

Course Title

American Sign Language I



INNOVATIVE
ARTS ACADEMY

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to define American Sign Language (ASL) as a complete visual-spatial language with its own unique grammar, syntax, and cultural norms; communicate at the Novice level using both expressive and receptive skills to exchange basic information about personal identity, family, emotions, and school life; apply the Five Parameters of ASL—handshape, palm orientation, location, movement, and non-manual signals—to accurately produce and interpret signs; demonstrate cultural competence by using appropriate Deaf etiquette, recognizing significant historical milestones, and understanding the diversity within the Deaf community; and utilize ASL visual grammar, including non-manual markers, to distinguish between statements, yes/no questions, and wh-questions during communication.

Unit 1: The Basics

Time Frame

8–9 Weeks
(Quarter 1)



Focus of the Unit

Foundations of visual communication, the manual alphabet, and the introduction of Deaf culture as a linguistic minority

Unit 2: Let's Introduce Ourselves!

Time Frame

8–9 Weeks
(Quarter 2)



Focus of the Unit

Terminology for identity, counting to 20, family structures, and etiquette for interacting in Deaf spaces

Unit 3: Express Yourself: Feelings, Colors, & Questions

Time Frame

8–9 Weeks
(Quarter 3)



Focus of the Unit

The mechanics of sign production (Five Parameters), expressing internal states, and mastering the grammar of questions.

Unit 4: School's in Session

Time Frame

8–9 Weeks
(Quarter 4)



Focus of the Unit

School-related vocabulary, turning statements into questions, the "Dark Ages" of Deaf history, and community diversity

Unit Title

The Basics



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Time Frame

8–9 Weeks (Quarter 1)



Essential Question(s)

- What makes ASL a "real" language compared to a collection of gestures?
- How does eye contact and physical space function differently in Deaf culture than in hearing culture?



Focus of the Unit

Foundations of visual communication, the manual alphabet, and the introduction of Deaf culture as a linguistic minority.

Standards

12.1.1.S1.A: Recite target language alphabet and basic words
12.1.1.S1.B: Speak common vocabulary and greetings
12.3.1.S1.B: Use culturally appropriate expressions and gestures
12.5.1.S1.A: Introduce one's self in the community

Learning Targets

I can explain how American Sign Language differs from English and recognize ASL as a unique visual-spatial language with its own grammar and structure.

Learning Targets

I can communicate using appropriate introductory ASL signs and demonstrate respectful Deaf etiquette when interacting with others.

Learning Targets

I can use the manual alphabet and numbers 1–10 accurately to communicate basic information, including introducing myself and fingerspelling my name.

Learning Targets

I can describe the contributions of Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet and Laurent Clerc and explain their impact on the history of American Sign Language and the Deaf community.



Resources

eDynamic Learning ASL 1a Unit 1, Manual Alphabet charts, fingerspelling practice tools (asl.ms), and Deaf culture primary source videos

Unit Title	Let's Introduce Ourselves!
Time Frame	8–9 Weeks (Quarter 2)



	Essential Question(s)		Focus of the Unit
	- Why is the distinction between "Deaf" and "deaf" significant to personal identity? - How do environmental adaptations in a Deaf household reflect cultural values of safety and connection?		Terminology for identity, counting to 20, family structures, and etiquette for interacting in Deaf spaces

Standards	12.1.1.S1.B: Numbers, daily life skills, and courtesy expressions. 12.1.1.S1.D: Facts about family using simple sentences. 12.3.1.S1.C: Model life skills and family/peer relationships.
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Learning Targets
I can explain respectful identity language in the Deaf community, including why the term “hearing impaired” is generally avoided.
Learning Targets
I can introduce and describe immediate and extended family members using appropriate ASL vocabulary and grammar, including the gender-location rule.

Learning Targets
I can count to 20 accurately using correct number patterns, movement, and palm orientation.
Learning Targets
I can demonstrate respectful communication and etiquette in Deaf spaces by using polite signs, appropriate facial expressions, and culturally appropriate behavior.



Resources	eDynamic Learning ASL 1a Unit 2, Family Tree templates, and Deaf etiquette scenario cards
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Unit Title

Express Yourself: Feelings, Colors, & Questions



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Time Frame

8–9 Weeks (Quarter 3)



Essential Question(s)

- How does changing a single parameter of a sign completely alter its meaning?
- How do non-manual markers (NMMs) act as the "punctuation" and "tone of voice" in ASL?



Focus of the Unit

The mechanics of sign production (Five Parameters), expressing internal states, and mastering the grammar of questions.

Standards

12.1.1.S1.C: Colors, likes, and dislikes
12.1.1.S1.D: Question structures
12.1.1.S2.B: Emotions and personal information

Learning Targets

I can identify and apply the Five Parameters of American Sign Language to recognize and produce signs accurately.

Learning Targets

I can use non-manual signals, including facial expressions and question markers, to communicate emotions and distinguish between yes/no and wh-questions.

Learning Targets

I can count from 21 to 30 using correct number patterns and palm orientation.

Learning Targets

I can communicate personal preferences by signing about colors, favorites, and likes or dislikes using appropriate ASL vocabulary and grammar.



Resources

eDynamic Learning ASL 1a Unit 3, Five Parameter graphic organizers, and color-coded question structure guides

