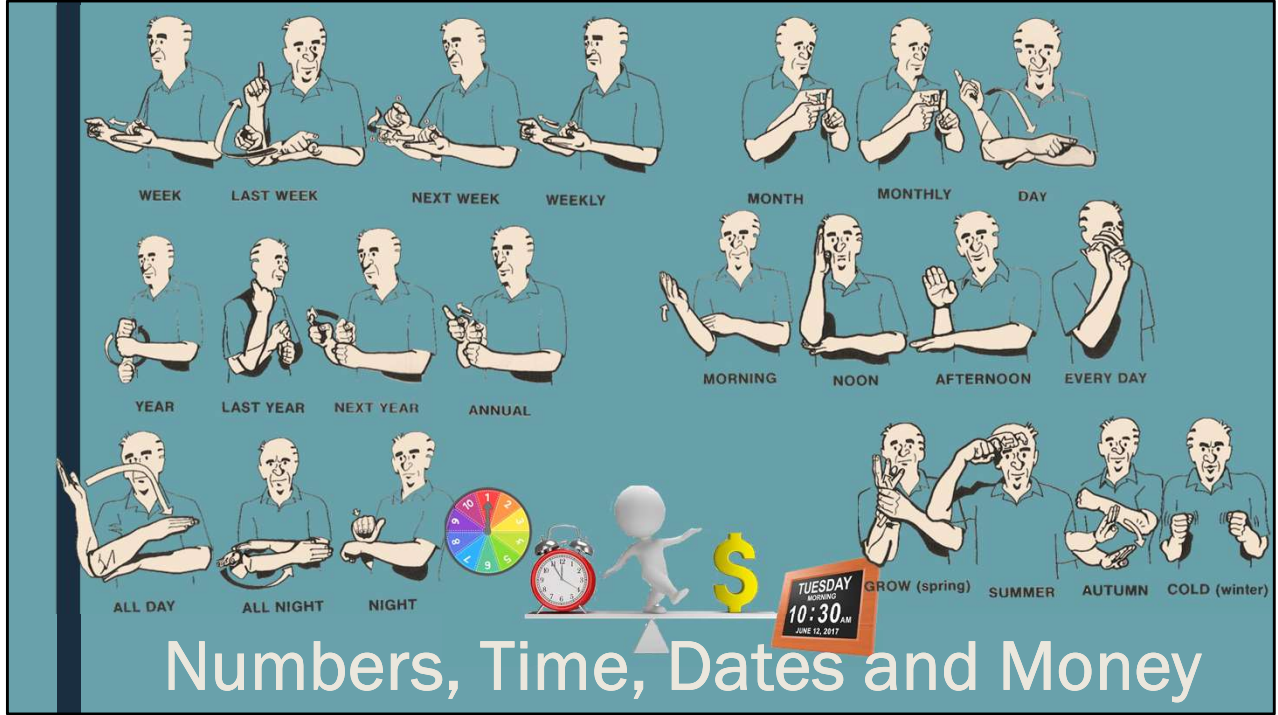
* Most of the months are abbreviated in fingerspelling. Only the short ones-March, April, May, June, and July and spelled out completely.

MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY WONDERFUL (Sunday)

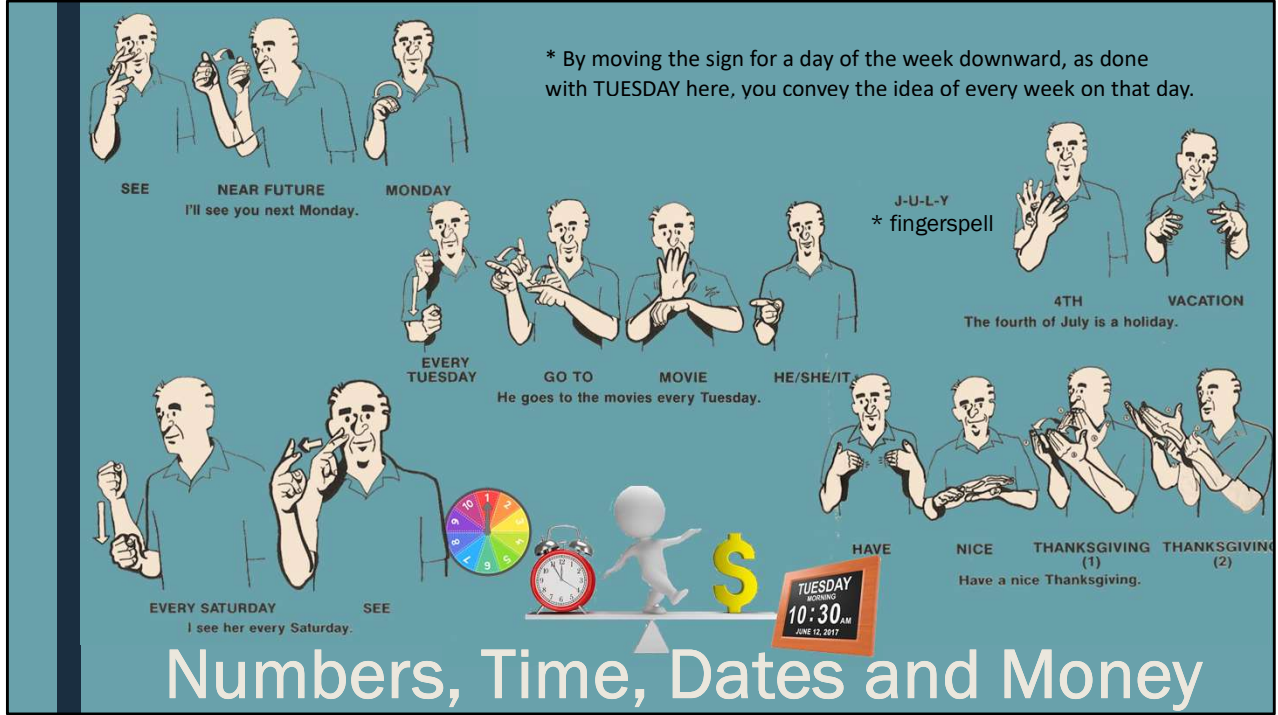
Numbers, Time, Dates and Money

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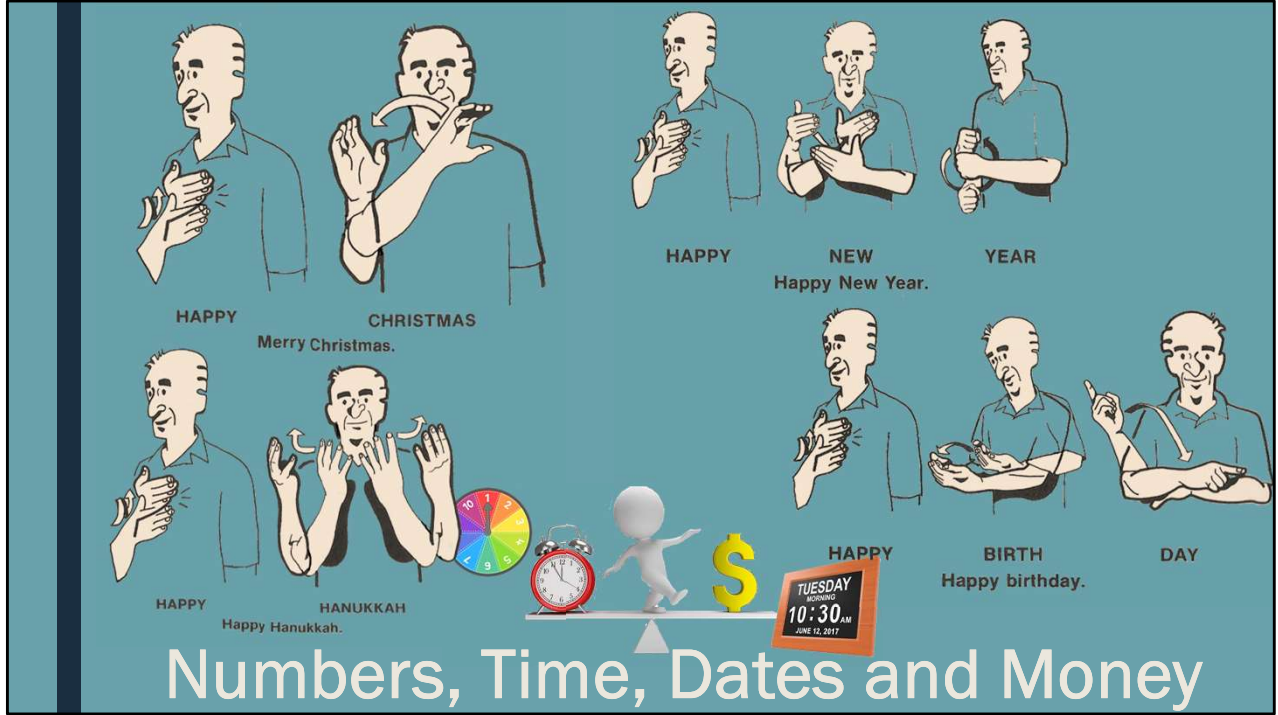


Numbers, Time, Dates, and Money



Numbers, Time, Dates, and Money

* By moving the sign for a day of the week downward, as done with TUESDAY here, you convey the idea of every week on that day.



Numbers, Time, Dates, and Money



Numbers, Time, Dates, and Money

- * These signs also serve as ordinal numbers – i.e. first, second, third, etc.
- * The sign DOLLAE is used when the amount is over nine dollars or when speaking specifically of a bill, as in “a dollar bill.”

1c 2c 3c 4c 5c

6c 7c 8c 9c 10c

* The sign DOLLAE is used when the amount is over nine dollars or when speaking specifically for a bill, as in "a dollar bill."

\$3.-0-9
\$3.09

\$1.-5-0
\$1.50

\$9.-25
\$9.25

* These signs are used only when speaking of these amounts by themselves, not when they are preceded by a dollar amount.

25c 50c

* The same applies to these two signs as to the cent signs. Use them only when speaking of these amounts alone, and not with a dollar amount.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VWJf46CdDbo>

Numbers, Time, Dates and Money

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BOOK **COST** **HOW MANY**
How much does the book cost?

PAY **HOW MANY**
How much did you pay?

MORE THAN \$5.00
It's over five dollars.

5c **10c** **25c**
Have you a nickel/dime/quarter?

HAVE **\$5.00** **SHARE (make change)** **CAN**
Can you change a five?

LESS THAN \$5.00
It's under five dollars.

Numbers, Time, Dates and Money

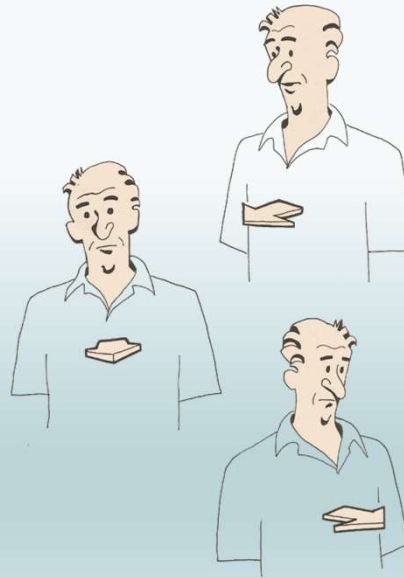
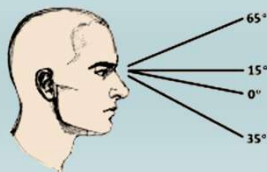
Numbers, Time, Dates, and Money

I **PAY** **LESS**
ENTER **COST** **HOW MANY**
 How much does it cost to get in?
THAN **YOU**
 I paid less than you.
MONEY **HAVE** **NONE**
 I have no money.
BROKE **I**
 I'm broke.
OWE **HOW MANY** **HE**
 How much does he owe?
Numbers, Time, Dates and Money

Numbers, Time, Dates, and Money

The Sight Line

- We begin the ASL workshop with an understanding of how space is used. Imagine a line extending from the center of the signer's chest, straight out, parallel to the floor. This imaginary line is called the sight line. **The sight line divides all space into the right or left side.**
- Whenever the signer turns the body, the sight line moves with it..



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Light, Sight, And Space

- Most languages are based entirely on sounds, and herein lies the unique difference between spoken language and ASL. Instead of sound waves in the form of spoken words, **ASL uses light waves in the form of signs.** ASL is a visual-spatial language. One sees ASL, and hearing plays absolutely no part in it. Because of this, ASL consists not only of signs made with the hands, but also of facial expressions, head movements, body movements, and an efficient use of the space around the signer. (In ASL the person “speaking” is the signer, and the person “listening” is the watcher, observer, or reader.) ASL is not mime, although mime sometimes is incorporated into the language.

Difference between sound waves and light waves

 Sound waves	 Light waves
Sound waves need a material medium for their propagation.	Light waves do not need a material medium for their propagation. They can travel even through vacuum.
Sound waves are longitudinal.	Light waves are transverse.
Sound waves have a very low speed of about 350 m/s in air at room temperature.	Light waves have a very high speed of 3×10^8 m/s in vacuum or air.



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Placement of Signs

One of the most frequently used signs is a simple point with the index finger. When the signer points parallel to the sight line toward the watcher, it means “you”. When the signer points to his or her own chest, it means “I” or “me.” When the signer points to the right or the left of the sight line it means “he,” “she,” or it.”



“I saw your father yesterday. He was driving a new car.”

Placement of Signs

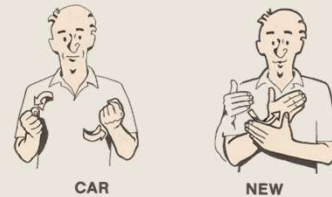
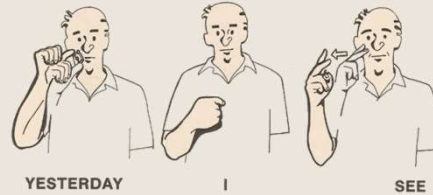
People, places, objects, and events may be established or placed to the right and left of the sight line. Once this is done, the signer merely points to that space when reference to it is made.



Placement of Signs

The signer makes the sign for “see” toward the right.

* This movement tells the watcher that the signer is about to say something about someone. Then the signer signs “father,” and that tells the watcher who the someone is. The watcher also now knows that “father” occupies that space to the right of the sight line because the SEE sign moved toward that space.



“I saw your father yesterday. He was driving a new car.”

Placement of Signs

For example, suppose the signer tells the watcher, “I saw your father yesterday. He was driving a new car.” The signer makes the sign for “see” toward the right.

* This movement tells the watcher that the signer is about to say something about someone. Then the signer signs “father,” and that tells the watcher who the someone is. The watcher also now knows that “father” occupies that space to the right of the sight line because the SEE sign moved toward that space. The signer may now point right, and it means “he,” and it will continue to mean “he” (father) until the signer places someone or something else in that space.



Placement of Signs

Placement of more than one person, place, or object in the same space at the same time may not be done, but placement in other spaces at the same time may be done. For example, the signer may say, “Yesterday I went to a restaurant, a movie, and a museum.” **The three places are set up in three different spaces.** Notice that the restaurant is nearer the signer, and the movie is farther out. Both may be to the right of the sight line, but they occupy slightly different spaces.



“Yesterday, I went to a restaurant, a movie, and a museum.”

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Placement of Signs

An exception to this rule is illustrated by this example:

The signer first establishes the book, then points to it. When placing things on the sight line that have no reference to the watcher, place them near the signer and be sure to point to that space.



“I have a book. It is interesting.”

Placement of Signs

Avoid placing persons on the sight line itself. This space, with some exceptions, is reserved for the watcher. Any signs that move on or along the sight line have to do with the watcher, and no one else may occupy this area. An exception to this rule is illustrated by this example:

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Facial Expressions

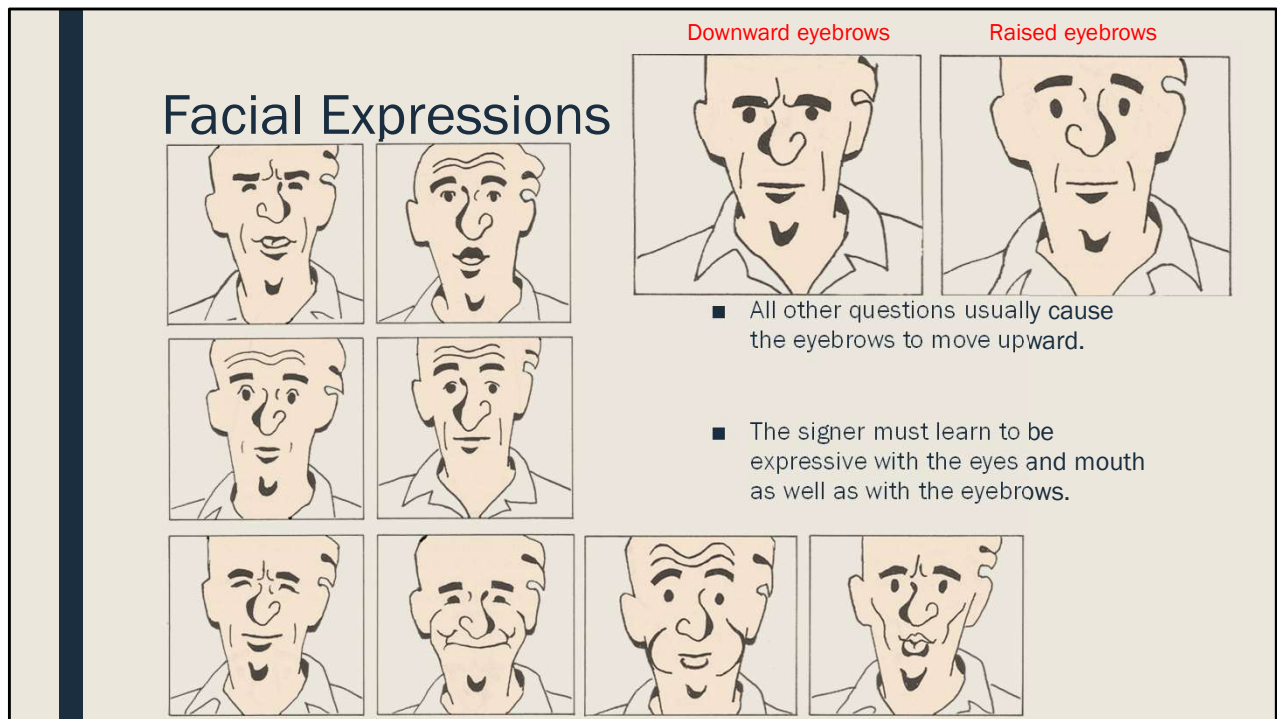


- Facial expressions in ASL are especially important when asking questions. In general, when one asks a “wh” question (who, what, where, why, when, which, and how) the eyebrows usually go downward.

Facial Expressions

In a spoken language, the rise and fall of the voice adds meaning to the words spoken. The various ways one can say “I love you” illustrate the importance of vocal inflection. The characteristic rising of the voice toward the end of a question is another example. In ASL, the face has these duties and supplies additional subtleties and nuances of meaning. Signs have meaning in and of themselves, just as words do, but these meanings are altered, shaped, enriched, and amplified by facial expressions. A face that is devoid of expression is to a deaf person the equivalent of a monotone speaker – boring and difficult to follow.

Facial expressions in ASL are especially important when asking questions. In general, when one asks a “wh” question (who, what, where, why, when, which, and how) the eyebrows usually go downward.



Facial Expressions


These are not rigid rules, and you may sometimes see something different, but these rules do generally apply. That the eyebrows will move up or down, however, is a certainty when asking questions.

The signer must learn to be expressive with the eyes and mouth as well as with the eyebrows. The eyes will open wide, or squint to narrow slits; the mouth will open and close; the lips will purse and stretch; the cheeks will puff out; and even the tongue will sometimes protrude.

All other questions usually cause the eyebrows to move upward.

The signer must learn to be expressive with the eyes and mouth as well as with the eyebrows.

Body Language



- Body language is an essential element of ASL. Information is communicated not only by the face but also by the head, shoulders, torso, legs, and feet. The head may tilt forward, back, or to the side, especially when questions are asked.

Body Language

The shoulders may shrug, the body may bend forward and backward and twist.

The incorporation of the whole body into the expression of sign language is absolutely required for clear, understandable communication. It is possible, of course, to overdo the matter, but it is better to err on the side of doing too much than too little. Deaf people are often described as animated, alive, vibrant, ect. This is due to their mastery of body language. For successful communication, you must do likewise.

Body language is an essential element of ASL. Information is communicated not only by the face but also by the head, shoulders, torso, legs, and feet. The head may tilt forward, back, or to the side, especially when questions are asked.

Past, Present, Future



SEE

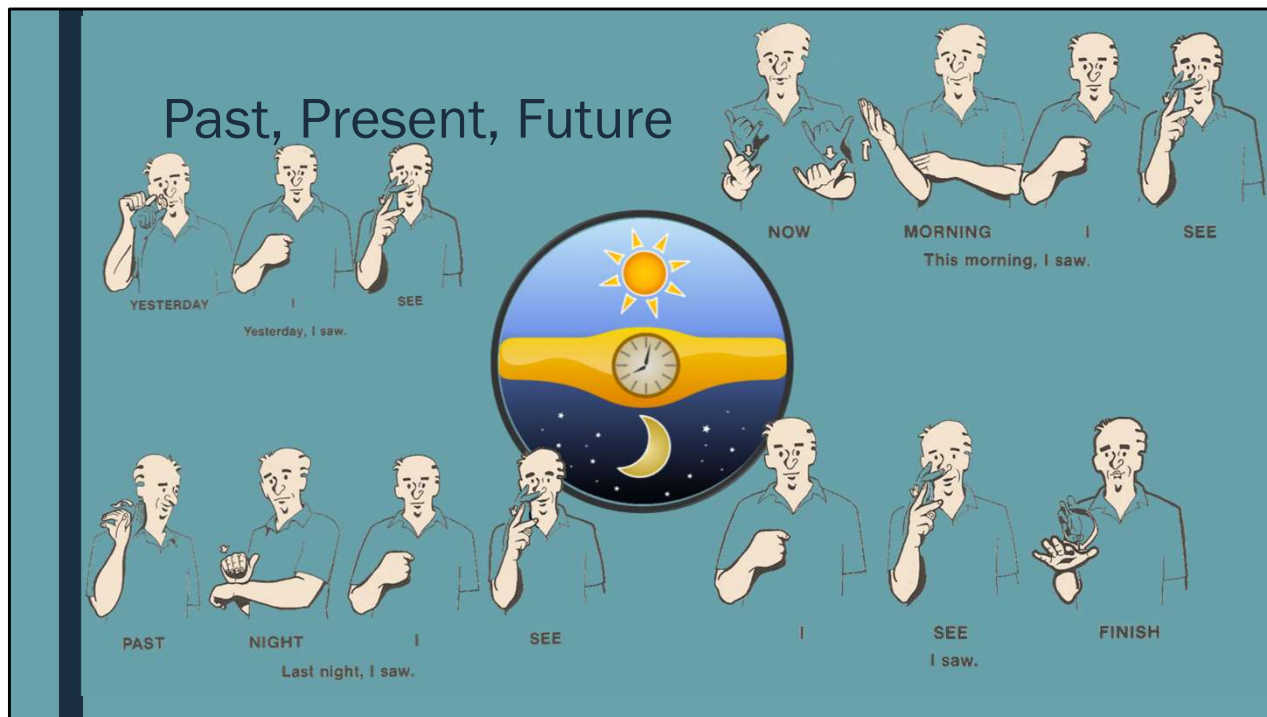


- No tenses are incorporated in the signs themselves. Tense is conveyed by using signs that tell when an action takes place, and these particular signs are called time indicators. In English for example, one may say, "I saw you." In ASL, the sign SEE is always made the same way whether it means "see," "sees," "seeing," "saw," or "seen."

Past, Present, Future

One of the most difficult tasks in learning a new language is conjugating verbs in their various tense. The struggle with regular and irregular verbs tries the student's patience to the utmost. It is, therefore, a pleasure to inform you that such is not the case with ASL. Learning to place actions in the past or future is comparatively simple.

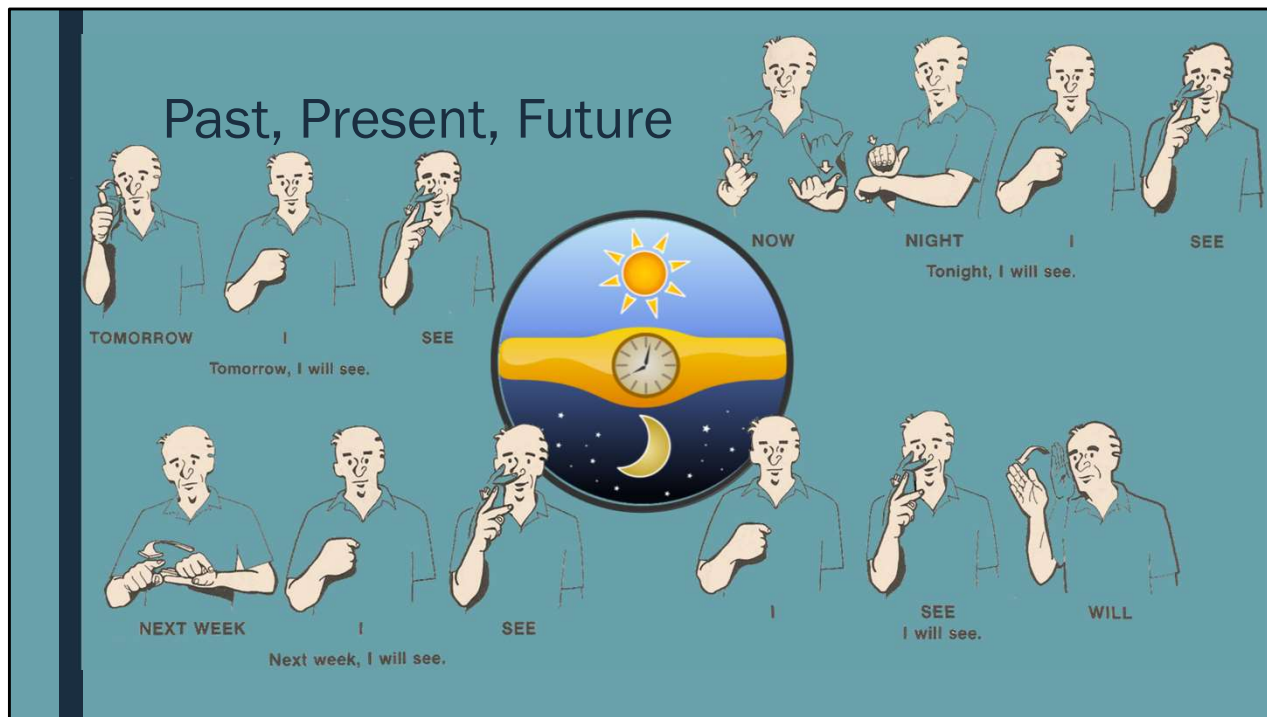
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Past, Present, Future

In order to sign the equivalent of “I saw you,” it is necessary to use a time indicator. One may use signs that will place the event in a specific time, such as “yesterday,” “last night,” or “this morning.”

One may also use the FINISH sign to indicate no specific time, simply the past:

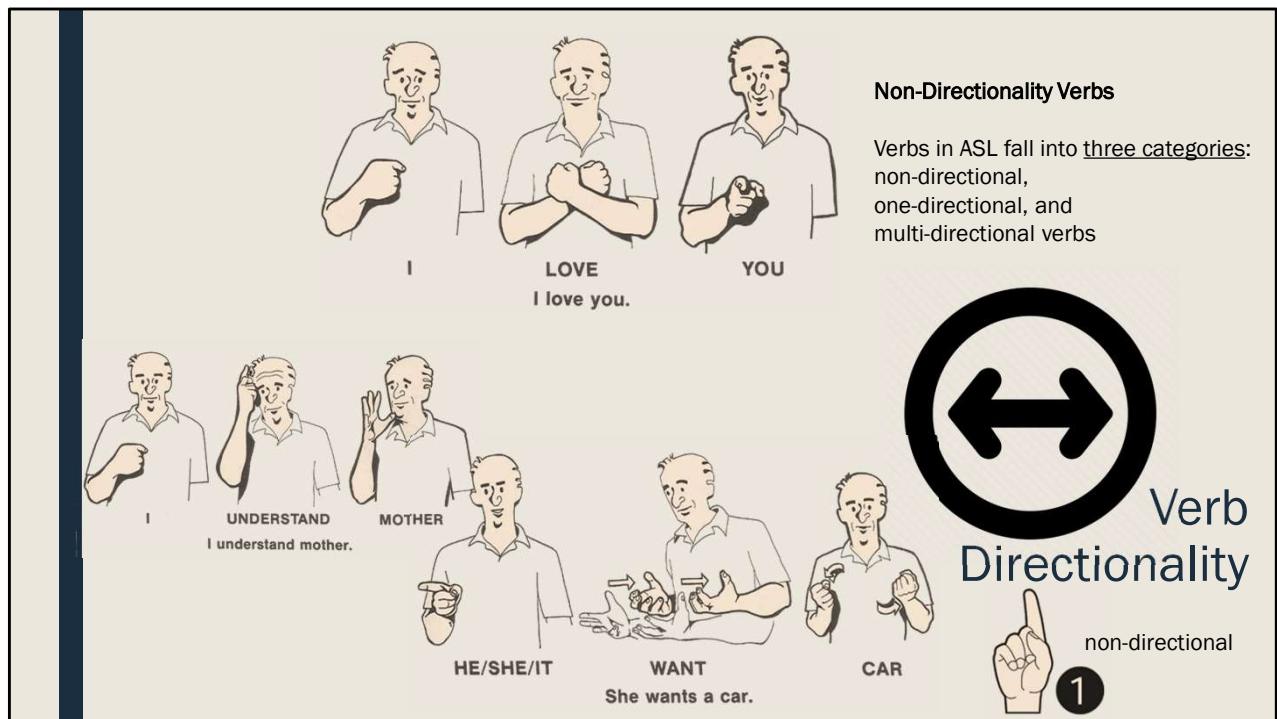


Past, Present, Future

The use of a time indicator also applies to the future tense.

Notice that both FINISH and WILL follow the verb SEE. This is generally true of nonspecific time indicators, whereas specific time indicators come at the beginning of a statement.

Context is used a great deal in ASL when establishing or determining tense. For instance, the signer may tell the watcher about an incident that occurred some time in the past or that will occur in the future. The signer will first establish the time of the incident by using a time indicator sign, then the signer will never repeat the time indicator sign or use any additional ones. The watcher knows that all the events described by the signer occur in the time frame established at the beginning of the statement by the time indicator sign used.

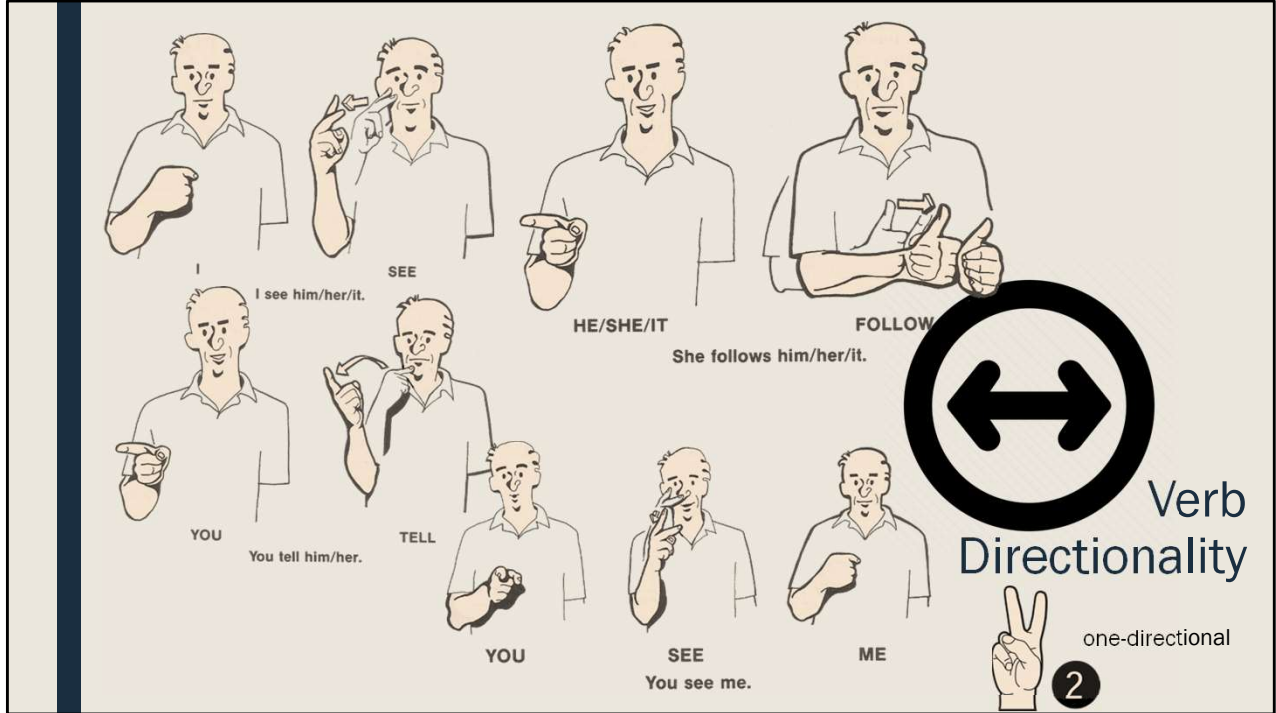


Non-Directionality Verbs

Verbs in ASL fall into three categories: non-directional, one-directional, and multi-directional verbs. Movement in verb signs may express who is performing an action (the subject) and to whom the action is directed (the indirect object). This quality of movement is called verb directionality.

The non-directional verbs do not express either (subject or object nouns and pronouns) must be supplied.

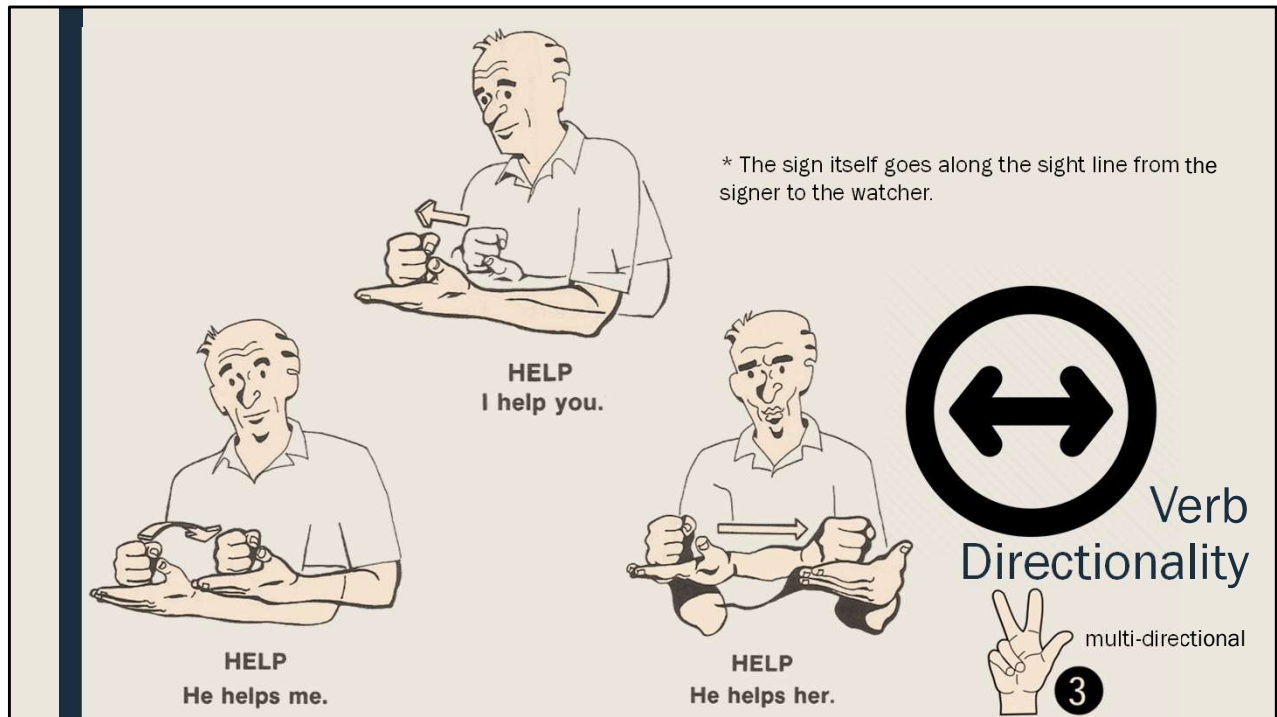
The verbs LOVE, UNDERSTAND, and WANT in the sentences above do obviously have movement in them, but that movement does not express either subject or indirect object; that is, the movement has no directionality. Subject and indirect object signs must be supplied.



