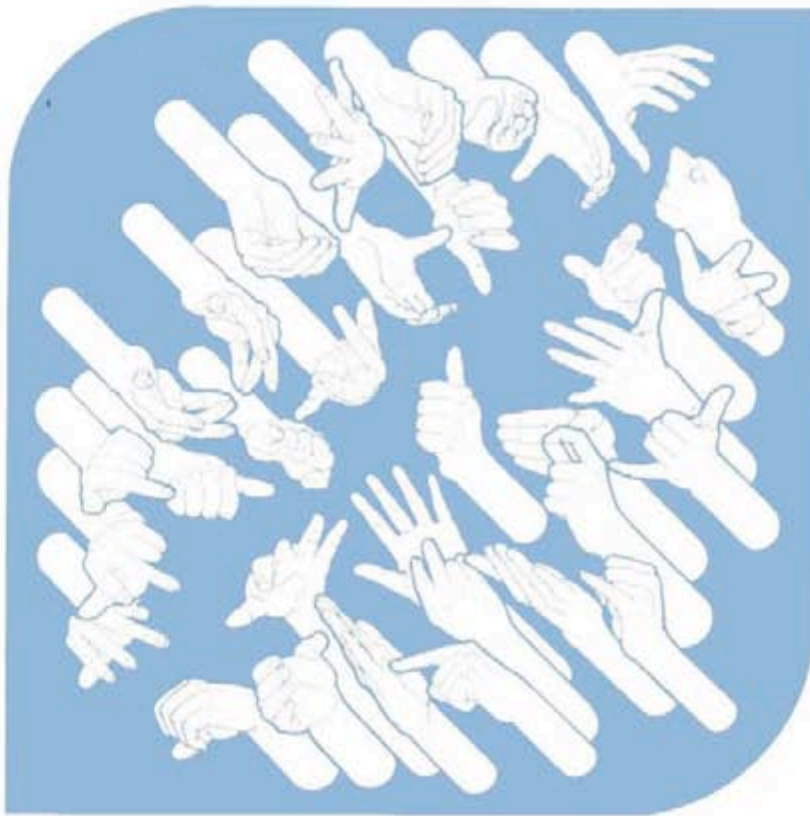


INTERMEDIATE
**Conversational
Sign Language**



WILLARD J. MADSEN

illustrated by **LOIS A. LEHMAN**

Intermediate Conversational Sign Language

American Sign Language
with English Translations

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Lois A. Lehman

Clerc Books
Gallaudet University Press
Washington, D.C.

COVER: Conversation In Sign Language is basically dependent upon a number of handshapes which communicate symbol after symbol. Handshapes are a primordial key to this vibrant, visual form of language. Equally important are the variable lines of movement which may indicate size or shape and direction or location. The cover illustration of this book is analogous to the historical enlightenment of deaf people through meaningful communication. This analogy is abstracted from the arms and hands reaching out to convey a message to one another which is not readily discernible. There is further abstraction in the eye-like shape of the background which would symbolize the importance of the visual aspects. Perhaps, to the student of Sign Language who has come this far, that is what it is all about—arms and hands reaching out, begging to be seen or “heard,” hands constantly changing shape, and each shape, each change, becoming significant in the message intended, although not all of it is quite easily grasped as yet. Then, too, there is the concrete in the specific handshapes, combinations of which do, in fact, say something to one who knows and understands handshapes, positions and movements.

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Dedicated to Sign Language teachers
everywhere

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Foreword

In 1960, when Dr. William C. Stokoe's *Sign Language Structure: An Outline of the Visual Communication System of the American Deaf* was published, people in the embryonic Sign Language field were just starting to seriously and systematically analyze what makes Sign Language tick. In recent years, Sign Language teaching has begun to emphasize utilization of second language teaching methodology, techniques, and technology as well as newly gleaned linguistic discoveries that pertain to Sign Language. But there is sometimes a problem of translating this information into manageable instruction in the classroom.

Many Sign Language books are written in a more-or-less traditional format. They primarily present lists of English words and lists of signs. This traditional format has its place and value. But there is more to the teaching and learning of Sign Language than vocabulary, and many of these texts are not broad enough.

Intermediate Conversational Sign Language: American Sign Language with English Translations by Willard J. Madsen is indeed a welcome addition to the field of Sign Language teaching. This new book allows students to systematically analyze the mysteries of Sign production and grammar and learn signs in manageable chunks. For teachers, it presents an approach to systematic instruction that can be adapted for use on several Sign Language training levels.

The book should also be useful to Sign Language students and teachers interested in exploring new methods of learning and teaching the language of Sign.

Besides illustrating individual signs and signed sentences quite clearly, the author uses a unique system for writing signs with words and symbols. It takes into consideration a number of major elements of the linguistic terminology pertaining to Sign Language and presents the essential information about sign production and grammar in a straightforward, not-too-technical manner.

The technical terms that are introduced in the book are both useful and well-explained. The terms are necessary if teachers and students alike are to share a clear, concise, objective way of discussing language. Teachers and students will also find that the terms and definitions in this book will help them understand the ever-increasing number of linguistically oriented books and articles relevant to Sign Language.

