

American Sign Language (ASL) 1, 2, 3 & 4
Broomfield High School
2026-27

Course Description:

World Language courses are based on the five standards of Communication, Culture, Connections, Comparisons and Communities. American Sign Language (ASL) is a visual-spatial language rather than a spoken and written one. The Communication emphasis is on Interpersonal (communicating with others), Interpretive (watching and comprehending) and Presentational (presenting to others). Communication occurs within the context of Culture. As such, we follow Deaf cultural practices in the ASL classroom. As we do this, we make Connections & Comparisons. As we learn about the Deaf Community, we also become a learning Community.

Grading: Because ASL is a visual-spatial rather than a spoken & written language, **what you do during class** is what counts the most toward your grade. ASL class participation is twofold as it involves watching (receptive practice) as well as signing (expressive practice). **In the ASL classroom, expect to always be either signing or watching who's signing.**

Learning Practice: 10%
Interpersonal (Interacting in ASL): 30%
Interpretive (Understanding ASL): 30%
Presentational (Presenting in ASL): 30%

Contact info: Nina Endler, nina.endler@bvsd.org

If you email me, please remember to check for a reply. There have been many times when a student has come to class and told me that they emailed me when I had already replied to them.

Ms. Endler's Schedule:

1st period: Plan

2nd period: ASL 3 & 4

3rd period: ASL 2

4th period: Lunch and Plan - in the classroom or the World Language office, #643

5th period: ASL 1

6th period: ASL 1

7th period: ASL 2

Materials:

While we won't use it every day, a charged chromebook is the material you will need. This class uses Schoology, and the best way to get to Schoology is via my.bvsd.org. Note that because not

everything is in Schoology, your Schoology grade isn't the grade you're earning. The grade you're earning is in Infinite Campus (IC). That being said, I don't give grades - you earn them and I record what you earned in IC.

ASL 1 & 2 topics:

* Alphabet & Numbers * Classroom Objects * Clothing & Colors * Daily Activities * Days, Months, Dates, Time * Family * Food & Beverages * Greetings, Farewells & Personal Information * Places & Locations * Seasons & Weather * Body Parts, Health & Fitness * Daily Routines * Descriptions of People, Personalities & Nationalities * Dining Out * Directions * Leisure Time * School Schedule * Shopping * Sports * Travel & Transportation

ASL 3 & 4 topics:

* Arts & Entertainment * Careers * Current Events * Deaf Culture * Ecology * House & Home * Literature & Poetry * Media & Technology * Storytelling * General Surroundings * History * Narratives * Personalized Topics * Settings * Short Stories * Technology * Plus Expansion of ASL 1 & 2 topics

ASL class expectations:

- 1) Watch with the intent to understand. (Heads up, eye contact, engagement)
- 2) Sign with the intent to be understood.
- 3) In whole-class situations, one person signs and everyone else watches. (I know this is challenging with large classes. I will aim to mirror the person who's signing so everyone can see what the question or statement was.)
- 4) Participate! Be engaged in class. Show interest in what's being signed.
- 5) Show when you don't understand. Make a confused facial expression, sign CONFUSED or DON'T-UNDERSTAND, etc.
- 6) Be brave and kind.
- 7) Make sure everyone can see. Make sure you can see. Make sure I can see you.
- 8) Getting the attention of the class is a shared responsibility. Help us out! Wave, tap shoulders, etc.
- 9) Do your 50%. (Do your half.)

Things to know about ASL:

- 1) Just like with other languages, there isn't a word-to-sign translation between English and ASL. (If you ask me for a sign, I'll ask you for a sentence.)
- 2) ASL uses your hands, face, body and space.

- 3) Pointing is polite (and necessary) in ASL.
- 4) What's on your face changes the meaning of what's on your hands. For example, what's on your face indicates whether you're signing a statement or a question.
- 5) ASL doesn't have little English words such as *is*, *to*, *are*. In addition, *and* is shown by body language (shoulder-shifting) or by listing.
- 6) Signing and speaking simultaneously is NOT ASL. (It's simultaneous communication, or sim-com for short.)
- 7) Just like with English words, ASL signs have multiple meanings that depend on context. This brings us back to #1 - if you ask me for a sign, I'll ask you for a sentence.
- 8) ASL <3 abbreviations. ASL is an efficient language. For example, instead of spelling out "Front Range Community College," simply use the initials FRCC.

Visual and Visible:

American Sign Language (ASL) is a visual language and as such, has differences (as well as similarities) with your other classes.