One Directionality Verbs

One-directional verb signs express indirect but not subject, as in these sentences:

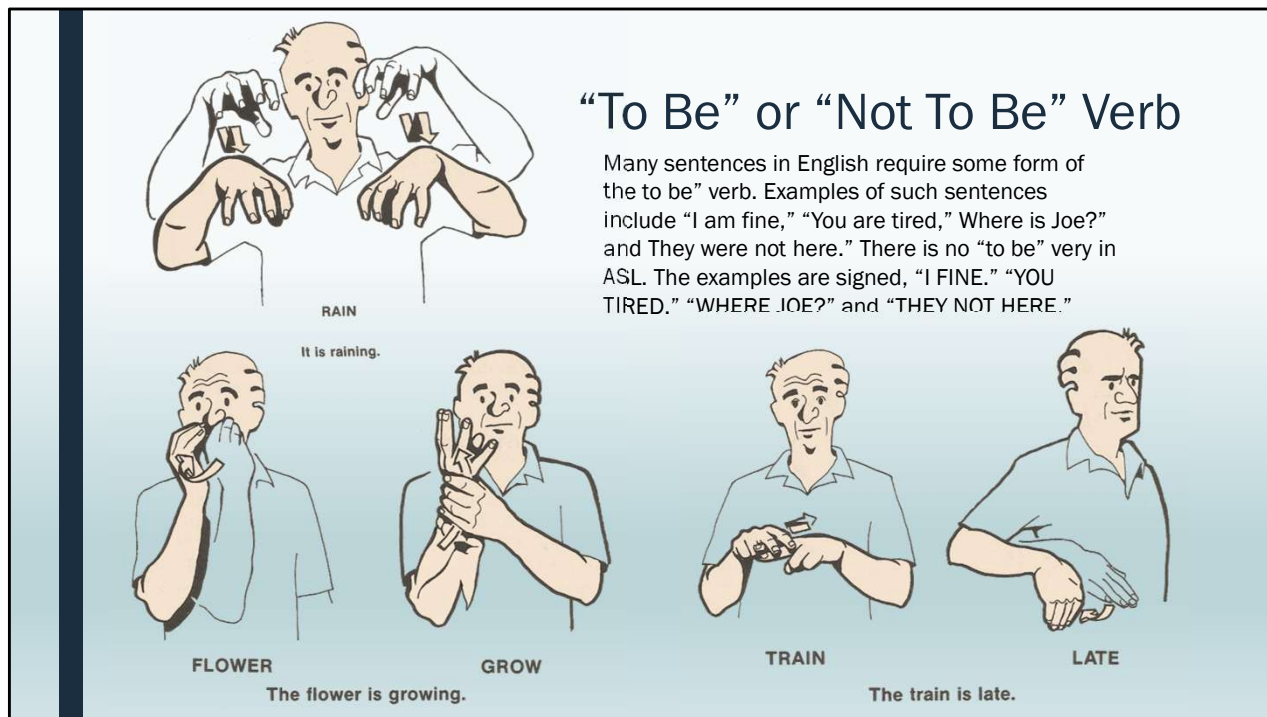
One-directional verbs move toward the indirect object; thus, a noun or pronoun is not required. The exception to this rule occurs when the signer is the indirect object. For example, “You see me” must be signed:



Multi - Verb Directionality

The indirect object here is the signer (“me”). And since the movement of the SEE sign does not move toward the indirect object, then the indirect object must be signed. Notice also that the SEE sign does indeed move slightly to the right of the sight line, not directly toward the watcher. *The sign itself goes along the sight line from the signer to the watcher.

The movement from a space normally implies that whoever occupies that space is the subject. The movement toward a space normally implies that whoever occupies that space is the indirect object.



To Be or Not To Be

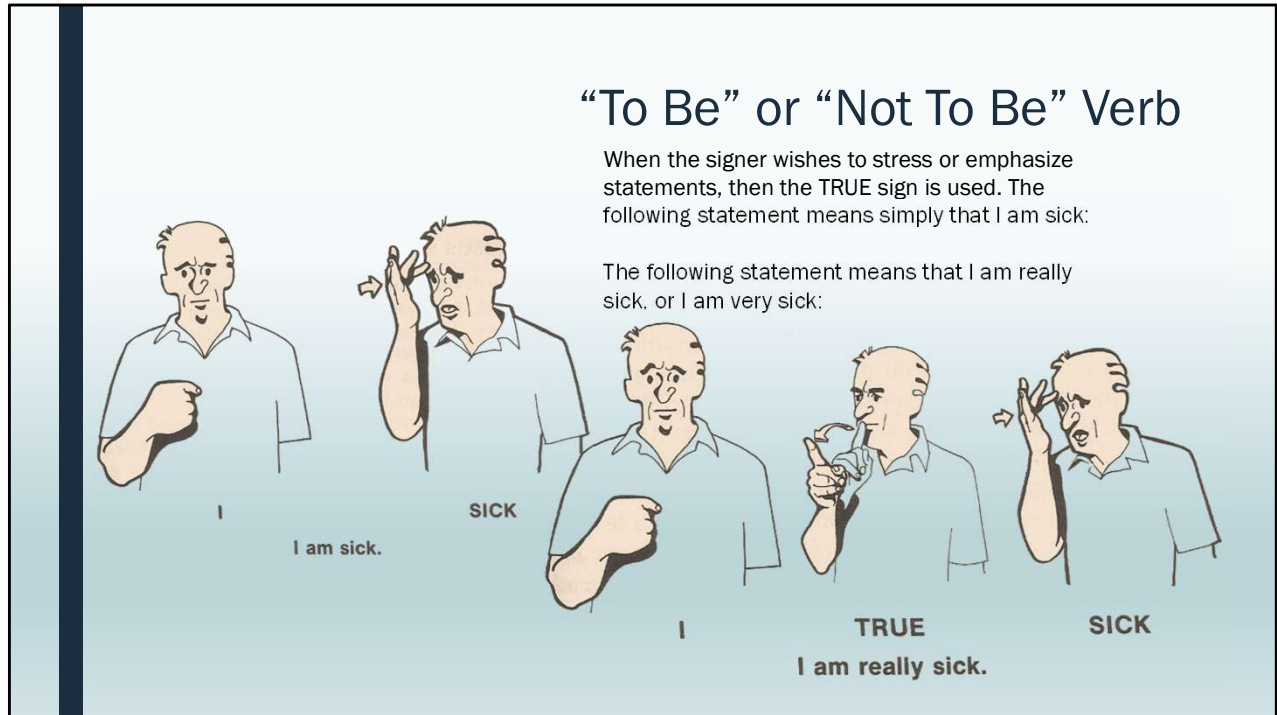
Statement such as “It is raining.” “The flower is growing.” and “The train is late are signed as shown.

Many sentences in English require some form of the to be” verb. Examples of such sentences include “I am fine,” “You are tired,” “Where is Joe?” and “They were not here.” There is no “to be” very in ASL. The examples are signed, “I FINE.” “YOU TIRED.” “WHERE JOE?” and “THEY NOT HERE.”

“To Be” or “Not To Be” Verb

When the signer wishes to stress or emphasize statements, then the TRUE sign is used. The following statement means simply that I am sick:

The following statement means that I am really sick, or I am very sick:



To Be or Not To Be

Do not confuse the use of the TRUE sign as a sign of stress and emphasis with a form of the “to be” verb in English.

When the signer wishes to stress or emphasize statements, then the TRUE sign is used. The following statement means simply that I am sick:

The following statement means that I am really sick, or I am very sick:

The TRUE sign also means true, truly, real, really, sure, surely, certainly, indeed, and actually. When used alone with a questioning expression, the TRUE sign means “Is that so?” or “Are you sure?”

Words Versus Signs

- A word stands for a concept or an idea. If someone says “tree,” you understand immediately because you have in your mind the concept of tree. The same applies to signs. If the signer signs TREE, the watcher understands it immediately without having to think the word “tree”. In other words, **a sign stands for an idea or concept; it does not stand for a word.**



Words Versus Signs

When you form statements in ASL, do not try to find a sign for every word in the English statement. Languages do not work that way. (For example, in English one says, “I am hungry.” but in Spanish and French one says, “I have hunger.” In ASL one says “I hunger.”) First get clearly in mind the ideas you want to communicate, forget the words, and then find the appropriate signs to express the ideas.

A word stands for a concept or an idea. If someone says “tree,” you understand immediately because you have in your mind the concept of tree. The same applies to signs. If the signer signs TREE, the watcher understands it immediately without having to think the word “tree”. In other words, **a sign stands for an idea or concept; it does not stand for a word.**

Sign Order

One guide to ASL syntax is that the signs are arranged in the same order in which the events they represent occurred in real life. A simple example of this is the sentence, “I am going home after work.” The arrangement of the words here is not in the same order in which these events can occur. One cannot go home until work is over. ASL arranges the signs so that the statement reads, “After work I am going home.” You must develop the habit of thinking: What comes first, then second, then next?

English
“I am going home after work.”

ASL



“After work I am going home.”

Sign Order

The order of words in a language is called the syntax. In ASL we talk of sign-order rather than word-order. The syntax of ASL is sometimes very flexible, permitting any one of several arrangements of signs, while at other times the syntax is rigidly fixed.

In the statement, “I am worried about Walter, who was in an accident last week,” the events are related out of sequence and the specific time indicator comes at the end of the sentence. ASL first sets up the time (last week) with the specific time indicator, then tells that Walter was in an accident, and finally gives the response to it. The sentence then reads, “Last week, Walter was in an accident and I am worried.” This example also contains another guide to ASL syntax, the cause-and-effect relationship of events. I could not be worried about Walter before his accident; my worrying is the effect caused by the accident. So it must come in the sentence after the accident.

Another example of this cause-and-effect relationship can be seen in this sentence: “I get nervous when a black cat crosses my path.” The nervousness is the effect of seeing a black cat cross my path, so the sentence in ASL reads, “When a black cat crosses my path, I get nervous.” Always arrange the signs so that the cause comes before the effect.

It is often useful to think in cinematic terms. When you wish to relate a story, think of it as a movie filmed in continuous time with no flashbacks or flash-forwards. Each scene leads chronologically into the next scene. (The camera would show the black cat walking across your path, for example, then show your reaction to it. If the camera shows your reaction first, then shows the black cat crossing your path, the camera is flashing backwards in time.) Arrange the events, persons, and details in this manner and you will be following good ASL syntax. Two more syntactic features are described in the next two sections.

One guide to ASL syntax is that the signs are arranged in the same order in which the events they represent occurred in real life. A simple example of this is the sentence, "I am going home after work." The arrangement of the words here is not in the same order in which these events can occur. One cannot go home until work is over. ASL arranges the signs so that the statement reads, "After work I am going home." You must develop the habit of thinking: What comes first, then second, then next?



How To Say No

The most common way to negate a statement in ASL is to shake the head while you are making a sign. For example, to say “I do not understand,” shake your head as you sign “I understand.” The shaking of the head negates the statement so that it means “I do not understand.” This practice applies to nearly all signs, For example, to say “I do not understand.” shake your head as you sign “I understand.” The shaking of the head negates the statement so that it means “I do not understand.” This practice applies to nearly all signs, including negative signs themselves. If the signer adds NOT in the statement and simultaneously shakes the head, the negation is emphasized. We know that English grammar does not permit double negatives, but in Spanish one may say “Yo no se nada,” which literally means “I not know nothing.” Spanish her may be compared to ASL, where one may sign UNDERSTAND NOTHING while shaking the head, thus creating a double negative.

Signs of negation usually follow the thing they negate,

How To Say No

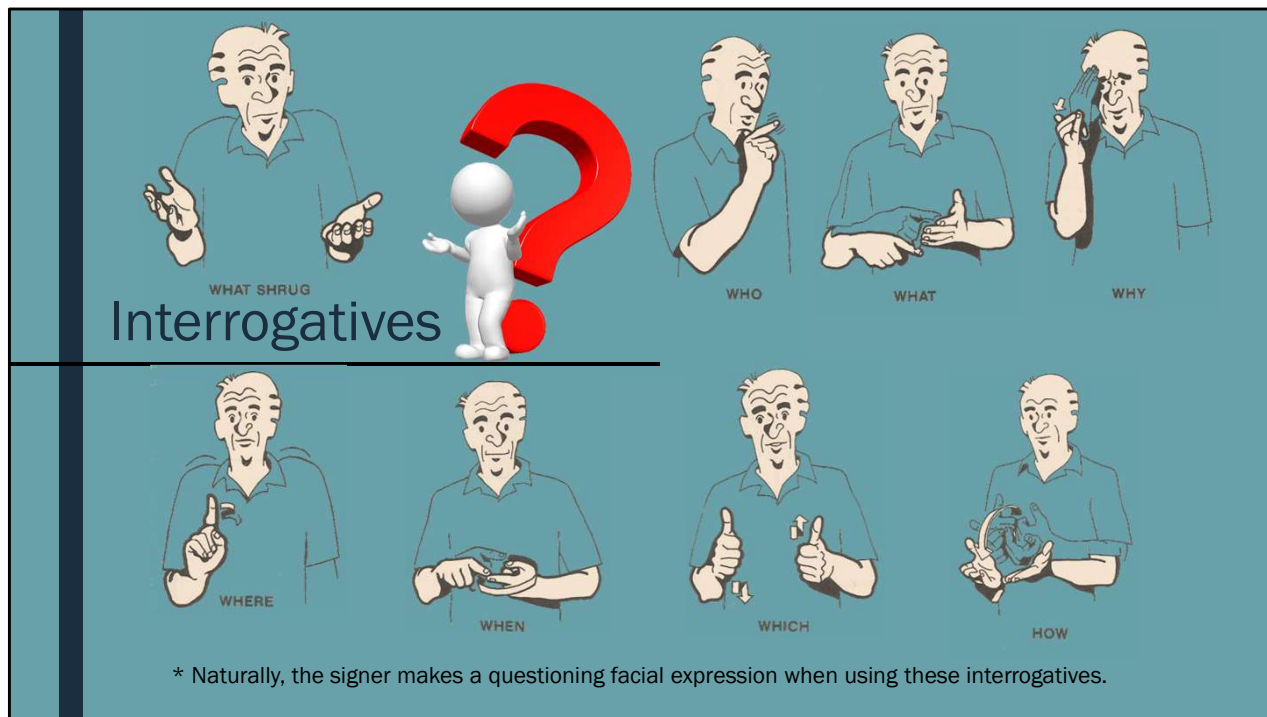
* The signer should always shake the head while simultaneously making the negative form of the sign.

GOOD BAD LIKE DON'T LIKE KNOW DON'T KNOW

WANT DON'T WANT

How To Say No

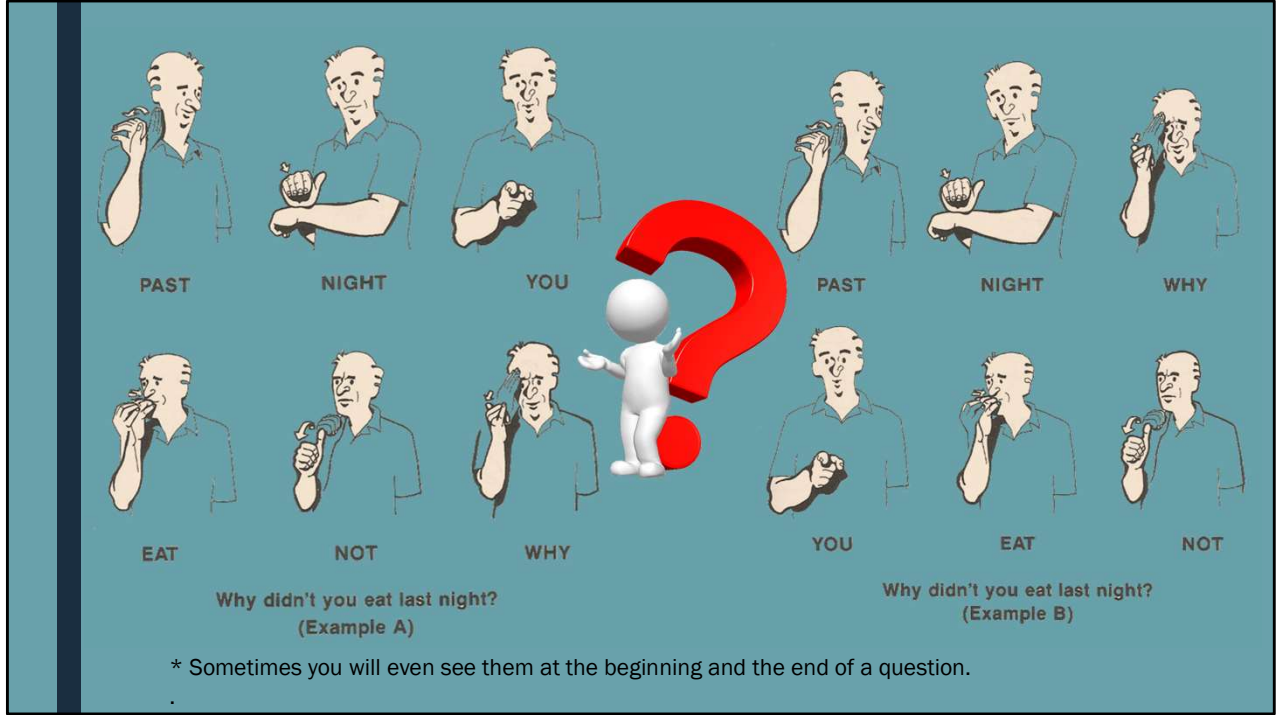
Many signs have negation built into them. The signer should always shake the head while simultaneously making the negative form of the sign.



Interrogatives

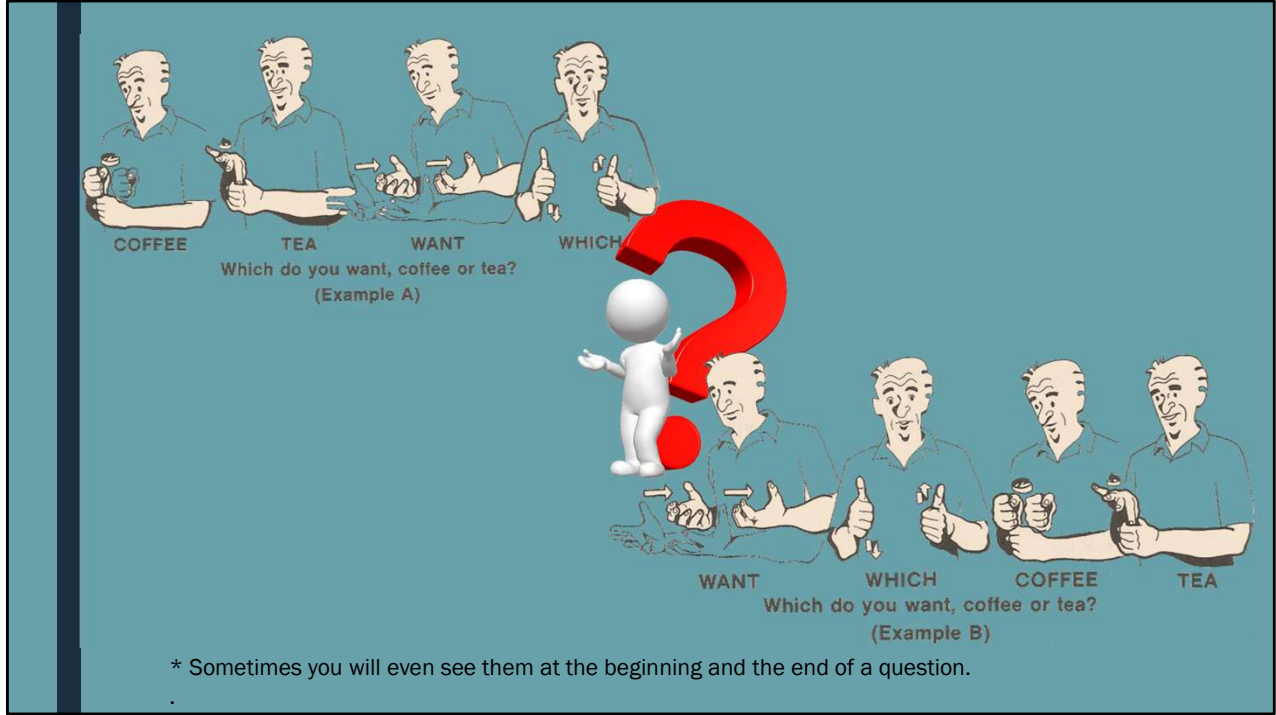
In ASL, the signs WHO, WHAT, WHY, WHERE, WHEN, WHICH, and HOW generally come at the end of a question but may also be at the beginning of a question. Sometimes you will even see them at the beginning and the end of a question.

* Naturally, the signer makes a questioning facial expression when using these interrogatives.



Interrogatives

Sometimes you will even see them at the beginning and the end of a question.



Interrogatives

Sometimes you will even see them at the beginning and the end of a question.

Plurals



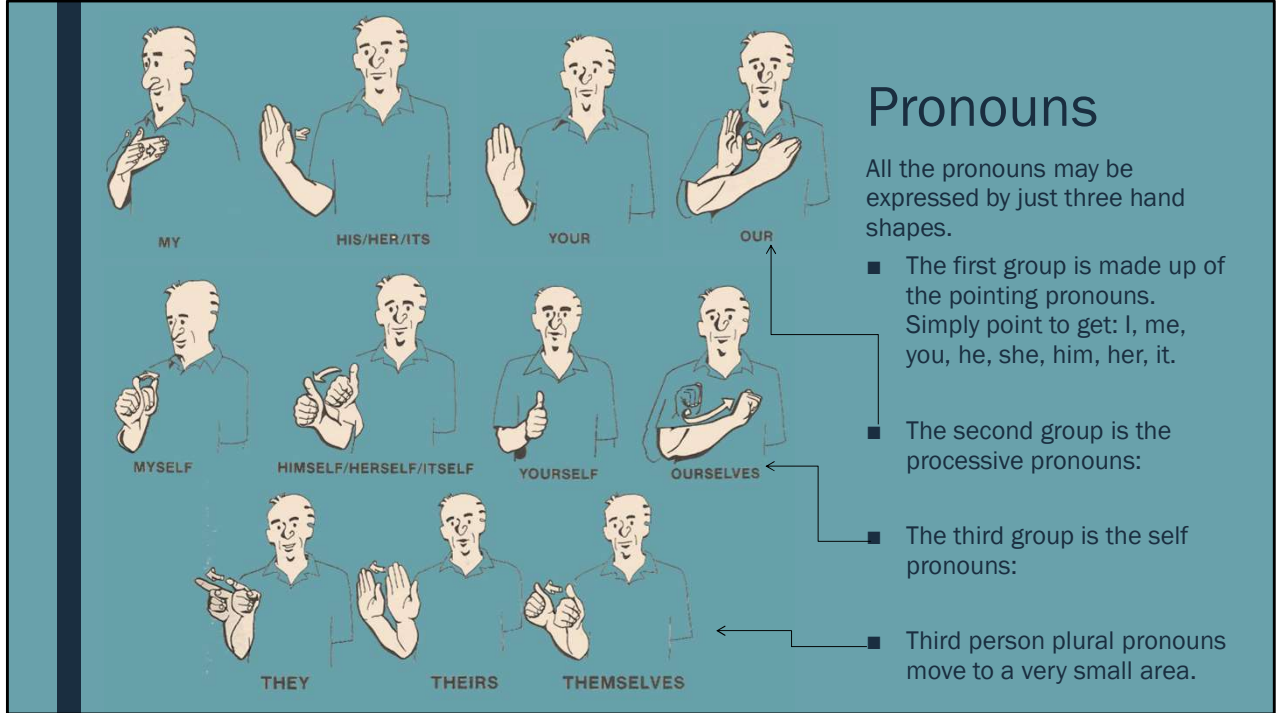
Often signs are repeated or moved in such a way that show plurality.

When a sign does not lend itself to this kind of repetition or pluralizing movement, then signers use such signs as MANY, FEW, and SOME, or they use specific numbers such as NINE or FIFTY.

Plurals

Often signs are repeated or moved in such a way that show plurality.

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Pronouns

All the pronouns may be expressed by just three hand shapes.

The first group is made up of the pointing pronouns. Simply point to get: I, me, you, he, she, him, her, it.

The second group is the possessive pronouns:

The third group is the self pronouns:

Pronouns

- First and second person singular pointing pronouns tend to come at the end of a statement:
- Sometimes the first and second person singular point pronouns is dropped entirely, especially in questions.

Pronouns

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Sometimes the first and second person singular point pronouns is dropped entirely, especially in questions.

Pronouns

- A simple declarative statement of fact, you may assume the subject is "I."
- If the intent were "You told him," then the sentence would be with "YOU" at the end.
- The second person singular pointing pronoun is usually dropped in questions.

Pronouns

A simple declarative statement of fact, you may assume the subject is "I."

If the intent were "You told him," then the sentence would be with "YOU" at the end.

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Pronouns

- If the intent here were “Did I tell him?” then it would be signed with “I” at the end.
- Command forms rarely use pronouns.

Pronouns

If the intent here were “Did I tell him?” then it would be signed with “I” at the end.

Command forms rarely use pronouns.

Names And Titles

A person's name must be fingerspelled, but most deaf people also have name-signs. A name-sign is one that stands for that person, not for the name. Two people with the same name will have different name-signs. When you first meet a deaf person, you fingerspell your name. You tell him your name-sign only if he asks. Usually name-signs are not asked for until the relationship develops beyond that of a casual acquaintance.



Names And Titles

When deaf people are talking to each other they rarely use each other's names. For example, "How are you, John?" becomes simply, "How are you?" If, however, the signer asks the watcher about another person, then the signer uses that person's name ("How is John?")

A person's name must be fingerspelled, but most deaf people also have name-signs. A name-sign is one that stands for that person, not for the name. Two people with the same name will have different name-signs. When you first meet a deaf person, you fingerspell your name. You tell him your name-sign only if he asks. Usually name-signs are not asked for until the relationship develops beyond that of a casual acquaintance.

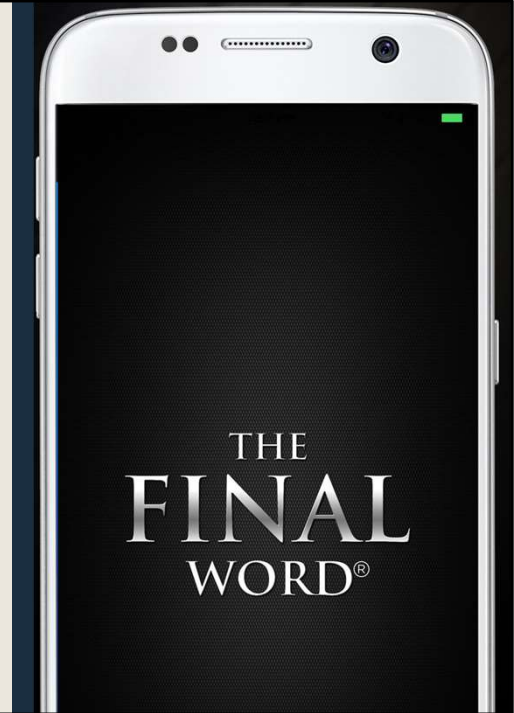
Titles such as "Mrs.," "Dr.," and "Rev." are fingerspelled and used only when the person is being introduced. You never use them when you are talking directly to the person. "How are you, Dr. Smith?" becomes simply "How you?"

A Final Word

Articles

There are no articles (a, an, the) in ASL.

The acquisition of a spoken language involves principally learning grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary. Except for pronunciation, the same applies to learning ASL. **Forming signs clearly is the equivalent of pronunciation in ASL. Clarity in signing depends upon accuracy in making the sign, smoothness in execution of the sign, flow from one sign to the next without jerky or hesitant movements, the use of facial expressions, the use of head and body movements, and the proper use of space.** The only way to develop these is through using the language with deaf people. They will correct you when you err, and by watching them carefully you will correct and fine tune yourself.



Articles

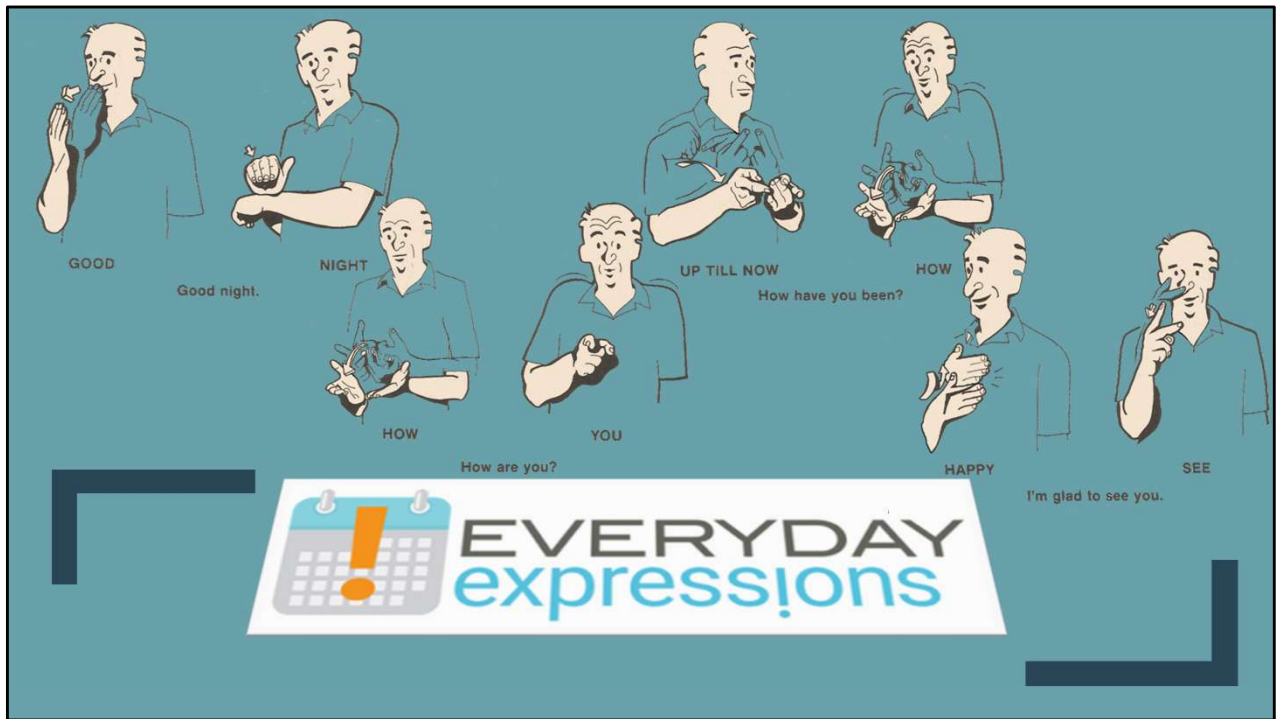
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A Final Word

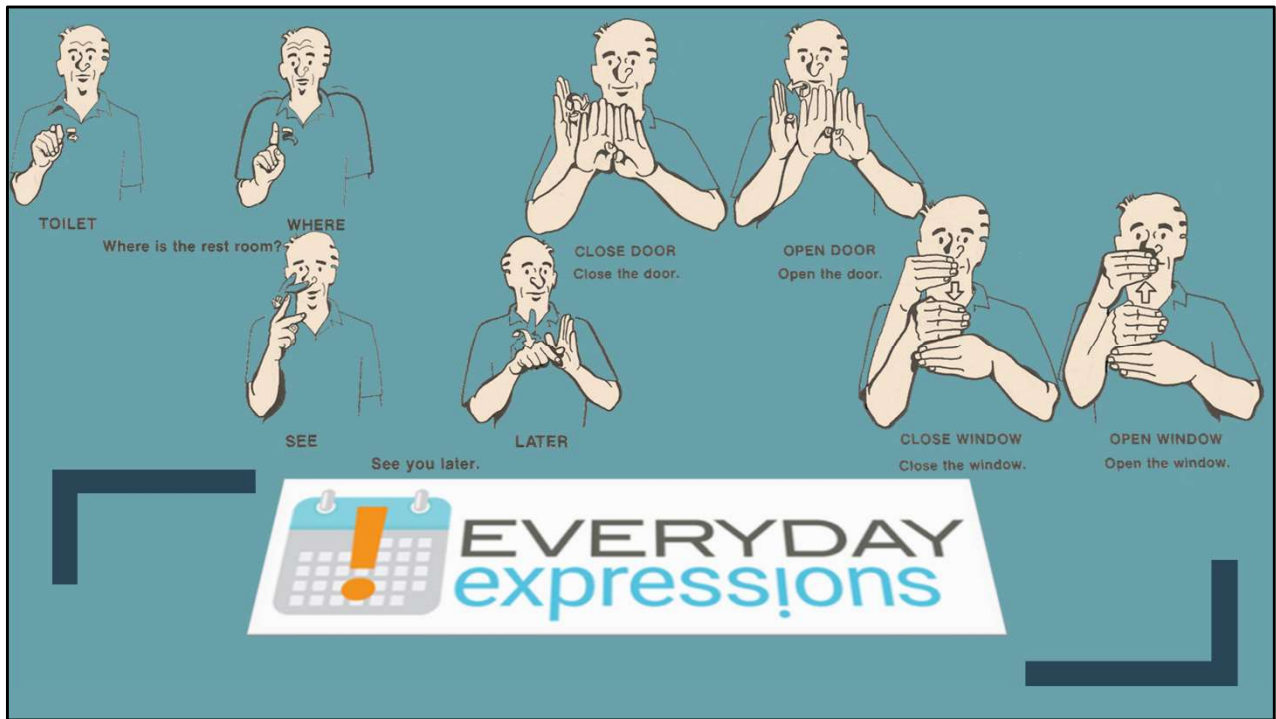
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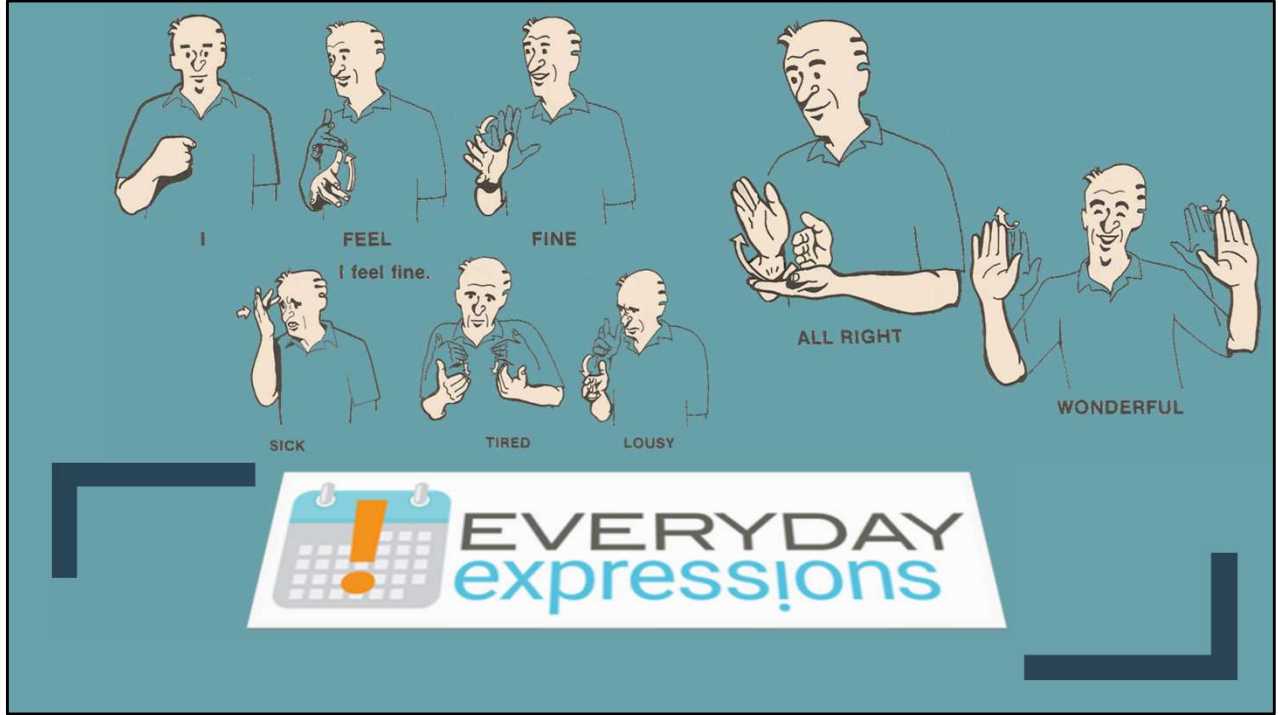
Everyday Expressions



