

# GUIDEBOOK

## Leo M. Jacobs American Sign Language (ASL) Collection

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## **Basic ASL Lessons**

### **The ASL Phrase Book video set**

Very practical signs and sentences for everyday conversations

### **A Basic Course in ASL**

This series gets right to the point with clear sign language instruction

### **A Beginning Course in ASL (Bravo ASL!)**

15 lessons from a top-rated ASL series, with cultural notes and stories

### **Coffee Break Sign Lessons (1-5, 6-10)**

Dr. Mike Tuccelli teaches signs with emphasis on conceptual accuracy

### **Conversational Sign Language**

Ray Bearden teaches the manual alphabet and 90 sentences

### **The Face of ASL**

Basic ASL grammar by Bienvenu and Colonomus

### **From Mime to Sign**

Gil Eastman shows how mime can be a useful bridge to ASL skills

### **Learning American Sign Language**

Fun, user-friendly book and video set by Humphries and Padden

### **On Fire With Classifiers**

Tuccelli shows how these signs are important to ASL grammar

### **Say It By Signing**

Elaine Costello's video shows sign used in greetings, chatting & shopping

### **Say It With Sign!**

Lively video from popular series

### **Sign ASL? Sure, You Can!**

Easy overview of ASL grammar by Tuccelli

### **Sign Language Crash Course: I and II**

With this set, learners get ASL, PSE and cultural tips

### **Signing Fiesta**

These ASL lessons are translated in Spanish and English

### **Signing Naturally Videotext**

Lentz, Mikos and Smith authored this text for use in ASL classes

## **ASL Lessons with a Focus on Infants and Toddlers**

### **ASL Basics for Hearing Parents of Deaf Children**

An excellent set, also useful for daycare workers

### **Sign Language Will Enhance Your Child's Intelligence**

The value of early sign use. Basic signs and information

### **Sign With Me**

Very clear communication techniques to use with infants/toddlers

### **Sign With Your Baby**

Teaches parents how to teach sign to their hearing babies

### **Signing Time! / Play Time Signs / Everyday Signs**

Leah (deaf), Alex (hearing), and their friends make it easy to learn sign vocabulary

### **Talking Hands**

Babies and others learn 30 ASL signs from this live-action video

see also: **ASL Lessons, Songs, Programs & Stories for Children** and  
**Issues of Interest to Parents with Young Children**

## **Issues of Interest to Parents with Young Children**

### **Access for All: Integrating Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Hearing Preschoolers**

Excellent guide for accessibility in early childhood programs

### **Cochlear Implants: Covering the Basics**

Provides current information on this device

### **Finger Food Café**

A café for deaf and hearing people sets the scene for unexpected blessings

### **Language Says It All (Parts I and II)**

Part I: Parents learn to communicate with children who have hearing loss

Part II: Parents learn to read to children with hearing loss

### **Mom and Dad, Your Deaf Child is OK ...**

Interviews with parents and information from educators

### **Mr. Holland's Opus**

A compelling drama featuring deaf characters

### **Passport Without A Country**

Adults with Deaf parents talk about their experiences

(Australian sign, spoken English)

### **Read It Again and Again**

David Schleper illustrates techniques for building literacy through shared reading

### **Reading to Deaf Children: Learning from Deaf Adults**

Schleper outlines effective strategies used by deaf adults reading to deaf children

