



## DC Public Library

Center for Accessibility, 901 G Street, NW, Room 205D, Washington, DC 20001  
Voice: (202) 727-2142; Videophone: (202) 559-5368; Email:  
DCPLaccess@dc.gov

### INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

Before joining this class, you must have completed the Beginning Level or equivalent and have a sign language vocabulary of about 100 words, as well as a basic understanding of ASL grammar. In the Intermediate Level class, you will learn more advanced rules of ASL grammar and practice having conversations with each other and with your instructor without using voice. The games and activities below are suggestions to help you learn ASL grammar and conversational skills. Your instructor may suggest other games and activities as needed. You will also learn new vocabulary as you go along but the main focus of this class is on using what you have learned previously in developing conversational skills.

### LESSON ONE – Setting the Stage

AN EXERCISE: Visualize the room you are in right now. Sign “room.” If it is a big room, make that a really large sign. If it is a small room, show how small. Go ahead and dramatize the size of the room.

- Where are you in this imaginary room? Point to yourself and then to that spot in your imaginary stage. Where are the other people and objects? Your instructor can help you create that spatial room in signs.

ANOTHER EXERCISE: Move around that room. After creating your spatial room, point to where you are standing. Hold one finger up to represent YOU. While holding your finger straight up, move your hand forward, backward, sideways, move in a running or jumping movement. Hold up one finger of the other hand, and have the two hands meet, hug (sign for “friend”), fight, make up, etc. Both hands go together to a table or chair on your imaginary stage. Be creative as to what you are showing.

Try some more exercises like this. Invent your own stories. Your upright finger can also represent other people in the class. Use more than one finger on each hand – show more than one person.

Use the vocabulary you learned in the Beginning Level class to have conversations with your classmates and instructor. Without voicing, share something about a recent or upcoming vacation, how you spent the past holiday,



## DC Public Library

something funny that happened at work, a favorite hobby, etc. You decide the topic and make up a story. If you don't know a sign you may fingerspell.

### LESSON TWO – Description and Direction

(SOURCE: Tom Humphries, A Basic Course in American Sign Language. T.J Publishers, Silver Spring, Maryland, 1980).

Some verbs change their direction and intensity to indicate “who” and “what” and how urgent the verb's action is.

Show	Send	Look-at	Come
Help	Tell	Pay	Go
Ask	Give	Buy	

Take turns asking others in your class:

- Will you show me your car?
- Why don't I show you my car? It's brand new!
- How many times will you keep asking that question?
- If I keep asking, will I find out?
- Did you send me the money yet?
- Can you send everyone in the class some e-mail?
- Why don't you tell everyone your secret recipe?
- Tell me why you want to learn to sign.
- Did you give him/her (just point to someone in the class) a big package?
- What are you looking at? (in a nice friendly way)
- Will you please look at the clock and tell me how much time we have left?
- How much did you pay for that watch?

### LESSON THREE – Descriptive Words

Vocabulary

Many	None	Both	Full
Few	Nothing	More	Empty
All	Some	Most	Enough
Whole	Part	Almost	Satisfied

Practice. Look around the room and describe people and things you see in the room. Try to use the above words.

To get you started, answer these:



## DC Public Library

- Are there many or few chairs?
- Is this room full?
- Are most of the participants here?
- Is the session almost over?

Now make up your own questions and answers.

Be creative and tell stories, jokes, and use this session to review what you have learned so far.

### LESSON FOUR – Verbs and Directionality

#### Vocabulary

Pay	Answer	Choose	Introduce
Buy	Influence	Lend	Invite
Sell	Advice	Borrow	Join
Tell	Advise	Listen (hear)	Send
Inform	Copy	Carry (bring)	

Practice. Use the following to stimulate conversation with others. Make up your own practice sentences, too.

- Will you pay me today? How much shall I pay you?
- Can you send me a copy of your paper? Can I copy that paper for you?
- Did I tell you a funny story? Shall I tell the whole class a funny story?
- Will you help me carry this box? Please bring me some water.
- Will you loan me some money? I will loan you some money.
- Will you ask everyone a question?
- Will you drive me home? Introduce me to your friend.
- Did you invite someone for dinner? Can everyone join us?

### LESSON FIVE – More Directional Signs

#### Vocabulary

To(preposition)	On	Here	Near
Toward	Above	There	Surrounding
From	Below	Far	Center



## DC Public Library

Through  
Across  
Away

In front of  
Beyond  
Between

Forward  
Backward  
North

East  
South  
West

Practice. Look around this room and describe the locations of various objects. Here are some questions to get you started.

- What is on top or beneath the tables or chairs?
- Are the tables and chairs in the center of the room?
- Are the tables and chairs far from the door?
- Describe how close your house is to the library. What path do you take to get to the library?
- How do you get to work? (school / the store / a friend's house , etc.)

## LESSON SIX – Past, Present, and Future Tenses

Think of yourself as standing in the center of an infinite, spatial timeline. You are standing in the present tense, facing future tense, and behind you is past tense. Use your hands, facial expression, and eyes to show how far in the future or past you are talking about.

