

Deaf Culture Awareness



WELCOME

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What is American Sign Language?

American Sign Language (ASL) is a complete, complex language that employs signs made with the hands and other bodily movements, including facial expressions and postures of the body. It is the first language of many deaf North Americans, and one of several communication options available to deaf people. ASL is said to be the fourth most commonly used language in the United States.

Is sign language the same around the World?

No one form of sign language is universal. For example, British Sign Language (BSL), Italian Sign Language (LIS) and French Sign Language (LSF) differs notably from ASL. Different sign languages are used in different countries, and regions within the same country.

Where did ASL originate?

The exact beginnings of ASL are not clear. Many people believe that ASL came mostly from French Sign Language (LSF). Others claim that the foundation for ASL existed before LSF was introduced in America in 1817. It was in that year that a French teacher named Laurent Clerc, brought to the United States by Thomas Gallaudet, founded the first school for the deaf in Hartford, Connecticut. Clerc began teaching LSF to Americans, though many of his students were already fluent in their own forms of local/regional, natural sign language. Today's ASL likely contains some of this early American signing as well signs used by Native Indians for tribal gatherings and meetings. Which language had more to do with the formation of modern ASL is difficult to prove.

How does ASL compare with spoken language?

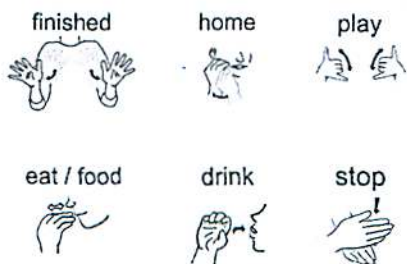
In spoken language, the different sounds created by words and tones of voice (intonation) are the most important devices used to communicate. Sign language is based on the idea that sight is the most useful tool a deaf person has to communicate and receive information. Thus, ASL uses hand shape, position, and movement; body movements; gestures; facial expressions, and other visual cues to form its words. Like any other language, fluency in ASL happens only after a long period of study and practice.

Even though ASL is used in America, it is a language completely separate from English. It contains all the fundamental features a language needs to function on its own—it has its own rules for grammar, punctuation, and sentence order. Every language expresses its features differently; ASL is no exception. Whereas English speakers often signal a question by using a particular tone of voice, ASL users do so by raising the eyebrows and widening the eyes. Sometimes, ASL users may ask a question by tilting their bodies forward while signaling with their eyes and eyebrows. Just as with other languages, specific ways of expressing ideas in ASL vary as much as ASL users themselves do. ASL users may choose from synonyms to express common words. ASL also changes regionally, just as certain English words are spoken differently in different parts of the country. Ethnicity, age, and gender are a few more factors that affect ASL usage and contribute to its variety.



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ASL Demonstration



Let's play at signing right now...

"GOOD MORNING".

"WELCOME TO GALLAUDET".

"NICE TO MEET YOU."

"BYE" and "THANK YOU"

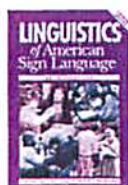
Some tips of the Deaf culture

How to walk between two people in conversation?

How do you get a Deaf person's attention when he/she doesn't see you?

An uninterrupted stream of questions from a Deaf person to hearing person? Is it rude?





Some suggested resources, you can find more books and information on-line. Also, check out <http://www.dawnsign.com/>

Welcome in the Deaf World and explore...

Short Descriptions

Linguistic of American Sign Language by c. Valli, C. Lucas and K. Mulrooney
 Featuring a completely revised section on morphology and syntax, 18 new and updated readings, and new homework assignments based on the accompanying DVD, the fourth edition of *Linguistics of American Sign Language* expands its purview as the standard introduction to ASL linguistics available today. The newly revised section offers new units on verbs in ASL, simple sentences in ASL, classifier predicates, syntax, and basic sentence types. The fourth edition also features groundbreaking research on iconic signs in ASL and the relationship between metaphor and iconicity in signed languages; variation in ASL, the different functions of space in ASL; and the artistic forms of ASL, including storytelling, percussion signing, drama, comedy, and poetry. Updated references and expanded readings delineate all of the linguistic basics, including phonology, semantics, and language use. The fourth edition also provides new homework assignments that correspond to the ASL stories signed on the special DVD enclosed with this new volume.

American Sign Language Dictionary DVD DVD020

With over 700 terms and pictures, this is the ASL dictionary to have. Browse the DVD dictionary's categories for specific signs or to extend your sign knowledge. Skilled signers Pam Amundsen, Don Lee Hanaumi, Seymour Duran and Justin Callaway demonstrate how to sign in real world situations. Appropriate for beginning and advanced signers. This is an extremely valuable resource for educators, parents and professionals who work with Deaf individuals, as well as autistic children and children with Down's Syndrome. *DVD not returnable once opened.*

Deaf in America: Voice from a Culture by Padden & Humphries

Through the use of folklore, apocryphal stories, poetry, jokes, and discussion of split factions and advocacy organizations, Padden and Humphries gracefully explain how deaf culture works, what it means to its members, how they define themselves within it, and how they interact with the world outside.

References

Humphries, T. and Padden, C. (1988). *Deaf in America: Voices from a Culture*. New York Times Book Review.

Lucas, C., Mulrooney, K. & Valli, C. (2005). *Language contact in the American Deaf community*. Gallaudet University Press.

DVD

American Sign Language Dictionary DVD. ASL in Motion by Amundsen, P., Hanaumi, L., Duran, S. and Callaway, J.

Porta

http://www.harriscomm.com/catalog/product_info.php?path=35_1735&products_id=17779

<http://www.deafculture.com/>

<http://www.aslinfo.com/deafculture.cfm>

Images posted by Google