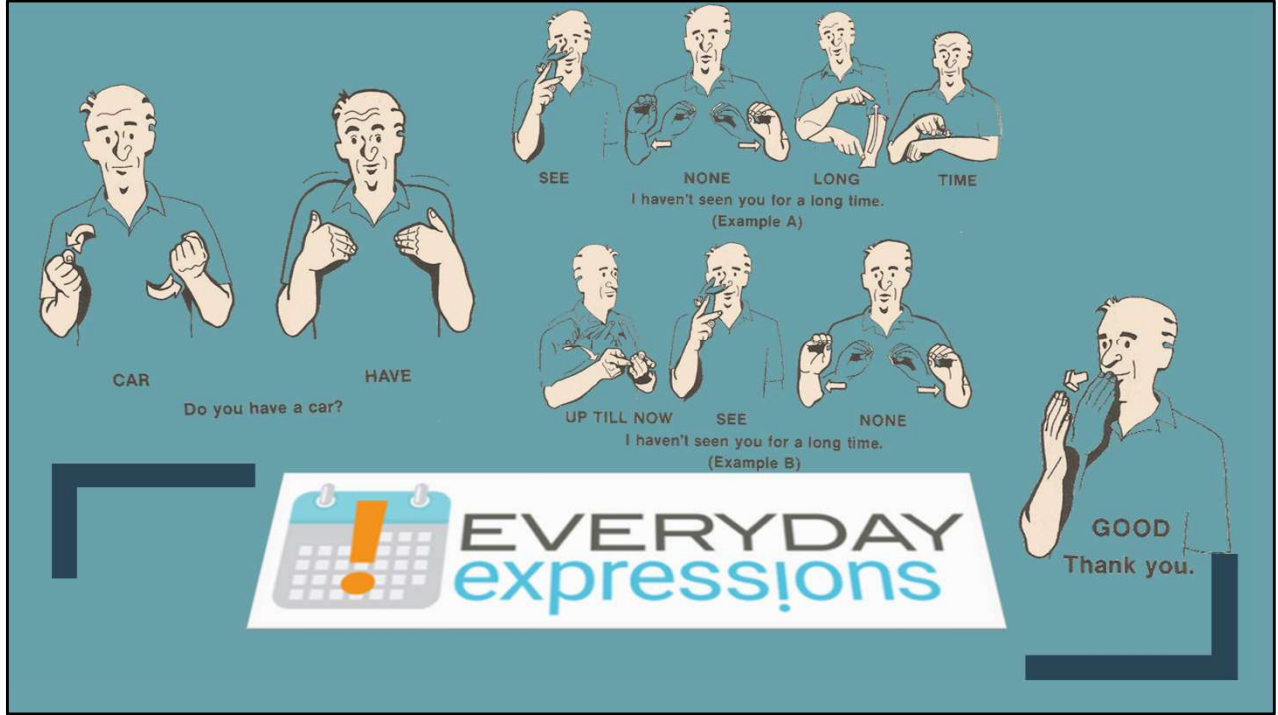
Everyday Expressions



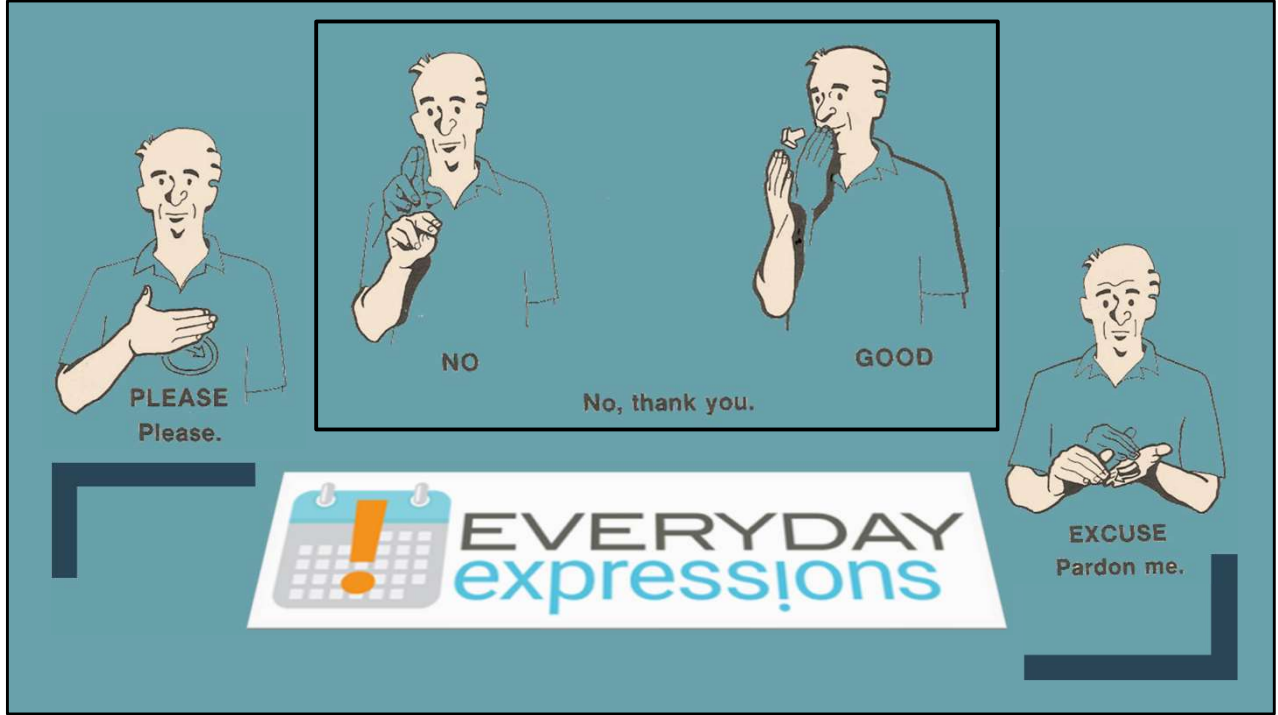
Everyday Expressions



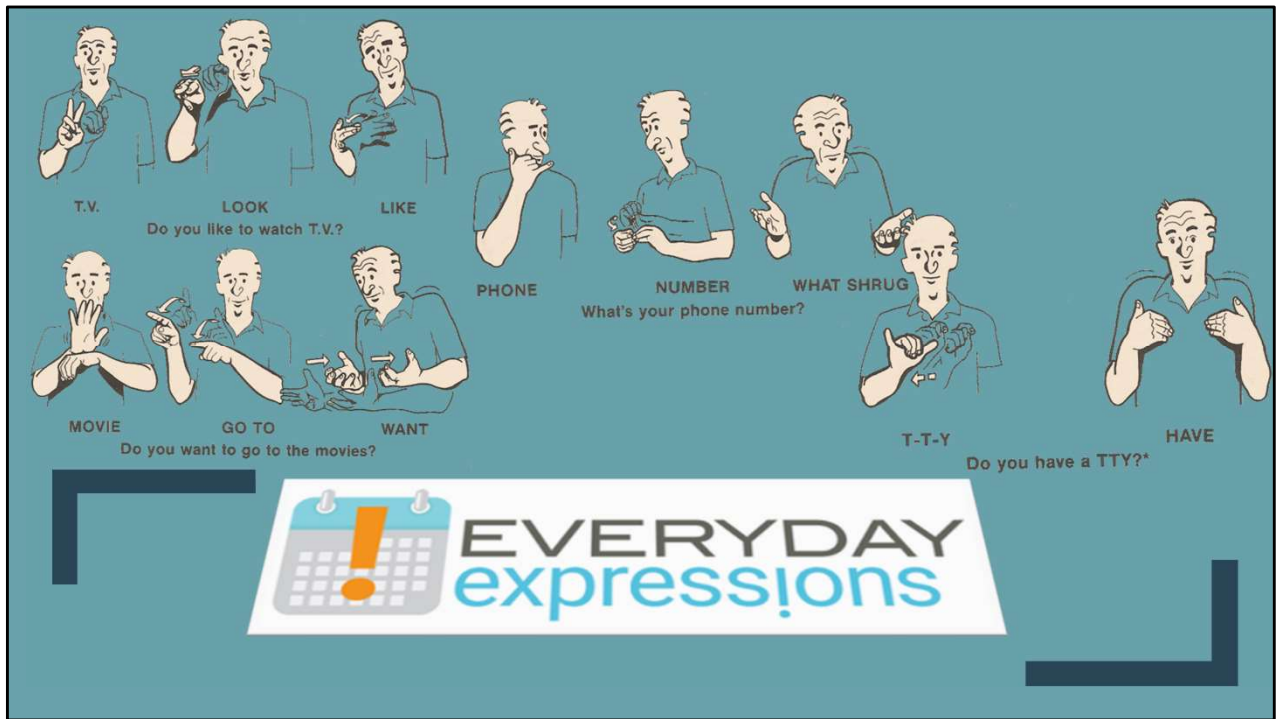
Everyday Expressions



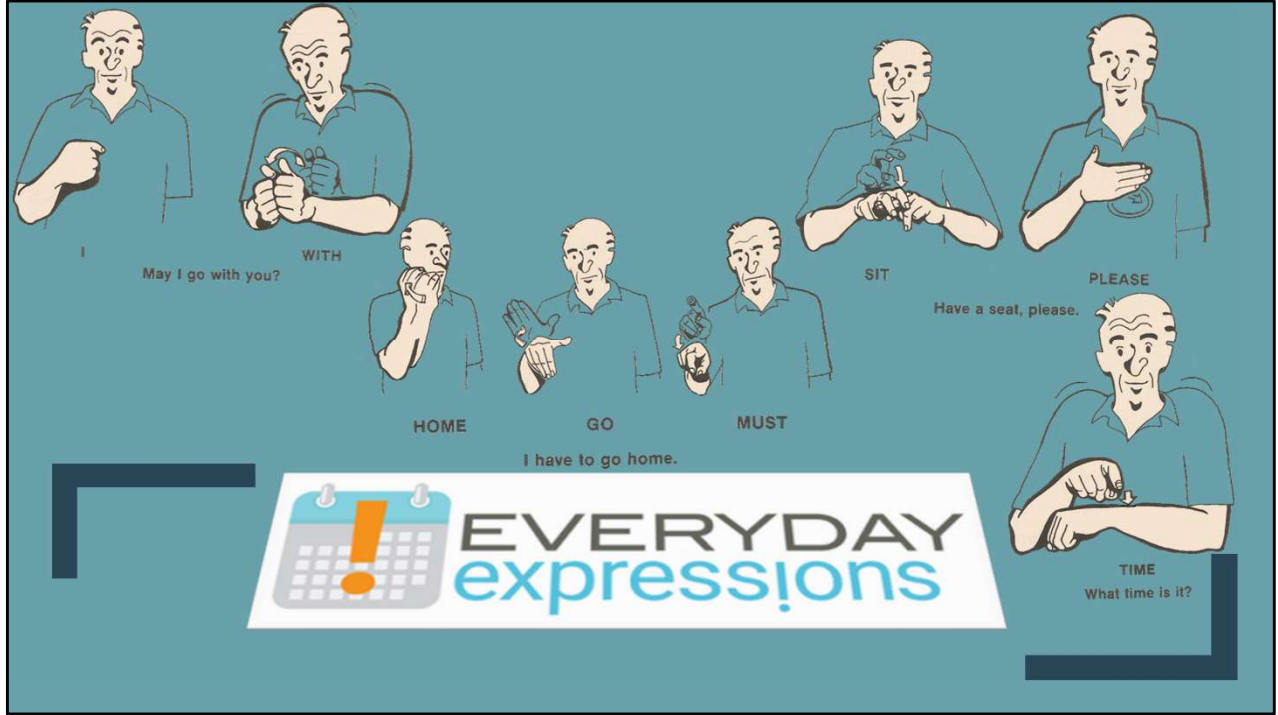
Everyday Expressions



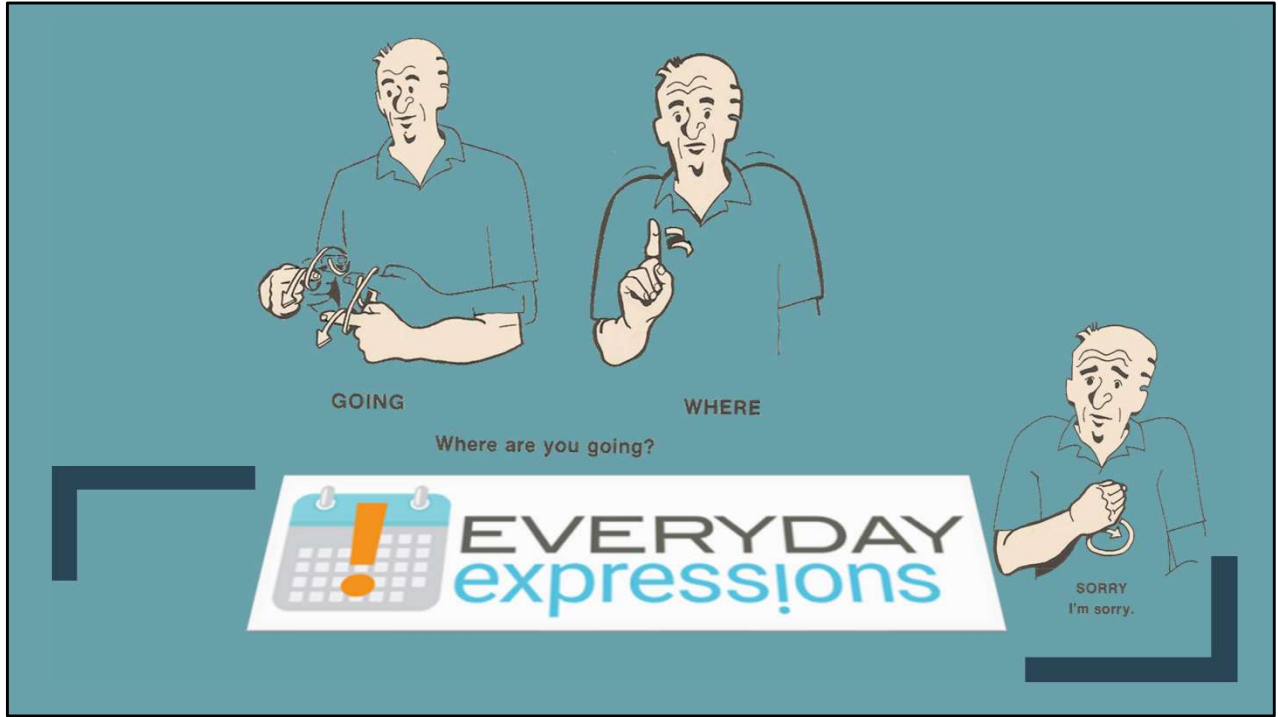
Everyday Expressions



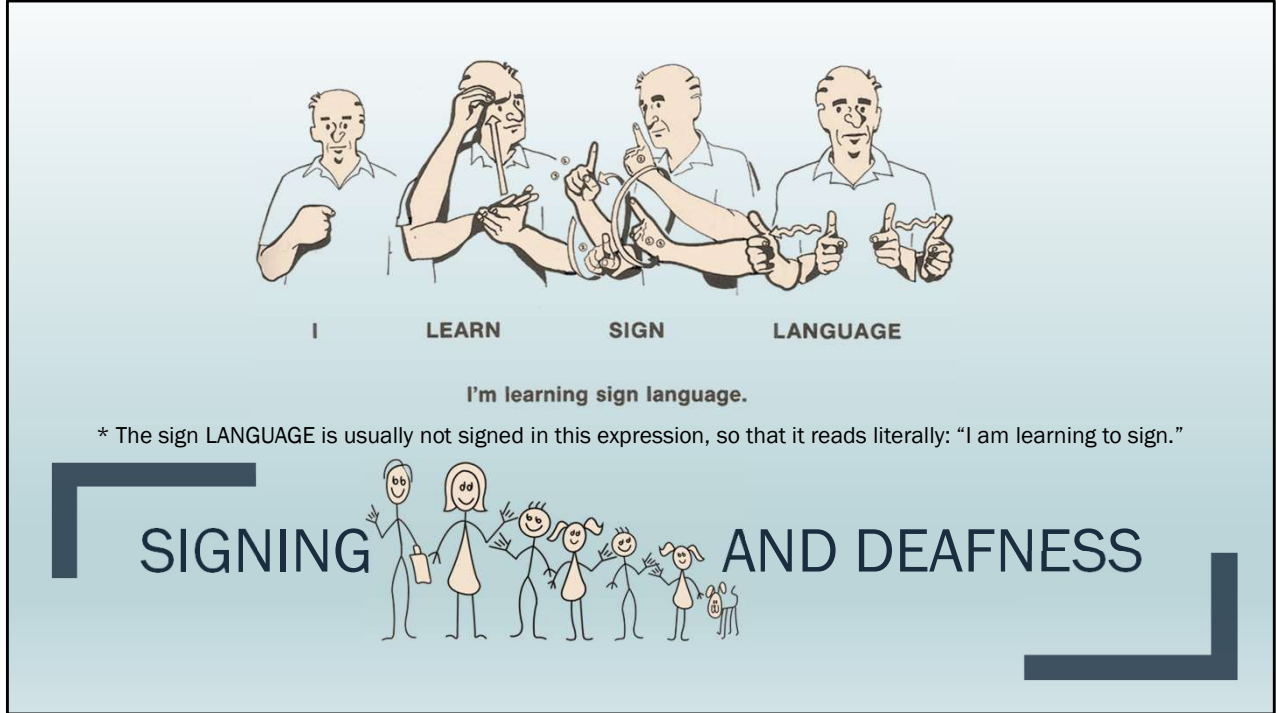
Everyday Expressions



Everyday Expressions



Everyday Expressions

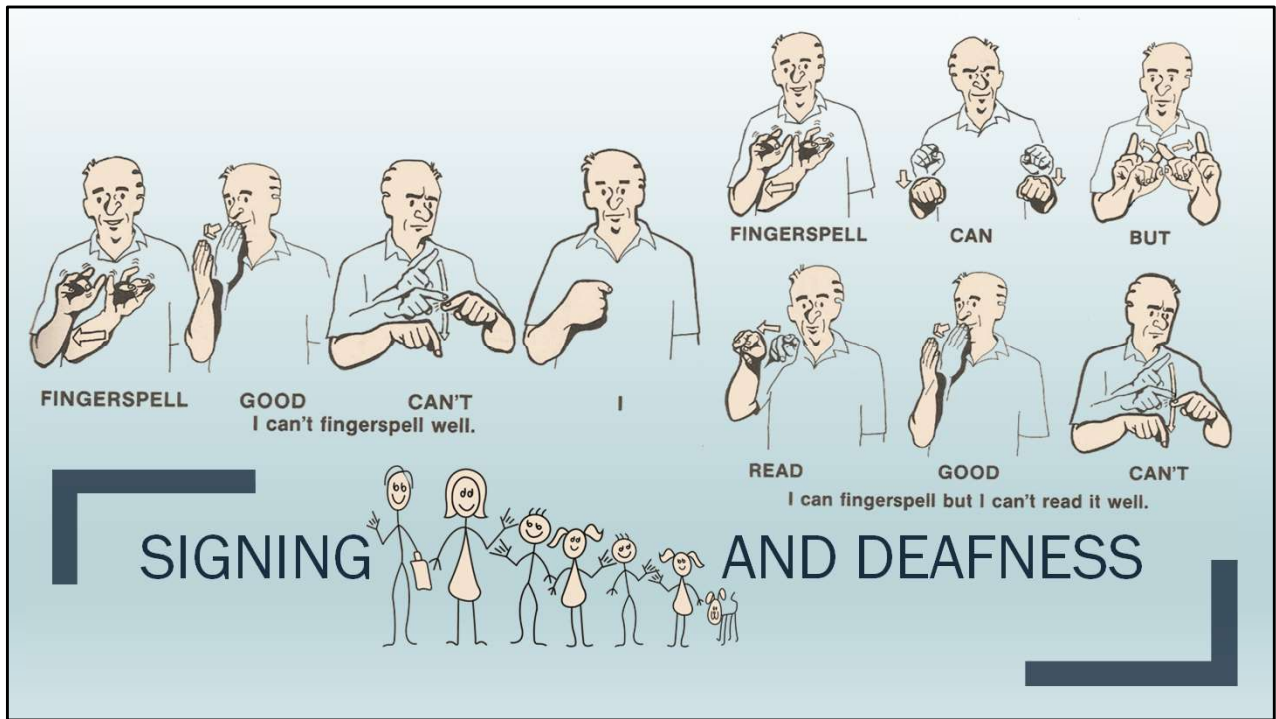


Signing and Deafness

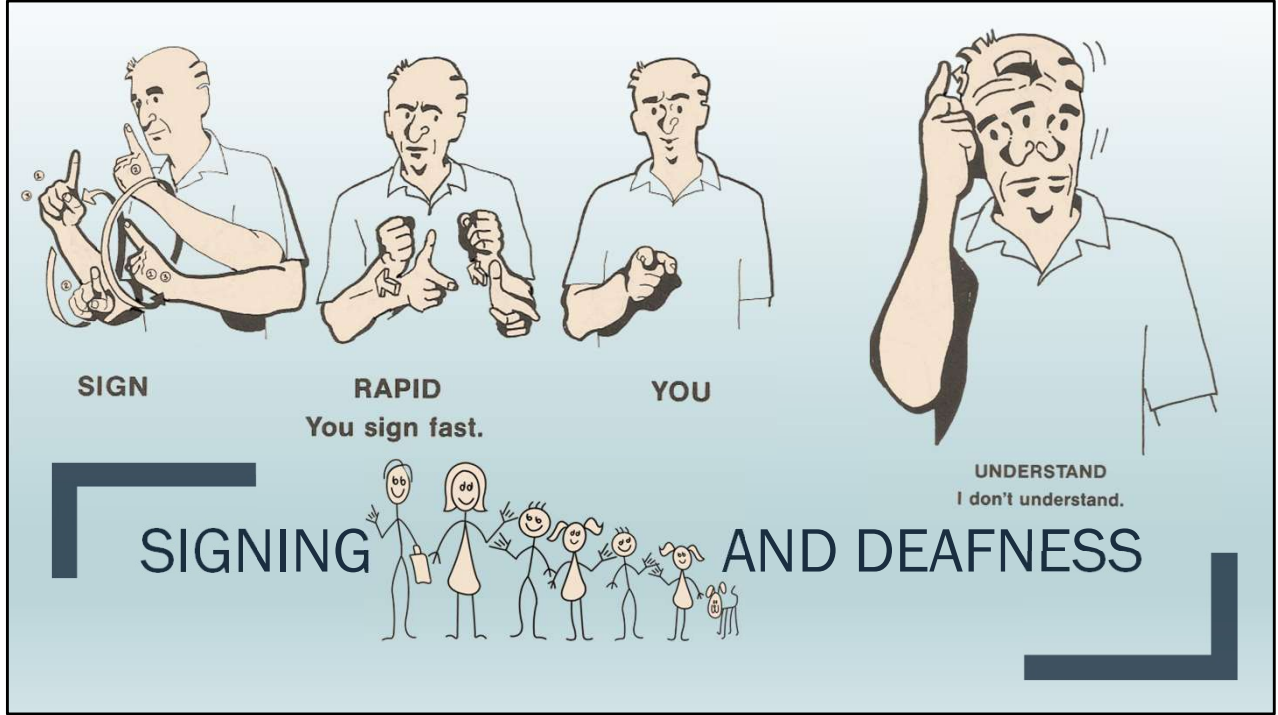
* The sign LANGUAGE is usually not signed in this expression, so that it reads literally: "I am learning to sign."



Signing and Deafness



Signing and Deafness

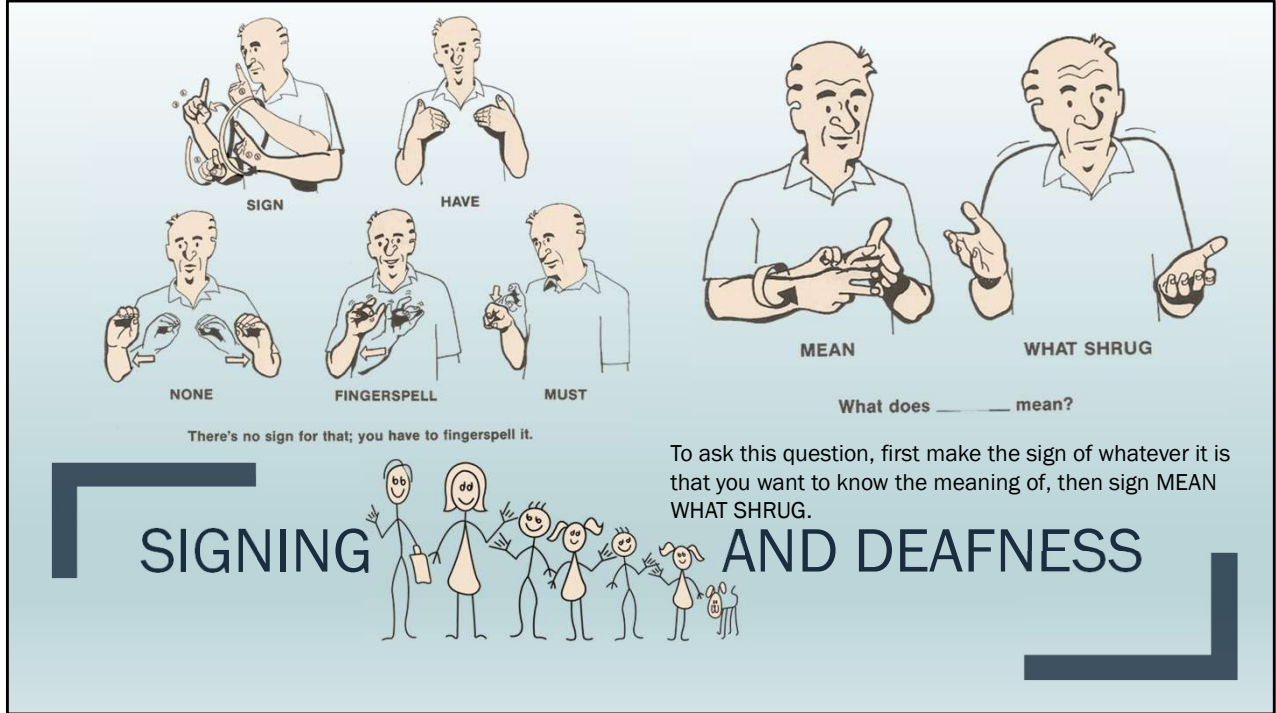


Signing and Deafness



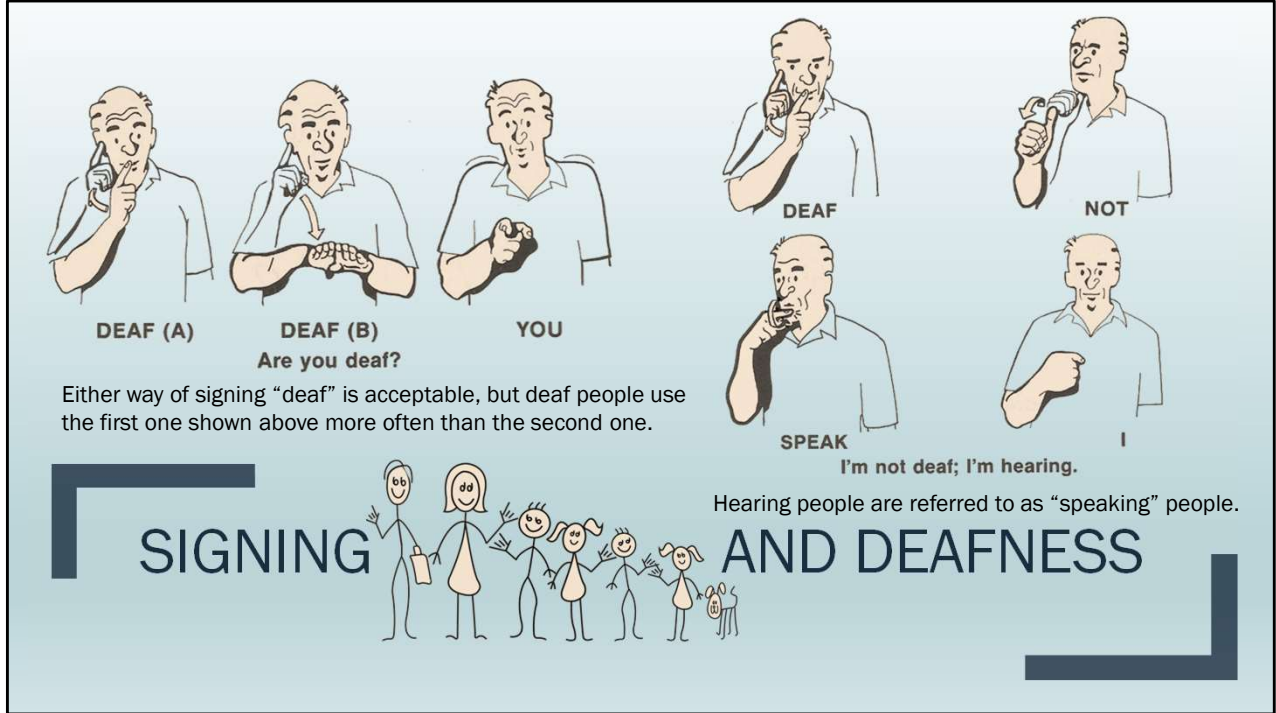
Signing and Deafness

* Ask these questions by pointing to whatever it is you want to know the sign for or by fingerspelling the word.



Signing and Deafness

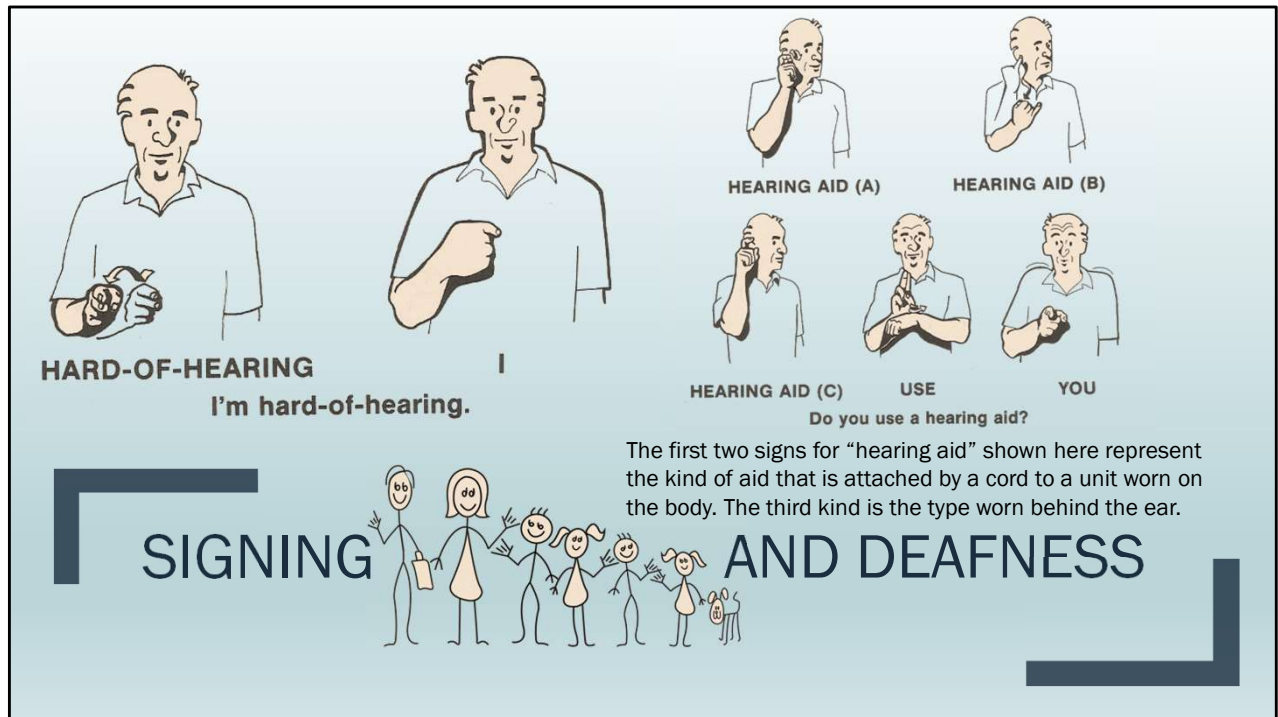
To ask this question, first make the sign of whatever it is that you want to know the meaning of, then sign MEAN WHAT SHRUG.



Signing and Deafness

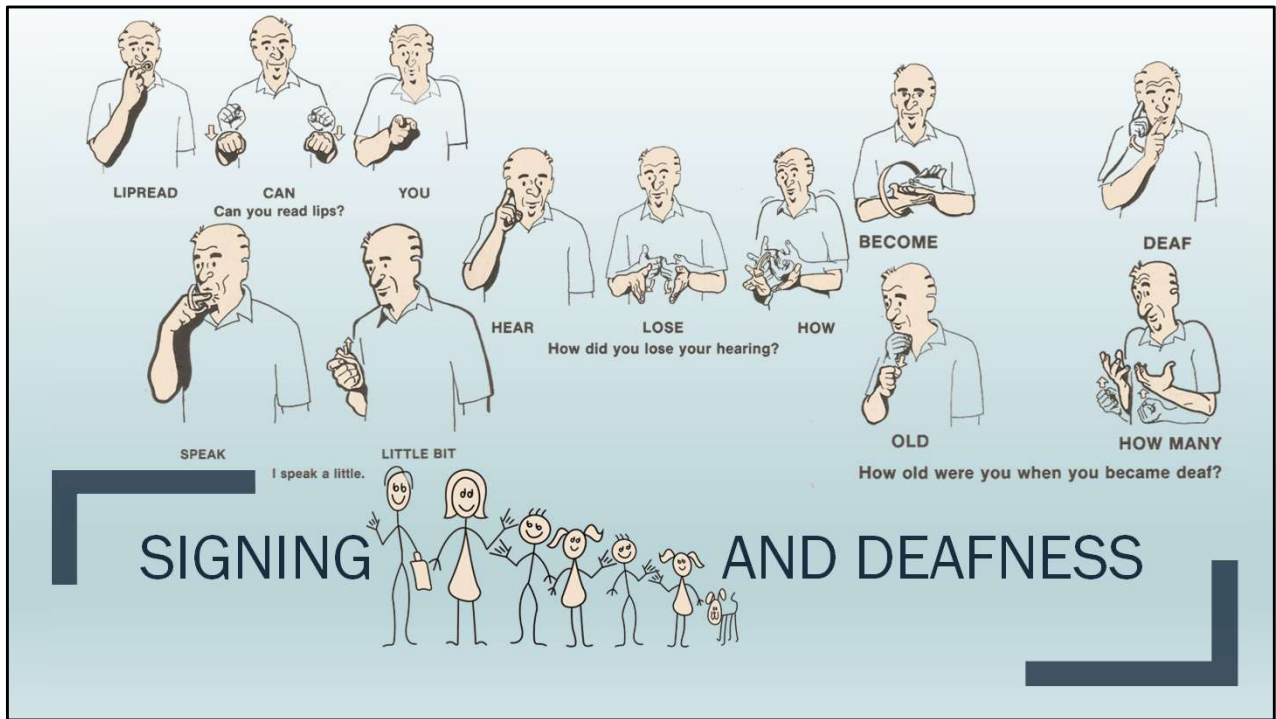
Either way of signing “deaf” is acceptable, but deaf people use the first one shown above more often than the second one.

Hearing people are referred to as “speaking” people.

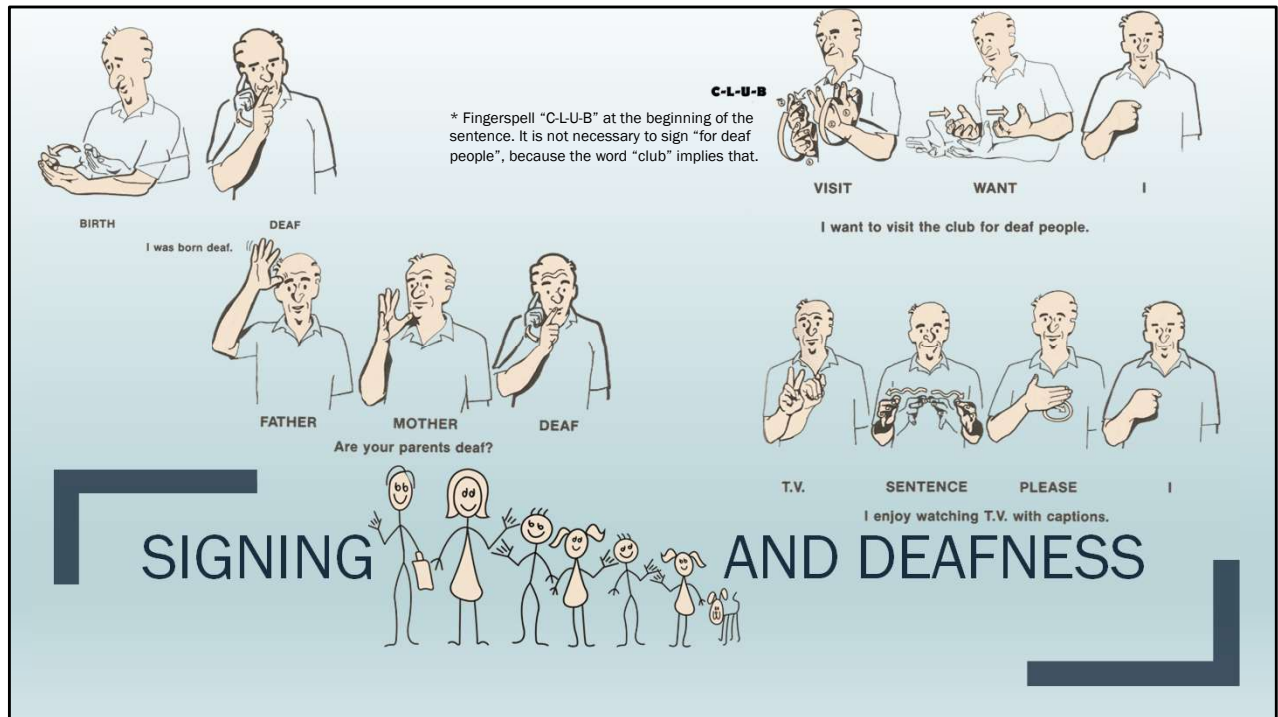


Signing and Deafness

The first two signs for "hearing aid" shown here represent the kind of aid that is attached by a cord to a unit worn on the body. The third kind is the type worn behind the ear.



Signing and Deafness



Signing and Deafness

* Fingerspell "C-L-U-B" at the beginning of the sentence. It is not necessary to sign "for deaf people", because the word "club" implies that.

PAST NIGHT SENTENCE MOVIE SEE
I saw a captioned film last night.