The illustrator, Lois Lehman, has also made her mark in her attention to details of Sign production: shift in body posture for a clearer view of the sign being formed instead of the traditional frontal illustrations; additional

circled or boxed illustrations showing the sequences of movements instead of relying entirely on directional arrows. The artist also purposely attended to detailed expressions on the face with sharp attention being given to the forehead, eyebrows, eyes, nose, lips, and mouth. This, in itself, is no easy task for any artist rendering Sign Language into illustrations.

Examples of how signs are used in sentences are worked out as completely as possible to show the intermediate signer each step of the sign formation. The author has made it easy for the reader to follow, in some detail, novel concepts and signing procedures.

Readers will find this book well-organized and well-written, useful either as a resource handbook or as a text in courses in Sign Language.

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Preface

This book is a product of the phenomenal growth in texts dealing with American Sign Language (ASL) in the 1980s. Earlier sign communication books were often little more than collections of selected sign vocabulary, or dictionaries, with little or no explanation about the grammar or use of ASL as a language. These books were usually arranged in topical units, or even by handshape, and the signs were presented in alphabetical order within each unit. More recent sign language texts are a far cry from these earlier books.

In 1972, my book, *Conversational Sign Language II: An Intermediate-Advanced Manual*, marked the first attempt to develop a text that would help students gain some understanding of colloquial American Sign Language and idiomatic expressions used by the Deaf community. This work included very few illustrations. Rather, it relied on synonyms and detailed explanations of how to produce specific signs and expressions. Some of these could not be explained with English equivalents. This book also contained the first attempt to translate common English idioms into ASL. Though the book was well received, many teachers and students have complained that it does not have enough illustrations.

An initial attempt at revising this earlier work to include illustrations soon led to the obvious need for a new work which would be more in keeping with current research into American Sign Language or ASL. Hence, *Intermediate Conversational Sign Language: American Sign Language with English Translations*, a fully illustrated text, came into being. The format of this text has been modeled somewhat after current foreign language textbooks. Sentence patterns, illustrated in the target language, are glossed to show syntactical relationships and some of the grammatical features. Grammatical notes help to clarify usage and English translations are also included for comparative purposes. Appropriate practice material further gives the student opportunities to achieve some competence in the target language along with an increased awareness of cultural implications. Linguistic information was purposely kept simple and limited so as not to overburden the student. The introduction and explanation of such information is left to the discretion of the teacher.

Perhaps the biggest problem encountered in producing this text has been the development of a glossing system and the selection of glosses to represent specific signs. Because this work is so new within the field, there are bound to be differences in the way the glossing is carried out in this text as compared to the way it is carried out in other new texts in American Sign Language. It will be some time before complete uniformity occurs. We will welcome suggestions from researchers, from teachers, and from students on how improvements and revisions might be handled in future editions of this work.

We are confident, however, that for the time being users of this book will find many practical applications for the material included herein.

Acknowledgments

The author wishes to thank the following people for their advice, assistance, and encouragement in the production of this book:

- Lois Lehman, the artist, for her creative suggestions and hard work in providing the illustrations and layout of the original art work.
- Kitty Dillman and Bob Seremeth for their help in critically reviewing the illustrations and written text and for making numerous suggestions for improving the overall content.
- Dr. Robbin Battison for helping me develop the transcription system and write the grammatical notes.
- Paul Menkis for his suggestions and encouragement from the start of the project.
- Larry Baker, Gallaudet student, for assisting me and the artist during the formative stages of production.
- Dennis Cokely and Charlotte Baker for their interest, suggestions, and encouragement, especially in the early stages of developing the book.
- Gallaudet officials, particularly Dr. John S. Schuchman, Dr. Doin Hicks, and Dr. Thomas A. Mayes, for their support of the project.
- The Gallaudet University Press for its assistance in making possible the publication of this book, and Dr. Elaine Costello, Director of the Press, for her timely and helpful suggestions.
- Jan-Lee Music, Beverly Hills, California, for permission to use the words of the song "Let There Be Peace on Earth . . ." by Sy Miller and Jill Jackson.
- The many other individuals and friends who offered suggestions or expressed interest in the work.
- And, finally, members of my family for helping to see me through.

Intermediate Conversational Sign Language

American Sign Language
with English Translations

Introduction

Intermediate Conversational Sign Language: American Sign Language with English Translations is an illustrated text primarily designed to assist students in developing some proficiency in the use of conversational ASL. It is arranged by topics based on everyday occurrences. The topics cover food shopping, eating, clothing, medical situations, home care (inside and outside), death, babysitting, driving, travel, sightseeing, engagements, elections, Christmas planning, school reunions, and poetry and song. All but one of the characters depicted in this book are representative of deaf persons in a typical Deaf community.

The section, How to Use This Book, gives an explanation of the format of the book. It contains a detailed explanation of how the signs are written in the book with selected English **glosses** (words) and special symbols. The section includes a Key to Gloss Symbols which categorizes the various types of glosses used throughout the text. This key gives examples of how the glosses are used and translated.

