



Spokane  
American Sign Language  
Study Guide 1 – Beginner to Low-Intermediate  
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## 1.0 Overview

The purpose of this document is to provide an approximate guideline for the weekly ASL study group. THIS IS NOT WRITTEN IN STONE, MERELY A GUIDELINE. It can easily be changed, modified, tweaked, or disregarded as desired. This varies heavily based on who actually shows up to a session. Sometimes if everyone is more advanced, the more rudimentary parts can be skipped, whereas if there are more novice signers, it is encouraged to cover the basics, and who among the non-natively-signing couldn't use some improvement in reading/receiving finger spelling?

Any parts can be used as much or as little as desired. It also encouraged to add to this document over time. It is planned to post this document as both a PDF and as a wiki page on the website, so that everyone (registered at <http://www.spokaneasl.com>) can add and modify this document over time. Please feel free to do so!

Currently the following reference materials are regularly being used as guides (please feel free to others):

- <http://lifeprint.com/>
- <http://www.aslpro.com>
- <http://handspeak.com>
- A Basic Course in American Sign Language 2nd Edition by T.J. Publishers
- A Basic Course in American Sign Language Student Study Guide by T.J. Publishers
- Learning American Sign Language 2nd Edition Levels I & II by Pearson Education
- Learn American Sign Language – Everything You Need to Start Signing – Complete Beginner's Guide – 800+ Signs, by James W. Guido
- Barron's 500 Flash Cards of American Sign Language by Geoffrey S. Poor.
- Additional resources:
- <http://spokanehope.org/services/>
- <https://www.ewu.edu/chsph/programs/communication-sciences-and-disorders/clinic>

## Warm up

For those who are not signing on a regular, daily basis, warm up helps not only from the physical aspect of stretching out, but also getting mentally into the mode of signing, this is also a great chance for less experienced signers to ramp up quickly and not feel left in the dark as much during the more “advanced” stages, especially the social hour.

Please note it is usually easier to sign with everyone sitting in a circle or roughly square, rather than a rectangle or scattered around the place. It is even better without tables between participants.

## The Alphabet & Finger Spelling

Unless signing on a regular daily basis, most people struggle with finger spelling, especially reading someone else's finger spelling at higher speeds.

- Start out with finger spelling the alphabet.
- First begin very slowly especially if any beginners or ASL I level participants.
- Run through alphabet 5 times, each time a little faster. The fifth time is as fast as each person can handle.

It is extremely important that each participant be WATCHING someone ELSE signing rather than themselves or looking off “into space”. We recommend looking at a different person each time through the alphabet to get practice reading different the finger spelling of a variety of people.

## Frequently Used Vocabulary

If beginners are in attendance, perform the sign, then finger spell the sign, then verbalize the word, and finally perform the sign one more time. For intermediate and higher participants, for each vocabulary word, perform the sign, then finger spell the word, and then perform the sign a second time. If someone does not know the sign, repeat the sign and finger spelling until the everyone understands, do not verbalize.

This section provides a list of the more commonly used vocabulary. It is not by any means an exhaustive list of ASL signs, just the most frequently encountered.

## Basic Survival Stuff

### Words to start with:

me	name	welcome	maybe	hearing
you	again	myself/yourself	huh?	hard of hearing
my/your	slow	understand	oic	deaf
sign (ASL)	nice	don't understand	yes	introduce
language	meet	know	no	fingerspell
PAH! (Finally, success!)	please	don't know	uh-huh	

### Important phrases:

- Fingerspell own name (with no bounce)
- My name is \_\_\_
- Your name, what?
- Nice to meet you
- (Say that) Again please
- Slow down please
- Fingerspell what?
- I don't know.
- <sign> means what?
- Thank you.
- \_\_\_ is where?
- What are you doing?
- How are you?
- How was your week?
- Sorry I'm late

## Parts of Speech

### Interrogatives:

for

where

when

why

because

how

who

what (3 variants)

how much

### School:

school

college

paper

test

read

write

math

science

number

add

subtract

count

multiply

divide

class

teacher

### Places:

toilet / restroom

hospital

work

library

bakery

apartment

house

home

address

church

bank

far

near

open

closed

People:**Gender placement**

- male: nose to crown
- female: nose to chin

people

person

personality

character (individual / in a play)

friend

family

mother

father

sister

brother

police

doctor

teacher

interpreter

lawyer

nurse

president

vice president

waiter/waitress

Time:

clock

watch

time

hour / hourly

half-hour

minute

second

stop

late

not yet

wait

calendar/schedule

month

day

night

daily

day

day before

day after

morning

noon

afternoon

night

midnight

all day

all night

always

often

sometimes

never

forever

continue

during

since

history

future

days of the week

week (last week / next week)

weekend

weekly  
year (years before/after)  
yearly  
before / past  
after  
recently  
late / not yet  
later  
yesterday  
today  
tomorrow  
birthday  
new  
old  
older  
years-old (e.g. 5 yrs old)  
young  
younger