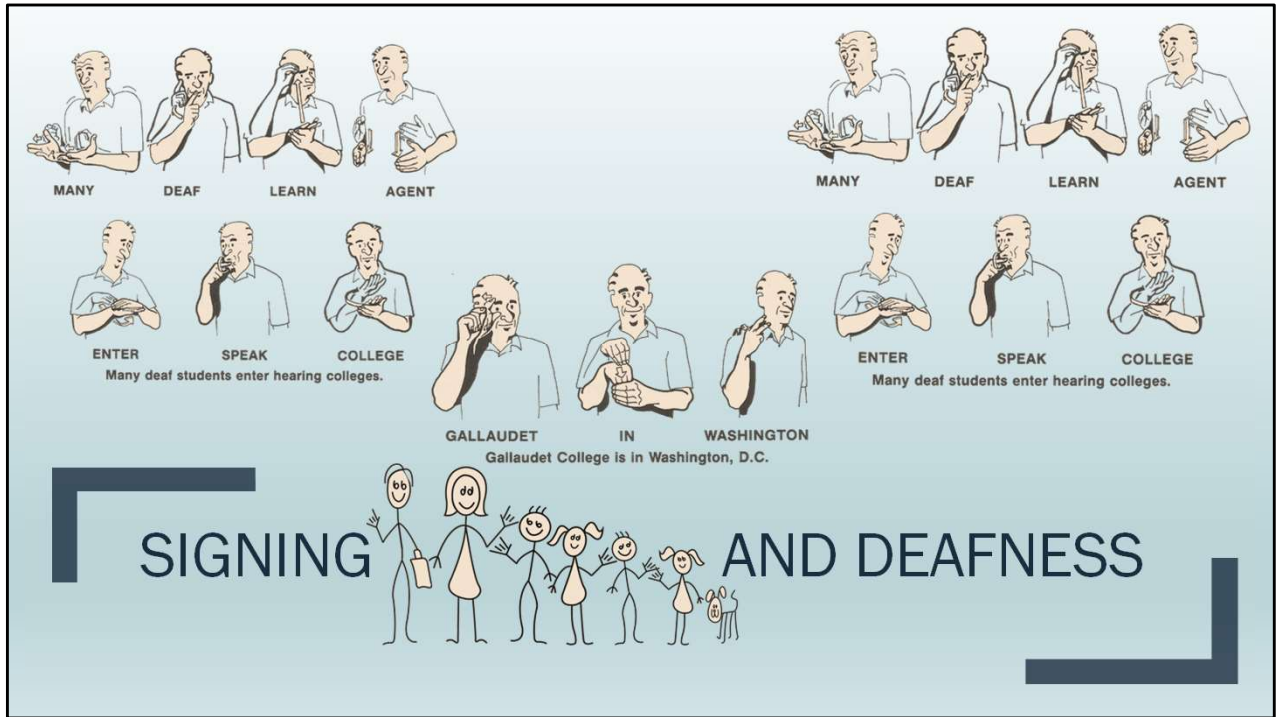
SPEAK SCHOOL I
I went to a school for hearing children.

INSTITUTE GO TO PAST YOU
Did you go to a residential school for deaf children?

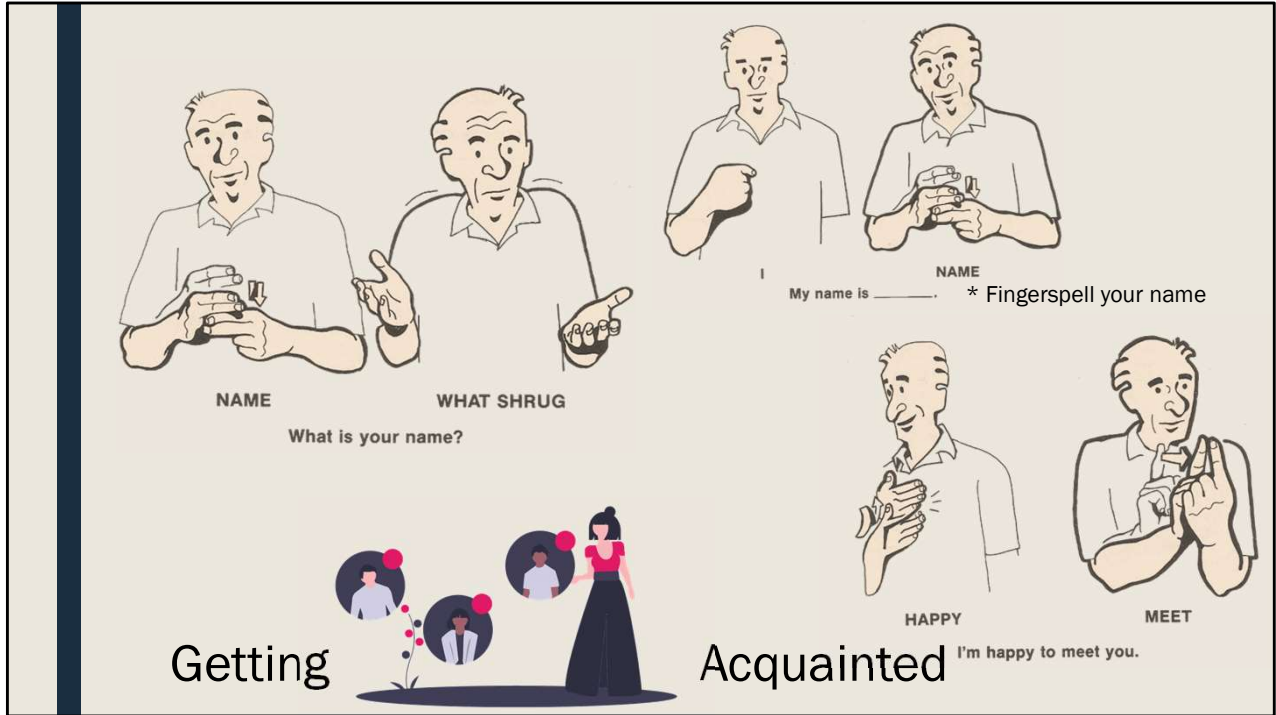
GALLAUDET FIRST COLLEGE FOR DEAF
Gallaudet College was the first college for deaf people.

SIGNING AND DEAFNESS

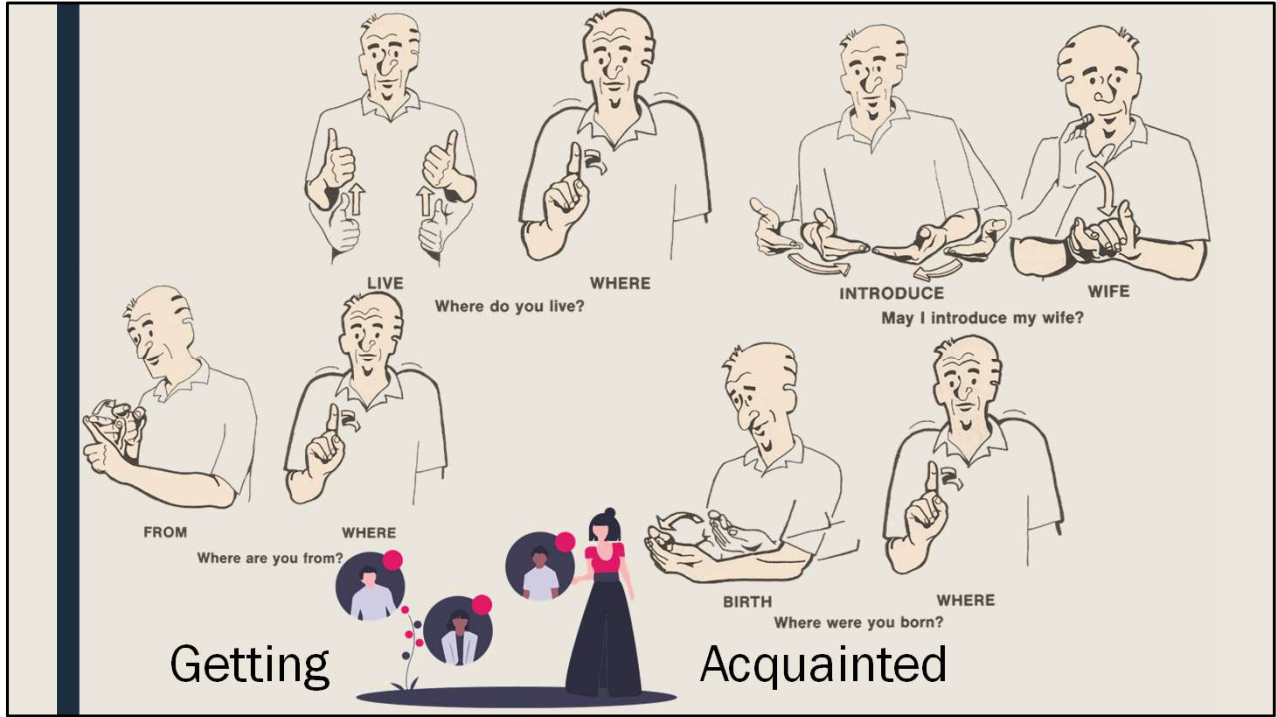
Signing and Deafness



Signing and Deafness



Getting Acquainted



Getting Acquainted

Additional vocabulary:



HUSBAND



SON



DAUGHTER



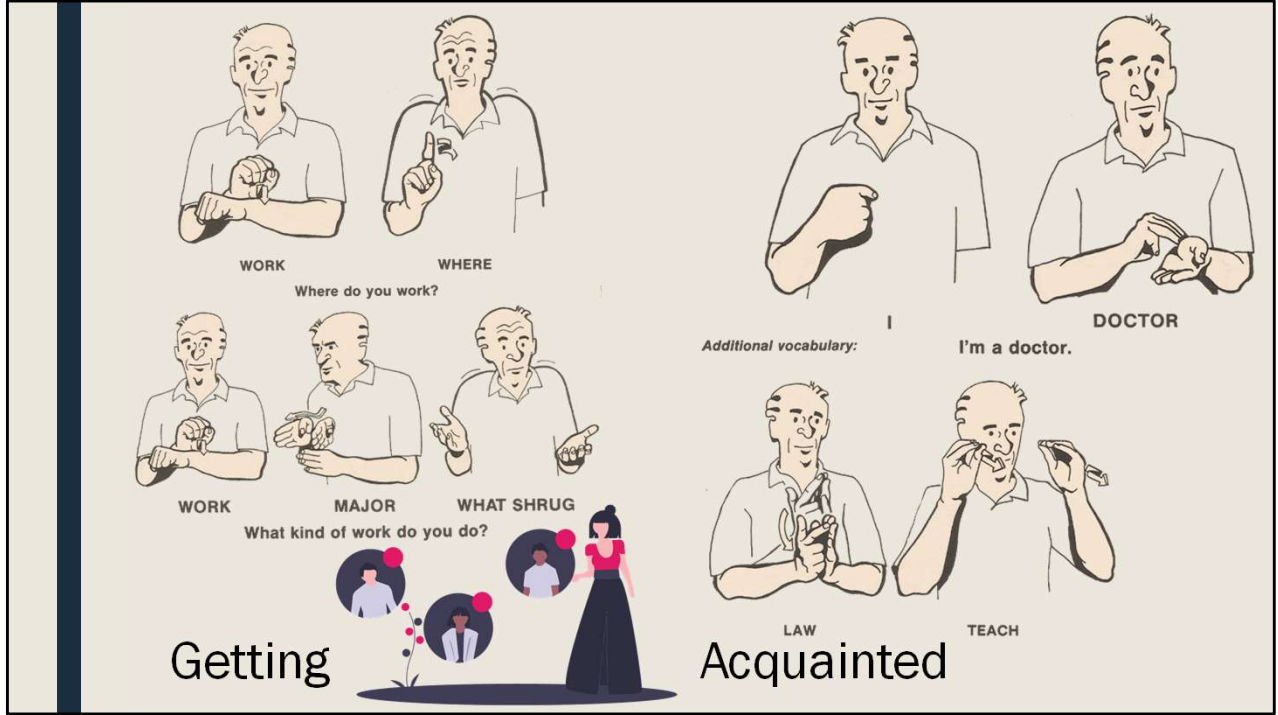
FRIEND

Getting



Acquainted

Getting Acquainted



Getting Acquainted



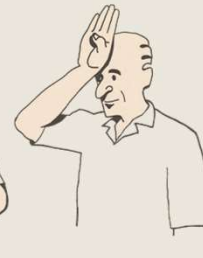
ACT



ART



AGENT



FIREFIGHTER

The AGENT sign is often added to a verb or noun sign to indicate that one does or is what the verb or noun sign says. Here the AGENT sign could be added to TEACH, LAW, ACT, and ART, but would not be added to DOCTOR, POLICE, HOUSEWIFE, FIREFIGHTER, or SECRETARY. The use of the AGENT sign is optional.

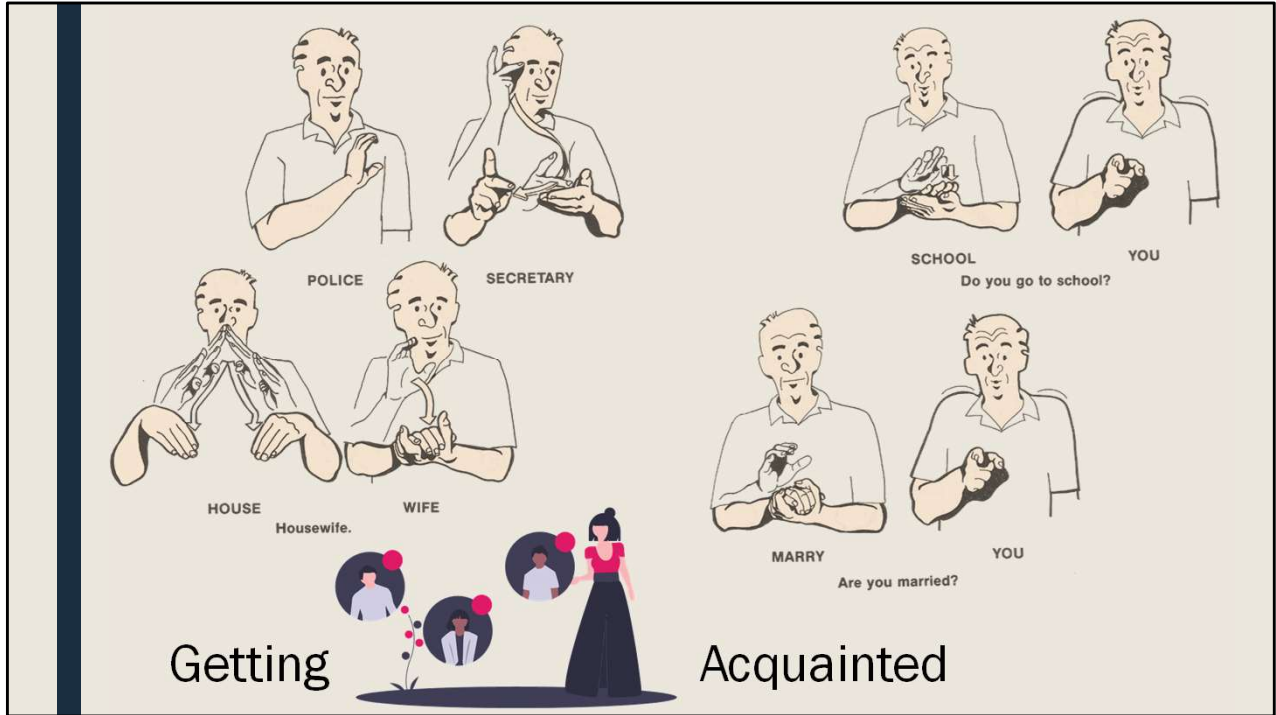
Getting



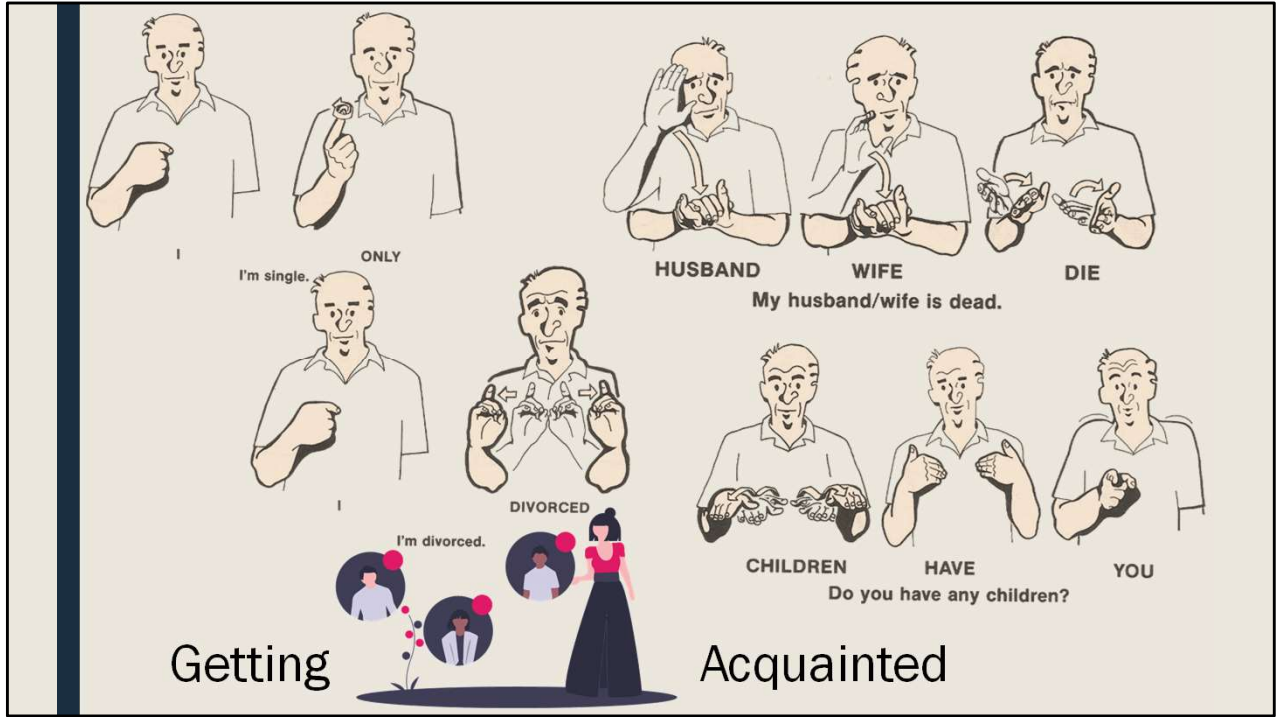
Acquainted

Getting Acquainted

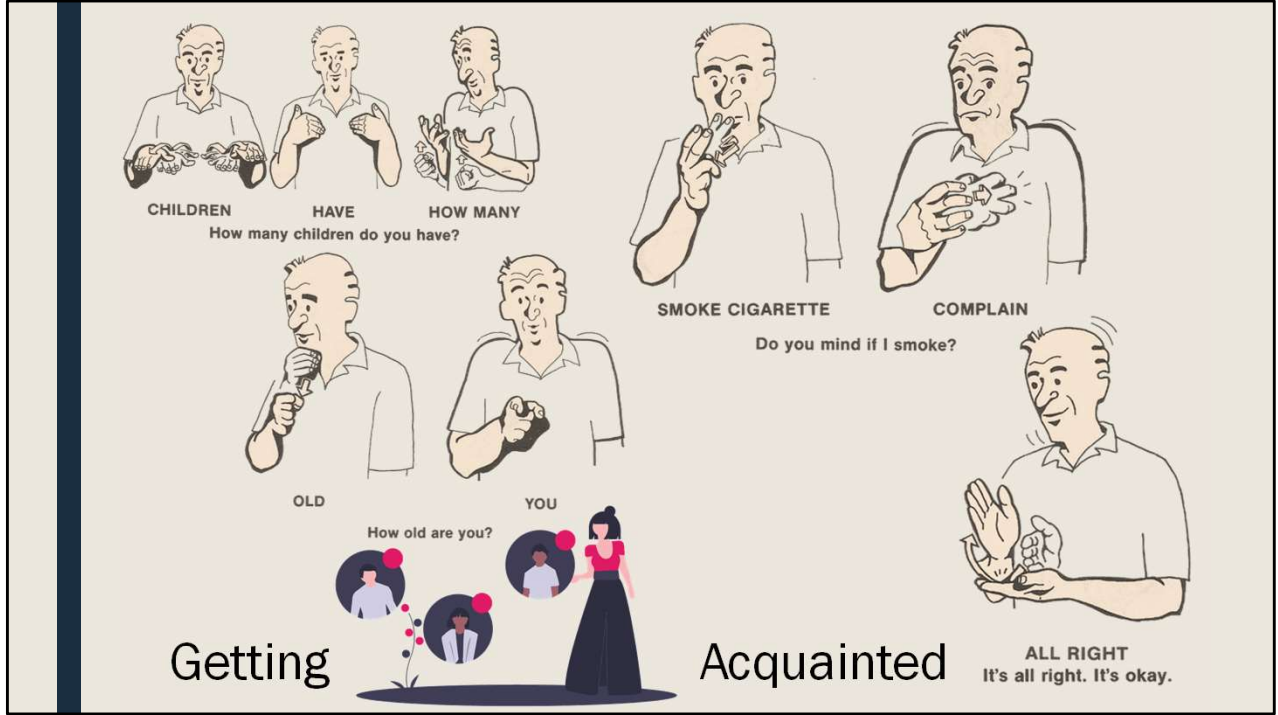
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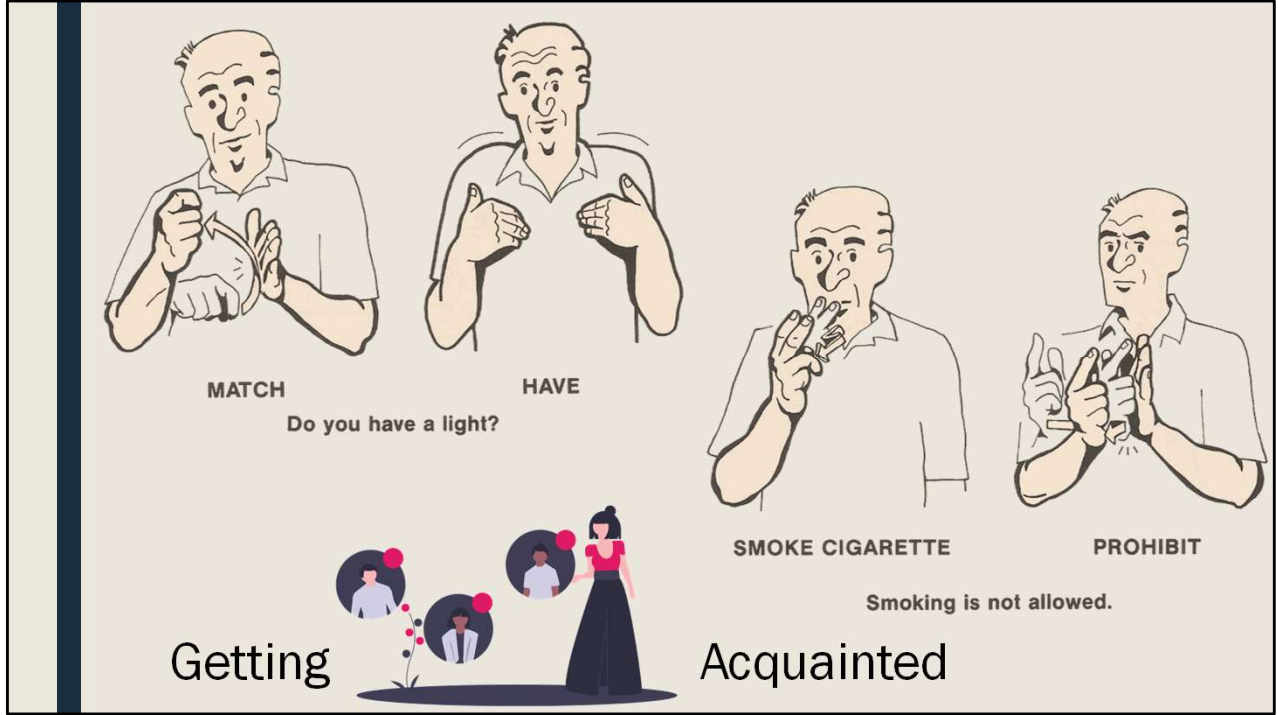
Getting Acquainted



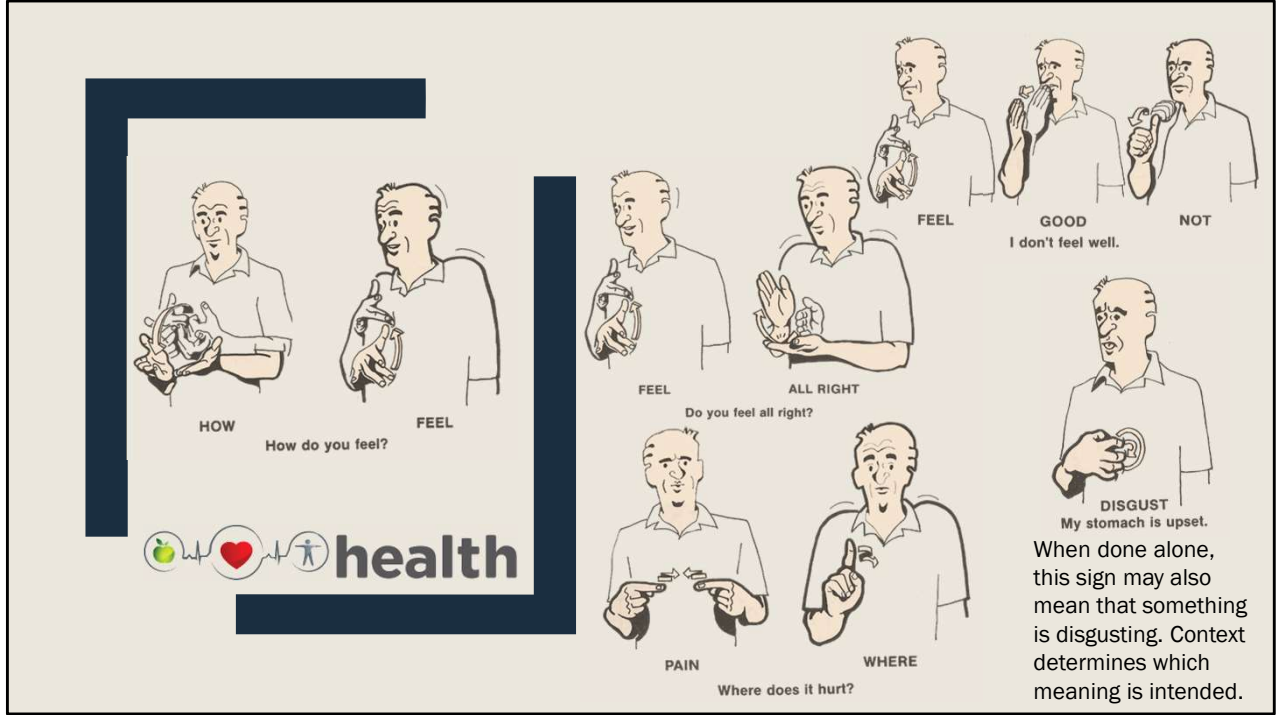
Getting Acquainted



Getting Acquainted

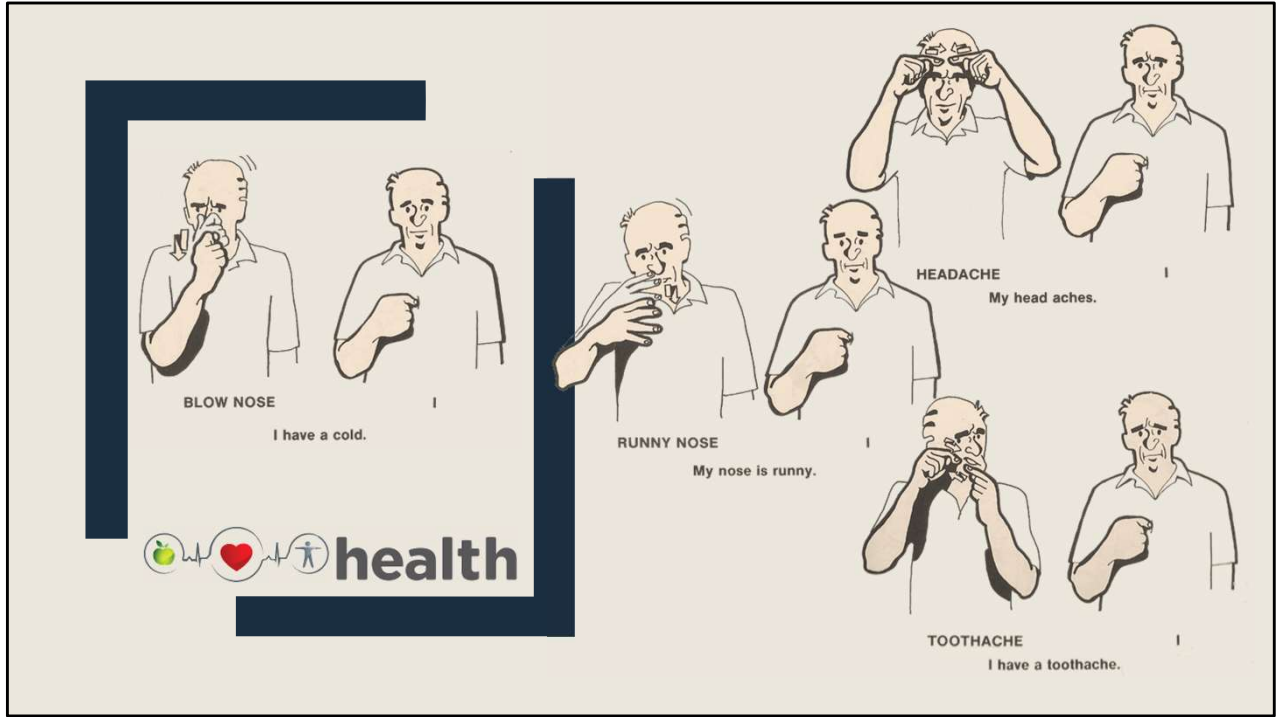


Getting Acquainted

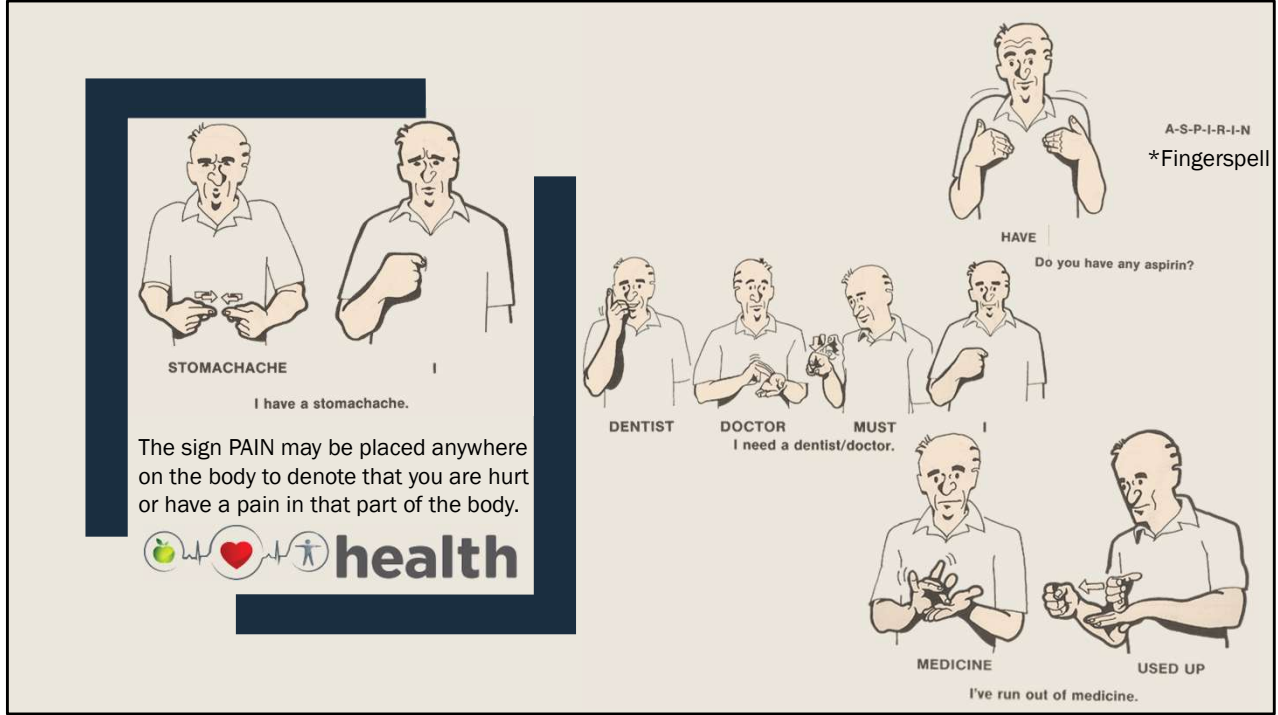


Health

Disgust: When done alone, this sign may also mean that something is disgusting. Context determines which meaning is intended.



Health



Health

The sign PAIN may be placed anywhere on the body to denote that you are hurt or have a pain in that part of the body.

MEDICINE BUY MUST
 I have to buy some medicine.

PILL MUST
 I have to take pills.

X-R-A-Y *Fingerspell
MUST NEED YOU
 You need to have an x-ray.

TIME FOR ORAL THERMOMETER
 It's time to take your temperature.

health

Health


HYPODERMIC **MUST NEED** **YOU**
 You have to have a shot.

The **MUST** sign may mean “need” or “should” and is done differently depending upon the meaning desired. If something is mandatory, then make one movement down. If something is optional but desirable, then make two gentle downward movements.

FEEL **BETTER** **NOW**
 I feel better now.

BED **LIE DOWN** **UP TILL NOW** **TWO WEEKS**
 I was in bed for two weeks.

BODY **BREAK** **ANY**
 Were any bones broken?

 **health**

* There is no standard sign for “bone,” so the statement here is more generally read as, “Is anything in your body broken?”

Health

* The **MUST** sign may mean “need” or “should” and is done differently depending upon the meaning desired. If something is mandatory, then make one movement down. If something is optional but desirable, then make two gentle downward movements.

* There is no standard sign for “bone,” so the statement here is more generally read as, “Is anything in your body broken?” If you wish to sign “bone” specifically, then you must fingerspell it or find out what the local sign for it is.

BLOOD
You lost a lot of blood.

LOSE

MUCH

YOU

health

PULL TOOTH
Have you ever had a tooth pulled?

PAST

FINISH

* The signs PAST and FINISH both refer to the past. Either one may be used alone here, but it is very common to see them both appear in a statement.

DRAW BLOOD
They have to draw some blood.

MUST

A WEEK AGO

BODY

SEARCH

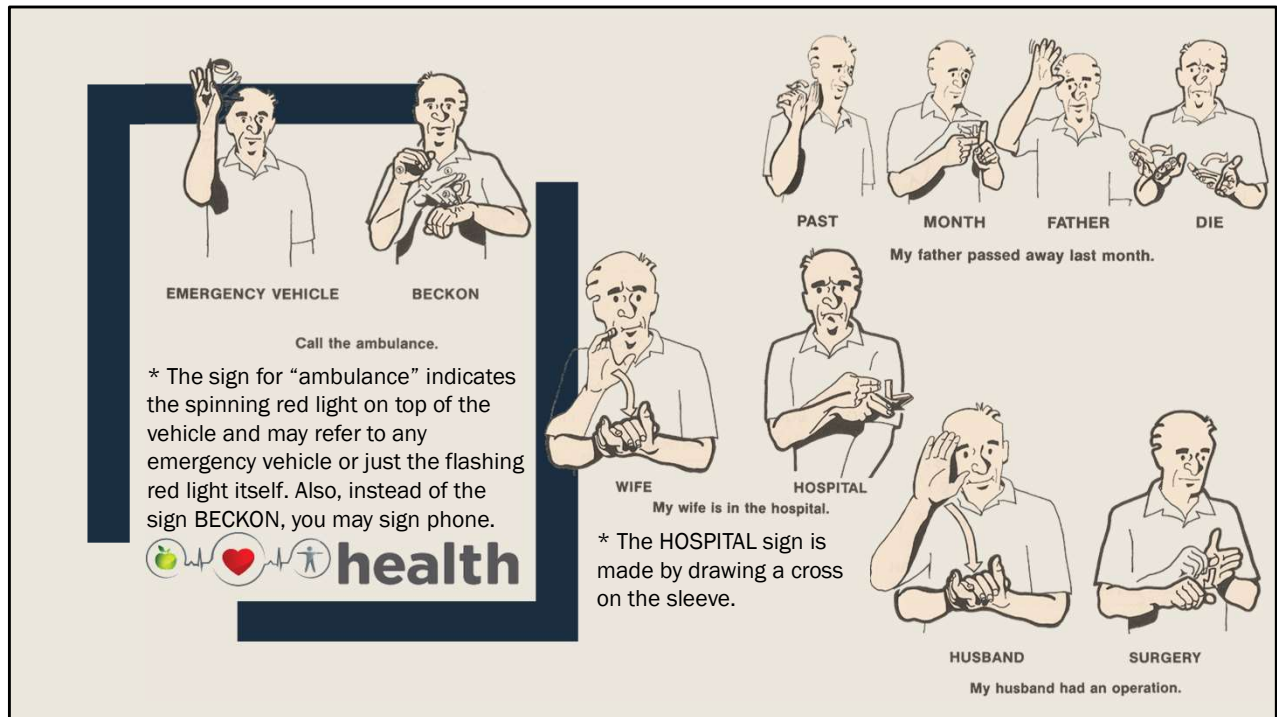
FINISH
I had a physical last week.

* The use of the FINISH sign here denotes the idea that I “already” had a physical last week.

Health

* The signs PAST and FINISH both refer to the past. Either one may be used alone here, but it is very common to see them both appear in a statement.

* The use of the FINISH sign here denotes the idea that I “already” had a physical last week.



Health

* The sign for "ambulance" indicates the spinning red light on top of the vehicle and may refer to any emergency vehicle or just the flashing red light itself. Also, instead of the sign BECKON, you may sign phone.


* The HOSPITAL sign is made by drawing a cross on the sleeve.

TOOTHBRUSH WANT
I want to brush my teeth.