The key is followed by an explanation of the various types of arrows and other marking symbols found in the illustrations, which helps provide information on how to produce the signs. This is an important introduction to understanding sign formation, movement, directionality, degree of emphasis, repetitions, and complex executions such as those found in alternate hand movements or in signs which combine with other signs in some special way.

Then follows an introduction to the seven deaf characters in the book and to the additional characters which are depicted in specific lessons: Lesson 15 deals with babysitting a grandson; Lesson 16 introduces a state police officer, the son of deaf parents, who appears briefly on the scene; and Lesson 19 brings in a deaf couple who are visiting from another part of the country.

Finally, students are presented with suggestions for solving translation problems and for understanding variations of certain sign vocabulary which they will come across as they progress through this book.

Another section gives a summary review of fingerspelling principles and practices to help the intermediate student improve this necessary skill. Fingerspelling is used only when necessary in this text, but it is an essential skill needed by the student of American Sign Language as he or she advances towards fluency in communicating with deaf persons. Fingerspelling practice is referred to only in the suggested activities at the end of each lesson.

Following the fingerspelling review, there is also a review of numbers and counting which is illustrated along with helpful hints to the student for improving skills in understanding and using numbers in Sign communication. This review is a prelude to Lesson 1, which focuses on the subject of numbers and counting. The majority of sentences in this lesson are unrelated; however, dialogue is used in Lessons 2 through 24; and Lesson 25 deals with the problems of translating songs or poems originally written in English.

Each lesson contains a glossed introductory paragraph, with only the title illustrated, followed by an illustrated dialogue. Opposite each page of illustrated ASL dialogue are glossed sentences with English translations and grammatical notes that explain the significance of specific signs from a linguistic point of view. Sometimes, a given thought can be expressed in a number of ways, but such variations are left to the discretion of the teacher since no text can cover every possible way in which a specific thought might be expressed in a given language. A vocabulary review of glossed sign words and phrases follows the dialogue in each lesson and translation exercises are provided both for ASL>English and English>ASL practice. In addition, substitution drills and a list of suggested activities are provided for most lessons.

The purpose of the glossed introductory paragraph to each lesson is to provide the teacher with material for comprehension practice before the dialogues are studied. Students may not understand everything in the paragraph when it is first signed, but repeated exposure to this type of activity will enhance their comprehension skills over time. The dialogue sentences, the translation exercises, and the substitution drills should enable students to practice thinking in the target language, gradually developing proficiency in both comprehension and expression of ASL. The vocabulary review can serve as a checklist for the students to quickly find out their understanding and retention of the signs used in the lesson. And, finally, the suggested activities may be randomly used to provide real-life experience and practice in acquiring proficiency at the intermediate level.

At the end of the text are vocabularies of the glosses representing ASL signs and their English translations or equivalents to serve as a reference.

Whatever the purpose in using this book, it is hoped that students will come away with a clearer understanding of ASL and the community of deaf people who use it, and that they will want to continue studying the language and the culture surrounding it.

How to Use This Book

How the Signs Are Written in This Book

It is very difficult to write signs in a Sign Language book so that the reader knows exactly what the sign is and how it is made. A combination of pictures, words, and other symbols to represent signs on paper were chosen for this book. Since pictures take a lot of space and can sometimes be misleading, the words and symbols are also necessary.

Signs are written here with *glosses* and other printed symbols. A *gloss* is an English word that represents the sign by naming it. The same gloss is always used to represent the same sign, and the gloss is written in capital letters, for example, TRUE.

Usually, the English word chosen for the gloss of a sign is also one of the most frequent translations of that sign. For example, the sign TRUE can sometimes mean “true,” or sometimes it can mean “real” or “sure.” It may also have other translations, but the single word chosen to represent this sign is TRUE.

To keep this system simple, an effort was made to gloss each sign with a single English word, but this was not always possible. Sometimes there is no single English word that is adequate to name the sign and distinguish it from other signs that are similar in meaning or form. In these cases, several capitalized words, separated by hyphens, were used. For example, the sign TIME-PERIOD is different from the sign TIME. But the sign TIME-PERIOD is still just a single sign because there is no part of it that means just “time” and no part of it that means just “period.” Another example of this is the sign NEW-YORK, which is also just a single sign; no part means just “new” and no part means just “York.”

Other signs are glossed with more than one English word because they are *complex* signs, with many meaningful parts; each part has to be named. In these cases, other symbols are usually added to the basic gloss to show how it is made. These complex signs are generally a basic sign plus some modifications that change the meaning of the sign, or change how it can be used in a sentence. For example, the sign don't=KNOW is not a combination of the sign DON'T and the sign KNOW; rather, it is the sign KNOW made with an additional twisting movement that changes the meaning of the verb to a negative. Likewise, the sign we=TWO is the basic sign TWO, made with a directional movement that clearly specifies that it is about “you” and “me,” or “we”; the sign WE is a separate sign that is not related. But both WE and we=TWO can be translated as “we”.