The first and most important difference is that communication in the ASL classroom is through our eyes. What this means is that everything that's communicated in the ASL classroom needs to be visually accessible. Examples of visually accessible forms of communication are: **gesturing, pointing, demonstrating, acting it out, typing, writing... and ASL as we learn it.**

Engaging in auditory (through the ears) communication such as whispering to your neighbor and talking aloud isn't visually accessible and needs to be avoided in the ASL classroom. Along with not being visually accessible, it's also culturally rude. This is important because learning a language isn't just about learning the language per se, it's also about learning new cultural practices and following them.

How to start ASL class - do this everyday:

- (1) Turn off your voice and whispers when you enter the room. If you wish to chat aloud with a classmate before the bell rings to start class, do this in the hall.
- (2) Put your phone in your backpack and leave it there.
- (3) Engage with your classmates visually - you've already turned off your voice. Sign to your classmates - see what's on the projector for prompts / ideas of what to sign. Apply what we're learning by using it in signed conversation.

Avoiding distractions:

The ASL classroom doesn't have desks so that we can use all of our signing space which includes our torso. This leads to other considerations:

Be aware of blocking others' line of sight when you stand up, or when you do something such as going to get a tissue. **It's okay to walk quickly through the chairs**, as long as you don't stand up and then linger in front of a classmate or classmates. Standing up and then lingering in front of classmates (or in front of me) breaks the line of sight.

Near the end of the period, as needed, I will ask for help with setting up the chairs for the next class. Depending on what period you're in, this will either involve stacking or unstacking chairs. Thank you for your help with this, it's much appreciated.

Questions or concerns you might have: (Let me know if you have others by writing them on a whiteboard.)

"I can see you. Why do I have to move?"

Sometimes I ask students to move when I can't see them. When I ask this, sometimes students will say that they can see me as if that's all that needs to happen. However, with ASL both of us need to be able to see each other. This can be challenging in a classroom. If I ask you to move, it means that I can't see you - and I need to see you just like you need to see me.

I also ask people to move when they're whispering with their neighbor(s). If you want to stay where you are, avoid whispering with your neighbor(s).

"I already signed it when you weren't looking. Why do I have to sign it again?"

Just like learning a sport or a musical instrument, ASL takes plenty of practice. As you know from your other pursuits, practice involves repetition. When you sign something again, you're helping yourself - and your classmates and I - learn. Think of being asked to sign something again as a learning opportunity. You may have heard "practice makes perfect." Not too long ago I read a new version of this - "practice makes permanent." By signing it again, you have an opportunity to make it permanent.

Last but not least:

- Be on time. If you're late, it's a Deaf cultural practice to explain why you're late.

- Bathroom trips - 5 minutes tops and not during the first 15 or so minutes. Avoid making it a habit to always go during your ASL class - spread it throughout the day. As most of the work for ASL happens during class, leaving the room does impact your learning - and your grade. If you're out for more than 5 min. = partial absence unless there's an extenuating circumstance. If you're sick, let me know. Use the closest bathrooms.
- Honesty is the best policy. If you tell me something that isn't true, I will have a hard time believing what you tell me from then on. Avoid this by being honest. Deaf people value honesty and forthrightness.

COURSE STANDARDS (From Colorado Department of Education)

ASL 1

At the end of this year, students will:

- Communicate, comprehend, and present about very familiar topics using isolated words and high frequency phrases.
- Identify common practices and products within ASL and the Deaf Community.
- Locate and use basic information from ASL resources.
- Identify similarities and differences of the most basic vocabulary through comparisons of English and ASL.
- Identify and recognize the nature of culture through comparisons of the American Deaf and American Hearing cultures.

ASL 2

At the end of this year, students will:

- Participate in and comprehend exchanges on a variety of familiar topics using familiar vocabulary and learned grammatical structures.
- Present on a variety of familiar topics using both high frequency vocabulary, new vocabulary, and learned grammatical structures.
- Examine common practices and perspectives within the Deaf community.

- Examine familiar products of the Deaf community.
- Relate information acquired from authentic ASL resources to individual perspectives and experiences.
- Describe similarities and differences between structural patterns of ASL and English.
- Describe the nature of culture through comparisons of the American Deaf and American Hearing cultures.

ASL 3 & 4

At the end of this year, students will:

- Initiate, sustain, and conclude conversations in a variety of situations based on familiar and unfamiliar vocabulary and learned grammatical structures.
- Comprehend ASL in a variety of situations based on familiar and unfamiliar vocabulary and learned grammatical structures.
- Present in a variety of situations based on familiar and unfamiliar vocabulary and learned grammatical structures.
- Analyze how the perspectives of people who speak ASL are reflected in their practices.
- Analyze how products reflect practices and perspectives of the Deaf community.
- Analyze information gathered from ASL and the Deaf community resources connected to other content areas.
- Evaluate information and viewpoints present in authentic ASL resources.
- Analyze the significance of the similarities and differences between ASL and English.
- Analyze the significance of the similarities and differences between the American Deaf and American Hearing cultures.