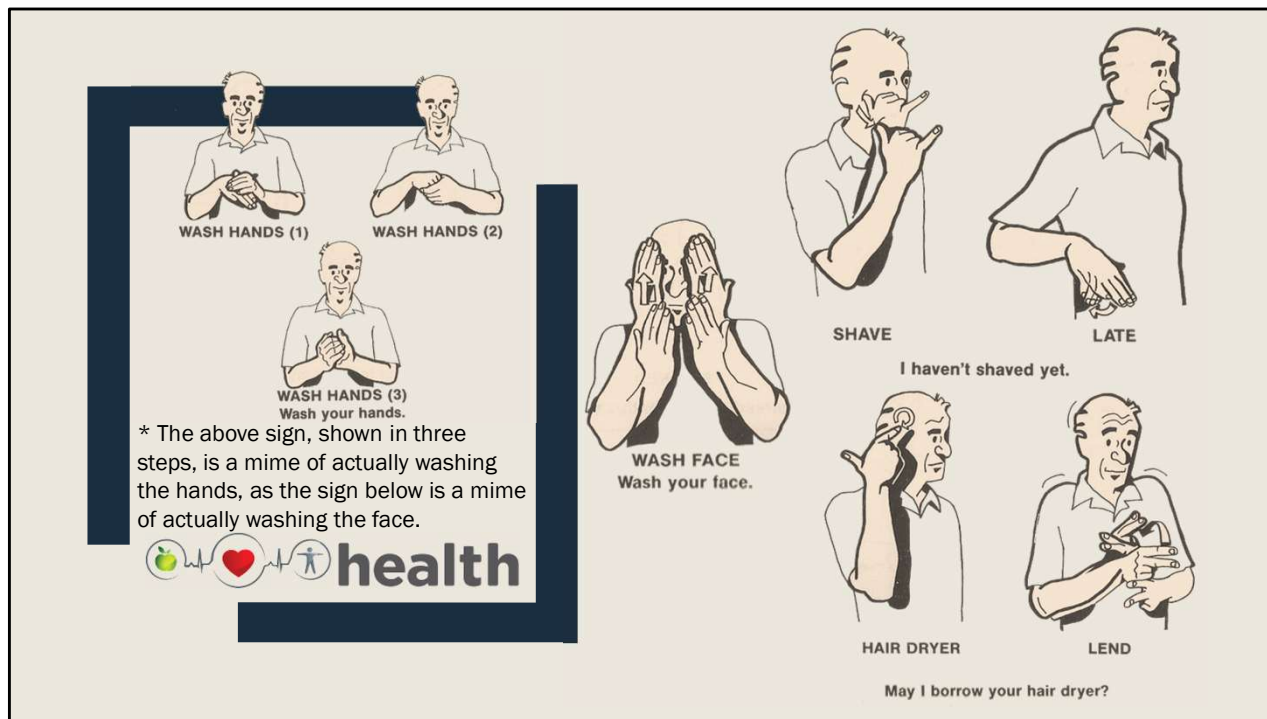
TOOTHBRUSH MY WHERE
Where's my toothbrush?

BATH SHOWER FINISH
I already took a bath/shower.

APPOINTMENT TIME 2:30
I have an appointment at two-thirty.

 **health**

Health



Health

* The above sign, shown in three steps, is a mime of actually washing the hands, as the sign below is a mime of actually washing the face.

BRUSH HAIR
Brush your hair.

COMB **LOSE**

I lost my comb.

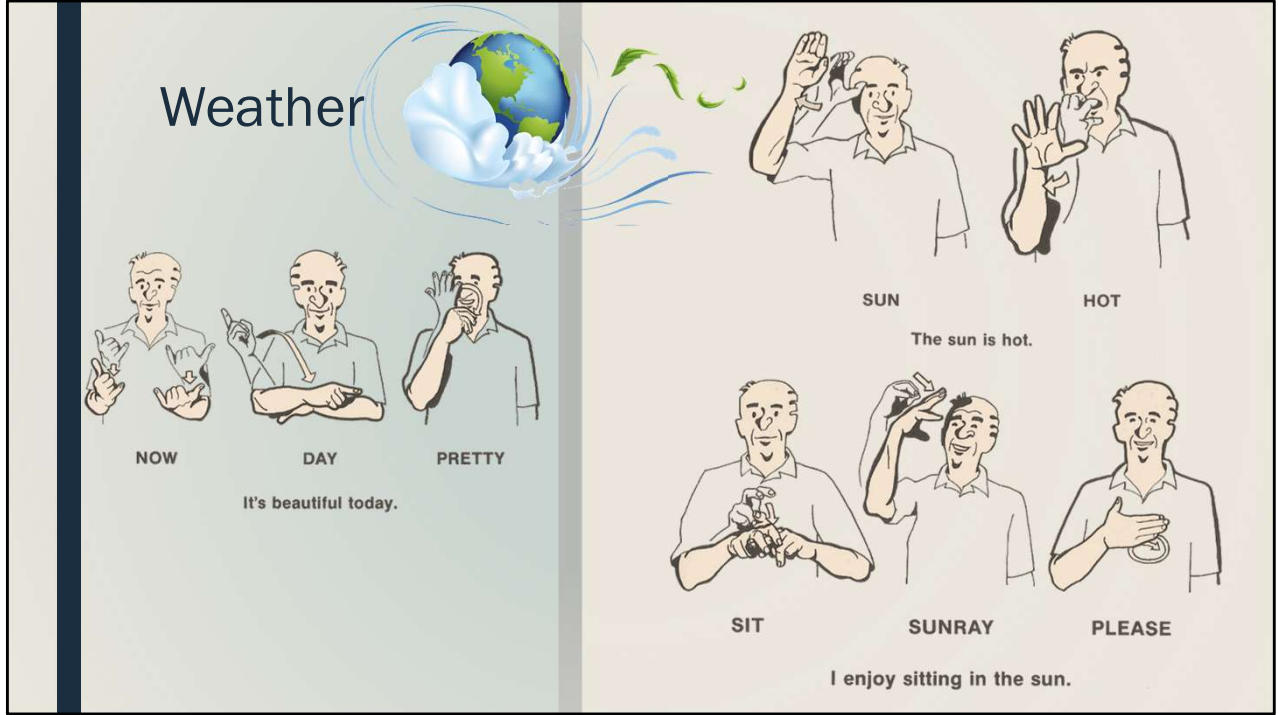
HOSPITAL **INSURANCE** **HAVE**

Do you have hospitalization insurance?

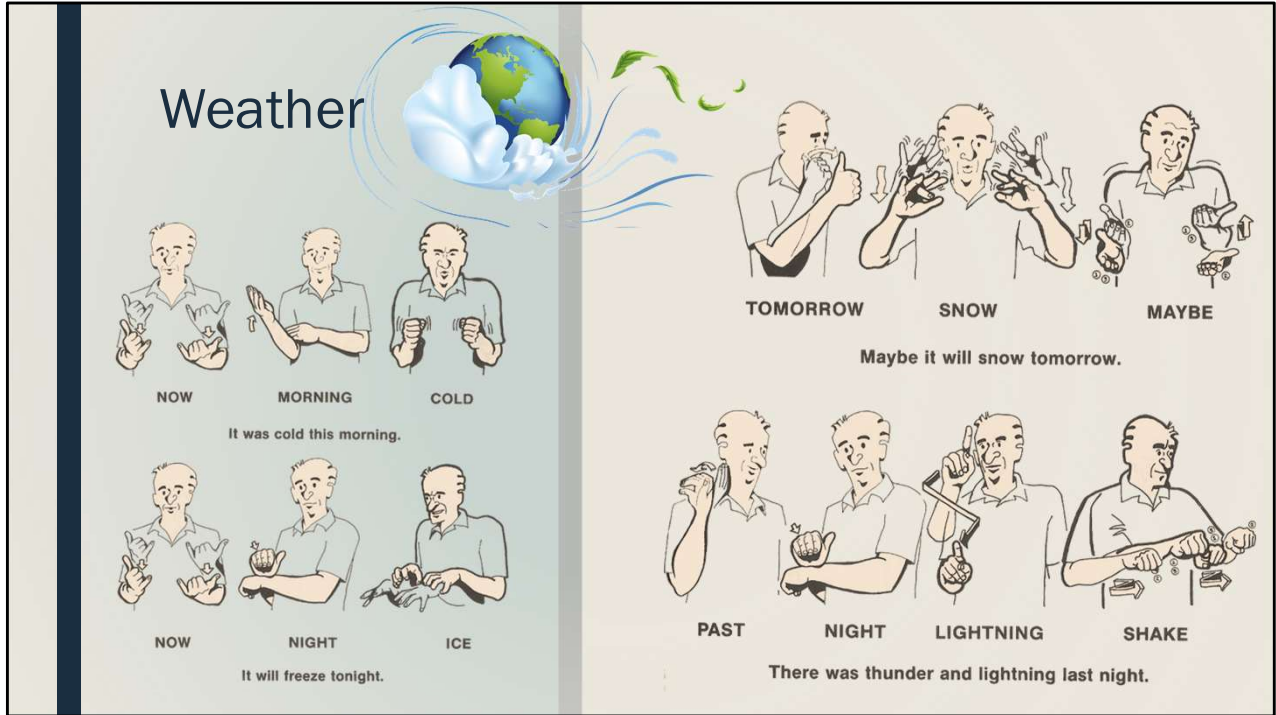
health

The image contains several illustrations of a man. One illustration shows him brushing his hair. Two other illustrations show him holding a comb, with the text 'COMB' and 'LOSE' below them, and 'I lost my comb.' between them. Three more illustrations show him holding a card or document, with the text 'HOSPITAL', 'INSURANCE', and 'HAVE' below them, and 'Do you have hospitalization insurance?' between them. At the bottom left, there is a logo for 'health' featuring an apple, a heart, and a person icon, followed by the word 'health' in a bold, lowercase font.

Health

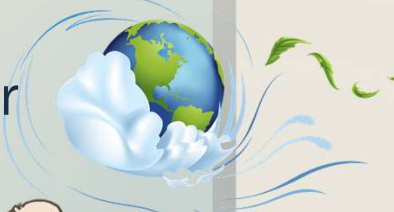




Weather







Weather

Weather








YESTERDAY RAIN
It rained yesterday.



RAIN COAT HAVE YOU
Do you have a raincoat?

UMBRELLA LOSE
I lost my umbrella.

YOUR GALOSHES (1) GALOSHES (2)

RUBBER WHERE
Where are your galoshes/rubbers?

Weather

Weather

YESTERDAY LATE AFTERNOON SUNSET

CLOUDS PRETTY

Yesterday evening at sunset, the clouds were beautiful.

NOW DAY WIND (1) WIND (2)

It's windy today.

NOW AFTERNOON CLEAR HOPE

I hope it clears up this afternoon.

I LIKE GROW SUMMER

AUTUMN COLD BEST

I like spring/summer/autumn/winter best.

Weather

Weather

DURING

COLD

CAR

MOUNTAIN

CHAIN

REQUIRE

You have to have chains to drive in the mountains in winter.

TEMPERATURE

WHAT SHRUG

What's the temperature?

TORNADO

SCARE

ME

I'm afraid of tornados.

SNOW

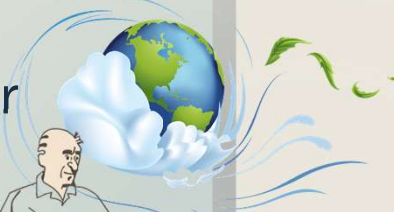
MELT

FINISH


Has the snow melted?

Weather


Weather




EARTH




SHAKE



FINISH




YOU




Have you ever been in an earthquake?

* There are no signs for "hurricane," "blizzard," "sleet," and "hail," so they must be fingerspelled.


LAST YEAR



WATER




FLOOD




There was a flood last year.


TEMPERATURE



LESS THAN



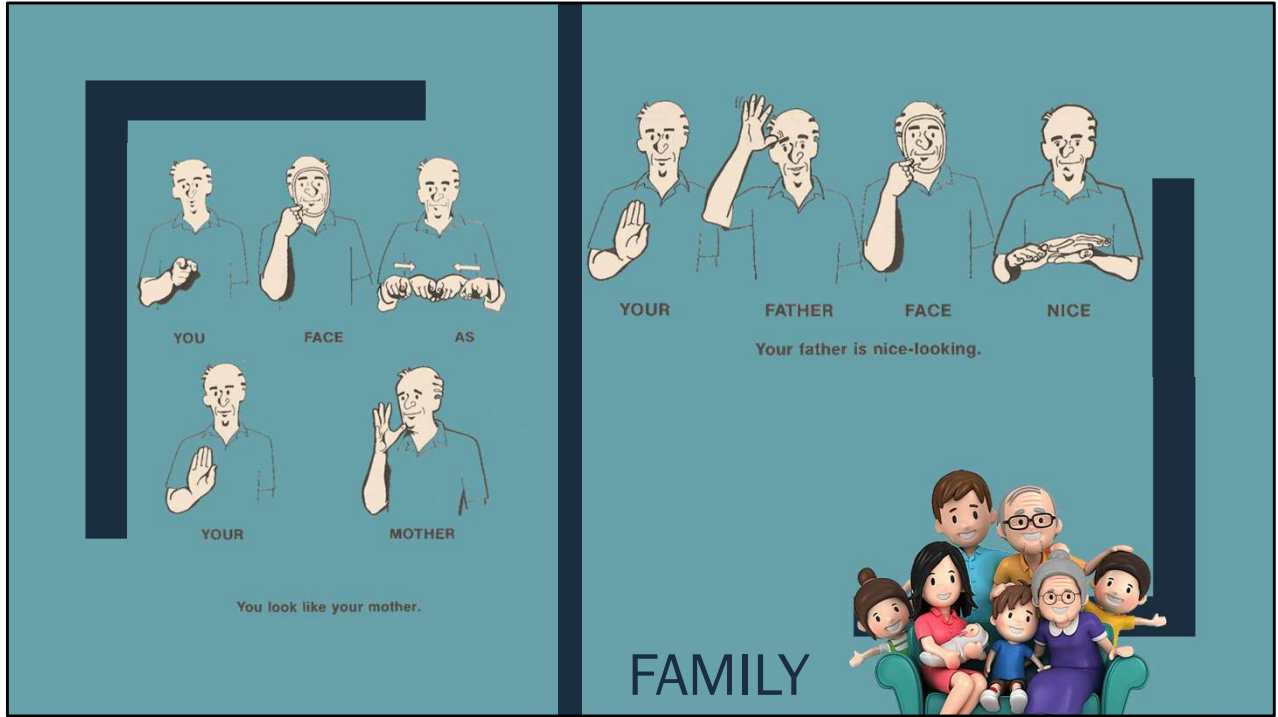
ZERO



The temperature is below zero.

Weather

* There are no signs for "hurricane," "blizzard," "sleet," and "hail," so they must be fingerspelled.



Family

MY SISTER SKILL TALK

FEW LANGUAGE SKILL

My sister speaks several languages fluently.

* The repetition of a sign, as SKILL is repeated here, is a common practice.

MY BROTHER YOUNGER

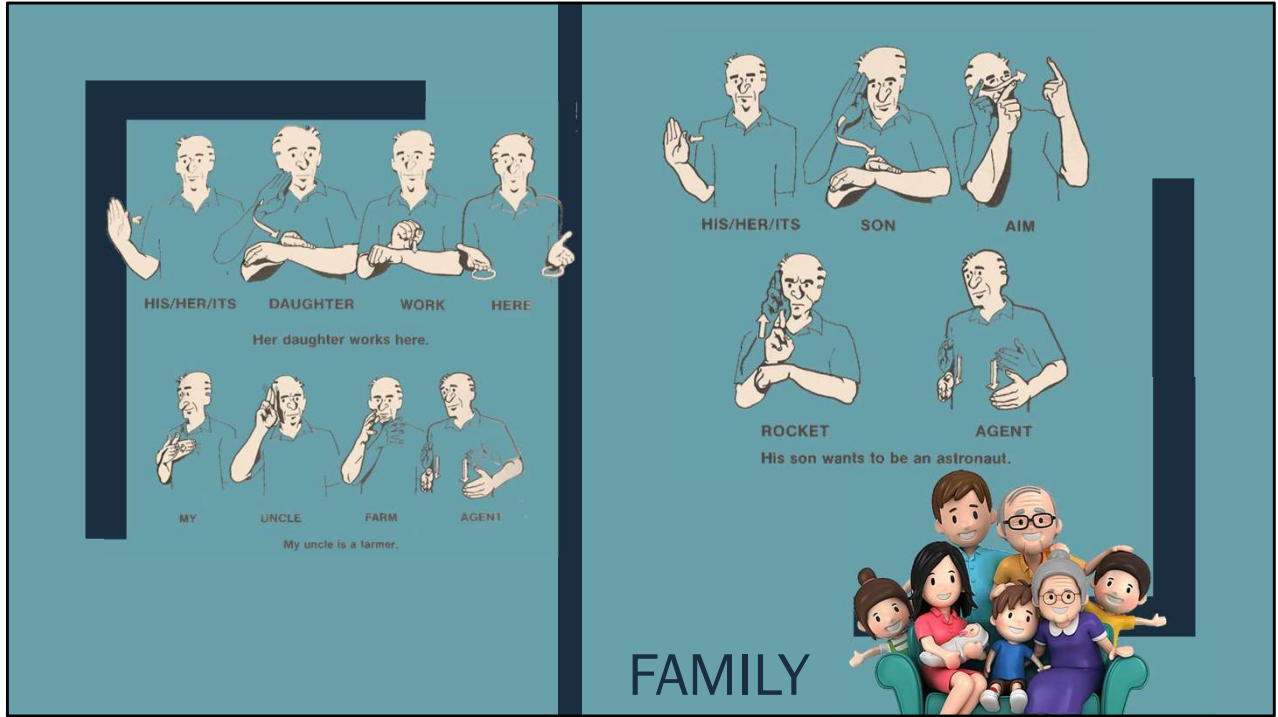
THAN I

My brother is younger than I.

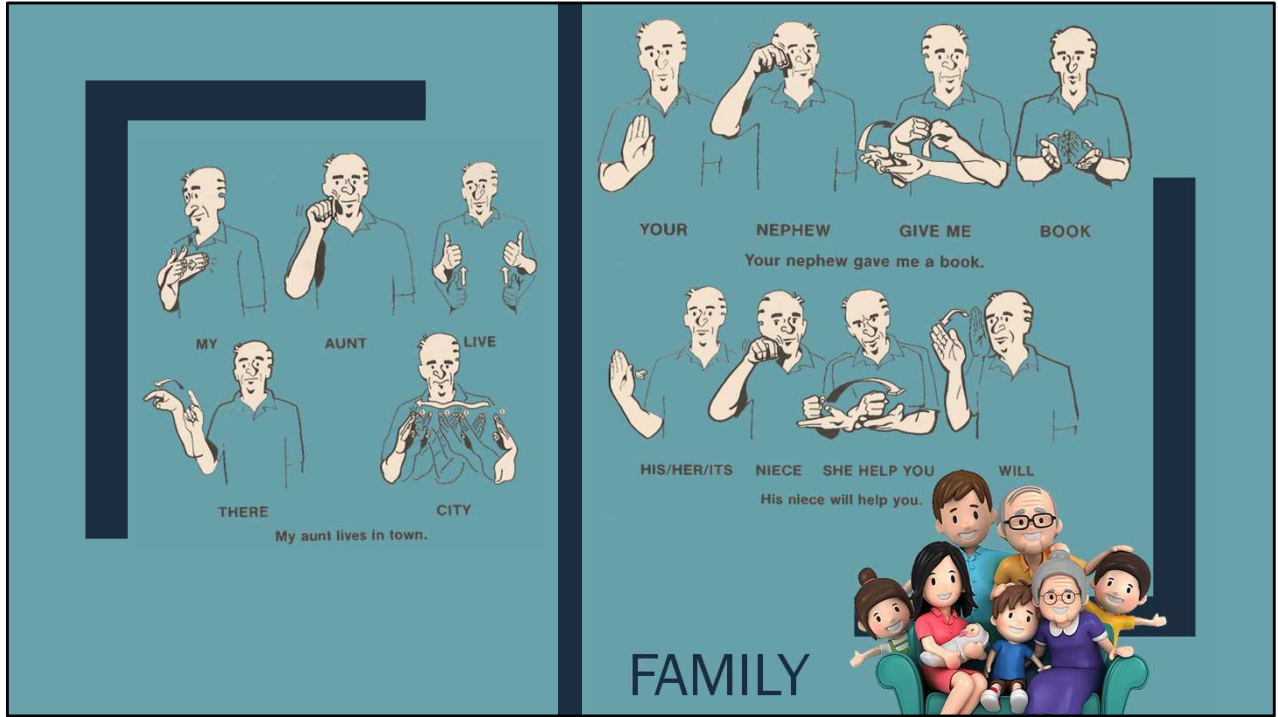
FAMILY

Family

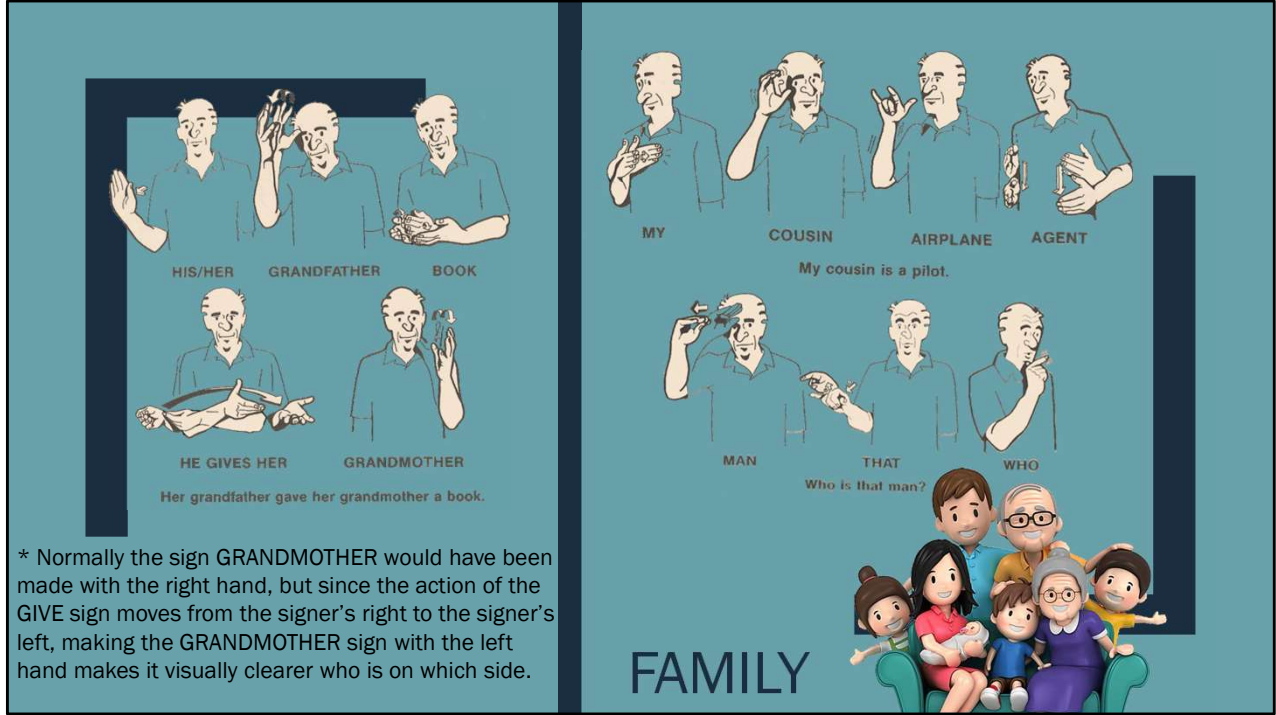
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Family



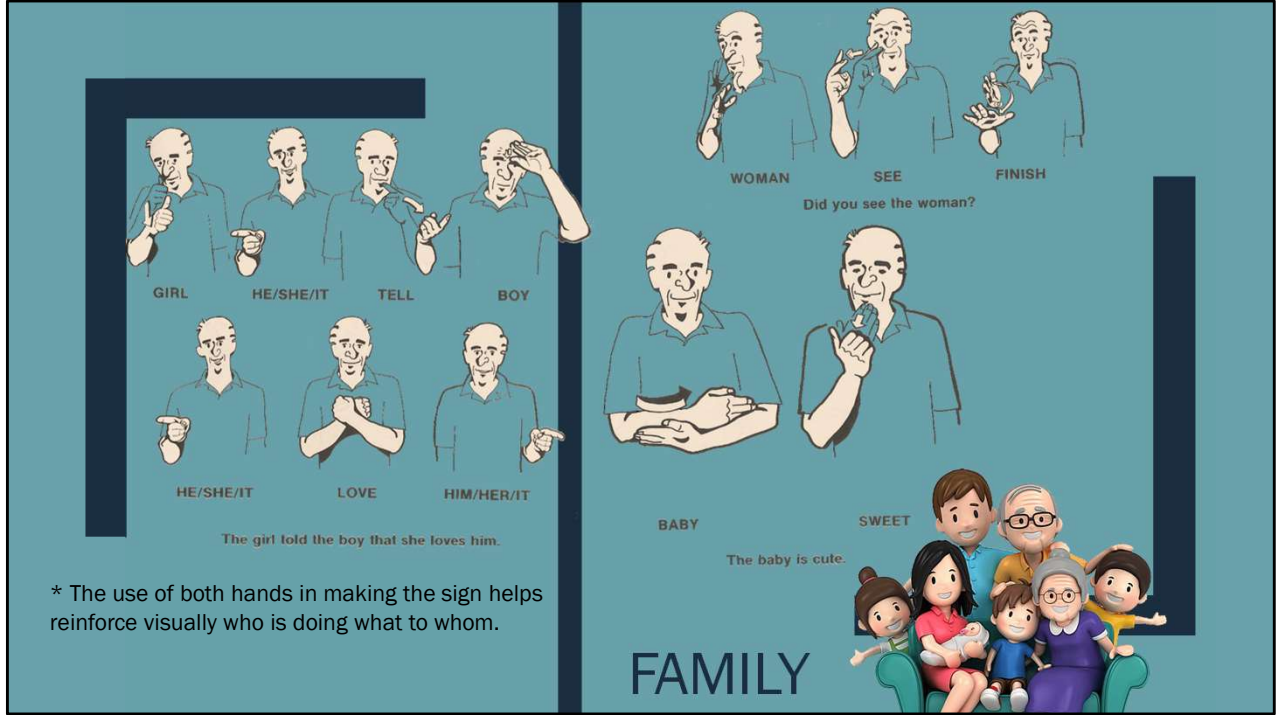
Family



* Normally the sign GRANDMOTHER would have been made with the right hand, but since the action of the GIVE sign moves from the signer's right to the signer's left, making the GRANDMOTHER sign with the left hand makes it visually clearer who is on which side.

Family

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* The use of both hands in making the sign helps reinforce visually who is doing what to whom.

Family

* The use of both hands in making the sign helps reinforce visually who is doing what to whom.

FATHER TELL BOY

SHORT (height) PLAY OUT

Father told the little boy to play outside.

* The TELL sign moves downward to denote that the person being told is a child. The same thing occurs in the following sentence with the HER sign.

GIRL SHORT (height) HIS/HER/ITS

DOLL BREAK

The little girl's doll is broken.

FAMILY

Family

* The TELL sign moves downward to denote that the person being told is a child. The same thing occurs in the following sentence with the HER sign.

WE CONVENE GRANDFATHER

FARM THERE

We met at Grandfather's farm.

CHILDREN COME HERE HOW MANY

How many children are coming?

PAST SUMMER FAMILY CONVENE

We had a family reunion last summer.

* The idea "we had" is understood and therefore not signed.

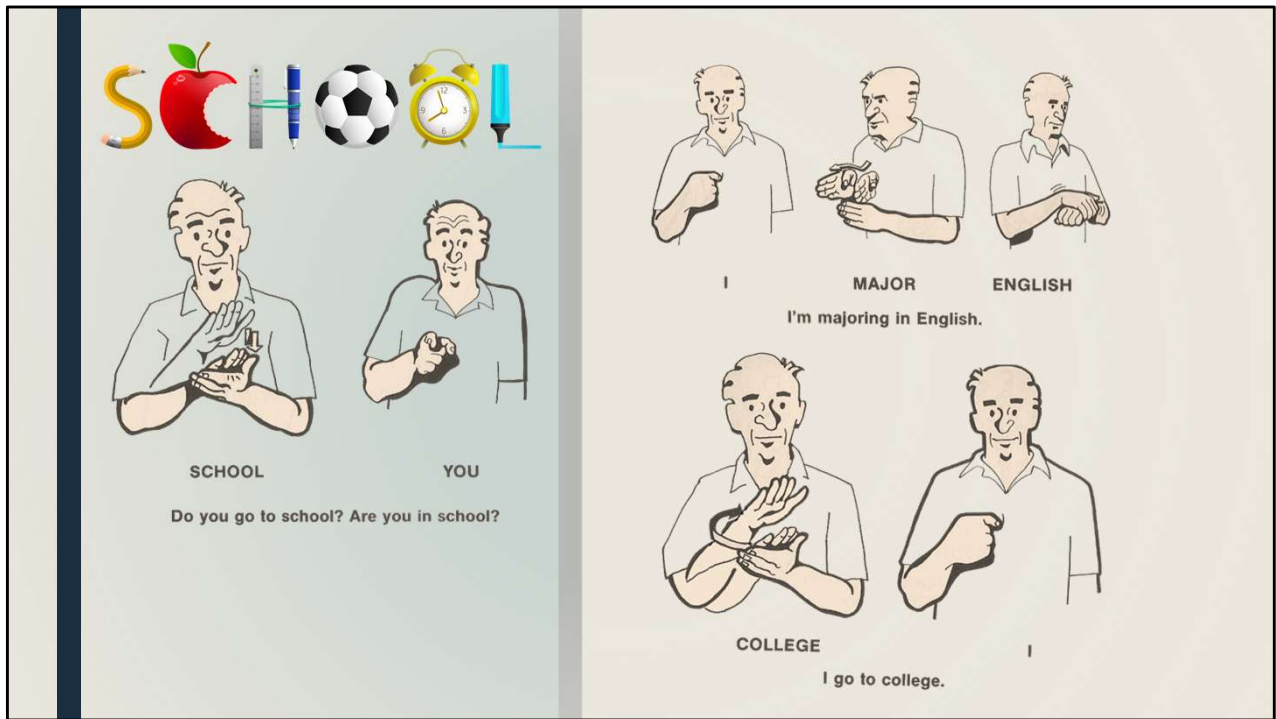
OUR FAMILY LARGE SMALL

Our family is large/small

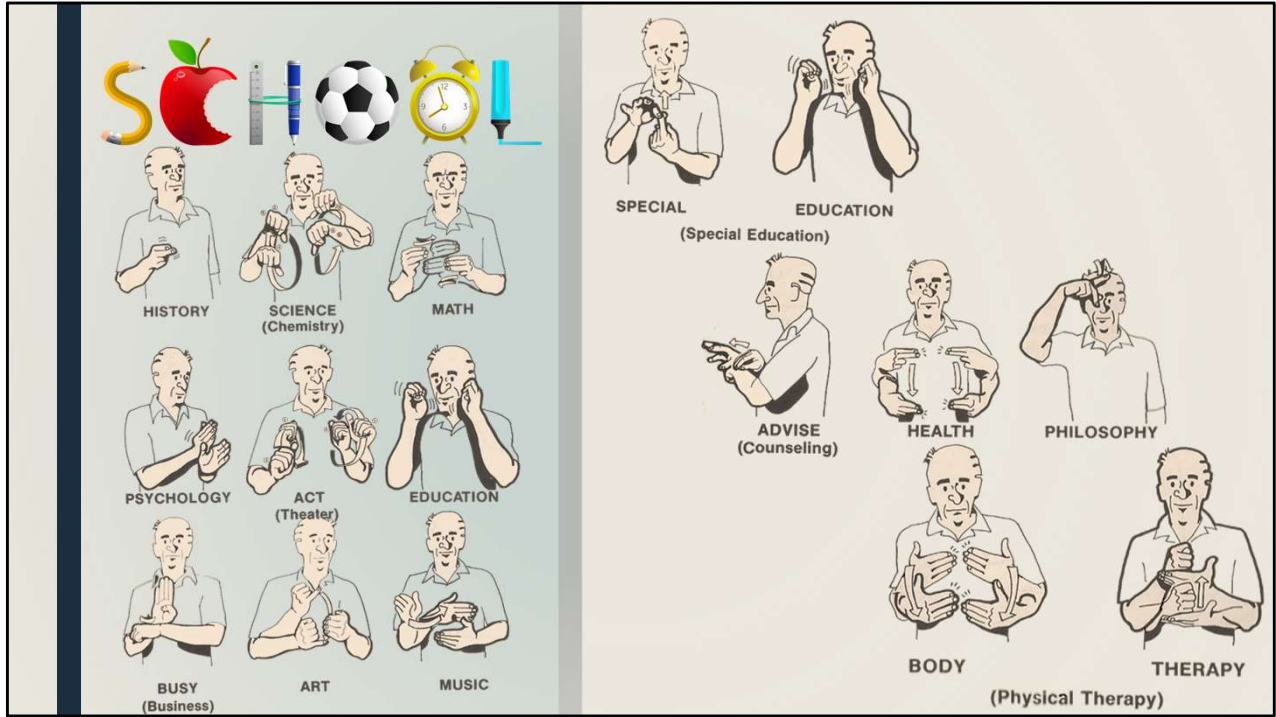
FAMILY

Family

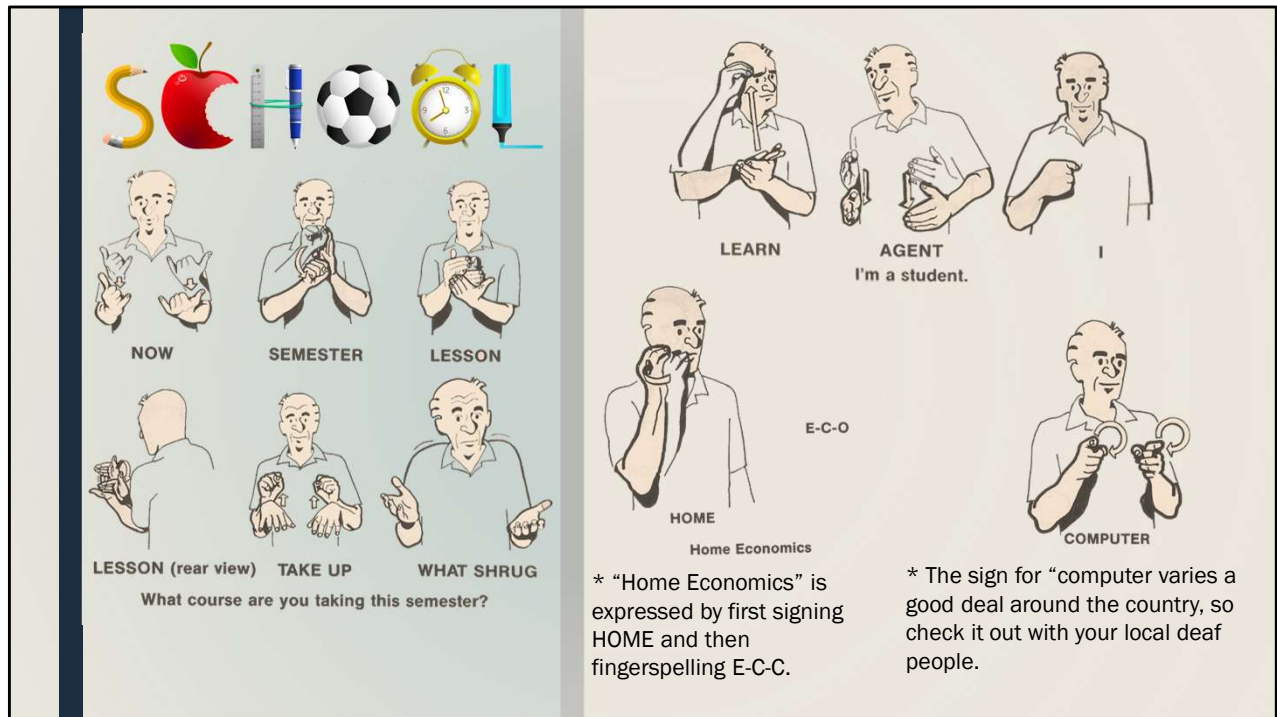
* The idea "we had" is understood and therefore not signed.



School



School



School

Other academic fields are fingerspelled, either in full or in abbreviated form. "Physical Education" is "P-E;" "Library Science" is "L-S;" "Sociology" is "S-O-C," and so on.

- * "Home Economics" is expressed by first signing HOME and then fingerspelling E-C-C.
- * The sign for "computer varies a good deal around the country, so check it out with your local deaf people.

SCHOOL

PREP FRESHMAN SOPHOMORE

JUNIOR SENIOR GRADUATE

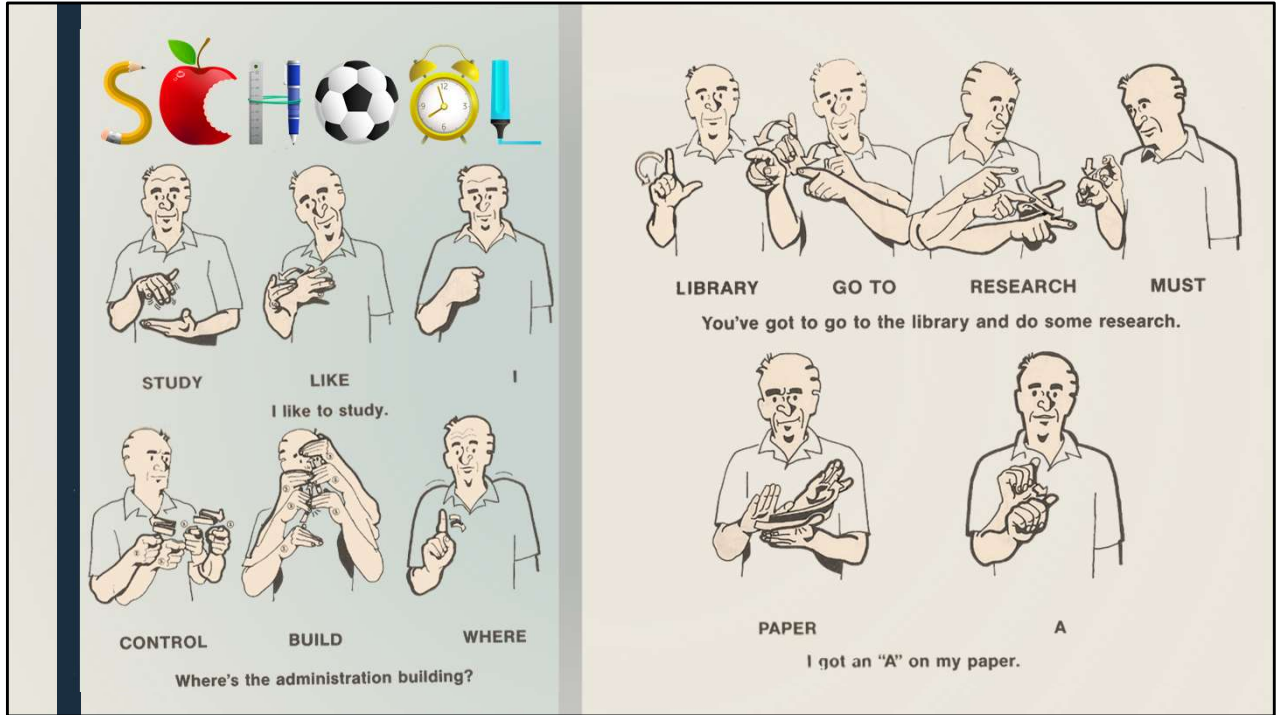
LAST YEAR GRADUATE I

I graduated last year.