*Try signing the following and/or make up your own:*

- Will you be analyzing that data soon?
- How many organizations do you belong to now?
- He currently works for the government.
- We made a deposit at the bank yesterday.
- Soon, she will discover the solution to the problem.
- This school was established some time ago.
- Sometime in the near future, we need to think about buying some new equipment.
- The restaurant was inspected recently.
- If you need to cancel, notify us well in advance.
- Right now, we are participating in a lively class.
- Do you want to postpone your trip until later?
- Our company just made a profit of \$100,000.
- Will the new schedule be posted soon?
- A couple of days ago, I attended a workshop on ASL.



## DC Public Library

MAKE UP SOME SENTENCES OF YOUR OWN. Have a conversation with the instructor and other participants using the skills and vocabulary you have learned these past few lessons.

### LESSON SEVEN – Sign Language Idioms

#### Idiomatic Expressions in Sign Language

The following words can be signed a variety of ways to show different meanings. Vary the movement and intensity of the following signs just as you would your speaking voice to show different shades of meaning.

Sign the following. What meanings do you get?

Use the sign “**finish**” to

- Show “completion”: I finished my work.
- Show “stop that!”: Stop fooling around!
- Show present perfect tense: I have visited New York.

Use the sign “**feel**” to

- Show “touch”: Feel this soft sweater.
- Show “emotion”: I don’t feel like going.
- Show “strong positive feeling”: I feel we will have a ten-foot snowfall tonight.

Use the sign “**zero**” to

- Show “the number less than one”: Six minus six equals zero.
- Show “nothing” or “none”: I have no more milk in the house.
- Show “not”: It is not funny. (sign “funny-zero”)

### LESSON SEVEN – Sign Language Idioms - continued

Use the sign “**for-for**” to ask “why?”:

- a. I have to go now
- b. “for-for”? (What for?)
- a. I need to throw this coat away.



## DC Public Library

- b. “for for”? (What for?) It’s still good
- a. I want to buy 500 pairs of shoes.
- b. “for for”? (What for?) That’s such a silly idea!!

“Do (or don’t) care” and “do (or don’t) mind” can be signed with the same hand motion. Touch the side of the nose with the tip of the index finger (all five fingers for stronger meaning), and flick finger(s) forward. Use facial expression and hand speed to show the intended emotion and meaning behind the sign.

Try these:

- a. Would you mind helping me open this box?
- b. No, I don’t mind helping you at all.
- c. I don’t care where we go. You decide.
- d. I really don’t care what you do! Just leave me alone!

The sign “do-do” is made upside-down. Fingerspell the word “do” twice, rapidly, and keep your palms facing up. It is one of the most flexible sign idioms and can mean almost anything related to the verb “do.” It doesn’t have a clear meaning by itself, but is best used in conjunction with other signs.

For example, “do-do” by itself can mean (depending on context):  
What are you doing? What shall I do? What shall we do? What can we do? What did we do? etc. etc.

Practice using the sign phrase “**do-do eat**” in:

- a. Do you want to eat?
- b. What do you want to eat?
- c. What do you want to do about eating?
- d. What are you going to eat?
- e. What shall I eat?

Practice using the sign phrase “**do-do now**” in:

- a. What are you doing now?
- b. We just finished our homework. What shall we do now?
- c. Our car has a flat tire. What do we do now?



## DC Public Library

Now try using “**do-do**” in the following:

- a. What are you doing tomorrow night?
- b. When you catch a bad cold, what do you do?
- c. What will you do tonight when class is finished?
- d. What did you do during the big snowstorm of 1996?

The “wow” sign can be made by placing the sign for “dizzy” lower from where it is usually made at the forehead to just in front of the eyes. Vary the size and intensity of “wow” to reflect the emotion behind it.

Try these:

- a. Wow! I passed my test!
- b. Wow! I had no idea that hot pepper was so hot!
- c. Wow! You must be nuts to stay awake 24 straight hours!
- d. Wow! My favorite football team won the Superbowl!

More Practice

Use the sign idioms “finish,” “feel,” “zero,” “for,” “don’t care / don’t mind,” “do,” and “wow” in sentences of your own.

### **LESSON EIGHT – Review / Game Suggestions**

(Thanks to Mary Anne Royster’s Games and Activities for Sign Language Classes, published by the National Association of the Deaf. Silver Spring, Maryland. No date. Out of print).

#### **QUESTION/ANSWER GAME**

1. You will need: Chairs, slips of paper with a question on each, slips of paper with an answer on each.
2. Class is divided into two groups. The two groups are in rows facing each other. Give each person in one row (the same row) a question written on a slip of paper on which you have written an answer to one of the questions.
3. The first person in the row signs a question. The person across from him/her signs the answer. The answers can be correct ones or incorrect. It is more fun if the answer is unrelated to the question.
4. The questions and answers can be mixed up and re-distributed, or you can use a new set of questions and answers.
5. No voice during this game.



## DC Public Library

### FORMATIONS GAME

1. This game will provide a means of reviewing vocabulary.
2. The participants sit or stand in a circle so that everyone can see each other. Someone is designated as the leader. He/She decides on a hand formation that will be used – e.g. the open palm. He/She begins by giving the sign for “hello.” The next player must also give a sign using the open palm – e.g. “know,” “don’t know,” “my,” “happy,” “your,” etc. When someone is unable to think of a new sign, he/she is out of the game. The person next to him/her chooses a new hand formation and play continues the same way.
3. Remember, no voicing.