

The American Sign Language Manual Alphabet as seen by the person reading the letters



The American Sign Language Manual Alphabet as seen by the person signing the letters



Fingerspelling

Each activity is designed to help you develop the skills needed to understand fingerspelling without decoding it letter by letter, and to form clear letters. By practicing fingerspelling alone or with a partner and participating in activities during your ASL class, you will learn to fingerspell clearly and confidently.

Note: The fingerspelling in illustrations has been created from left to right, for greater ease of use and comprehension when looking at the illustration. However, the hand moves away from the body when fingerspelling.

Fingerspelling: Do's and Don't's

- Don't jerk, bounce, or move your hand.
- Keep your elbow down, close to your side.
- Hold your hand to the side of your chest, not in front of your face.

Unit

1

1 *Three letter names.* Hold your hand in one place as you fingerspell short, three-letter names.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Pam	Ira	Ray	Uma	Meg	Amy	Tim	Ana	Ben	Rea
Joe	Gus	Bob	Val	Dan	Ina	Ram	Fae	Kia	Eve
Mia	Van	Ngi	Wes	Ken	Ned	Abe	Mel	Nan	Sue
Sue	Tad	Sal	Jan	Ron	Ted	Ace	Kay	Ari	Aga
Tom	Gil	Tia	Zoe	Kim	Sam	Ian	Rob	Ona	Don

2 *What are their names?* Complete each sentence by fingerspelling the name in bold. An example is provided.



Her name is Jan.

1. His name is **Hal**.
2. Her name is **Kim**.
3. Their names are **Jed** and **Gil**.
4. Her name is **Ana**.
5. His name is **Tom**.
6. We are named Sue, Tia, and Ron.
7. Her name is **Kay**.
8. Her name is **Eva**.
9. Her name is **Flo**.
10. My name is ____.

FYI Instead of signing *and*, simply point towards two (or more) different locations.

Accent Steps

Using the correct handshape while fingerspelling is as important as not swinging your hand outward for the letters O, H, D, C, and G. Look at the two versions of the letter *i*. Even a slight error like the thumb is noticeable. Make sure your handshapes are correct, and your fingerspelling skills will improve.

Incorrect *i*Correct *i*

- 3** *Common errors.* Look at both handshapes and fingerspell each name or word using the correct form of the letter.

Handshape Error	Fingerspelling Handshape			Handshape Error	Fingerspelling Handshape		
		Ada	Ali			ghi	hat
		tax	ham			Huy	hah
		Abe	Ava			ohm	Hoy
		dye	dim			Kia	Lin
		Dan	doe			mix	Ian
		Ed	Dar			tie	ice
		Ida	bad			Kay	kid
		den	dab			kin	kite
		id	cod			Ken	kit
		Eve	Ben			Meg	mud
		vet	tea			amp	Sam
		sea	hem			gem	Mia
		Guy	sag			jog	Joe
		wag	hug			oat	Opi
		Aga	gas			Ron	ox

- 4** *The ABCs.* Complete the fingerspelling prompts below.

- fingerspell the ASL alphabet
- fingerspell the vowels: A, E, I, O, U
- fingerspell your entire name
- fingerspell the name of your hometown

- 5** *Trouble letters.* The following words and names contain one or more trouble letters. Fingerspell each column using the correct handshapes.

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>
Deb	Eve	Fox	get	Hao	key	Mae	Ned	top	Paz
Del	eat	elf	Gap	hop	Kay	Max	Noe	oat	pet
Dex	Eva	fin	Gus	hen	Rik	map	Neo	toy	pop
Dom	Ely	if	Aga	ham	koi	emu	Nhu	opt	ape

- 6** *First & last names.* Complete the sentence by fingerspelling the first and last names shown in bold. Pause briefly before signing the last name.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. My name is ... (Rob Paz) | 6. My name is ... (Bev Wan) |
| 2. My name is ... (Mel Ash) | 7. My name is ... (Ly Kur) |
| 3. My name is ... (Ina Ris) | 8. My name is ... (Sam Hyn) |
| 4. My name is ... (Jan Kol) | 9. My name is ... (Gil Och) |
| 5. My name is ... (Ed Dio) | 10. My name is ... (?) |

- 7** *Introductions.* Practice fingerspelling the complete names of the following people.

- yourself
- your ASL teacher
- your boss / supervisor
- a sibling

I Want to Know ...

How important is fingerspelling?

Consider fingerspelling to be like your handwriting. Being clear is vital to being understood, be confident enough not to worry whether each letter is exactly right, and be able to spell words quickly instead of breaking them down letter by letter. Everybody has their own fingerspelling style, just as you have your own style of handwriting. It takes time and practice to become an excellent fingerspeller! Fortunately fingerspelling is **generally** used in specific instances:

- first, last, and middle names;
- names of places (cities, states, stores);
- titles of movies and books;
- certain foods;
- for clarification when one sign has several meanings;
- technical terms.

The first two instances are the most important parts of fingerspelling for a beginning student. You want to sign your name and where you're from without stumbling! Warning: Don't fingerspell words and sentences if you don't know a sign. Doing this is like saying A . . R . . E . . Y . . O . . U . . and is hard to understand.

- 8** *Four letter names.* Fingerspelling a four-letter name follows the same pattern as three-letter names. Hold your hand in one place and keep your elbow by your side. Spell each column of names.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Glen	Evan	Mike	Alex	Hala	Tara	Alma	Lita	Dana	Leif
Saul	Tura	Liza	Jose	Kyle	Jean	Brad	Joey	Greg	Iris
Huey	Ivan	Nora	Nick	Erin	Fran	Mira	Carl	Mary	Vika
Kara	John	Dave	Sara	Amos	Raul	Ajax	Roni	Neil	Sala

- 9** *Name exchange.* Fingerspell a name beginning with the first letter shown in each letter-pair to a partner, who will respond by spelling a different name using the second letter of the pair. Use the list of four-letter names below if needed. An example is provided.

Example

Student A

L

Student B

J



.....



- | | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. P Y | 6. J C | 11. D N | 16. L L |
| 2. B E | 7. R I | 12. F Z | 17. X H |
| 3. V V | 8. A P | 13. A A | 18. S S |
| 4. G M | 9. O H | 14. K F | 19. J P |
| 5. T S | 10. U L | 15. Q V | 20. A R |

- 10** *Making introductions.* Sign the introductions with a partner, who will respond using the information in bold.

- Hi, my name is Lou Eads.
What's your name?
(My name is Adam Chen.)
- Her name is Amy Kiva.
What's his name?
(His name is Doug Brin.)
- His name is Paul Reys, and her name is Tara Reys.
(What are their names?)
- My name is _____.
What's your name?
(My name is _____.)
- Her name is Vera Yan.
(No, her name is Vera Yang.)

Four-letter Names

Alan	Ivan	Mary	Raul	Teri
Alec	Jack	Mike	Reba	Thad
Alex	Jake	Mina	Rick	Thom
Brad	Jana	Nick	Risa	Tina
Bret	John	Nora	Rolf	Tony
Cara	Kira	Olaf	Ryan	Troy
Dana	Kris	Olga	Sana	Uday
Dean	Kyle	Opal	Sara	Ulan
Eric	Lana	Paco	Sean	Vera
Erin	Lara	Paul	Sela	Vern
Fran	Lars	Pete	Seth	Ward
Gail	Leah	Phil	Shea	Xena
Gwen	Lisa	Prue	Skye	Xuan
Hank	Lori	Qira	Stan	Yael
Hedy	Marc	Quin	Tara	Yuri
Iris	Mark	Rain	Tate	Zach