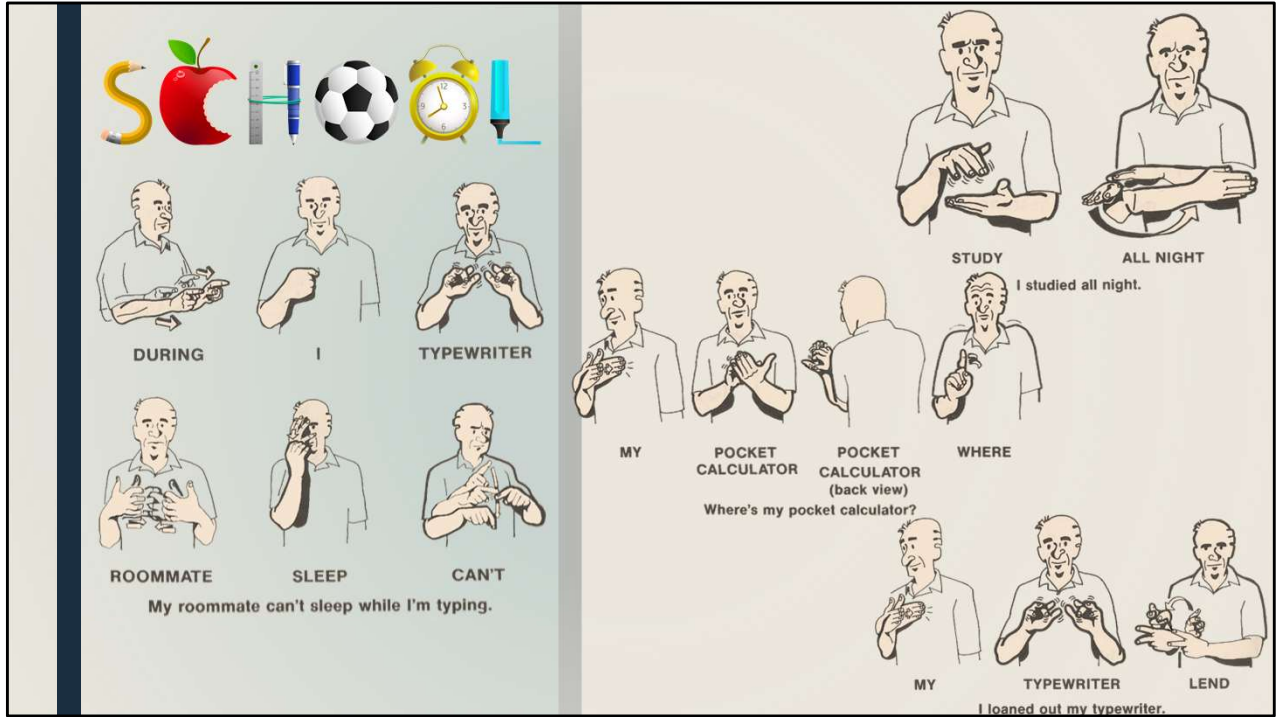
NOW GRADUATE SCHOOL I

I'm in graduate school now.

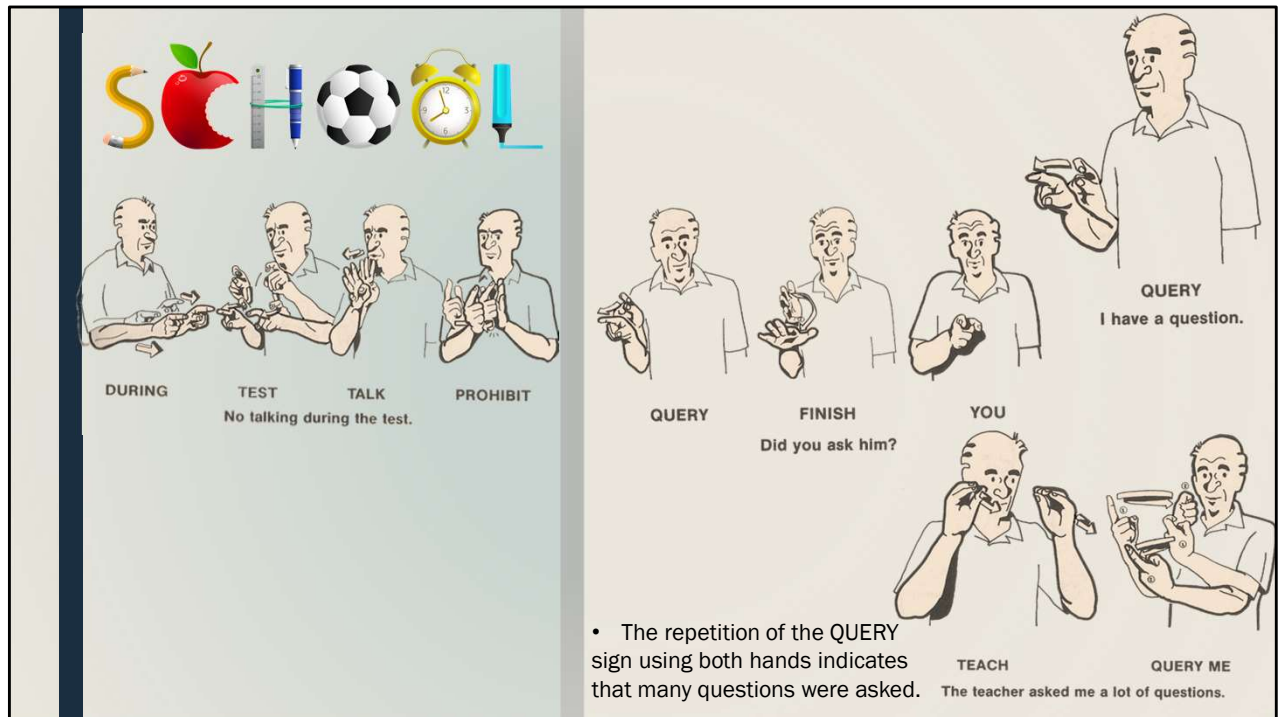
School



School



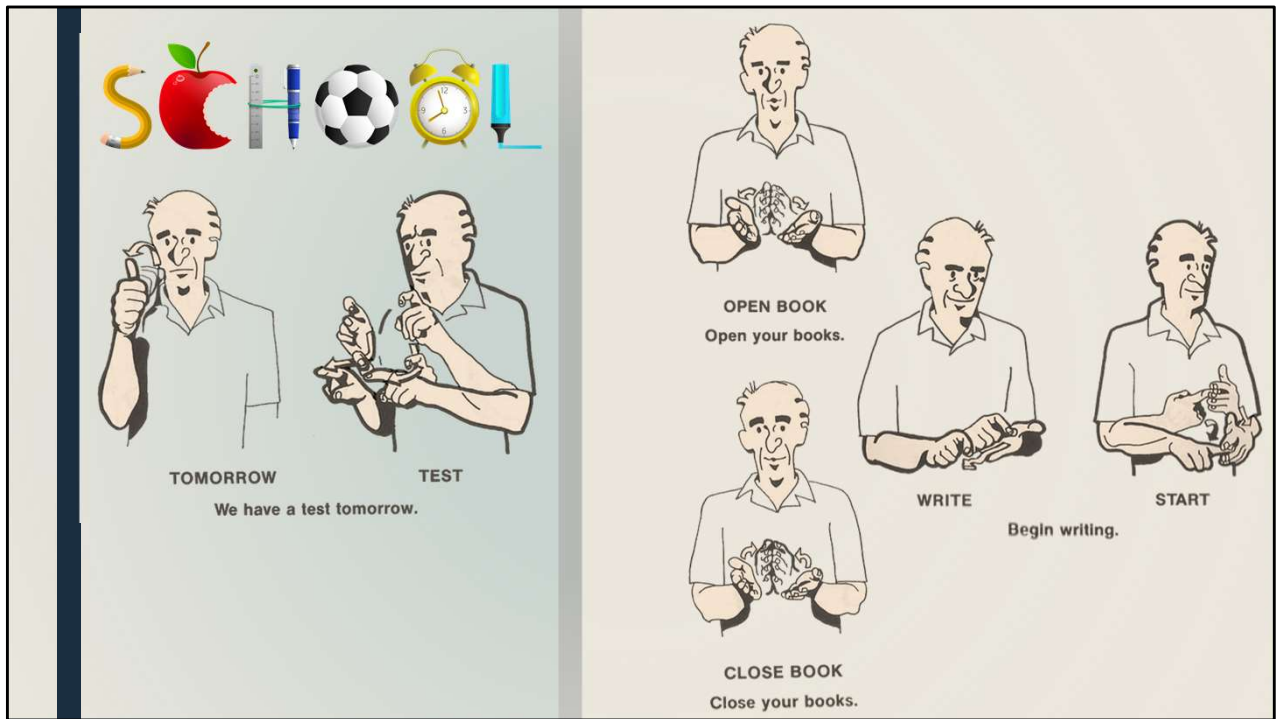
School



School

School

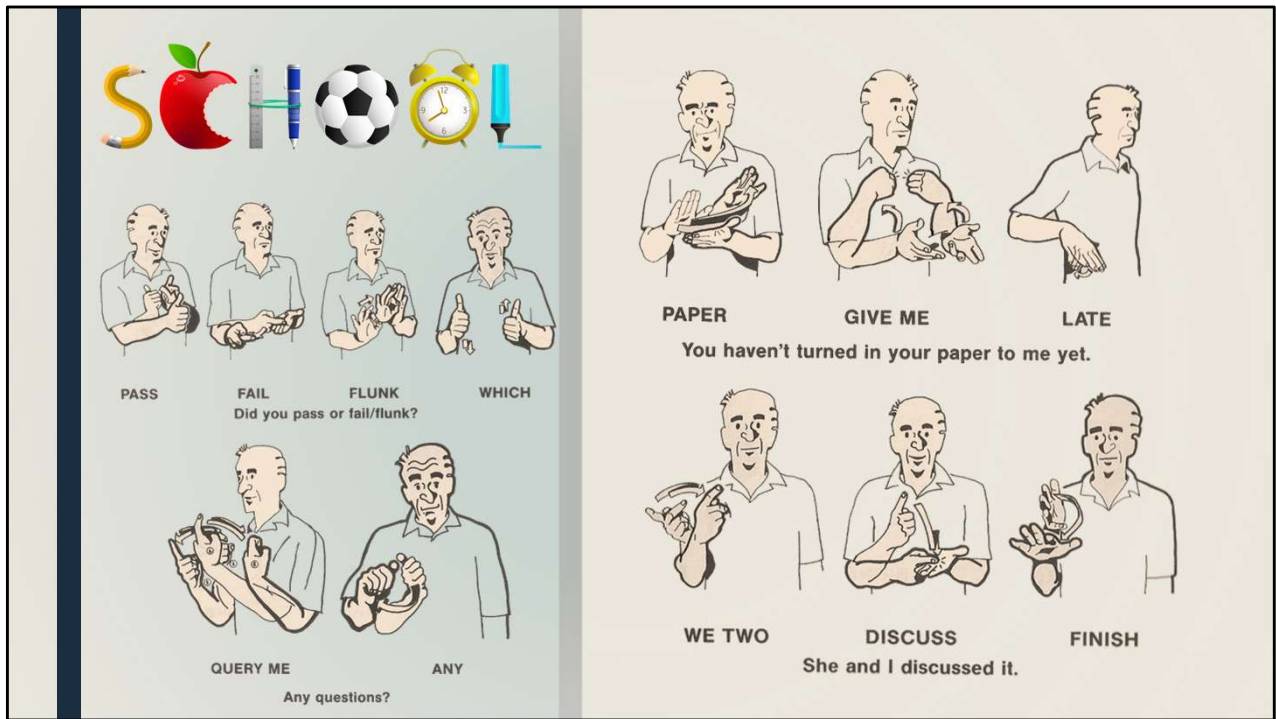
* The repetition of the QUERY sign using both hands indicates that many questions were asked.



School



School



School

SCHOOL

BREAK
Let's take a break.

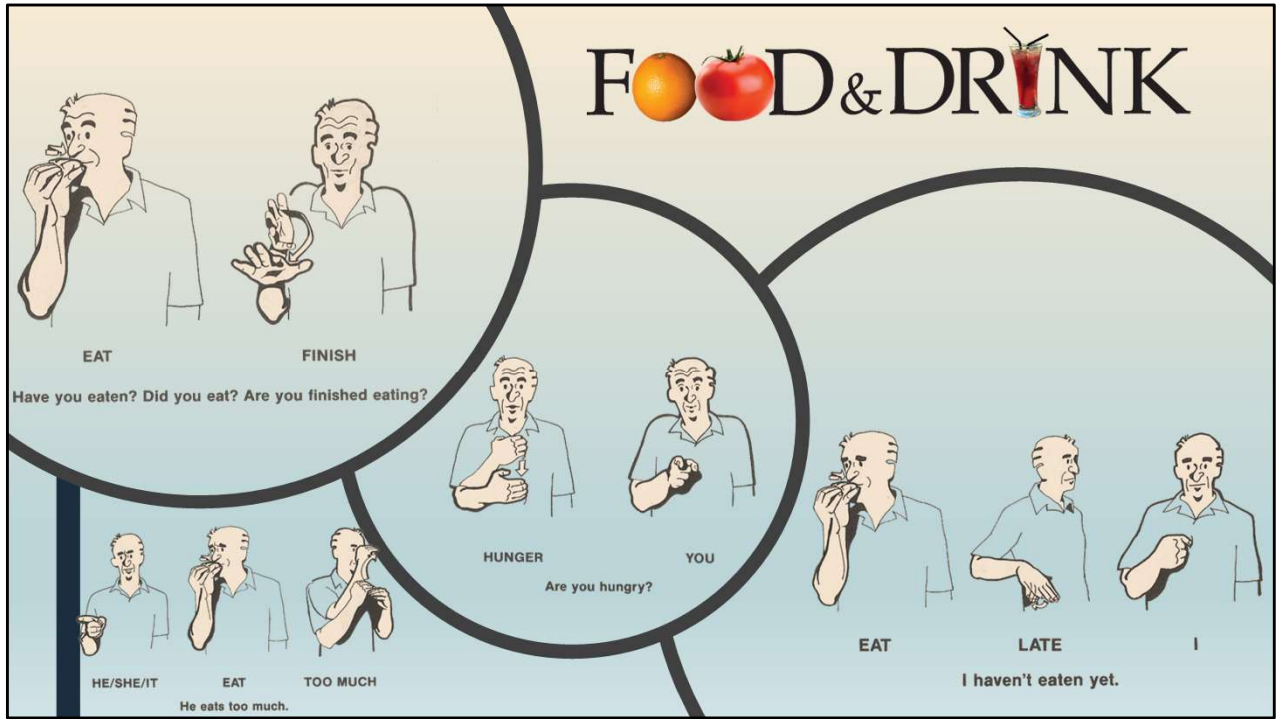
ABSENT EXCUSE BRING MUST

When you've been absent, you must bring an excuse.

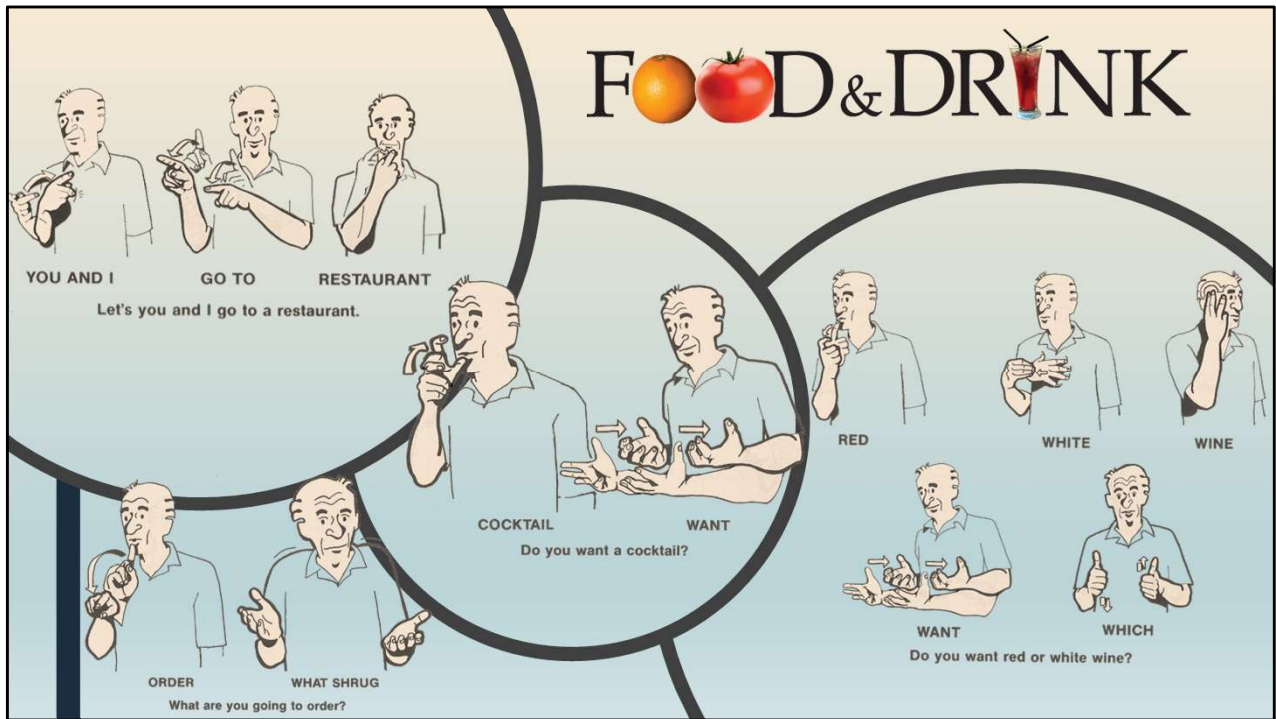
* Conditional statements such as "When you've eaten, you may go" or "If you're good, I'll tell you" are usually changed to questions. In the sentence shown above, the ABSENT sign is made with a questioning expression.

School

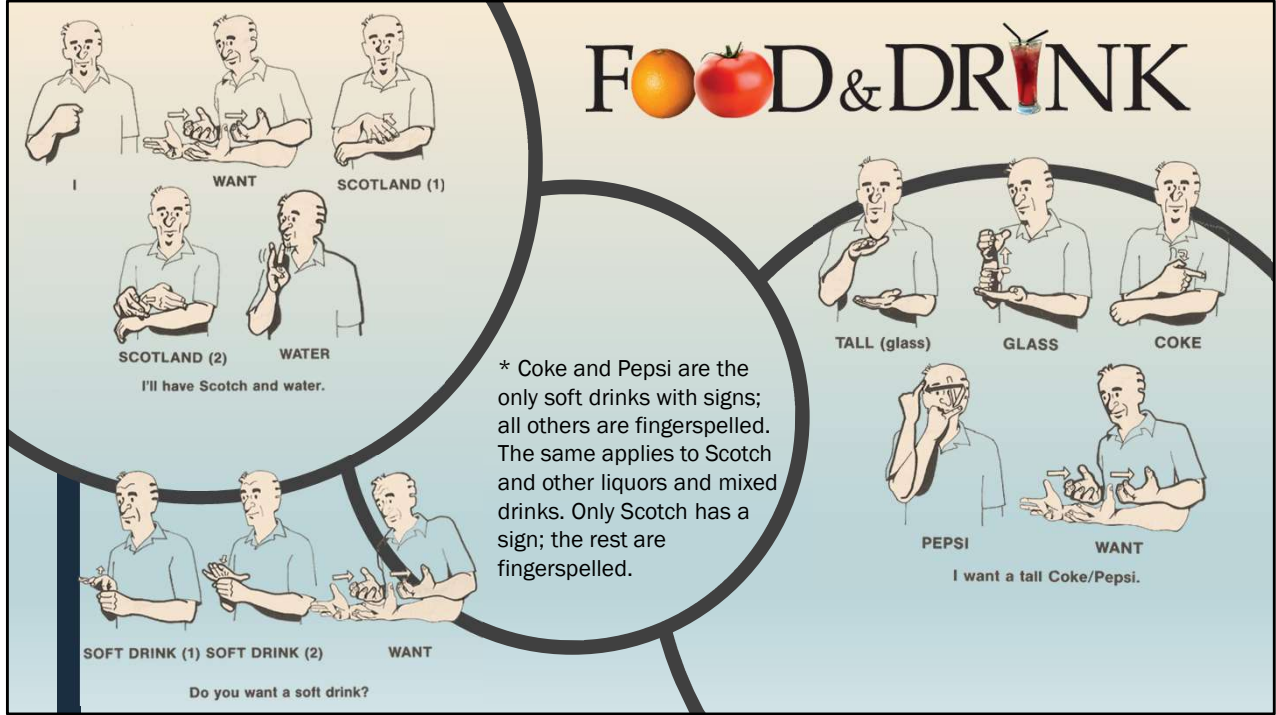
* Conditional statements such as "When you've eaten, you may go" or "If you're good, I'll tell you" are usually changed to questions. In the sentence shown above, the ABSENT sign is made with a questioning expression.



Food & Drink

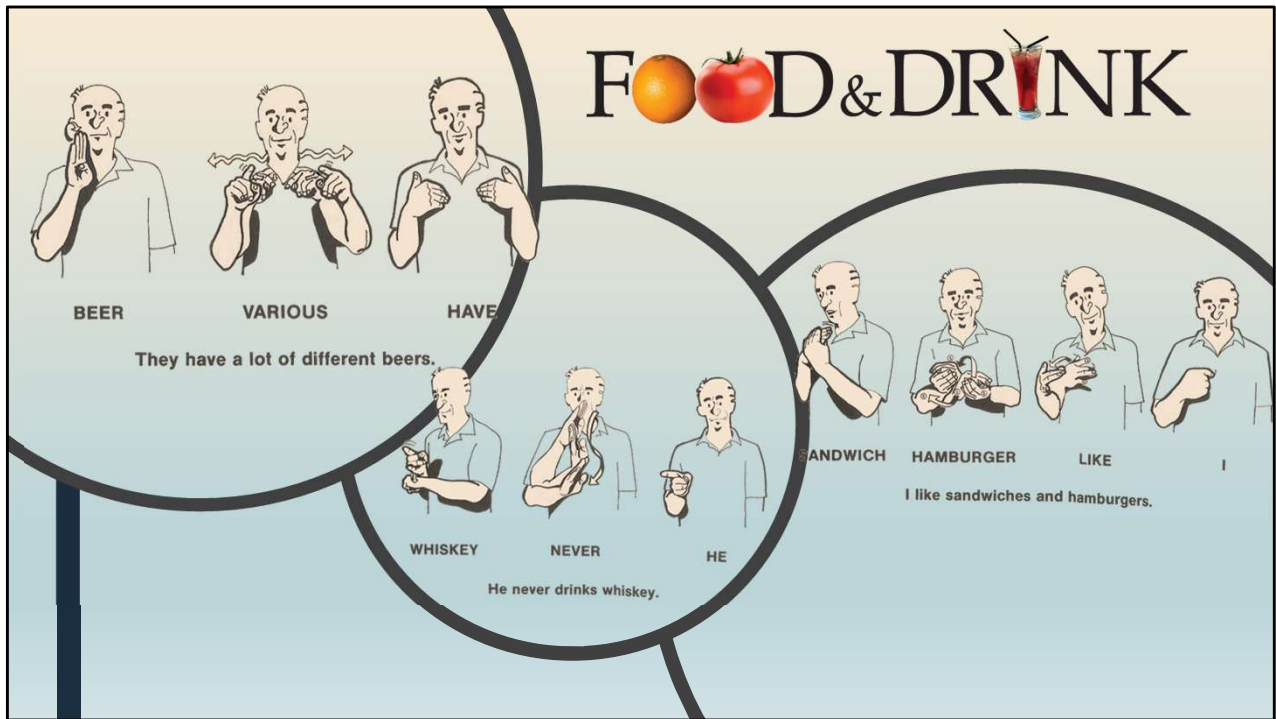


Food & Drink

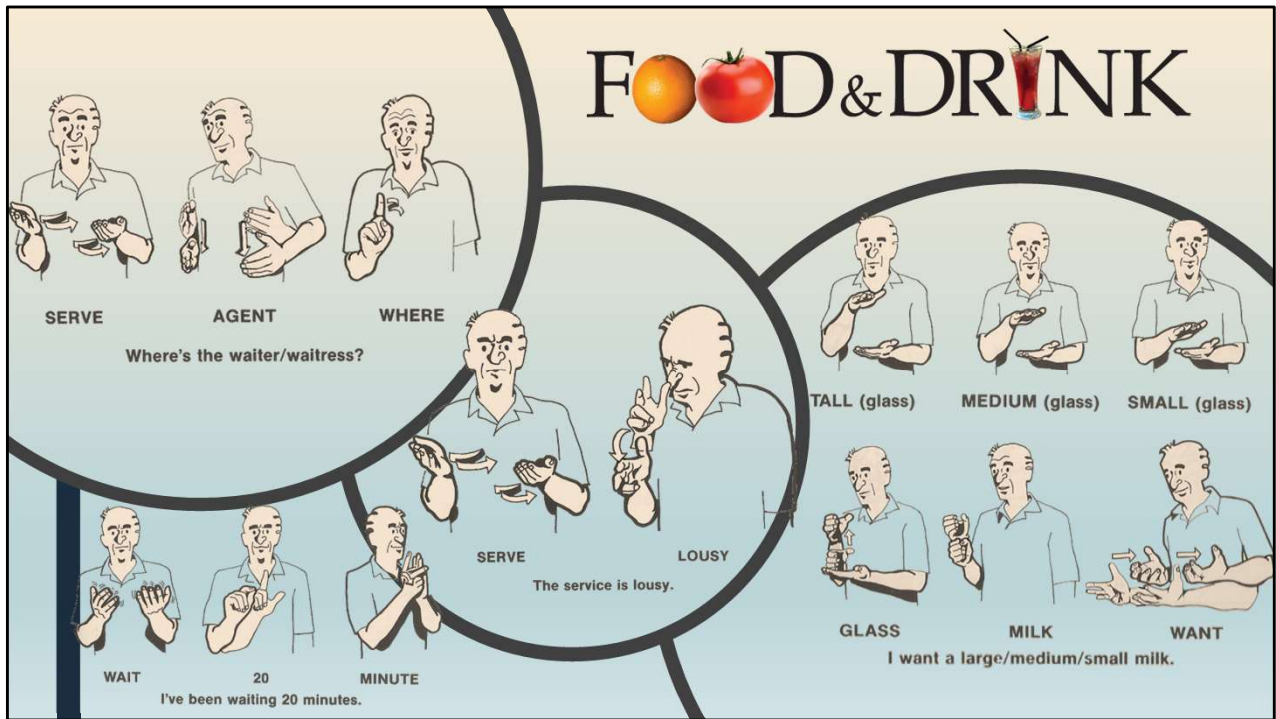


Food & Drink

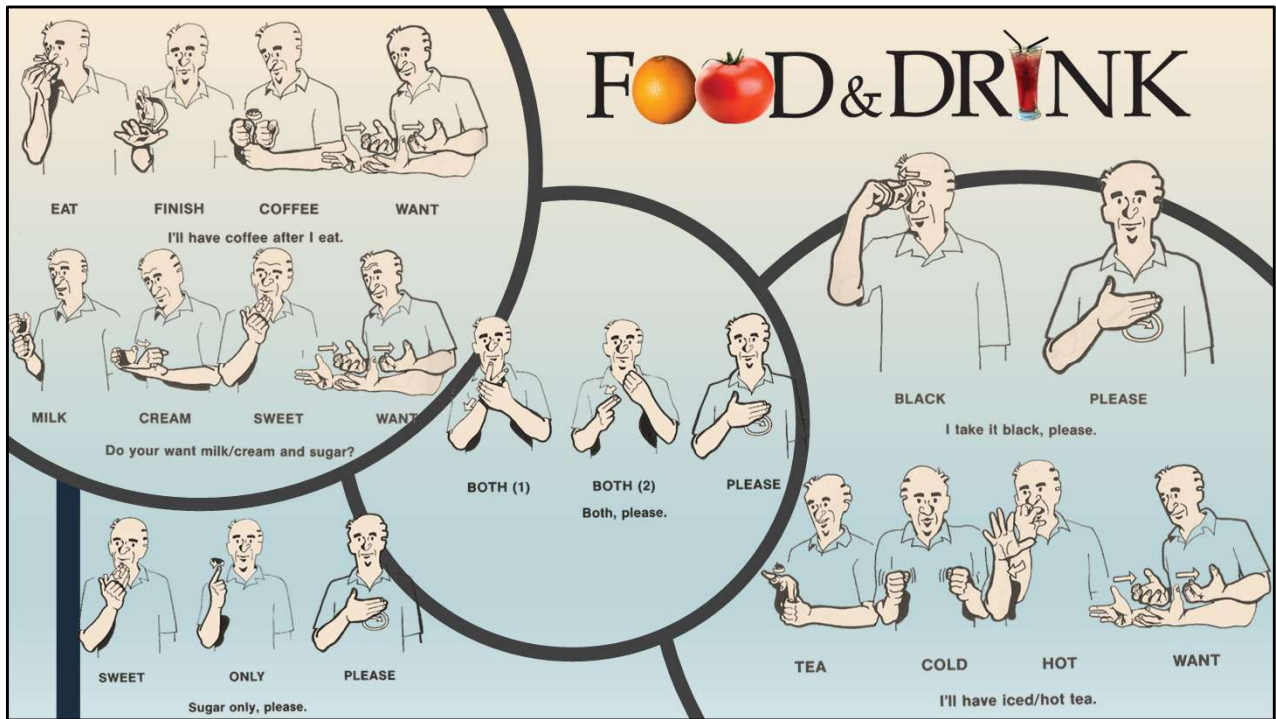
* Coke and Pepsi are the only soft drinks with signs; all others are fingerspelled. The same applies to Scotch and other liquors and mixed drinks. Only Scotch has a sign; the rest are fingerspelled.



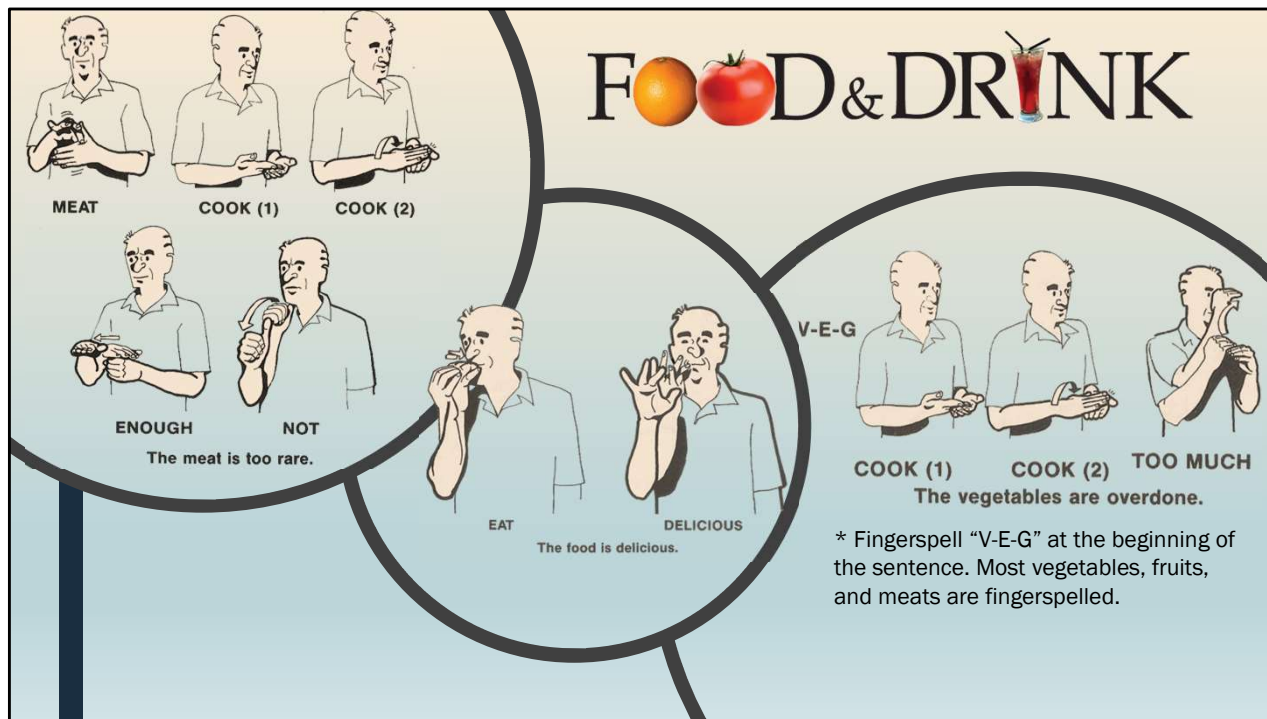
Food & Drink



Food & Drink

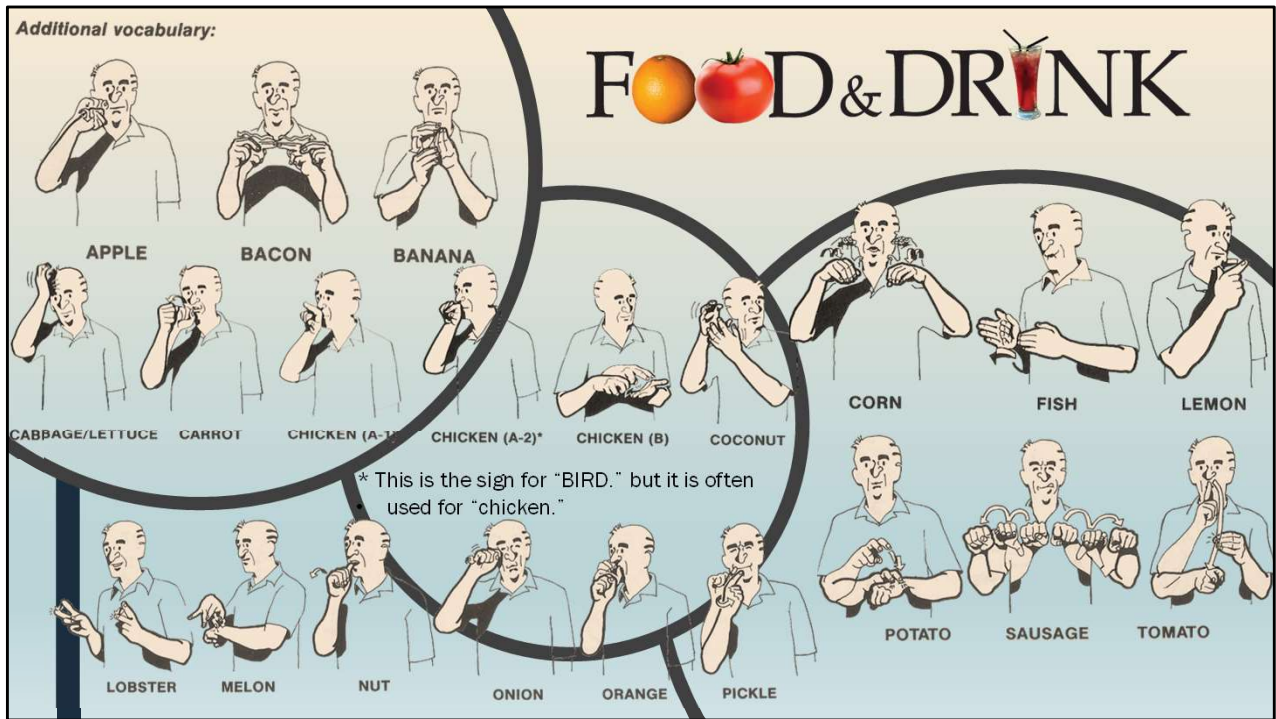


Food & Drink



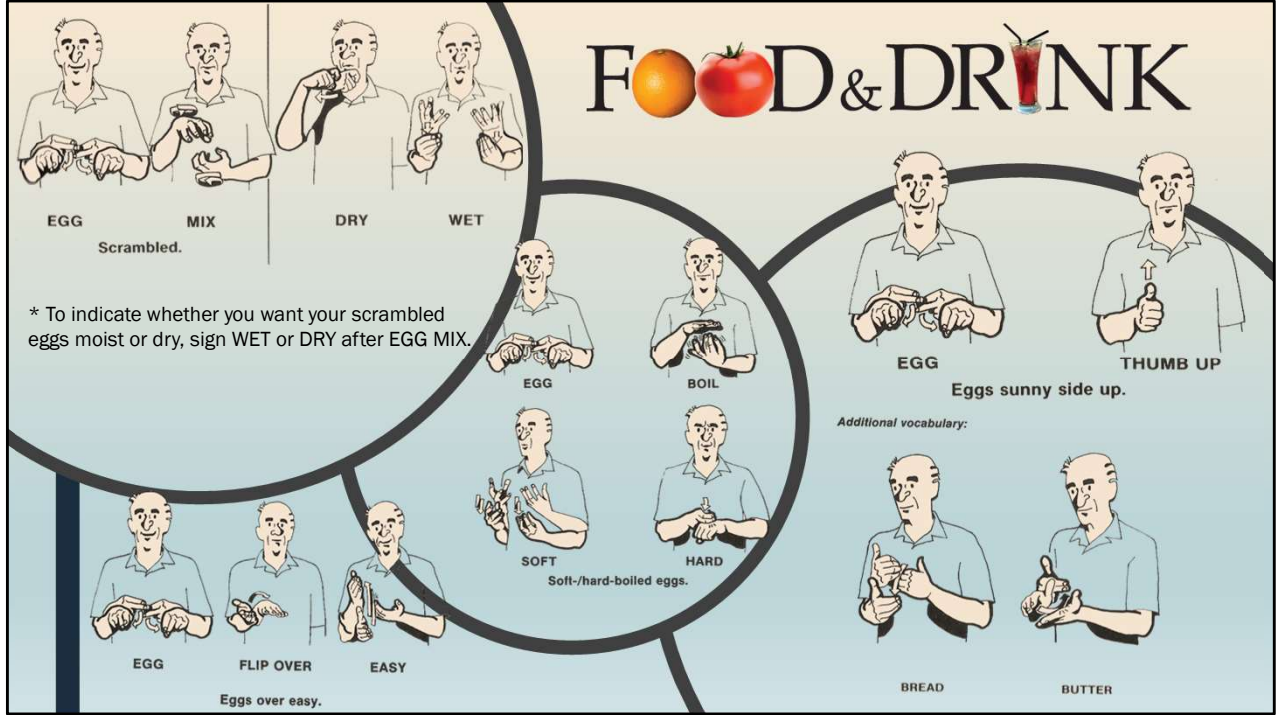
Food & Drink

* Fingerspell "V-E-G" at the beginning of the sentence. Most vegetables, fruits, and meats are fingerspelled.



