



Spokane  
 American Sign Language  
 Study Guide 1 – Beginner to Low-Intermediate  
 Revision: 3/31/2018 3:18 PM Version: 1.2

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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://www.aslpro.com>
- <http://lifeprint.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>

## 1.1 Study Group Schedule

First hour is generally for beginners to intermediates.

Second hour is generally for intermediates and up.

All times are just approximations, it varies greatly on who shows up (and their skill levels).

The schedule is given as a guideline for those who wish to show up for specific areas, though it is always best to try to participate for the full 2 hours. The first hour is mostly review/practice, the second hour is usually more social in interaction.

First Hour (All signing levels, beginners and above)

Activity	Duration	Time
Meet and greet. Introduce each other and chat as people arrive.	5 minutes	4:00 – 4:05
Warm up with finger spelling alphabet and numbers.	5 minutes	4:00 – 4:10
Important Phrases & basic vocabulary	20 minutes	4:10 – 4:30
Additional vocabulary	20 minutes	4:30 – 4:50
Sentences / grammar	10 minutes	4:50 – 5:00

## 2 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.

## 2.1 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.

## 3 Most 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.

### 3.1 Basic Survival Stuff

Words to start with:

me	sign (street)	not / don't	hearing
you	yes	and	hard of hearing
sign (ASL)	no	but	true
language	maybe	deaf	false
PAH! (Finally, success!)	learn		



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**Most 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 understand.
- 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**

**Interrogatives:**

for

where

when

why

how

who

what (3 variants)

how much

**School:**

school

college

paper

test

read

write

math

science

number

add

subtract

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: chin to nose

people

person

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

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

**Weather**

sun

rain

snow

wind

clouds/cloudy/overcast

hail

**Self care:**

comb/brush hair

poop

constipation

diarrhea

pee

bath

shower

tired

sleep

snore

towel

pillow

socks

soap

tissue

bathroom/toilet

sick

vomit

pain

clothes

sit

chair

bed

sleep/sleepy

shoes

**Food/Drink:**

eat

breakfast

lunch

dinner

cheese

butter

salt

coffee

milk

water

food

candy

cookie

orange

apple

cake

chocolate

soda pop

tea

beer

wine

bread

meat

chicken

fish

vegetables

**Emotions/feelings:**

fine

afraid

sad

depressed

stressed

happy

excited

mad

angry

agree

hope

love

like

frustrated

relieved

upset

**Colors:**

color

red



blue  
green  
yellow  
purple  
black  
white  
gray  
pink  
orange  
brown  
tan  
dark  
light (shade)

### Verbs

clean (small item / lg item)  
care

happen

love  
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  
exercise  
swim  
stop  
copy  
miss (person)  
miss (bus/comment)  
go  
go-to  
move  
move to  
move from  
pay  
require

### Adjectives

clueless

hot

cold

right (correct)

right (direction)

left (direction)

left (something somewhere)

wrong / oops

tall

short (structure/person)

short (brief)

big

small  
a little bit  
fat  
thin  
ugly  
beautiful  
strict

### Imperatives

must  
should / need  
want  
don't want  
order (command)  
order (sequence)  
require  
start  
stop  
finish  
come one (come over here)  
watch out!

### Money

penny  
quarter  
dollar  
cents  
cost  
cheap  
expensive  
credit card

### Important other:

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

## **3.2 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

**3.3 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

### 3.4 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)

### 3.5 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

### 3.6 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

kill	problem
kind / type	raccoon
language	receive (sign language)
laptop	right now
laugh	rocket
lazy	role-playing
learn	roommate
level	run
library	salmon
list	same
loser	scold
lovey-dovey	see
lying	shock
make	short
marijuana	shower
mask	sick
movie	snobby / snooty
multiply	soap
never	soccer
notice	socks
order / command	sorry
page	specialist
Pah! (success)	stars
paper	store
patient	street / road
pay attention	stress
perfect / spot-on	student
picture	subtract
pig	sucks
prefer	swim

sympathy	watch
Target	weird
tonight	welcome / hire
town	whatever
train	wheelchair
ugly	witch
video	with
visit	without
voice	worse
vomit	wow (2 variants)
walk	yell
Walmart	
want	

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.

## 4 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.

## 5 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.

## 6 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).

Happy Signing!

-Hawke

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