In some cases, simply repeating the sign with small, abrupt movements can change a verb into a noun. These signs are always marked with the word "noun." For example, KNOW = noun + means "knowledge" and FLY = noun + means "airplane." The + sign shows repetition; the word "noun" in the gloss shows the grammatical result. In a few cases, these glosses may seem a bit peculiar. For example, American Sign Language has a sign that means "store" and the sign could have been called STORE to make things easy for the students. But one of the goals of this book is to draw attention to the relationships among different signs; therefore, this sign was written as SELL = noun + , since it is really a repeated form of the verb sign SELL. The same relationship is true of EAT (which means "eat") and EAT = noun + (which means "food").

The following key explains the method of using glosses (English words) to represent ASL signs. The students should spend a few minutes becoming familiar with the symbols in this table and how they are used to represent signs. The teacher will demonstrate the signed sentences. After a few lessons, students will probably be quite skilled in reading Sign sentences and will only have to refer to this key occasionally.

After some sentences in the lessons, there are brief grammatical notes. These notes explain

1. complex transcription symbols when they are used for the first time;
 2. any large differences between the words of glosses and the words of translation;
 3. the relationships (and differences) between signs to help prevent confusion or to present a larger pattern of how signs are made;
 4. nuances of meanings to help in using the sign properly in conversation.
-

Key to Gloss Symbols

| Gloss | Translation | Explanation |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| FATHER | “father” | Single sign. |
| EAT | “eat” | Single sign. |
| TIME-PERIOD | “period of time” | A hyphen (-) between all-CAP words shows that two or more words represent a single sign and a single unit of meaning. |
| LET’S-SEE | “we will see,” “wait and see” | |
| KNOW + | “I know.” | The plus sign (+) by itself shows that the sign is repeated once. A double plus sign (+ +) shows the sign is repeated two or more times. In the illustrations, we also use these symbols. |
| KNOW + + | “I know about that.” | |
| KNOW = noun + | “knowledge” or “familiarity” | |
| <i>KNOW</i> | “know” | <i>Italic type</i> shows that the sign is made with the nondominant hand—that is, the hand that usually does not move much when making signs. For a right-handed signer, the right hand is dominant and the left hand is nondominant. |
| <i>TEACH</i> | “teach” | |
| BLUE  RED  GREEN | “blue and red and green” | |
| KNOW ₂ | “know” | The symbol ₂ indicates that the sign is made with both hands |
| KNOW _A | “know-it-all” | The symbol _A indicates that the sign is made first with one hand, then with the other. These “alternating” signs are almost always repeated. |
| MANY ₁  | “how much?” | The symbol ₁ means a sign normally made with two hands is made with only one hand; compare with the sign that means “how many?” in the section explaining directional markers. The symbol  —in this case—means the movement of the sign is directly upward. |
| “WHIFF” | “get a whiff of” | A nonstandard sign or mime-sign is shown in all-CAPS with quotation marks. |
| “PALM-SIZE” | “small” or “hand-sized” | |

| Gloss | Translation | Explanation | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| HELP = me | "help me" or "lend a hand" | <i>Complex signs</i> have more than one part, and each part has a meaning. Each part is labeled with a word, and the words are separated by equal signs (=). The principal part of each sign is capitalized, and the other parts that modify or change it in some way are printed in lower case letters, e.g., two = WEEK, which means "two weeks." | |
| near = PAST | "recent past" or "very recently" | | |
| she = GIVE = you | "she gave to you" or "she gives to you" | | |
| two = WEEK | "two weeks" | | |
| don't = KNOW | "don't know" | | |
| we = TWO | "we" or "the two of us" | | |
| KNOW = noun + | "knowledge" or "familiarity" | | |
| EAT = noun + | "food" | | |
| MOTHER \frown FATHER | "parents" | | A curve that joins the tops of two glosses (\frown) shows a <i>compound sign</i> made of two or more single signs in <i>sequence</i> ; the "pronunciation" and the meaning of these signed compounds are usually different from the two signs made separately. These will be explained in the grammatical notes. The first part of a compound sign usually has a very reduced movement. |
| MIND \frown FREEZE | "shocked" or "speechless" | | |
| COAT \frown PANTS | "suit" | | |
| KNOW | "I know!" | A sign printed in boldface type shows that its meaning is emphasized, usually by changing its movement. The exact changes will be explained in the grammatical notes. | |
| FINISH | "stop that!" "that's enough!" | | |
| | | These symbols indicate a movement <i>added</i> to the sign or overlaid on the sign's basic movement. | |
| MANY ₂ \wedge | "how many?" | <i>Upward</i> movement. | |
| JOT-LIST \vee | "make a list of" or "a list" | <i>Downward</i> movement. | |
| ASIDE $>$ | "move or put out of the way" | Movement to signer's <i>right</i> . | |
| ASIDE $<$ | "move or put out of the way" | Movement to signer's <i>left</i> . | |
| me = APPROACH = you \perp | "I went up to you" | <i>Forward</i> movement, away from signer. | |
| you = APPROACH = me \top | "you came up to me" | Movement <i>toward</i> signer. | |