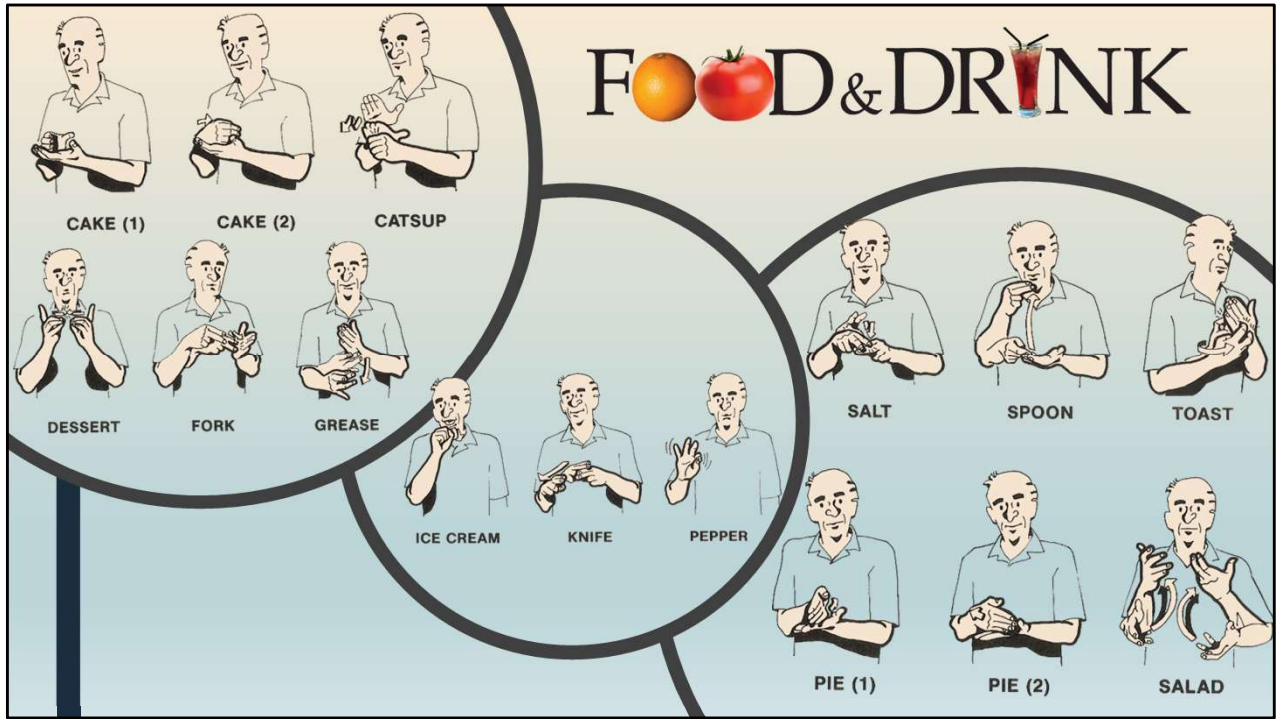
Food & Drink

* This is the sign for "BIRD." but it is often used for "chicken."

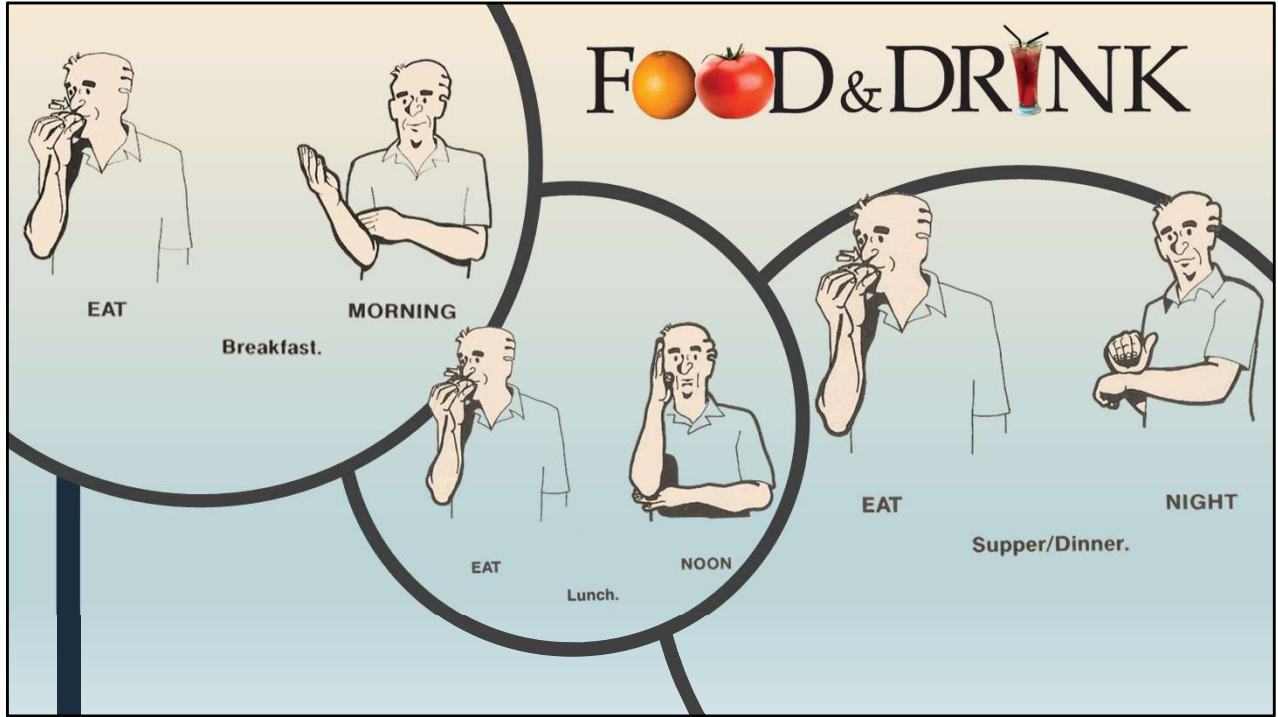


Food & Drink

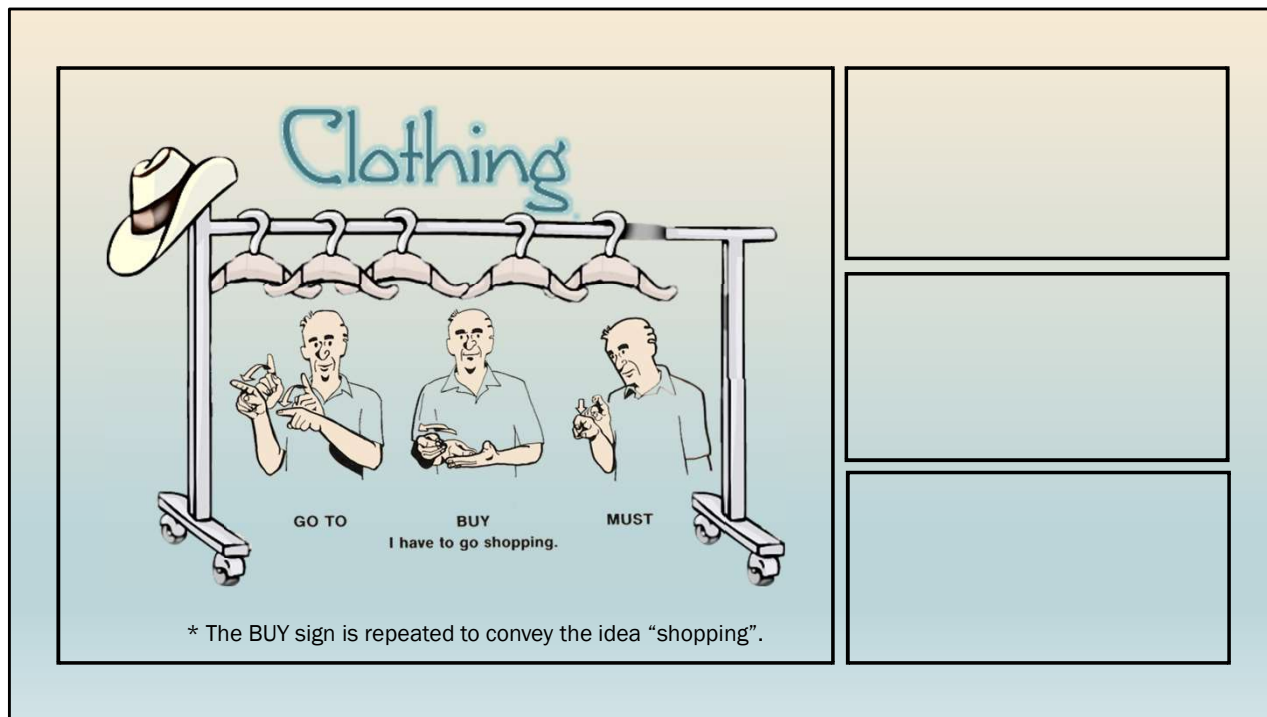
* To indicate whether you want your scrambled eggs moist or dry, sign WET or DRY after EGG MIX.



Food & Drink



Food & Drink



Clothing

* The BUY sign is repeated to convey the idea "shopping".

Clothing

NOW

NIGHT

DRESS

WHAT SHRUG

What are you wearing tonight?

DRESS **DIRTY** **HAVE**

Do you have any dirty clothes?

DRESS **COLOR** **ODD**

That dress is an odd color.

WASHING MACHINE **MUST**

I need to do some laundry.

Clothing

Clothing

WASHING MACHINE **NEAR**
Is there a laundromat nearby?

* The NEAR sign is done so that the hand do not actually touch each other.

DRESS **NICE** **ALWAYS** **HE/SHE/IT**
He always dresses nicely.

SHIRT **TIE** **OPPOSITE**
The shirt and tie don't match.

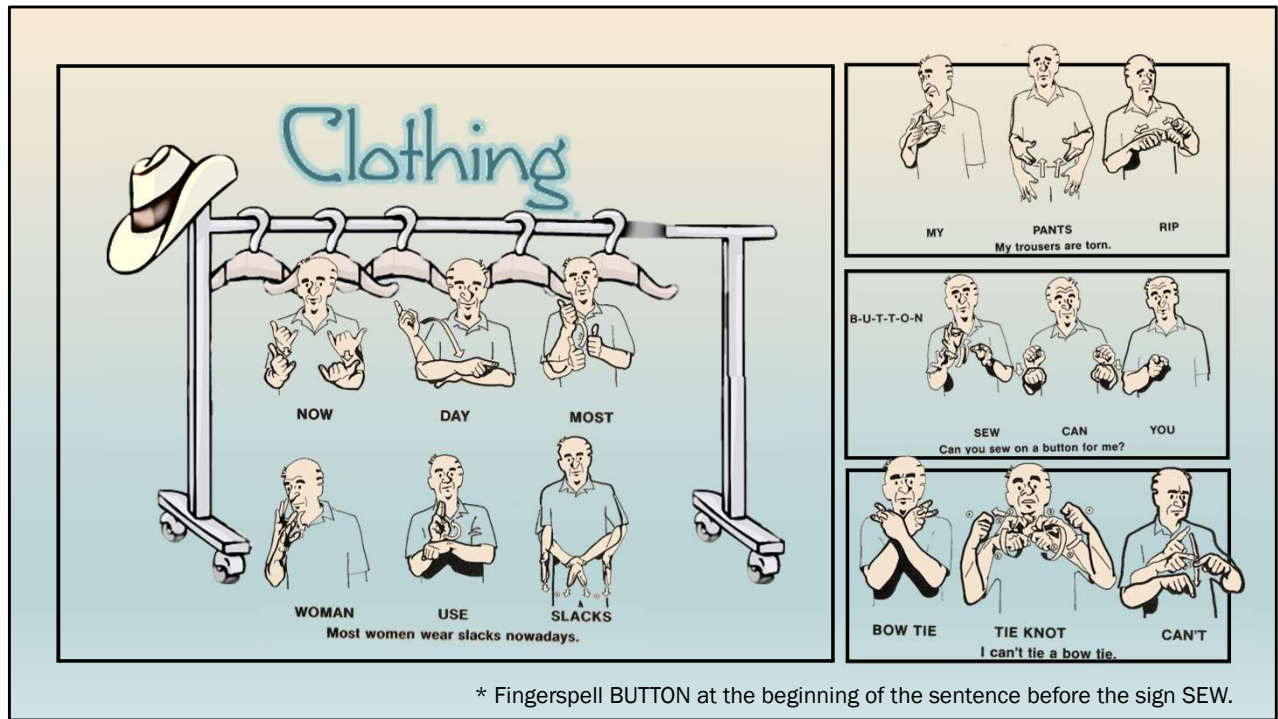
BLUE **AGREE**
Blue agrees with you.

* Ordinarily the AGREE sign just moves downward, but when it is used in this expression, it must move toward the watcher.

Clothing

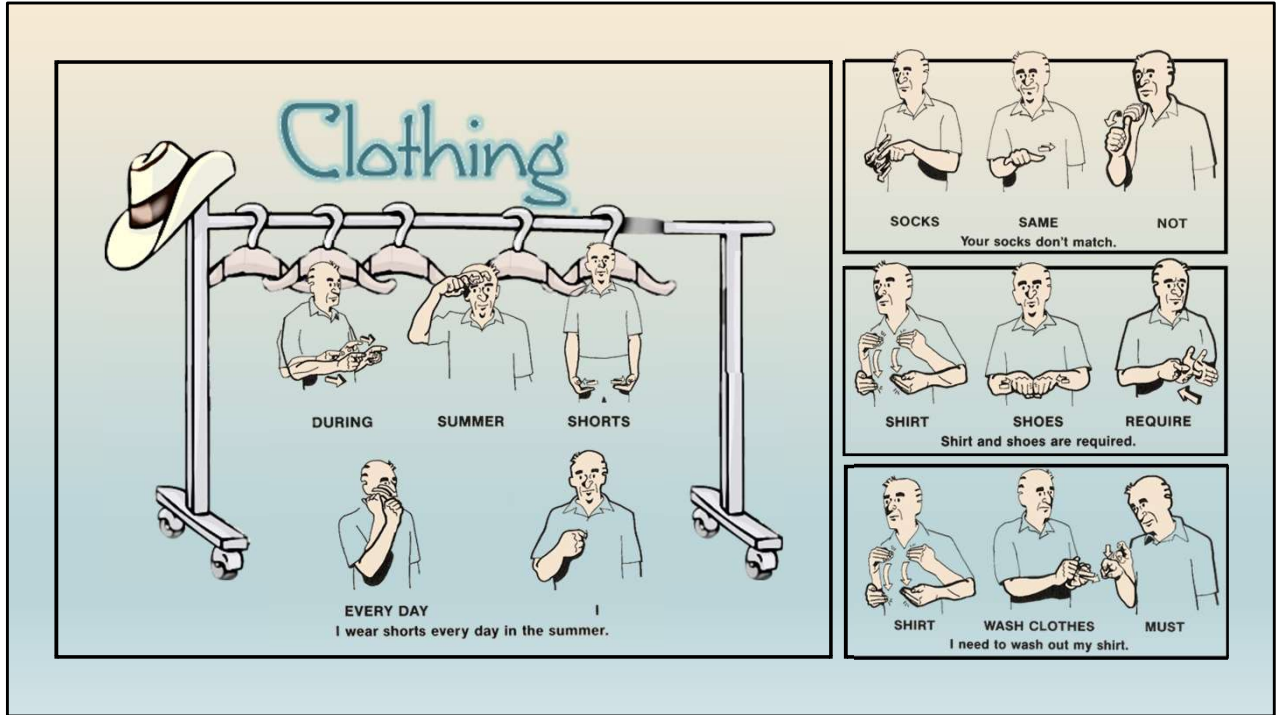
* The NEAR sign is done so that the hand do not actually touch each other.

* Ordinarily the AGREE sign just moves downward, but when it is used in this expression, it must move toward the watcher



Clothing

* Fingerspell BUTTON at the beginning of the sentence before the sign SEW.



Clothing

Clothing

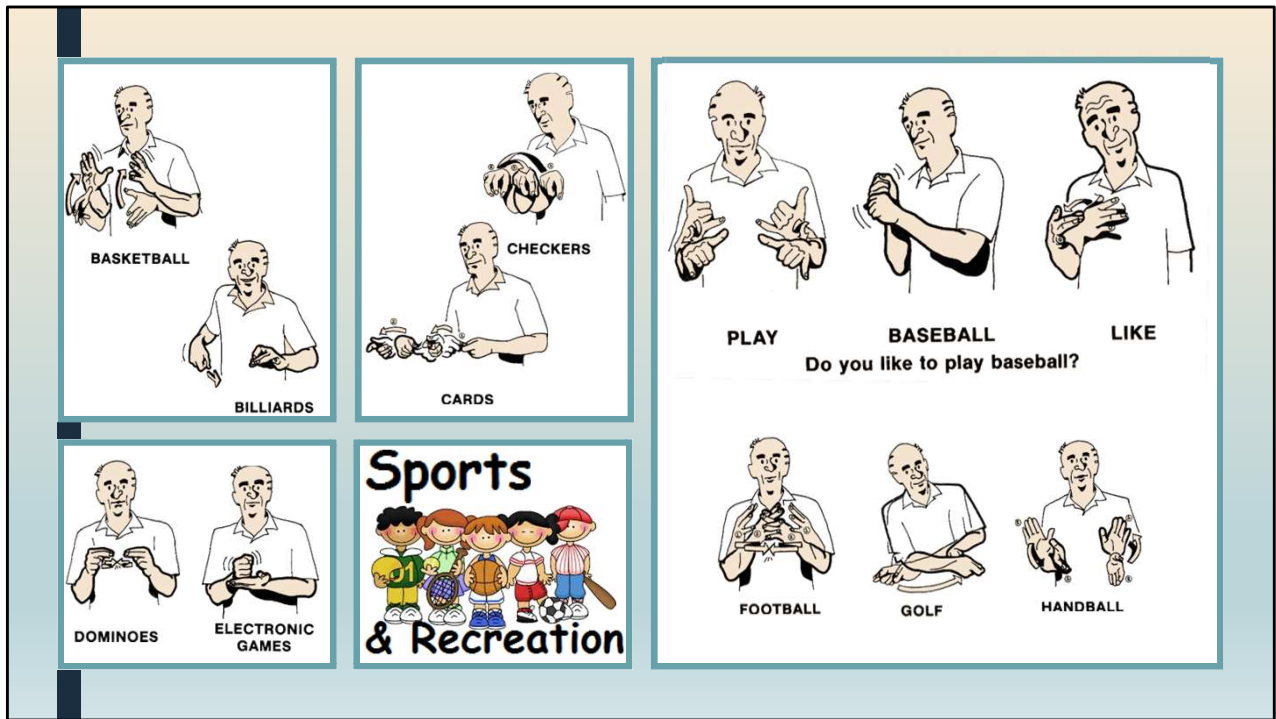
COAT PUT CLEANERS

FINISH SHORTER SLEEVE
When I took my coat to the cleaners, it shrunk.

BELT CAN'T
I can't fasten my belt.

MY HAT GRAB WHO
Who took my hat?

Clothing



Sports and Recreation

TENNIS

TABLE TENNIS

VOLLEYBALL

SOCCER

EVERY DAY

RUN

I

I run every day.

SKI

CAN

Can you ski?

Sports & Recreation

MOUNTAIN

GO TO

FISHING

PLEASE

I enjoy going to the mountains to fish.

Sports and Recreation

PAST SUMMER
I went camping last summer.

TENT I







SAILBOAT HAVE HE/SHE/IT
He has a sailboat.

Sports & Recreation

ROLLER-SKATE CAN BUT ICE-SKATE TRY NEVER I
I can roller-skate, but I've never tried ice-skating.


EVERY DAY WE CANOE (1) CANOE (2)
We went canoeing every day.






Sports and Recreation

 WATER	 WAVE (1)	 WAVE (2)
 WAVE (3)	 SWIM	 DON'T LIKE




I don't like to swim in the ocean.*

Sports & Recreation



 DURING	 AUTUMN	 MANY
 PEOPLE	 HUNTING	

Many people hunt in the fall.

 SURFBOARD	 SKILL	 HE/SHE/IT
--	---	---

She's an expert surfer.

Sports and Recreation

* It takes four signs to express "OCEAN" – "WATER", WAVE (1), WAVE (2), and WAVE (3).

CHAIN (Olympics) **COMPETE**

HOPE **HE/SHE/IT**

HORSE **COMPETE** **BET**

CRAZY **HE/SHE/IT**

He hopes to compete in the Olympics.

He's crazy about betting on the horses.

RIDE HORSE **LOVE** **HE/SHE/IT**

She loves to ride horses.

Sports & Recreation

EXERCISE **HATE (1)** **HATE (2)** **I**

I hate callisthenics/exercising.

Sports and Recreation

STOP **REST** **NOW**
Let's stop and rest now.

WEEKLY **BOWL** **I**
I go bowling every week.

DANCE **LEARN** **WANT**
Do you want to learn to dance?

DANCE **LIKE**
Do you like to dance?

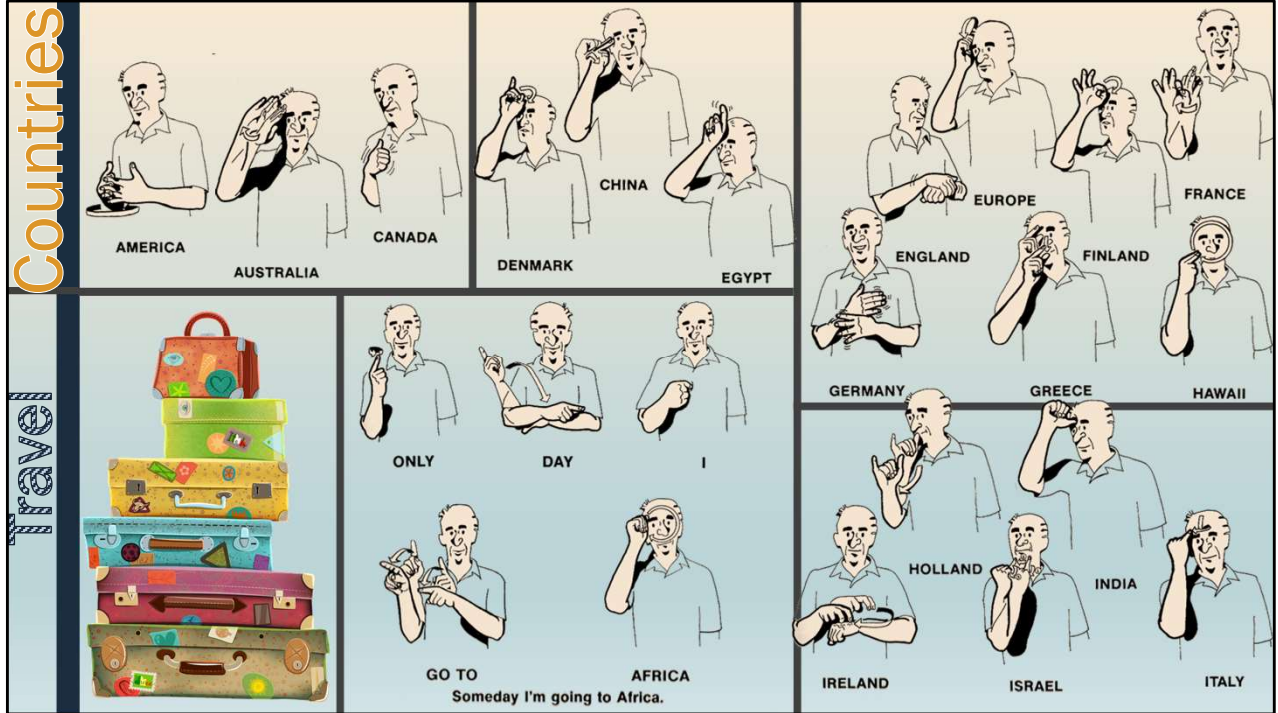
Sports & Recreation

DURING **LOAF** **DO-DO** **WHAT** **SHRUG**
What do you do in your spare time?

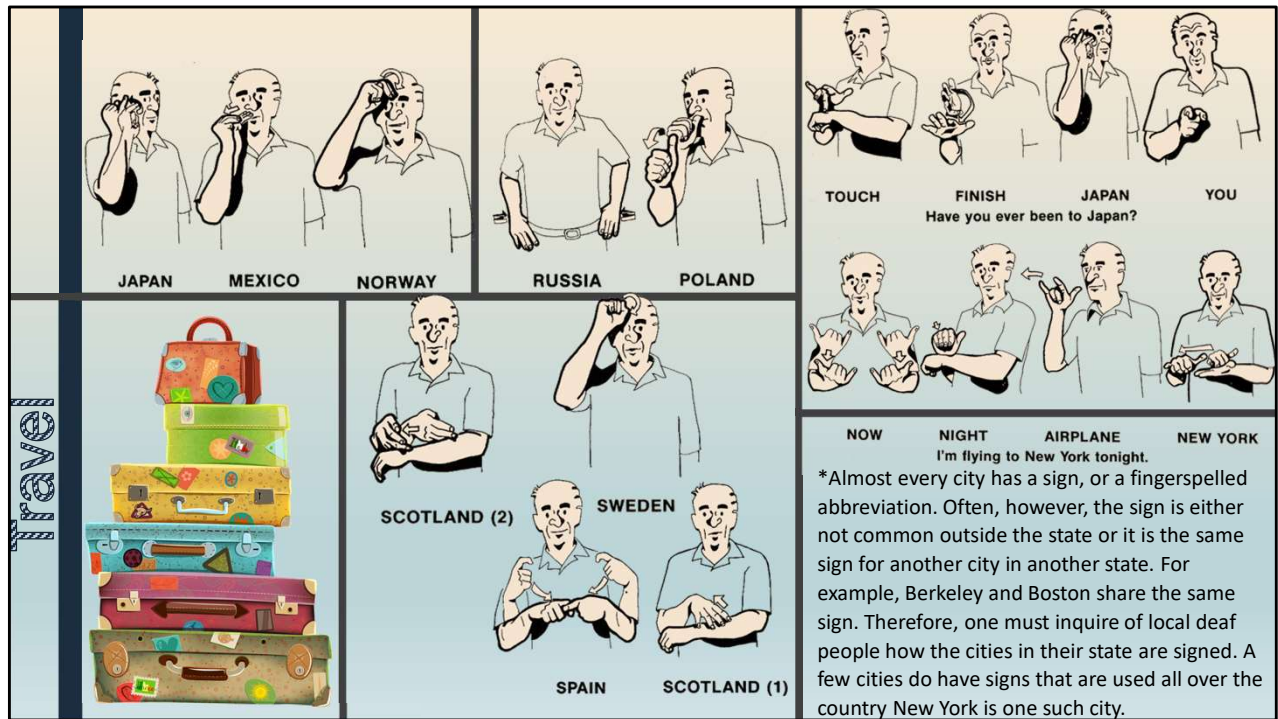
Sports and Recreation

Countries

Travel

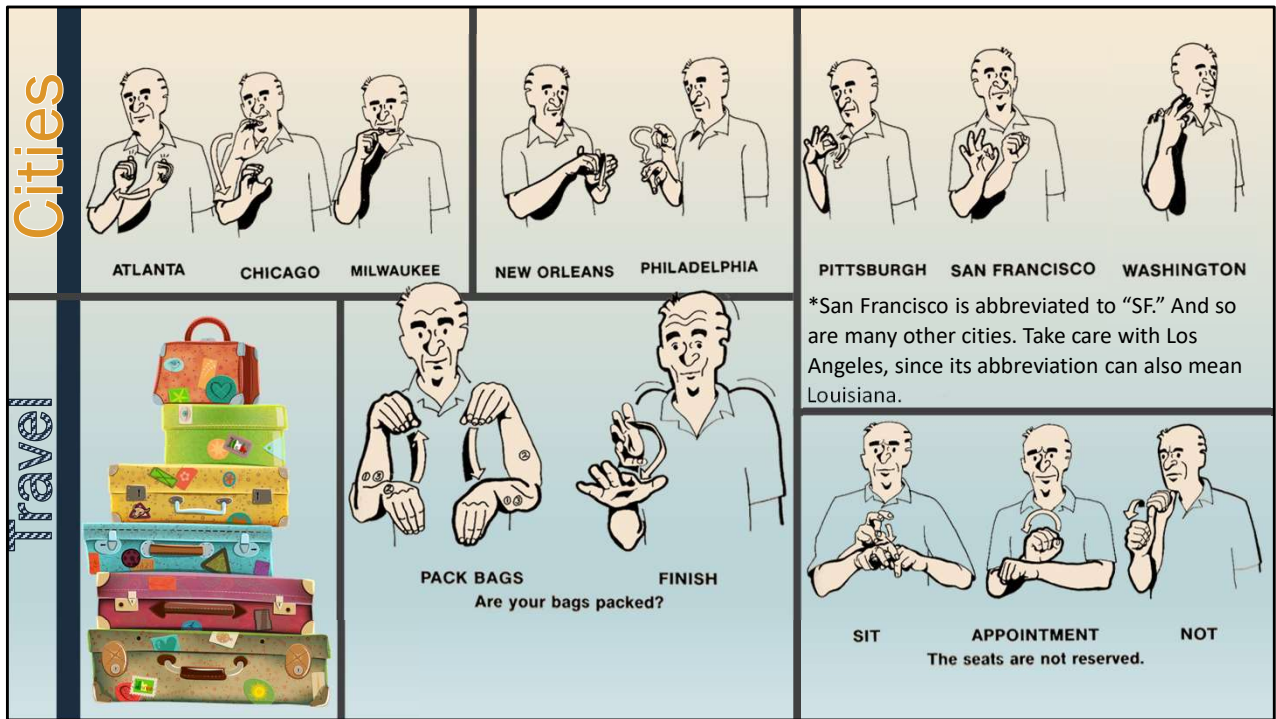


Travel



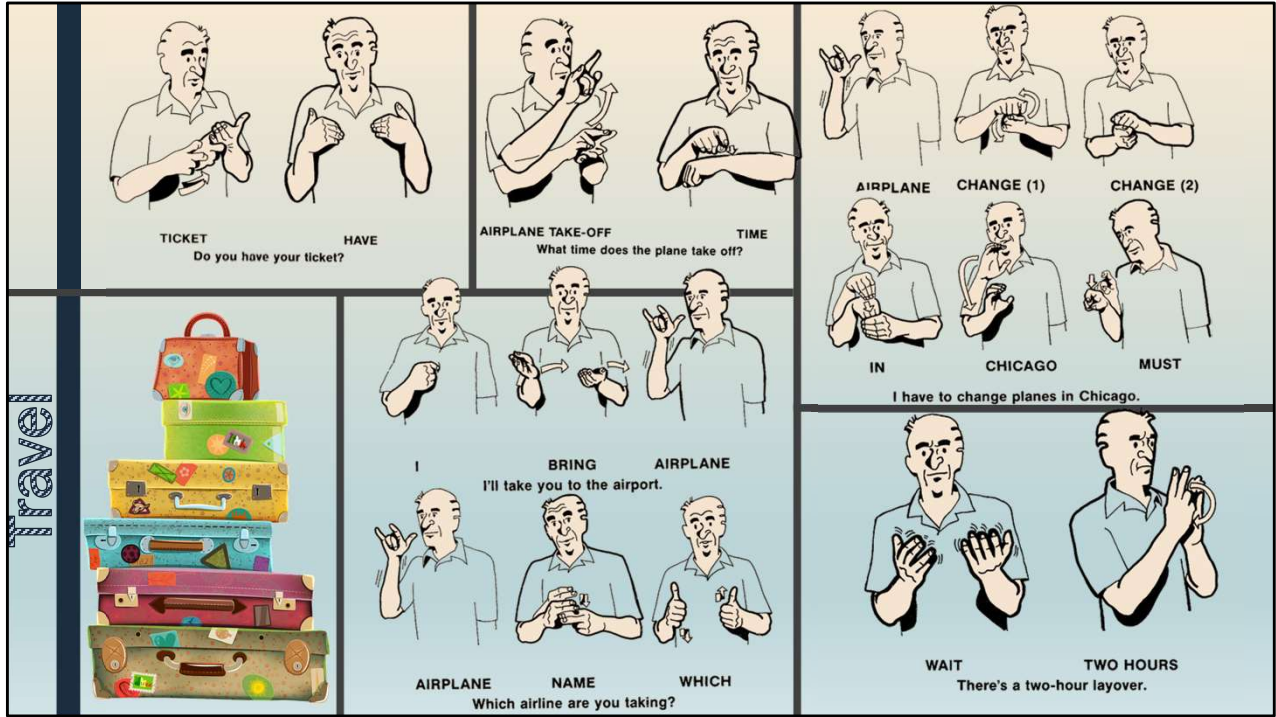
Travel

* Almost every city has a sign, or a fingerspelled abbreviation. Often, however, the sign is either not common outside the state or it is the same sign for another city in another state. For example, Berkeley and Boston share the same sign. Therefore, one must inquire of local deaf people how the cities in their state are signed. A few cities do have signs that are used all over the country New York is one such city.

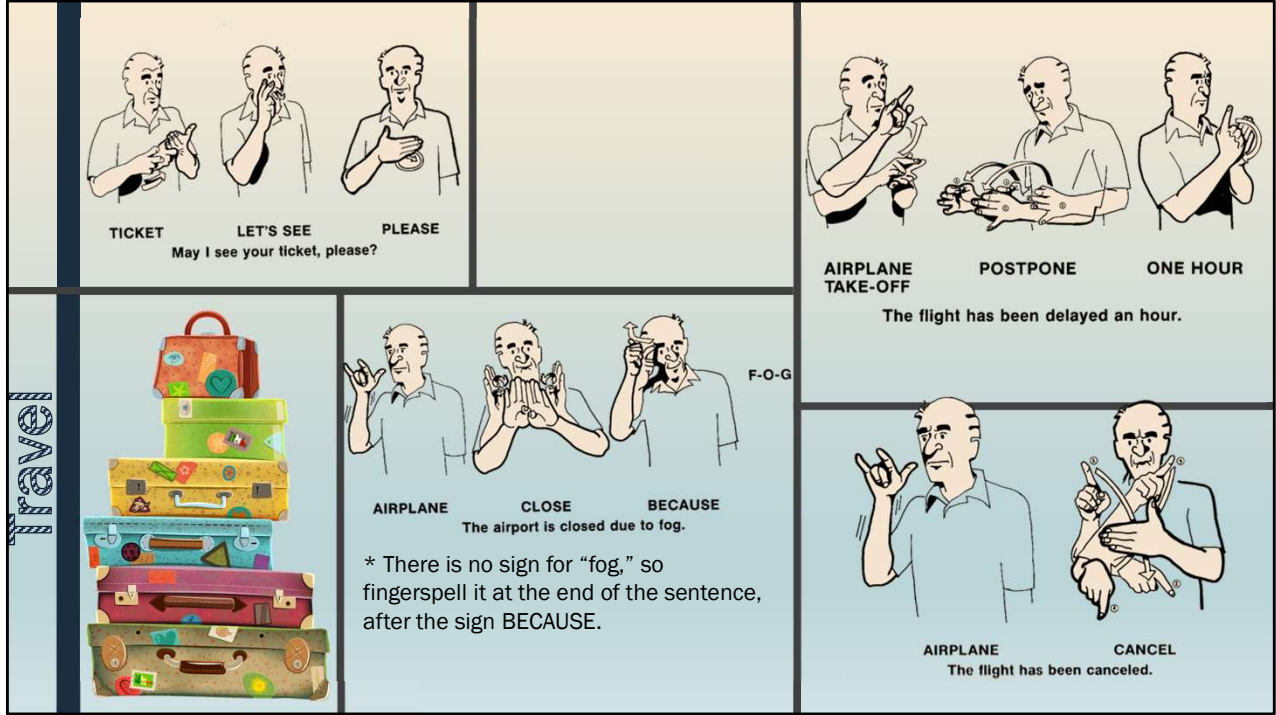


Travel

* San Francisco is abbreviated to "SF." And so are many other cities. Take care with Los Angeles, since its abbreviation can also mean Louisiana.