### **We Can Do Anything**

Children who haven't let hearing loss keep them from living fully

see also: **ASL Lessons, Songs, Programs & Stories for Children**

# **ASL Lessons, Songs, Programs & Stories for Children**

## ***ASL Lessons:***

### **A Beginning Course in ASL (Bravo ASL!)**

Excellent for children, series of 15 videos

## ***Songs and Programs presented in ASL:***

### **Fantastic ("C" and "F" from the set A-H)**

Entertainment for deaf and hard of hearing children ages 6 -10

### **Rainbow's End**

Designed for deaf children, these programs appeal to most kids

### **Shape Up 'N Sign**

Low impact kids' exercise program with signing

### **Sing, Dance 'n' Sign**

Entertaining for young children; teaches sign

### **Sing 'n' Sign for Fun!**

Gaia and friends sing and sign upbeat, cheerful songs

## ***Stories presented in ASL – “A Book A Day Series”:***

### **Animal Tracks**

**The Bravest Dog Ever, The True Story of Balto**

**Cats of Tiffany Street**

**Eek! There's a Mouse in the House**

**Everybody Cooks Rice**

**Grandfather's Journey**

**If The Dinosaurs Come Back**

**Is This a House for Hermit Crab?**

**Julius**

**Jumanji**

**Just A Dream**

**Kate Shelley and the Midnight Express**

**A Mother for Choco**

**My Buddy**

**My First American Friend**

**The Rat and the Tiger**

**A River Dream**

## **ASL Lessons, Songs, Programs & Stories for Children**

*Stories presented in ASL – “A Book A Day Series” (continued):*

A River Ran Wild  
Sheep in a Shop  
Super Cluck  
Three Cheers for Tacky  
Uncle Jed’s Barbershop  
Watch Out, Ronald Morgan!  
Who Put the Pepper in the Pot?  
Will and Orv

*Stories presented in ASL – Read With Me Series:*

Sharing the Joy of Storytelling with Your Deaf Toddler  
Where the Wild Things Are / More Bunny Trouble  
How the Grinch Stole Christmas/  
    The Wolf’s Chicken Stew  
The Mitten / King Bidgood’s in the Bathtub  
The Rainbow Fish / Small Green Snake  
If I Ran the Zoo by Dr. Seuss  
The Very Busy Spider/  
    Owl Babies/Monster Can’t Sleep  
Elizabeth and Larry  
If You Give a Mouse a Cookie  
The Mixed-Up Chameleon

*Stories presented in ASL – Visual Storyreading Series (no audio):*

The Lady and the Spider  
Our New Puppy

# **ASL Lessons, Songs, Programs & Stories for Children**

## ***Other Stories Presented in ASL:***

### **American Sign Language Christmas Stories**

Signed by Bobby Giles and Doris Wilding

### **American Sign Language Fairy Tales**

I and II; five tales on each, with voice-over

### **Deaf Children Signers and More Deaf Children Signers**

Watch these children express themselves in sign

### **Fairy Tale Classics**

Selected favorites from "Four For You" and "High Five"

### **The Land Before Time (I - IV)**

ASL translation by Linda Bove

### **Libros en Accion**

Translating Spanish stories to ASL

### **Number Stories**

Collection of 13 animal stories created and signed by Deaf children ages 4-14

### **Once Upon A Time (1-6)**

Children's classics retold in ASL by Bahan & Marbury

1. The Little Mermaid
2. The Emperor's New Clothes
3. The Fisherman & His Wife and Hansel & Gretel
4. The Musicians of Bremen, Rapunzel and Sleeping Beauty
5. The Princess & The Pea and Inchelina
6. Cinderella and Rumpelstiltskin

### **Sign Me a Story**

The Three Bears and Little Red Riding Hood told in ASL by Linda Bove

### **That's Sign, Folks!**

Linda Bove translates cartoon classics

### **Visual Tales**

Billy Seago signs these classic stories

1. The Father, The Son, and The Donkey
2. The Greedy Cat
3. The House That Jack Built
4. The Magic Pot
5. Village Stew



## **Intermediate to Advanced ASL Lessons**

### **ASL Vocabulary (6B)**

Sign Enhancers Practice Series

### **ASL Vocabulary, Affect & Structure (6C)**

Sign Enhancers Practice Series

### **ASL Sentences (6D)**

Sign Enhancers Practice Series

### **ASL Mini-Stories (6E)**

Sign Enhancers Practice Series

### **ASL Stories (6F)**

Sign Enhancers Practice Series

### **ASL Dialogues (6G)**

Sign Enhancers Practice Series

### **ASL Funny Bones (6H)**

Sign Enhancers Practice Series

### **Deaf Tend Your**

Non-manual signals (NMS) in ASL

### **Finger Flicks Intermediate I, Tape I**

Eight lessons to improve fingerspelling skills

### **Fingerspelled Names and Introductions**

Carol J. Patrie

### **Fingerspelling Expressive & Receptive Fluency**

Joyce Linden

### **Linguistics of American Sign Language**

Clayton Valli

### **Mouth Morphemes**

Mouth-centered facial grammar in ASL, taught by Struxness

### **Number Signs for Everyone**

Cinnie MacDougall

### **On Fire With Classifiers**

Tuccelli

### **Sign ASL? Sure, You Can!**

Tuccelli

*also recommended:* **All ASL literature, fiction & non-fiction videotapes and Reference Materials**