| Gloss | Translation | Explanation |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| this = SAME = that > | "these two are alike" or "this is just like that" | These glosses are directional; that is, the first part begins in one location and moves to the other according to the symbol used. |
| here <= NEXT-TURN = there > | "after this, then that" or "then" | |
| S-C-R-A-M-B-L-E | "scramble" | Letters separated by hyphens indicate fingerspelled words and abbreviations. Each letter represents a different fingerspelling handshape. |
| V-E-G | "vegetable" | |
| B-B-Q | "barbecue" | |
| R-X | "prescription" | |
| #DO + | "what will (we) do?" | A gloss preceded by a crosshatch (#) shows a fingerspelled word that is MADE LIKE A SIGN and that usually has a special meaning. These will be explained in the grammatical notes. |
| #IF + + | "if" or "suppose" | |
| EAT + ROOM | "dining room" | The curve joining the bottoms of two words (∩) means a slight blend or contraction of two signs. They are made so that they influence each other, but they do not have a special meaning. A part of one sign may still be visible while the second sign is beginning. Blends are <i>not</i> compounds. This symbol is only added as an additional clue to "pronouncing" signs fluidly and fluently. |
| WIRE ∩ T-T-Y | "call via a teletype machine" | |
| NEW ∩ DIFFERENT | "changing" or "completely different" | |
| BLUE ∩ GREEN ∩ RED | "blue and green and red" | |

Explanation of Arrows and Symbols



SIGN is repeated once.



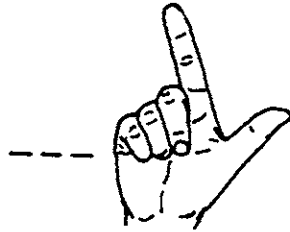
SIGN is repeated more than once.



Order of hand configuration changes or movements within complex SIGNS.



Internal punctuation marks to show the end of a thought in a sequence of sign drawings.

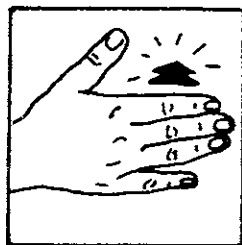


A MANUAL LETTER followed by a series of dashes represents a form to be completely fingerspelled. The exact word is spelled out in the GLOSSED SENTENCES.

(Note: If a fingerspelled form is boxed-in, it represents the complete form to be fingerspelled.)



A broken-line circle or oval represents the second part of a SIGN in which the handshape, position, and movement may differ from the first part of that SIGN.



A boxed-in SIGN is used primarily to conserve space or to meet spatial requirements or limitations within an illustrated line. These are used only for commonly known signs for which body position is already known.



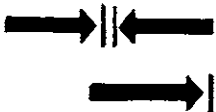
Repeated forward movement.



Back and forth or side to side movement.



Simultaneous parallel movement in opposite directions.



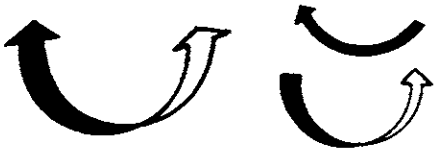
Sign movements stop abruptly short of actual contact.



Variable movement.



Downward zigzag movement.



Curved or arched movement.



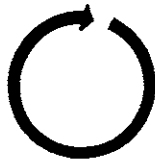
Repeated upward curved or arched movement.



Spiral movement.



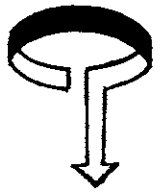
Alternating up and down semi-circular movement.



Circular movements.



Circular movement with straight downward drop to contact.



Fingers and thumb or open handshape closes in direction of arrow.



Movement that strikes some "object" and immediately bounces back.



Alternating wiggling movements of fingers.

Introduction to Characters

In this book, seven deaf characters have been created to represent some typical deaf people in a given community, in this case, the Washington, D.C., area. These characters are Benny, Gloria, Alexander, Jennifer, Lawrence, Jane, and Kee Kong. Any resemblance to actual people, either in name or in appearance in the illustrations, is purely coincidental.

Since this text is designed to help students of Sign Language, the characters portray deaf people and, thereby, something of the deaf culture that exists today. Deaf people do things much the same as do other groups in society, but some cultural differences do exist. They are found largely in language differences and in the fact that many deaf people are actually bilingual. Differences also exist in their general orientation to their surroundings, to the way they monitor their environment.

Here are the characters who appear again and again throughout the lessons.

Benny and Gloria Buetchel are exemplary of a successful, middle-aged, white, deaf couple, married 29 years with two grown children who are hearing. Like many such deaf people, Benny and Gloria are models for younger deaf people who see in them possibilities for successful lives also.