Travel

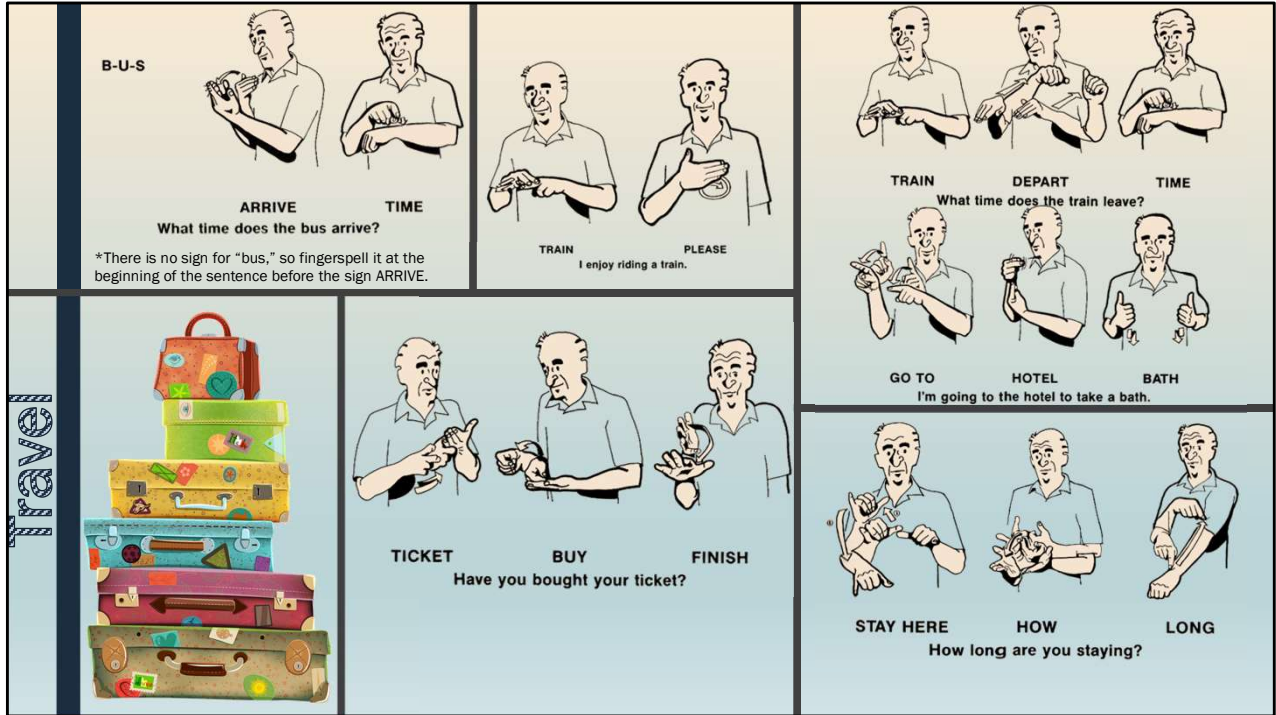


Travel

* There is no sign for “fog,” so fingerspell it at the end of the sentence, after the sign BECAUSE.

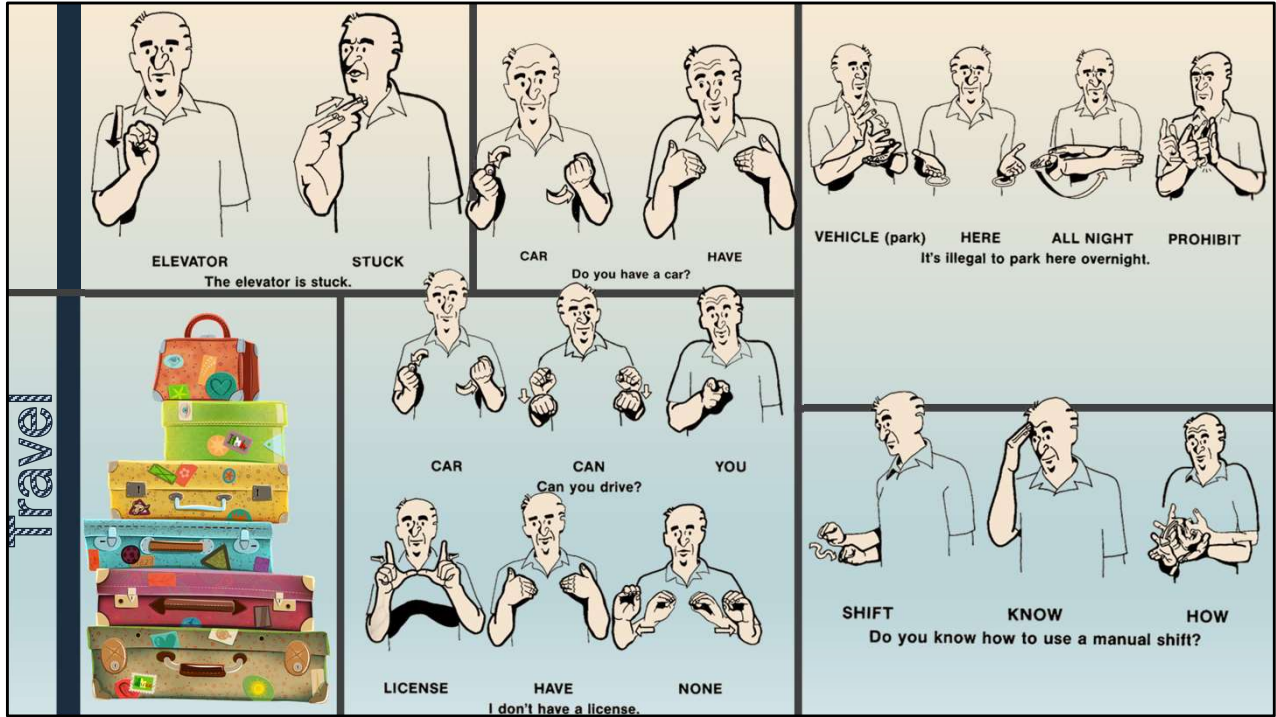


Travel

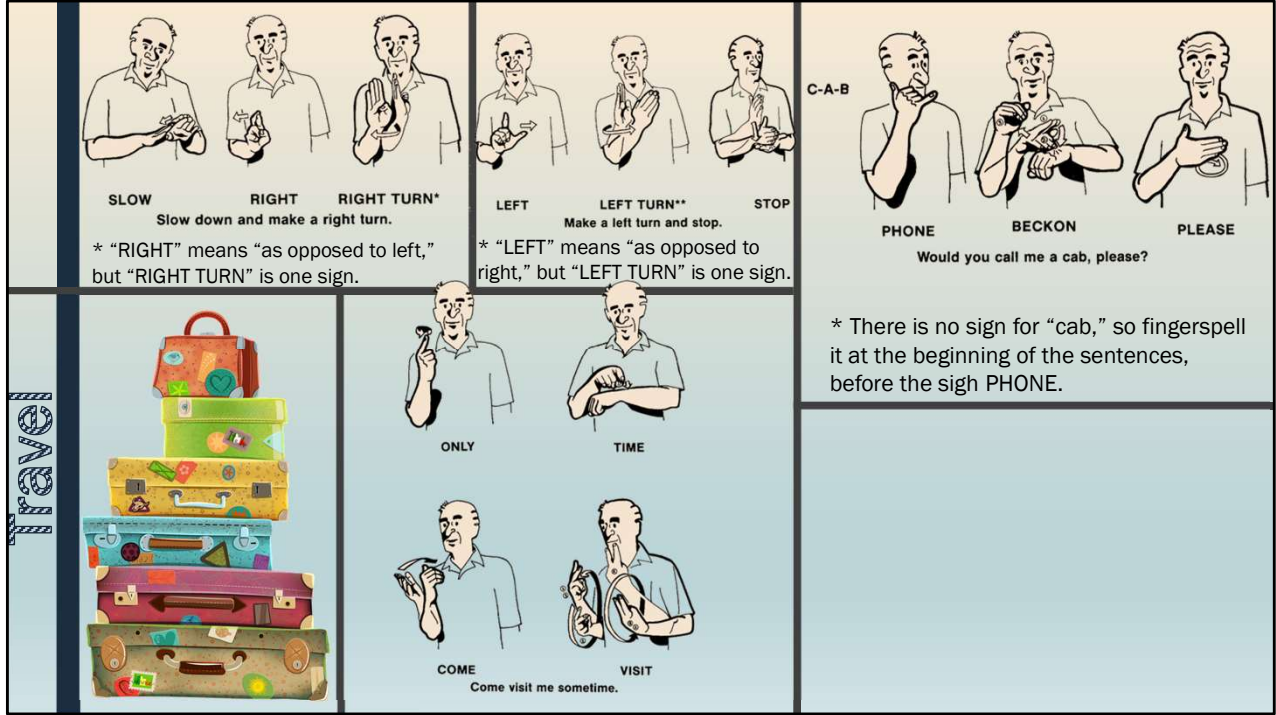


Travel

*There is no sign for “bus,” so fingerspell it at the beginning of the sentence before the sign ARRIVE.



Travel










Travel

* "RIGHT" means "as opposed to left," but "RIGHT TURN" is one sign.

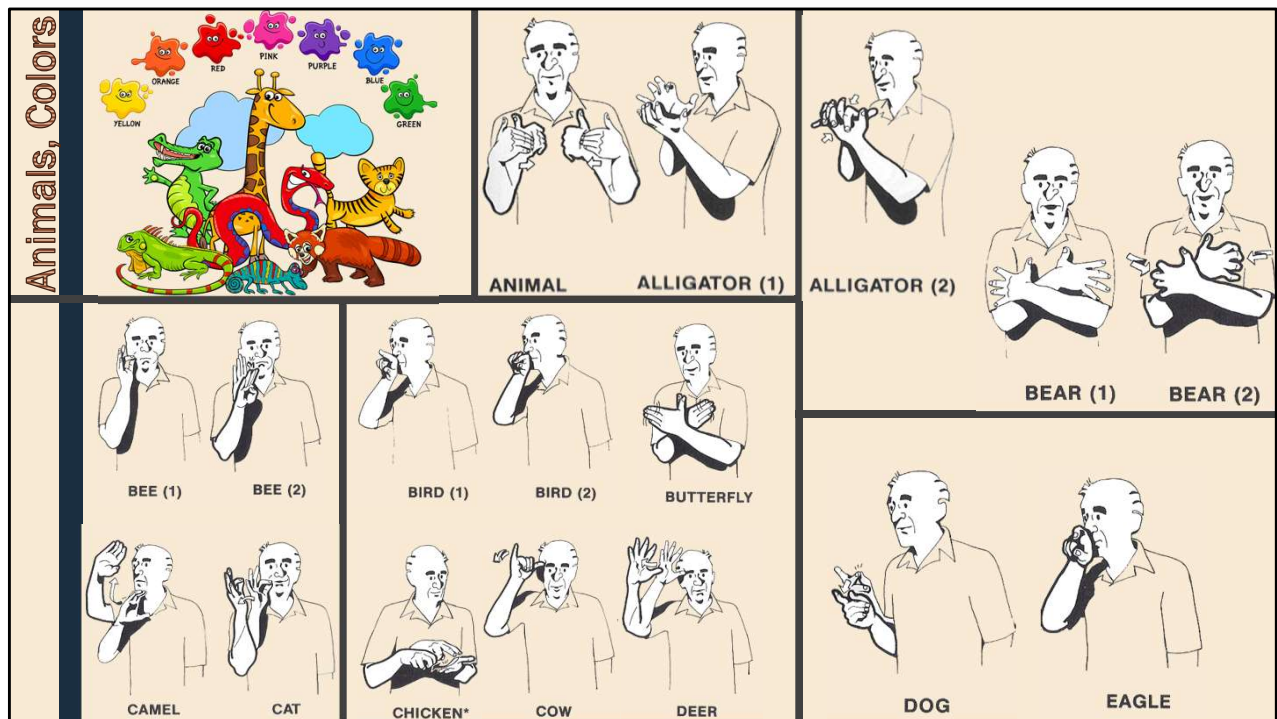
* "LEFT" means "as opposed to right," but "LEFT TURN" is one sign.

* There is no sign for "cab," so fingerspell it at the beginning of the sentences, before the sign **PHONE**.

States	 ARIZONA	 CALIFORNIA	 HAWAII	 NEW YORK	 TEXAS	 WASHINGTON
		<p>* Almost all states are fingerspelled using the standard written abbreviations such as Penn. or Pa., N.D., and Wyo. States such as Ohio that have short names are spelled out.</p>				
Travel						

Travel

* Almost all states are fingerspelled using the standard written abbreviations such as Penn. or Pa., N.D., and Wyo. States such as Ohio that have short names are spelled out.

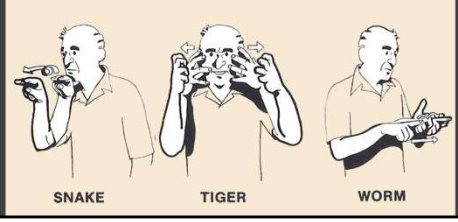
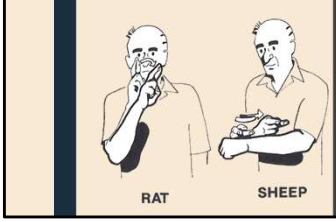
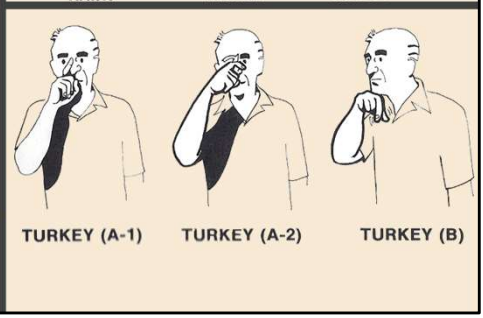
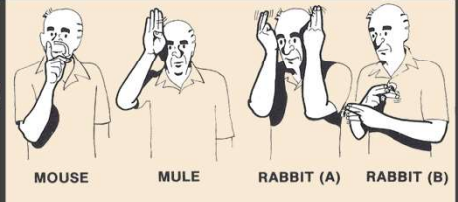
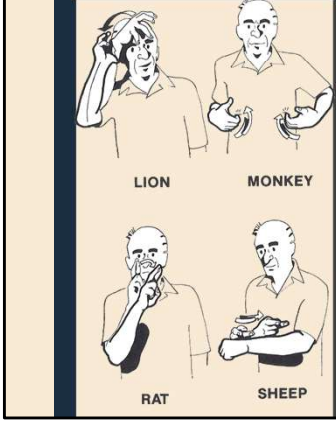
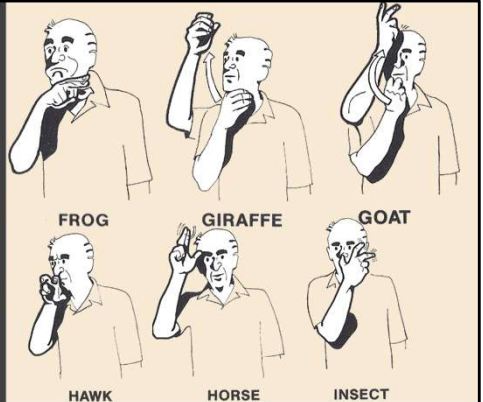
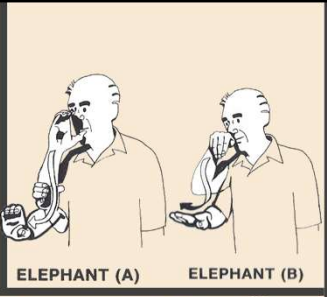


Animals, Colors

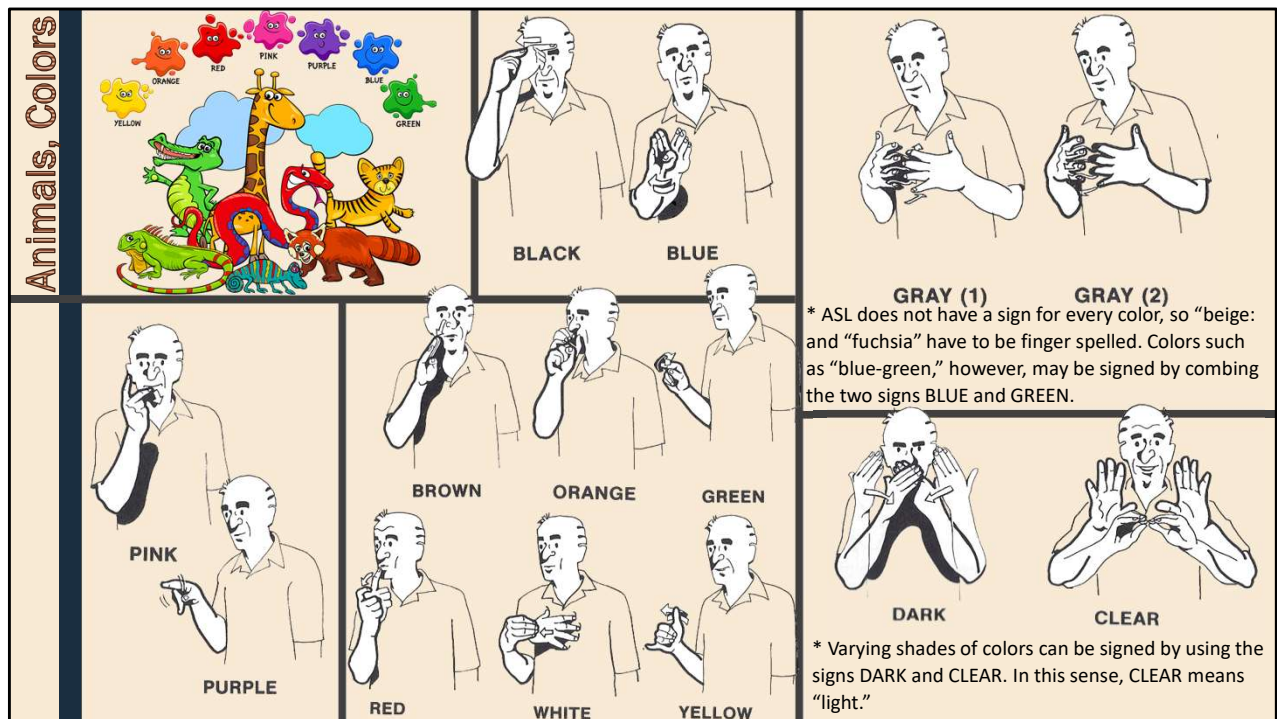
* ASL does not have a sign for every animal. Presented here are nearly all the animal signs that do exist. All other animal names are either fingerspelled or have signs that are known only in a particular area.

* While this sign means “chicken,” the sign “BIRD” is also often used to mean “chicken.”

Animals, Colors



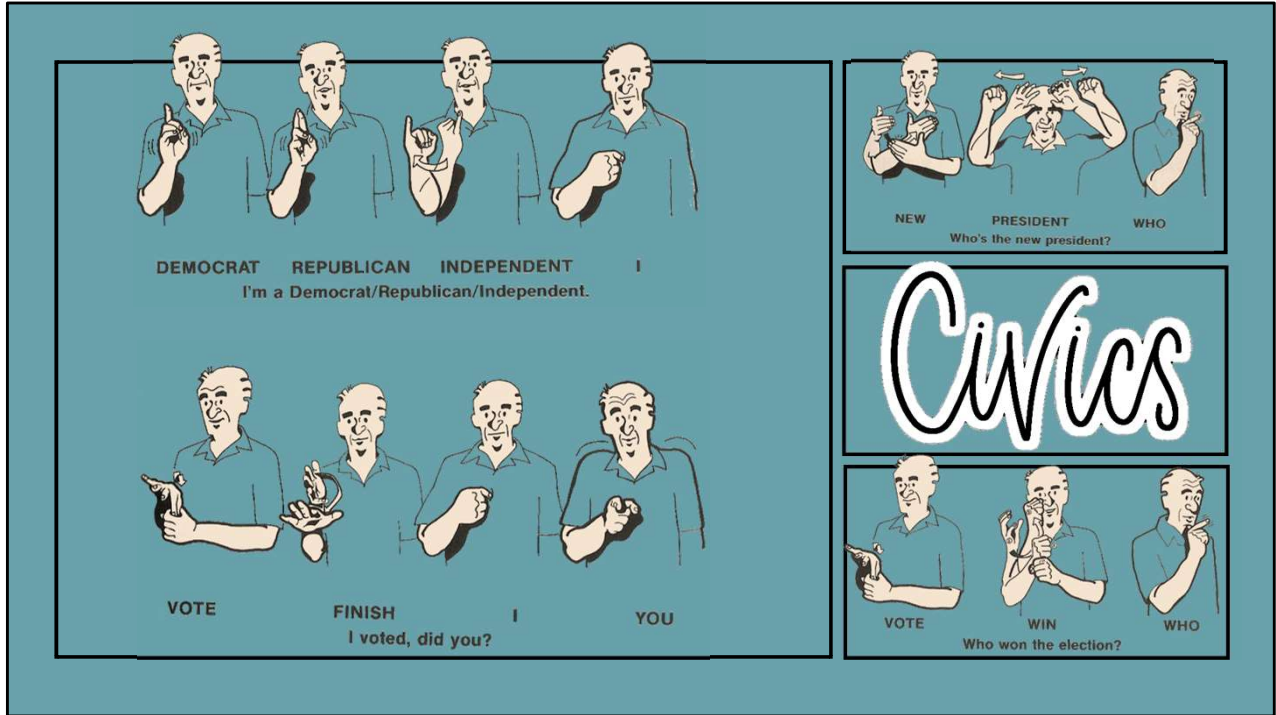
Animals, Colors



Animals, Colors

* ASL does not have a sign for every color, so “beige: and “fuchsia” have to be finger spelled. Colors such as “blue-green,” however, may be signed by combing the two signs BLUE and GREEN.

* Varying shades of colors can be signed by using the signs DARK and CLEAR. In this sense, CLEAR means “light.”



Civics

LAW **PASS** **RESPONSIBLE**

WHO **LEGISLATURE** **CONGRESS**
 * **WHO**
 The legislature/congress is responsible for passing laws.
 * This is an example of the rhetorical question, where the signer asks, then answers, the question. It is used a great deal in ASL. There is a slight pause at the end of the question-after the sign **WHO** in this example-and then the answer is signed.

HE/SHE/IT **SENATE** **GOVERNMENT**

JUDGE **LAW** * **AGENT**
 He is a senator/governor/judge/lawyer.

HE/SHE/IT **CONGRESS** **WOMAN**
 She is a congresswoman.

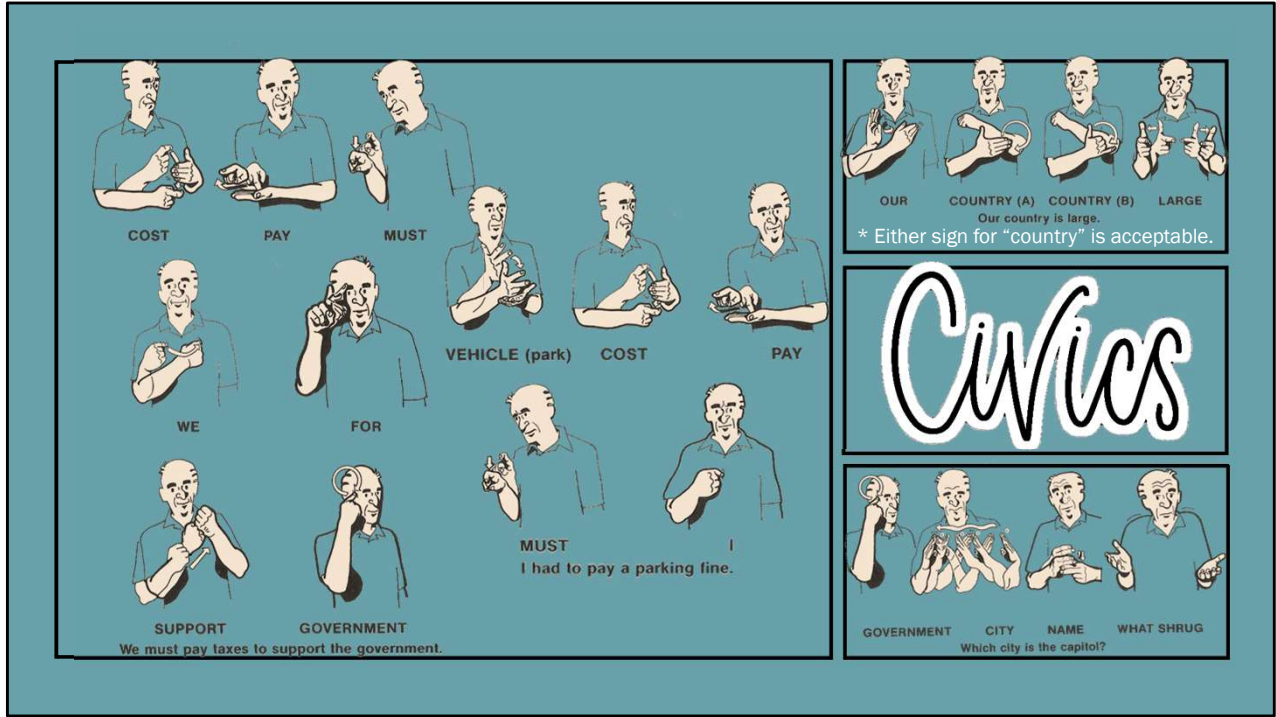
Civics

* The **AGENT** sign is usually done following the **SENATE**, **GOVERNMENT**, **JUDGE**, and **LAW** signs to indicate senator, governor, judge, and lawyer, respectively.

Civics

* This is an example of the rhetorical question, where the signer asks, then answers, the question. It is used a great deal in ASL. There is a slight pause at the end of the question-after the sign **WHO** in this example-and then the answer is signed.

* The **AGENT** sign is usually done following the **SENATE**, **GOVERNMENT**, **JUDGE**, and **LAW** signs to indicate senator, governor, judge, and lawyer, respectively.



Civics

* Either sign for "country" is acceptable.

LAW BREAK JAIL MAYBE

If you break the law, you might go to jail.

* The idea of "if" is often expressed in ASL by stating the sentence as a question. This requires a questioning expression done on the BREAK sign, and then a slight pause before you sing the consequence. The questioning expression happens with the DISOBEY sign followed by a pause.

LAW DISOBEY PUNISH WILL

If you disobey the law, you will be punished.

LAW OBEY MUST YOU

You must obey the law.

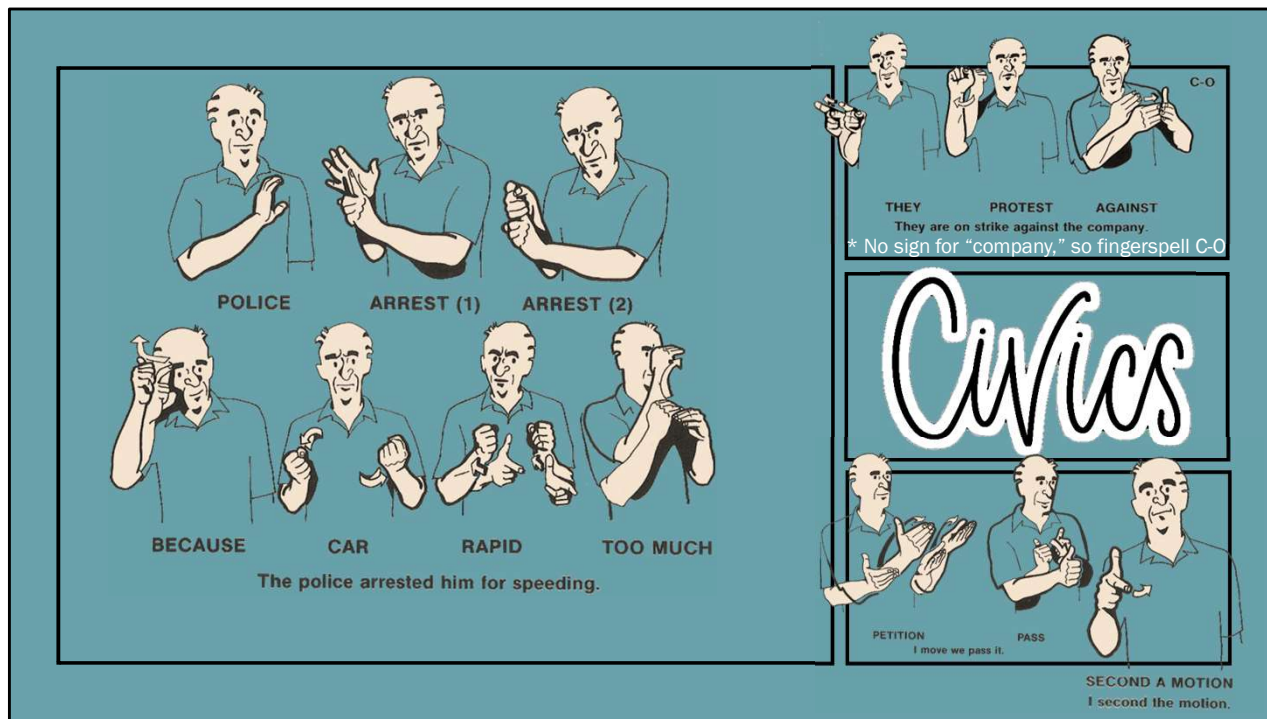
Civics

HE/SHE/IT PLAN AGAINST

She plans to sue them.

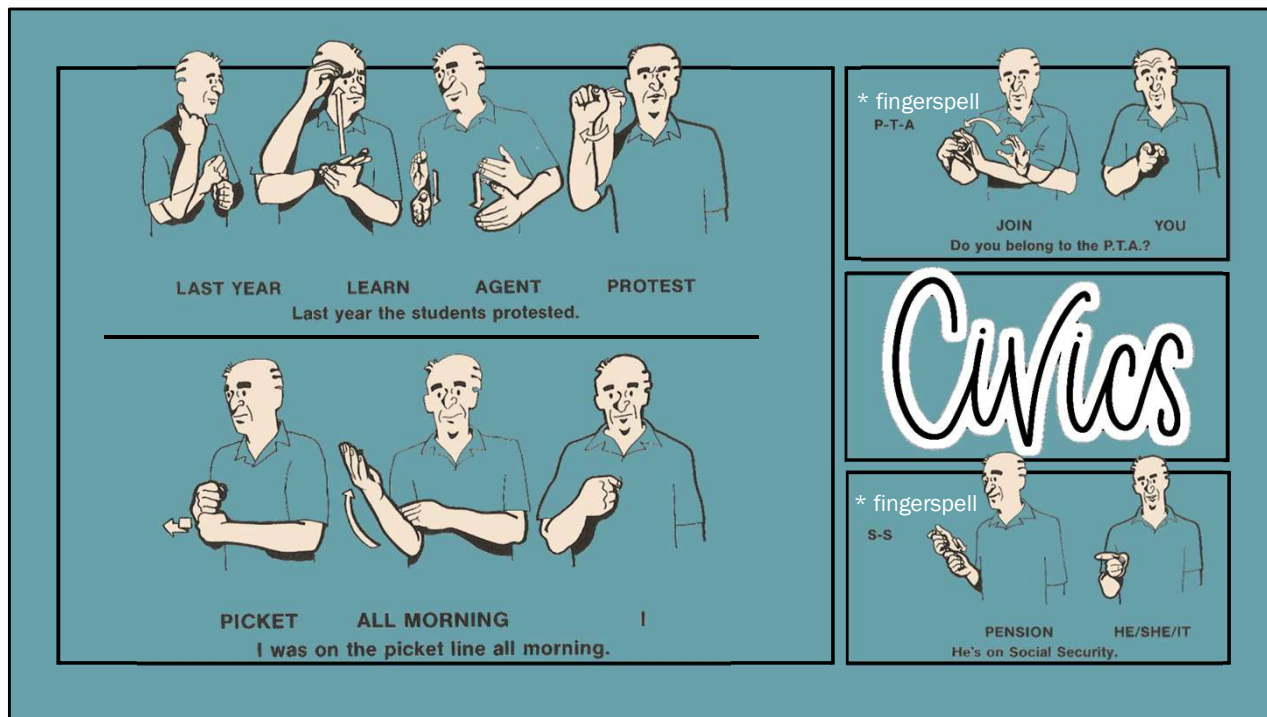
Civics

* The idea of "if" is often expressed in ASL by stating the sentence as a question. This requires a questioning expression done on the BREAK sign, and then a slight pause before you sing the consequence. The questioning expression happens with the DISOBEY sign followed by a pause.



Civics

* There is no sign for "company," so fingerspell C-O at the end of the sentence after the sign AGAINST.



Civics

* There is no sign for “P.T.A.,” so fingerspell it at the beginning of the sentence before the sign JOIN.

* Finger spell “S-S” to indicate “social security” at the beginning of the sentence before the sign PENSION.

NOTIFY

GO TO

JUDGE

GO TO

GOOD

* fingerspell
S-S-I

PENSION

HE/SHE/IT

She gets Supplementary Salary Income.

Civics

JUDGE

GET

LAW

AGENT

FINISH

MUST

YOU

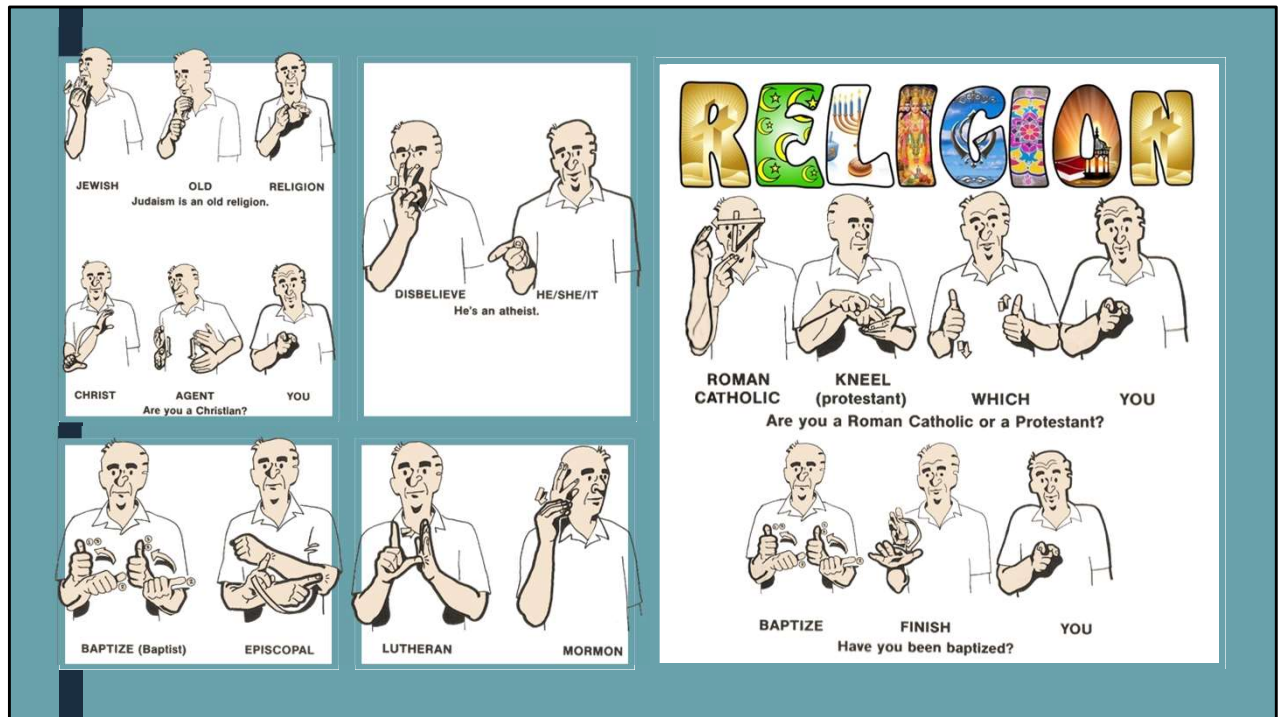
Did you receive a notification to appear in court?

If you go to court, you should have a good lawyer.

* Do not forget to questioning facial expression, since this is an "if" statement. It should occur with the sign GO TO.

Civics

* Fingerspell "S-S-I" to indicate "Supplementary Salary Income" at the beginning of the sentence before the sign PENSION.



Religion

Signs for various denominations differ considerably around the country, so it is suggested that you make local inquiries about how specific denominations are signed in your area. Those that follow are fairly standard.

BAPTIZE (A) **BAPTIZE (B)**

LONG AGO **PREACH** **HE/SHE/IT**
He used to be a preacher.

MISSIONARY **HE/SHE/IT**
She's a missionary.

MUSIC (Choir) **GROUP**

CRUCIFY (1) **CRUCIFY (2)**

RELIGION

CHURCH **GO TO** **EVERY SUNDAY** **I**
I go to church every Sunday.

JEWISH **GO TO** **TEMPLE** **SATURDAY**
Jewish people go to temple on the Sabbath.

Religion

Additional vocabulary:

LORD **MASS**

BLESS **BELIEVE**

CRACKER (Passover) **PITY**

COMMUNION **CONFESSION**

PRAY **PRIEST**

RELIGION

ME **INTERPRET (1)** **INTERPRET (2)**

PREACH **WANT** **YOU**

Do you want me to interpret the sermon?

Religion

Additional vocabulary:

PROPHECY

SAVE

SIN

RABBI

RELIGION

SOUL (A)

SOUL (B-1)

SOUL (B-2)

GET UP (Resurrection)

AGAIN

WORSHIP

Religion