

Who Learns ASL?

ASL classes are held not only in every state in the USA, but also across Canada, Europe, Asia, and Africa. In the USA, ASL is the world



language of choice for many students from kindergarten through college. The Modern Language Association reports that ASL enrollment at the college level continues to grow faster than any other language, and the National K-12 Foreign Language Enrollment Survey shows more students are taking or are interested in taking ASL than most other languages combined. ASL is the 3rd most-studied world language in the USA.

	2002	2006	% Change, 2002–06	2013	% Change, 2009–13
Spanish	745,215	822,094	10.3	790,756	-8.2
French	201,985	206,014	2.0	197,757	-8.1
American Sign Language	60,781	79,708	31.1	109,577	19.0
German	91,100	94,147	3.3	86,700	-9.3
Italian	63,899	78,176	22.3	71,285	-11.3
Japanese	52,238	65,403	25.2	66,740	-7.8
Chinese	34,153	51,381	50.4	61,055	2.0
Arabic	10,584	23,987	126.6	32,286	-7.5
Latin	29,841	32,164	7.8	27,192	-16.2
Russian	23,921	24,770	3.5	21,962	-17.9
Greek, Ancient	20,376	22,831	12.0	12,917	-35.5
Hebrew, Biblical	14,155	14,109	-0.3	12,551	-8.7
Portuguese	8,385	10,310	23.0	12,415	10.1
Korean	5,211	7,146	37.1	12,229	44.7
Hebrew, Modern	8,619	9,620	11.6	6,698	-19.4
Other languages	25,344	33,855	33.6	40,059	-2.6
Total	1,395,807	1,575,715	12.9	1,562,179	-6.7

Sources: MLA Enrollment Report (2018); FLE Report (2017).

Isn't ASL Easy?

Don't Be Misled

ASL is as challenging to learn as is any other spoken language. It's not an "easy" language for most students. If you struggled to learn Spanish or French, then you will probably struggle to learn ASL. That's because ASL is just like any other world language - it has its own structure and grammar, has different ways of phrasing things than English does, and requires you to push yourself.

And That's Just the Beginning!

ASL is very different from English or any other spoken language. You use your hands, your face, your lips, your shoulders, and even the space around you to communicate, but you won't make a sound!

Learning ASL means you will be able to communicate in 3-D, so rather than telling *about* a movie, you'll be able to *show* the movie itself. Try doing that in a spoken language!

ASL Will Challenge You



You will be expected not to use your voice while inside the ASL classroom.



You will be expected to maintain constant eye contact with your peers and teacher. Not keeping eye contact is the same as plugging your ears in a spoken language class!



You will spend a lot of time filming yourself signing and appearing on camera, so don't be shy!

Taking ASL as a World Language

What students, parents, school administrators, and guidance counselors should know about ASL.



Get started in ASL by fingerspelling your name!



Survival Tips

- English and ASL are separate, different languages. It's more than learning a sign for each English word!
- Sit in a circle if possible, rather than rows of desks. This way, students can see the teacher and each other communicate.
- Don't freak out that you can't speak English. You will learn how to communicate in ASL by using it every day in the classroom.
- Meet Deaf people and show off your ASL skills!

Is Knowing ASL Useful?

Yes!!

ASL is more than becoming a teacher of the Deaf or an interpreter. ASL proficiency opens the doors to jobs where a person will interact with the general public. Think of all the different jobs that require talking to people, and you'll see how useful ASL can be:

Police. Fire department. Store clerk. Attorney. Doctor. Nurse. Physical trainer. Teacher. Restaurant server. Customer service representative. General manager. Federal, state, and local government. Education. Accountant. Hospital aide. Retail sales. Receptionist. Home health aide. Childcare worker. Military. Bank teller. Management. Electrician. Software developer. Financial planner. Correctional officer. Coffee shop staff. Human resources. Hairdresser. Labor relations specialist. Mechanic. Pharmacist. Dentist. Engineer. Therapist. And many more!



College Admissions and Graduation Policies
Regarding American Sign Language

Does ASL Count for College?

Yes, it does. Contrary to widespread belief, taking ASL does not harm college acceptance rates. Check www.aslcollege.com to see college admissions policies regarding ASL for every institution in the USA.

Have an Advantage Over Other Applicants

Unlike most other spoken languages, learning ASL means you can communicate with friends, neighbors, and on the job without leaving town!

International Use?

You'd be surprised how your ASL proficiency can be used in foreign countries. The Peace Corps looks for people who know ASL every year, to serve all over the world!



The Fine Print

The world of IEPs and ASL

ASL might not be the best decision for a student with IEP needs, including:

- *Auditory input.* ASL classes are taught in ASL, which means there is no spoken language used in the classroom.
- *Dysgraphia.* Those with writing problems will struggle in ASL, where glossing (ASL written form) may be a key portion of the curriculum.
- *Attention deficits.* Prolonged visual attention and attention to detail is a fundamental part of learning ASL.