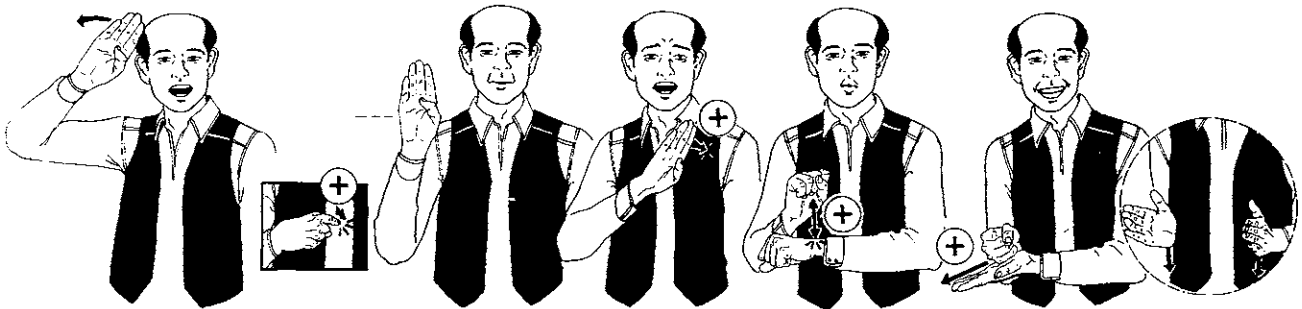
Alexander Armstrong is a young, single, black deaf man who is a successful mechanic. His girl friend, Jennifer Fowler, works as a keypunch operator. Alexander and Jennifer are good friends of Lawrence Larsen and Jane Bowman who are sweethearts and are engaged to be married. Jane lives next door to Alexander who often helps her when she has problems with her car. Jane works in a large insurance company office. Lawrence, her fiancé, is a draftsman who is also going to night school to improve his skills so he can obtain a better job.

Then there is Kee Kong, a young Oriental deaf woman in her early 20s. Kee is a commercial artist and shares an apartment with Jennifer. All these people are graduates of the Pine Ridge School for the Deaf (PRSD).

Because they live in the same community and share a common alma mater, they occasionally get together socially in either formal or informal settings. Each has a name sign from school days; however, like many deaf people their names are also sometimes fingerspelled for identification, and the student may wish to use fingerspelling from time to time for practice purposes.

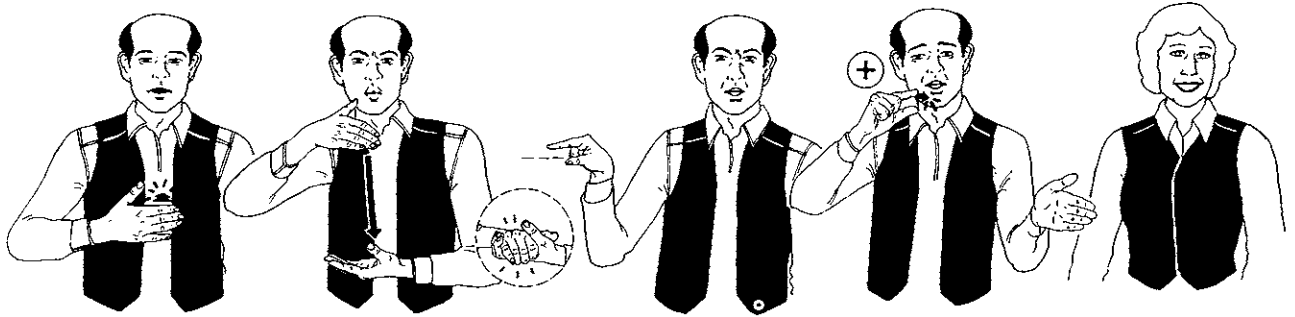
In addition to these people, this text also includes Jimmy, the Buetchel's grandson (Lesson 15); a state police officer, the son of deaf parents (Lesson 16); and Barbara and Tom, a deaf couple from San Francisco who visit Benny and Gloria (Lesson 19).

Students will learn more about these people—their lives, their hopes, their dreams, their families, and their friends—as they journey through this book. Now, meet individually the seven main characters.



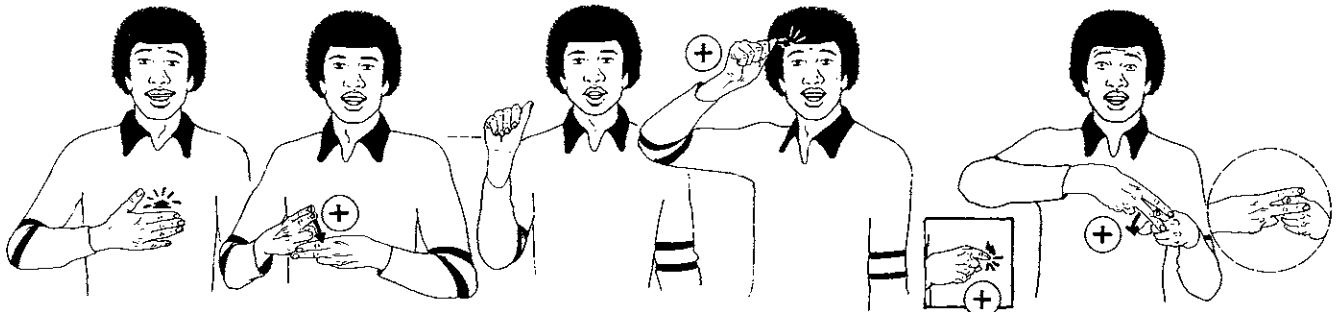
HI ! ME B-E-N-N-Y , BENNY ; WORK CARPENTER .