## Months

January  
February  
March  
April  
May  
June  
July  
August

September  
October  
November  
December

## More on Time

### Seasons

spring  
summer  
winter  
fall / autumn

### Holidays

New Year's Eve  
Valentine's day  
St. Patrick's Day  
April Fool's day  
Easter  
Memorial Day  
4th of July  
Labor Day  
Veterans' day  
Columbus Day  
Halloween  
Thanksgiving  
Chanukah  
Christmas  
Anniversary (wedding celebration)  
Birthday

### Weather

sun  
rain  
snow  
wind  
clouds/cloudy/overcast  
hail

## Self care:

comb/brush hair

brush hair

brush teeth

floss

blink

poop

constipation

diarrhea

fart

pee

bath

shower

tired

sleep

snore

towel

pillow

socks

soap

tissue

bathroom/toilet

sick

vomit

pain

clothes

sit

chair

bed

sleep/sleepy/nodding off

shoes

## Food/Drink:

Eat

drink

breakfast

lunch

dinner

cheese

butter

salt

pepper

coffee

milk

water

food

candy

cookie

orange

apple

banana

grape

juice

cereal

cake

chocolate

soda pop

tea

beer

wine

bread

meat

chicken

pizza

pie

fish

vegetables

### Emotions/feelings:

fine

afraid

sad

depressed

stressed

worried

panic

happy

excited

burdened/responsible

overwhelmed

mad

angry/furious

agree

hope

love

like

frustrated

relieved

upset

puzzled

### Colors:

rainbow

color

red

blue

green

yellow

purple

black

white

gray

pink

orange

brown

tan

dark

light (shade)



## Verbs

clean (small item / lg item)  
care  
can  
can't  
happen  
love  
laugh  
count  
notice  
figure out  
think  
imagine  
enter / access  
show (show me/show you)  
show (TV show)  
play (kids playing)  
play (theatrical performance)  
act (e.g. on stage)  
walk  
run  
jump  
dance  
drive  
search  
surprise  
sleep  
awake

smile  
cheat  
exercise  
swim  
stop  
shut up  
quiet  
copy  
miss (person)  
miss (bus/comment)  
go  
go-to  
move  
move to  
move from  
pay  
require

## Adjectives

fun  
funny  
clueless  
hot  
cold  
right (correct)  
right (direction)  
left (direction)  
left (something somewhere)

icky / detestable

more

less

healthy

wonderful (waffle/awesome)

wrong / oops

tall

short (structure/person)

short (brief)

big

small

a little bit

fat

thin

ugly

beautiful

strict

finish

come one (come over here)

watch out!

## Money

penny

quarter

dollar

cents

cost

cheap

expensive

credit card

## Imperatives

must

should / need

want

don't want

order (command)

order (sequence)

require

start

stop

don't

Important other:

like  
 key  
 TV  
 show  
 YouTube  
 Facebook  
 car  
 phone  
 book  
 light  
 slow  
 again  
 more  
 help  
 sign  
 fire  
 name  
 work  
 ASL  
 Starbucks

Numbers

Practice numbers from 1 through 30. Then in “Tens” from 30 to 100. Demonstrate both versions of representing hundreds (“C” versus “hooking”). 100 through 300. Then 1,000 (Thousand), 1,000,000 (Million) 1,000,000,000 (Billion). Below are some sample numbers to run through after counting to the hundreds, you can of course make up any you want:

**Sample Numbers**

67  
 86  
 98  
 99  
 31  
 25  
 56  
 79  
 81  
 97  
 100  
 1,024  
 9,121  
 100,053  
 965,876  
 1,521,325  
 189,428,210  
 1,687,943,121  
 998,876,543,321

Fractions

fraction [9 hand above hand and below hand]

1 / 2

1 / 3

1 / 4

Percent [zero hand, draw fraction]

## Ordinals

First (thumb, alternative: twist number)  
 Second  
 Third  
 Fourth  
 Fifth  
 Sixth  
 Seventh  
 Last

## Pronouns

I  
 me  
 you  
 it  
 that ("Y" horizontal to object)  
 that one ("Y" - pinky to object)  
 this (finger to palm)  
 he (to person / placed in space)  
 she (to person / placed in space)  
 we (initialized/not initialized)  
 us (initialized)  
 we all ("L" from shoulder to shoulder)  
 everyone (each one)  
 2 of us (2 of you)  
 3 of us / 4 of us

## Possessives

my  
 your  
 his (to person / placed in space)  
 hers (to person / placed in space)  
 its  
 ours  
 theirs  
 myself  
 yourself  
 himself  
 herself  
 ourselves  
 themselves

