

Signed Languages Badge Requirements

By Heather Rompel

Daisy & Brownie

Just like with spoken languages, there is no “universal” sign language. Different countries have their own versions of sign language, which is unique to their region and culture.

For example, American Sign Language (ASL) is different from Australia’s Auslan sign language, which is different from the British Sign Language (BSL) used in the United Kingdom. Today, there are more than 300 different sign languages in the world, spoken by more than 72 million deaf or hard-of-hearing people worldwide.

In the United States, American Sign Language (ASL) has become the dominant sign language among the deaf and hard-of-hearing communities. It is the 3rd most widely used language in the United States, after English and Spanish. Black American Sign Language, or BASL, is a dialect of ASL that formed during the segregation of schools when white deaf children were mostly taught to try and speak and read lips and black children were taught to sign.

Step 1: Read or have a leader read to you the introduction to signed languages at the beginning of these requirements. Did you know that there were different signed languages? Watch a video of how to sign “I love you” in 60 different signed languages at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4UwLUnvcK8w>

Step 2: Did you know there is a difference between deaf and Deaf?

According to Carol Padden and Tom Humphries, in *Deaf in America: Voices from a Culture* (1988):

We use the lowercase deaf when referring to the audiological condition of not hearing, and the uppercase Deaf when referring to a particular group of deaf

people who share a language – American Sign Language (ASL) – and a culture. The members of this group have inherited their sign language, use it as a primary means of communication among themselves, and hold a set of beliefs about themselves and their connection to the larger society. We distinguish them from, for example, those who find themselves losing their hearing because of illness, trauma or age; although these people share the condition of not hearing, they do not have access to the knowledge, beliefs, and practices that make up the culture of Deaf people.

Deaf and dumb and deaf-mute are offensive, or mean, terms that people used to say to describe the deaf. They are mean to say because it assumes that the person who is deaf cannot communicate. In 1991, the World Federation of the Deaf voted to use the official terms “deaf” for people who are unable to hear and “hard of hearing” for people who can hear some, but not all, sounds. “hearing impaired” was once considered polite but isn’t anymore because it implies that people that can’t hear have a disability. The Deaf do not consider being deaf a disability.

Step 3: There are certain jokes, called puns, that use the different meanings or sounds of words. There are jokes in signed languages that are puns too.

The sign for “I love you” held up with your palm facing outward can be turned into the sign for “airplane” by making the sign “I love you” put putting your palm to the ground. Learn this joke and share it with a friend or family member.

What did the airplane say to the ground? I love you!



Step 4: Try to learn to sign the US Pledge of Allegiance in ASL by watching the video and following along: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fw1p3bpXExY>

Junior

Complete Daisy / Brownie steps AND

Step 1: How hand signs are made and placed in the space around the face and body makes a big difference in the meaning of signs – so do facial expressions. Watch this video for more in depth information about the history of ASL and how it works as a language.

Introduction to the language of ASL

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A-zWWYKCMAc>

Step 2: Black American Sign Language, or BASL is a separate dialect of ASL. Watch this video on How to sign in BASL:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3HDm3kx3rhY>

What are 3 signs that are different in ASL and BASL?

Cadette / Senior / Ambassador

Complete Daisy / Brownie/Junior steps AND

Step 1: Dive a little deeper into the language of ASL by learning how to yell without using your voice! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zFUf5Co2GAM>

Step 2: Gallaudet University is the only college in the United States that was created for the deaf. Explore Gallaudet's website. <https://gallaudet.edu/>

Look at the histories and traditions, clubs, and sports sections. Gallaudet fields the only deaf-led sports teams in the country. What are some things you notice about

Gallaudet that are different than at schools that primarily serve the hearing? What are some things that are the same?

Step 3: Many people who are deaf can hear some tones of music or feel the vibrations. Interpreters at concerts have gotten a lot of press for their expressive interpretations of music.

Read this article about ASL concert interpreters:

<https://www.aboutamazon.com/news/entertainment/amazon-music-live-concert-sign-language-interpreters>

Rihanna performed at the 2023 halftime show. Her ASL interpreter wasn't shown on national TV but put on an amazing performance. Read an article and watch her performance here:

<https://en.as.com/entertainment/rihannas-sign-language-interpreter-for-super-bowl-show-goes-viral-n/>

How does her signing add to the experience of the music?

References

<https://www.littlepassports.com/blog/world-community/the-many-languages-of-sign-language/#>

<https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/sign-language/>

<https://www.nad.org/resources/american-sign-language/community-and-culture-frequently-asked-questions/>