Hi, I'm Benny; I work as a carpenter.



MY WIFE G-L-O-R-I-A , GLORIA over=HERE .

And this is my wife, Gloria.



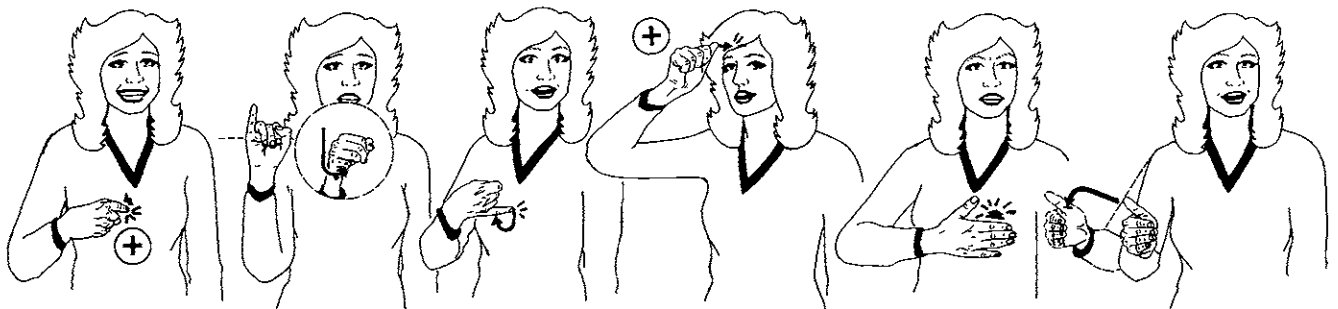
MY NAME+ A-L-E-X-A-N-D-E-R , ALEXANDER ; ME MECHANIC .

My name is Alexander; I'm a mechanic.



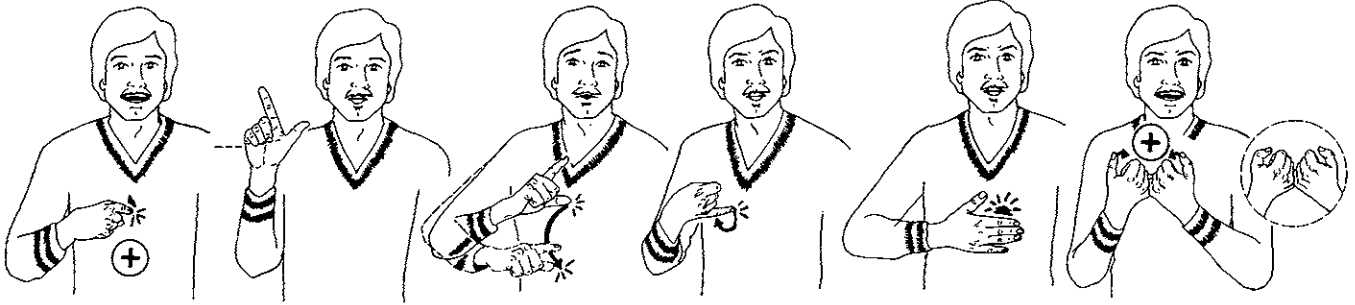
MY NAME+ J-E-N-N-I-F-E-R , JENNIFER ; ALEXANDER LIKE ME !

My name is Jennifer; I really like Alexander!



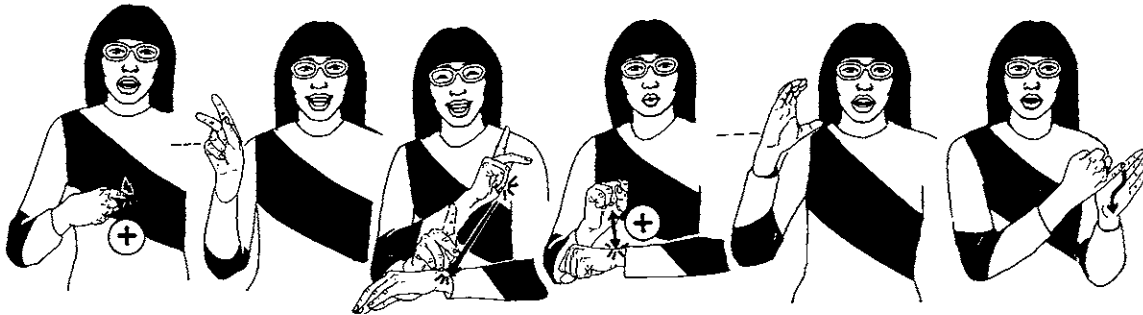
ME J-A-N-E , JANE ; ALEXANDER MY NEXT-DOOR .

I'm Jane, Alexander's neighbor.



ME L-A-W-R-E-N-C-E , LAWRENCE ; JANE MY SWEETHEART !

I'm Lawrence; Jane is my sweetheart!



ME K-E-E K-O-N-G , KEE-KONG ; WORK C-O-M-M-E-R-C-I-A-L ART+ .

I am Kee Kong; I work as a commercial artist.