# Sign Language Interpreting

## The Art of Interpreting

User-friendly basic interpreting set

## Developing Interpreting Skills: U.S. Post Office Safety Meeting

“You are there” interpreting a group meeting

## Developing Interpreting Skills: Meeting With a Real Estate Agent

“You are there” interpreting a one-to-one meeting

## Interpreter Model Series: English-ASL (Lectures)

Demonstrations of interpreting by two top interpreters

## Interpreting in Various Settings

Massoud; voiced lectures, no captions

## Intro to Interpreting

Massoud; excellent preparation for interested students

## It’s Just a Phrase You’re Going Through

Mark Mitchum re: religious interpreting

## Practical Demonstrations of Transliteration & Interpretation

PSE and ASL, follows Leo Dicker’s book, *Facilitating Manual Communication*

## Technical Aspects of Interpreting

Lectures, voiced by Massoud

*also recommended:* **All ASL literature, fiction & non-fiction videotapes** and  
**Reference Materials**

## **Classic Literature Translated in ASL**

### **American Freedom Speeches**

Bill of Rights, Pledge of Allegiance, Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson,  
Abraham Lincoln, Susan B. Anthony, Martin Luther King . . .

### **Shakespeare Unmasked**

Performed by Little Theatre of the Deaf

### **Adventures of Sherlock Holmes: The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle**

Compelling mystery story with the greatest sleuth of all times

### **Adventures of Sherlock Holmes: The Adventure of the Speckled Band**

Compelling mystery story with the greatest sleuth of all times

### **Adventures of Sherlock Holmes: The Red Headed League**

Compelling mystery story with the greatest sleuth of all times

## **Poetry and Artistic ASL**

### **ASL Poetry: Selected Works of Clayton Valli**

Poems, hidden meanings, and clues to understanding

### **From a Gator Ride to the Dentist Office & United States of ASL Poetry**

People of all ages will enjoy these funny, fascinating and sometimes serious pieces  
by Peter Cook

### **Poetry in Motion**

Original ASL poems by Clayton Valli, Patrick Graybill and Debbie Rennie

### **The Treasure**

Original ASL poems by Ella Mae Lentz

## **Stories, Comedy and Drama**

### **ABC Stories**

A unique art form utilizing the letters of the manual alphabet

### **A-Z Stories: “Professions”**

Collection of nine fascinating stories created and signed by Andrew Byrne

### **ASL Literature Series:**

#### **Bird of a Different Feather & For a Decent Living**

A fable signed by Ben Bahan and a story signed by Sam Suppalla

#### **The Bridge**

An opera by William Moses in ASL with a universal theme

#### **DEAFology 101 Comedy Show**

This “class” is just for laughs

#### **From a Gator Ride to the Dentist Office & United States of ASL Poetry**

People of all ages will enjoy these funny, fascinating and sometimes serious pieces by Peter Cook

#### **Gil Eastman**

Founding member of the National Theatre of the Deaf performs “live”

#### **The Golden Legacy**

Mystery/Drama/Comedy/Adventure - all in ASL

#### **Man of a Thousand Faces**

Lon Chaney, a hearing child of deaf parents, became a legend in silent films

#### **Mary Beth Miller**

Founding member of the National Theatre of the Deaf performs “live”

#### **Signing Treasures**

Skits, jokes, stories, deaf folklore, and poetic works

#### **Tales from the Green Books**

Signed stories from a popular ASL instructional series

#### **Telling Stories**

A gestural play by William Moses. Deaf actors re-enact a common history of hard-won battles for freedom of expression.

#### **Tomorrow Dad Will Still Be Deaf and Other Stories**

Bonnie Kraft, daughter of Deaf parents

#### **You Think DEAF People Have Problems?**

Hilarious video frames hearing people as pathological, for a change

## **History & Culture of Deaf People and Sign Language**

### **ASL Pah!**

#### **Deaf Students' Perspectives on Their Language**

Deaf students describe the impact of ASL on their lives

#### **Class of '52**

Documentary on the history of Black deaf students at Kendall School in D.C.