## Relationships

man  
 woman  
 gentleman  
 lady  
 boy  
 girl  
 baby  
 child  
 children  
 kids / brats  
 dating  
 girlfriend  
 boyfriend  
 sweetheart  
 wed / wedding  
 marriage/married  
 husband  
 wife  
 separated (1 finger/whole hands)  
 divorced (reversed "meet")  
 parents  
 grandparents  
 grandmother  
 grandfather  
 daughter  
 son  
 grandchild / grandchildren  
 grandson  
 granddaughter  
 aunt  
 uncle  
 niece  
 nephew  
 cousin (female/male)  
 law  
 brother-in-law  
 sister-in-law  
 false / step / foster  
 stepfather  
 stepmother  
 step-monster  
 half (some)  
 half-brother  
 half-sister  
 adopted (3 variants)

## Additional Vocabulary

a little (2 variants)  
 access  
 add  
 agree  
 airplane  
 airport  
 allergies / allergic  
 allow  
 amount  
 ask (favor)  
 ask (question)  
 autism  
 badge  
 bakery  
 baseball  
 basketball  
 because  
 between  
 blind  
 boat  
 boring  
 born  
 brain  
 bus  
 business  
 busy  
 celebrate  
 certificate  
 character  
 chat  
 cigarettes  
 city  
 coffee  
 comfortable  
 communicate  
 community  
 competition  
 computer  
 cool  
 dark  
 deaf  
 desire  
 diet  
 dirty  
 divide

don't want  
 drive  
 easy  
 emergency  
 enough  
 equal  
 exactly  
 exciting  
 excuse me  
 expect  
 expensive  
 fancy  
 fast  
 favorite  
 feel pain  
 flirt  
 fish  
 football (American)  
 force  
 forgive / pardon  
 forklift  
 frustrating  
 fun  
 funny  
 game  
 garbage  
 glasses  
 grammar  
 grew up  
 hard of hearing  
 have  
 hear  
 heart  
 help  
 historical  
 history  
 hope  
 hungry  
 ice  
 idea  
 important  
 impressed  
 information  
 insurance  
 internet  
 join  
 joke / tease

kidnap	short
kill	shower
kind / type	sick
language	snobby / snooty
laptop	soap
laugh	soccer
lazy	socks
learn	sorry
level	specialist
library	stars
list	store
loser	street / road
lovey-dovey	stress
lying	student
make	subtract
marijuana	sucks
mask	swim
movie	sympathy
multiply	Target
never	tonight
notice	town
order / command	train
page	ugly
Pah! (success)	video
paper	visit
patient	voice
pay attention	vomit
perfect / spot-on	walk
picture	Walmart
pig	want
prefer	war
problem	watch
raccoon	weird
receive (sign language)	welcome / hire
right now	whatever
rocket	wheelchair
role-playing	witch
roommate	with
run	without
salmon	worse
same	wow (2 variants)
scold	yell
see	bicycle
shock	

Let each person in the group sign a few words from the book, then pass the book around to the next person, and so on, until everyone in the group has had a turn

to sign from the book, and all the vocabulary from that section of the book has been covered.

## Sentences

Try to use the same or correlative chapter related to the same vocabulary used in the previous section (3), using example sentences from that book to build on the vocabulary just covered.

Have each person sign one sentence from the book, then pass it to the next person. Keep doing this until all the sentences from the book have been covered. Remember to FINGERSPELL the answers to unknown signs, not speak the answers.

## Story time

Now each person takes a turn telling a brief story (in ASL) about their day, their week, their past month, or any other story they would like to tell. If there are more people attending, the stories should be kept shorter so everyone has a turn, if there are fewer people attending, then more time can be spent on each story. The stories can be very basic (depending on the person's signing ability), such as:

MY CAR LAST WEEK NEED FIX.

I TAKE CAR TO SHOP.

MONEY IT COST EXPENSIVE.

CAR NOW DRIVE OK.

Of course, feel free to provide more elaborate stories as well.

## Social time

Now that everyone has had some time to get into the “mode” of signing, it is a free form social chat time for as long as anyone wishes. Everyone can continue taking turns chatting with the group, or break off into separate conversations. However, please do still try to remain in a circle/square so that others can jump in on conversations. For the less advanced/experienced signers, they will likely be a bit overwhelmed by the more advanced signers, but it is still VERY IMPORTANT for them to “eavesdrop” on the conversations to get used to watching faster signing. The beginner-to-low-intermediate-study-group ends after 1 hour, and the intermediate-and-above-study-group lasts for the second hour. When finished, if the location is still open, you can certainly run over as long as anyone wants to stick around and continue signing.

For any questions, sending updates, corrections, or other comments, please feel free to email me: [spokaneasl@gmail.com](mailto:spokaneasl@gmail.com).

Website: <http://www.spokaneasl.com> | Meetup: <https://www.meetup.com/spokaneasl/>