#### **Deaf Mosaic #611**

Features "I Didn't Hear That Color" – a play; deaf World War II contributions

#### **Deaf President Now (Deaf Mosaic #402)**

1988 protest resulting in the appointment of Gallaudet University's first Deaf president, Dr. I. King Jordan

#### **Impact of Deaf History on Our Lives**

Jack Gannon speaks at the First International Conference on Deaf History

#### **Laurent Clerc**

A biography about America's first Deaf teacher

#### **The L.A.C.D.**

Los Angeles Club of the Deaf Story

#### **National Association of the Deaf, 42<sup>nd</sup> Biennial Convention Highlights (July 4-10, 1994; Knoxville, Tennessee)**

Glimpses of an exciting NAD convention (no audio)

#### **The Preservation of American Sign Language**

Archival films transferred to video

#### **See What I Mean: Differences Between Deaf and Hearing Cultures**

Tom Holcomb and Anna Mindess demonstrate cultural differences in a fun, effective manner

#### **Telling Stories**

This play by William Moses could be described as a type of "historical fiction."

Deaf actors re-enact a common history of hard-won battles for freedom of expression.

## **Biographies**

### **An Interview with Bernard Bragg: The Man Behind the Mask**

Based on the book *“Lessons in Laughter: The Autobiography of a Deaf Actor.”*  
A fascinating biography of a Deaf man who worked with Marcel Marceau

### **Charles Krauel**

A profile of a Deaf filmmaker

### **Deaf Mosaic #212**

Features author Lou Ann Walker; features Alice L. Hagemeyer

### **Deaf Mosaic #404**

Features a tribute to the late Dr. Andrew Foster – first Black Deaf graduate of Gallaudet and founder of more than 20 schools for the deaf in Africa

### **The Films of Charles Krauel**

Archival footage by Charles Krauel gives glimpses of Deaf Culture

### **The Hearing World Around Me**

Trix Bruce performs stories, skits and poems

### **Howie Seago - Deaf Culture Autobiography**

A popular Deaf actor tells how he got started on stage

### **Laurent Clerc**

A biography about America’s first Deaf teacher

### **Moving Pictures, Moving Hands: The Ernest Marshall Story**

This Deaf artistic pioneer filmed plays in ASL

### **Summer’s Story**

Summer Crider tells about growing up deaf, using a cochlear implant, and finding Deaf Culture

### **A Tribute to Art Kruger (1911-1992)**

The Deaf founder of the American Athletic Association of the Deaf (AAAD)

## **Inspiration**

### **Bring the Bible Alive with ASL Classifiers**

Trix Bruce teaches classifier use through stories

### **Finger Food Café**

A café for deaf and hearing people sets the scene for unexpected blessings

### **Genesis**

Bible book translation signed in ASL by Bob Alcorn

### **God's Heroes**

Stories signed in ASL by Bob Alcorn

### **God ... Who?**

Children's program about God

### **Jesus Film**

Popular movie with sign language interpretation

### **Life of Christ**

New Testament literature in ASL

### **Lift Up Holy Hands**

Beautifully filmed sign translations of songs

### **Mark Mitchum: Forgiven**

Inspiring performance signed in ASL

### **Mark Mitchum: Your Favorites**

Classic Christian hymns signed in ASL

### **Special Me!**

Deaf children "sing" in ASL about their Christian faith

### **A Taste of Heaven**

Mark Mitchum's musical ASL interpretation



## How to ...

### **Resources for Sign Instructors:**

#### **The ASLTA Evaluation & Certification System**

Hope to become certified as an ASL teacher? Check this out

#### **The Basics of Teaching ASL**

This tape helps teachers of ASL organize their classes

### **Written Sign Language:**

#### **SignWriting:**

1. Introduction to SignWriting
2. SignWriting Basics

#### **History of SignWriting:**

1. How Deaf Opinions Changed
2. How SignWriting Changed

#### **Learn to Read ASL in SignWriting:**

*Goldilocks & The Three Bears* transcribed;  
intermediate and advanced storybooks

### **Deaf-Blind Communications:**

#### **Deaf-Blind Communication & Community:**

##### **Overview and Introduction**

Describes the community

##### **Getting Involved: A Conversation**

Theresa Smith with two Deaf-Blind individuals and their interpreters

### **Leading Meetings:**

#### **Bummy's Basic Parliamentary Workshop**

Teaches how to lead meetings

### **Cooking:**

#### **The Tomato Chef**

Jeff Perri (deaf) teaches how to prepare delicious, heart-healthy meals

## **Health and Safety Issues**

### **Alcoholics Anonymous in American Sign Language**

Five volume set translating the Big Book

### **Anywhere to Anyone**

Domestic violence in the Deaf community

### **The Asthma Classroom**

Deaf young people explain how they handle asthma

### **Choosing a Healthy Lifestyle**

Tells about good eating and exercise, and health habits

### **Cochlear Implants: Covering the Basics**

Provides current information on this device

### **Fire Safety Starts With You**

Basic safety practices, described in ASL with voice-over

### **I Can: Stories of Deaf and Hard of Hearing People in Recovery**

Real life struggles with alcohol and drug abuse issues

### **It's Not Just Hearing AIDS: Deaf People & The Epidemic**

Learn how not to get sick with AIDS, what to do if you have AIDS, and how to help someone with AIDS

### **Martial Signing**

Sign language comes in handy for self-defense

### **Protect Yourself: A Basic Guide to Self Defense**

Presented in ASL, this video may increase personal confidence

### **Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions in ASL**

Five volume set from Alcoholics Anonymous

### **Your Physical Exam**

Explains the importance of a physical exam and what is involved

## **Reference Materials**

### **Pursuit of ASL: Interesting Facts Using Classifiers**

The signer explains 35 interesting topics, using ASL classifiers in natural ways (no audio)

### **Religious Signs Vocabulary**

Provides religious sign vocabulary information

### **Video Dictionary of ASL Signs English - Spanish Edition**

Provides a list of sign vocabulary, with English and Spanish captions

## **A Brief Biography of Leo M. Jacobs**



Leo M. Jacobs, an internationally known groundbreaking author, wrote “A Deaf Adult Speaks Out” which finally described the Deaf Community from a Deaf educator’s point of view. With a rare combination of wit, intelligence, and experience, Jacobs spoke out about various types of paternalism that the Deaf Community faces on a daily basis. He wrote this book as the first honored recipient of the Powrie V. Doctor Chair of Deaf Studies at Gallaudet University during the early 1970’s. The book, now in its third printing, was greeted with both criticism and acclaim, and is now considered a classic in the literature on deafness.

Leo also published papers on deaf issues and gave hundreds of speeches. He was a fixture on local and national committees on the status and future of American deaf people. Some of the ways he served the Deaf Community are as follows:

- A California delegate to the White House Conference on Handicapped Individuals in 1977
- A former President of the California School for the Deaf Alumni Association
- Over 20 years of service with the Gallaudet University Alumni Association as a Board member and in other capacities
- A founding Board member of Deaf Counseling, Advocacy, and Referral Agency (DCARA) serving the Bay Area.

Leo M. Jacobs was born in San Francisco on July 13, 1918. His family moved to Berkeley to be closer to the California School for the Deaf (CSD). Leo was the son of Deaf parents, Monroe and Elizabeth (“Lizzie”), and had a Deaf brother, Harry. With dedication and commitment to advocating for the rights of Deaf people, the Jacobs family had always been active in the Bay Area. Determined and ambitious, Leo graduated from high school at the age of 14 and attended Gallaudet College (now Gallaudet University) in Washington, D.C.

At 19, Leo earned a Bachelor’s degree and moved back to Berkeley, where he became a dorm counselor at the California School for the Deaf in 1938. After earning a Masters degree in Education from San Francisco State College, he became a high school teacher and taught English

and Mathematics for 35 years. As the school's first Coordinator of Community and Continuing Education, he helped establish Deaf Awareness Month in the state of California, which has become Deaf Awareness Week every September.

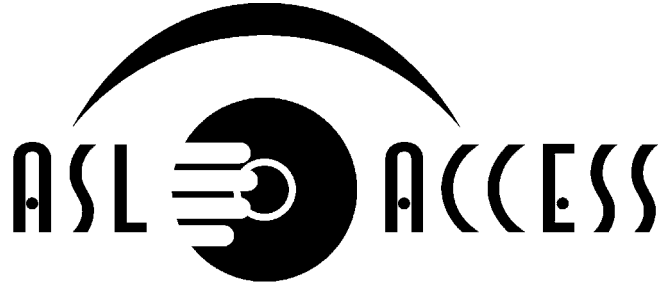
Leo married Dorothy "Dot" Morrison of Durham, North Carolina. They had two daughters, Sheila and Lisa. After receiving her Master's Degree, Dot was the first deaf teacher hired by the Oakland Public School System. Unfortunately, Dot passed away from cancer in her 40's. The Dorothy M. Jacobs (DMJ) award, sponsored by the Omega Chapter of the Phi Kappa Zeta Sorority, recognizes a volunteer who has given a lot to the Deaf community behind the scenes rather than in the spotlight.

Upon his retirement from the California School for the Deaf and the passing of his wife, Jacobs followed the School for the Deaf when it was relocated from Berkeley to Fremont. He wanted to remain close to his friends and colleagues. Leo commented on the positive interactions within the Fremont Community, with hearing citizens helping to make their new Deaf neighbors feel at home.

To be fair to his daughter living on the East Coast, Jacobs spent the second half of his retirement in Maryland, where he continued to attend national Deaf Conferences for as long as he could, always enjoying the latest debate in education, linguistics, or the politics of the Deaf Community, until his passing at the age of 80.

Leo Jacobs is survived by two daughters and their families. The oldest hearing daughter, Sheila Jacobs, and her husband, Christopher Funchess, have two sons, Ryan and Nicholas. The second daughter who is Deaf, Lisa Jacobs, and her husband, Allen Talbert, have a daughter, Darby.

The daughters of Leo M. Jacobs honor their father's lifelong mission of building bridges between the Deaf and Hearing worlds by bringing this special American Sign Language Collection to the Fremont Main Library where Leo's beloved California School for the Deaf resides as a neighbor. With this exceptional Collection of over 200 videos, the hearing Fremont Community can continue to learn more about sign language and Deaf Culture in order to make Fremont "Home Sweet Home" for its Deaf Citizens.



**Looking for American Sign Language?  
Look to Libraries with ASL Access!**

**American Sign Language (ASL) is a unique and complete language. Deaf and hearing people use ASL for everyday communication, access to information, education, and artistic expression. And now ASL is coming to public libraries!**

**ASL Access partners with interested public libraries  
– with your help – to put ASL videos on the shelves.**

**ASL Access has created a collection of more than 200 ASL videos.  
Qualified deaf and hearing volunteer reviewers helped choose the videos.  
ASL Access places the collections in selected public libraries.**

#### **ASL Instruction Videos**

**The large majority of deaf children have hearing parents. ASL Access Video Collections serve these families, as well as countless other learners of ASL, with dozens of teaching videos.**

#### **Deaf History Videos**

**Videos trace the history and describe traditions of the Deaf Community.**

#### **ASL Literature Videos**

**ASL poets paint the air. Storytellers entertain. Classic literature comes alive in ASL.**

#### **Informational Videos in ASL**

**With public libraries as a point of connection, deaf people all across America meet in virtual visits, using ASL to talk together like neighbors over a fence. Children swap funny stories. Deaf parents offer advice. Deaf Ph.D.'s debate. ASL signers offer a hand up to those who learn best with ASL. Information becomes accessible through ASL.**

**ASL Access Video Collections in public libraries open so many doors.  
Communication. Literacy. Careers. New friendships. New directions.**

**You can make a difference!**

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*A financial statement is available upon written request from the Virginia State Office of Consumer Affairs.*

# How To Communicate

by Christine Wixtrom

*The Deaf American*, Fall 1988

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1. **ESTABLISH POSITIVE COMMUNICATION GOALS:**
  - ◆ I want to “hear” and “see” you - to **UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU SAY.**
  - ◆ I want to **SHARE MYSELF** - my ideas and feelings - **WITH YOU.**
  - ◆ I want to **GIVE AND RECEIVE CLEAR MESSAGES.**
  - ◆ I want to **ENJOY TALKING WITH YOU AS A UNIQUE INDIVIDUAL.**
2. **RESIST THE TEMPTATION TO USE YOUR STYLE OF “COMMUNICATION” AS A SHIELD, A SWORD, OR A BANNER:**
  - ◆ Don’t talk without taking time to listen.
  - ◆ Don’t use “communication” to dominate and manipulate others, forcing them to use the method of communication, language, grammar or vocabulary choices that you prefer.
  - ◆ Don’t try to promote your preferred method of communication as **The One True Way.** (Instead, do demonstrate flexibility and tolerance by allowing each person to express and receive communication as he or she prefers.)
3. **SHOW CREATIVITY:**
  - ◆ If your first attempt to communicate fails, try another way!

## **MATERIALS REQUIRED FOR SUCCESSFUL SIGN LANGUAGE COMMUNICATION**

### 1. **WILLING HANDS**

You can do it! The main requirement is willingness, not manual dexterity, perfect hands or talent.

People who face all kinds of barriers have learned to sign, including those with arthritis, cerebral palsy, missing fingers, big or small hands. Just remember that it may take some time for you to learn to feel comfortable using hands, face, and body to talk.

### 2. **AN EYE FOR UNDERSTANDING**

If you demonstrate a positive attitude, you will have success. An attitude of respectful interest is far more important than fluency.

Most of us are not used to depending on our eyes to capture fleeting information. But “reading” sign language is a skill, like any other, that can be practiced and learned. Rather than striving to see every sign, relax and just try to get a general idea of what is being said. Don’t be afraid to ask for clarification.

### 3. **AN OPEN MIND**

Most importantly, keep an open mind about communication strategies. There are many ways to communicate. It doesn’t much matter **HOW** communication happens. Do whatever you can to “make it happen!”

# What Is Sign Language?

by Christine Wixtrom

*The Deaf American*, Summer 1988 (Updated July 1998)

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That's a good question! There are many types of gestural communication, and sometimes the term "sign language" just doesn't make it clear which form is being discussed. Here are a few brief explanations to help clear up the confusion.

## FINGERSPELLING, OR THE MANUAL ALPHABET

Fingerspelling is a method of representing the letters of the alphabet with the hand. Forming different shapes with your hand, you can spell out words such as: "H-O-W A-R-E Y-O-U?" Manual alphabets are not languages; they are visual codes for languages. The one-handed American Manual Alphabet is a code for English. (A two-handed manual alphabet is used in Europe.) There are different manual alphabets used to code different languages.

## AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE OR ASL

ASL is a visual-gestural language. ASL developed in a natural manner, as a means of clear visual communication used among deaf people. ASL was created by deaf people and belongs to their culture, Deaf Culture. Today, ASL is used by millions of Americans and Canadians of all ages. The units of ASL are composed of specific movements of the hands and arms, eyes, face, head and body posture. These movements, or gestures, represent concepts and serve as the "words" of the language. Precise syntactical rules and grammatical principles dictate proper ASL "word" (sign) order, tense indicators, intonation and other aspects of ASL language use. The grammar of ASL is completely different from (and unrelated to) the grammar of the English language. Linguistic research has shown, however, that ASL is as "rich" and "complete" as any spoken language.

## MANUALLY CODED ENGLISH

(MCE may also be termed SSS, Sign Supported Speech, or SSE, Sign Supported English)

There are a number of signing systems that were artificially devised in order to teach English to deaf children. MCE systems use manual signs to represent English visually. Signs used in these systems may be taken from ASL, but these vocabulary units are used to represent English words (rather than to represent concepts, as they do in ASL). Some new signs are contrived (invented) for English words or word parts in these systems. All signs are used in English grammatical order. Thus, these forms of manual communication are not languages - they are systems. Using one of these manual systems along with spoken English is a method of communication called "simultaneous communication" (or "sim-com"). Some MCE systems: Seeing Essential English (SEE1), Signing Exact English (SEE2), Linguistics of Visual English (LOVE) and Signed English (Bornstein, et al.).

## PIDGIN SIGN ENGLISH (PSE, or CONTACT SIGN)

When some ASL signs, some newer signs, some contrived signs and fingerspelling are used in flexible grammatical order, this is referred to as Pidgin Sign English. (Recent research has determined that "contact sign" is a more accurate term.) PSE is not a structured system, but a natural mix of two languages, ASL and English. One of the varieties within this category is Conceptually Accurate Signed English (CASE). Users of CASE will choose a sign on the basis of its meaning in ASL, rather than on the basis of its sound or spelling in English. The signs are used in English grammatical order, and may be accompanied by English mouth movements. (Note: Persons transferring someone else's spoken language into an English-like signed format are said to be transliterating. This is in contrast to the conveyance of a spoken English message into its equivalent in the language of ASL - or an ASL message into English - which is called interpreting.)

## PANTOMIME

Pantomime is not "sign language." Pantomime is not a language at all. Pantomime includes motions, gestures and dramatics used to communicate. It is used in theatre, and between people who do not share a common language.

## References:

1. *ASL: A Look At Its History, Structure, and Community*, by Charlotte Baker/Carol Padden
2. *Sign Language Interpreting: A Basic Resource Book*, by Sharon N. Solow
3. *ASL: Fact and Fancy*, by Harry Markowicz.



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