Hints to the Student

If you have difficulty in translating an English sentence, try paraphrasing it or writing a different version of it which will retain the original meaning. Then try translating the new version of this sentence.

For example, you might come across a translation exercise with the sentence, "How much money did you spend on groceries last week?" You say to yourself, "But I don't know what the sign for *groceries* is. I can't translate the sentence."

In this case, paraphrase the sentence. For example, "How much money did you spend on *food* last week?" means the same thing, and you *do* know the sign for *groceries*.

It will be helpful for you to learn to think in terms of basic concepts because ASL is a visual-gestural language that contains many conceptually based signs, like the example above with *food* and *groceries*. Such words are related to the basic sign concept of EAT; in exploring further, we find ASL signs meaning *breakfast*, *lunch*, *dinner*, *meal*, and *banquet* are also conceptually related to this one sign.

You may also occasionally experience difficulty or confusion over certain sign variations. It is important to become acquainted with the transcription symbols which will help you overcome some of this confusion. For example, take the following glosses: COST, COST + , and **COST**. The first gloss may mean "cost," "price," "fee"; the second, because it is repeated, may mean "being charged over and over," but it also may mean "taxes" and the meaning may be derived from contextual clues; the third gloss is the emphatic form and it usually means an arbitrary charge or a "fine." There is another sign that may sometimes mean "cost" or "price" and that is WORTH. Variations such as these usually have to be memorized. A simple rule is just to remember that in ASL, as in any other language, you will find variations which must be learned according to usage.

These suggestions are only intended to serve as a general guide to the kinds of situations you will encounter in this book from time to time.

Review of Fingerspelling Problems

Students invariably express frustrations and anxieties when it comes to reading fingerspelling. Sometimes these feelings lead to the formation of a kind of mental block in some individuals. Trying to learn to read fingerspelling becomes a painful experience for them. What can be done to help avoid or alleviate such problems? For one thing, being aware of the basic guidelines for fingerspelling and reading fingerspelling should help.

First and foremost of the guidelines are hand position and palm orientation in fingerspelling. The palm of the fingerspeller or communicator should always face outward. It is important also that the hand be positioned just below chin level or at shoulder level so that facial information is not blocked. The arm should remain stationary while the fingers execute a spelled word. If the fingerspeller is right-handed, movement will naturally be from left to right, and from right to left if left-handed. The arm and hand should be in a comfortable position.

Fluency and rate are also significant factors for the fingerspeller and the receiver or "listener." Fingerspelling should be done smoothly and at a rate of speed that is neither too slow nor too fast for comfortable expression or reception. It is important to maintain an even, steady pace. Words should never be fingerspelled at an extremely slow pace, even to a beginner. Such practice will only create more problems for the receiver in the long run. In using fingerspelling drills, the material should be presented at a normal pace. If it is not understood on the first try, it should be repeated at a slightly slower pace. If the material is still not understood, it should be tried a third time at a slightly slower pace. More repetitions than that are not recommended because they actually become a crutch, and the aim in receptive fingerspelling skills should be to challenge the receiver consistently. With practice it should not be necessary to repeat material more than once, if at all.

When fingerspelling, avoid mouthing of letters. Practice instead mouthing and fingerspelling syllables simultaneously. If done regularly, this will make fingerspelling more readable, and the receiver should begin to recognize fingerspelled words by their shape. The listener or receiver should focus on the face of the person communicating, not on the hands. The eyes will then receive important cues from the facial expressions and non-manual behaviorisms of the fingerspeller which aid in comprehension of the total message. If the person communicating does not mouth the syllables or words being fingerspelled, some attention must be given to the hand movements. However, the receiver should never focus solely on the fingerspeller's hands.

It is essential for the communicator to maintain firm, almost stiff, control of the hand and fingers, allowing crisp, clear finger movements in a slight left to right hand movement, somewhat similar to hand movements in writing. Other factors to be aware of are separation of words fingerspelled in sequence and the inclusion of all

letters in a fingerspelled word. In fingerspelling two or more words in sequence, minute pauses are necessary so that the words are clearly distinguishable as individual words and not as run-ons or single words. Except for fingerspelled loan signs (which are identifiable in this text such as #JOB, #DO, #LUCK), all letters in a word must be clear. Occasionally, the communicator or fingerspeller may “stutter” or omit a letter. This is as natural as slips of the tongue in speaking, which do not interfere with complete understanding of the message. It is only when this is done repeatedly that problems are created for the receiver. Above all, avoid bouncy or jerky hand movements by keeping the arm steady. Sometimes it helps to grasp the dominant arm just below the wrist to hold it steady. Experienced fingerspellers do this as a technique that will force them to slow down a bit for emphasis.

Visual memory exercises or drills in real or nonsensical combinations are helpful in the development of receptive fingerspelling skills. In the American Manual Alphabet, letter handshapes vary from closed, to open vertical, to open horizontal, to open inverted forms. Becoming familiar with these will enable the receiver eventually to understand what is fingerspelled through the visual picture a complete fingerspelled word represents.

Closed letters: A, E, O, M, N, S, T

Open vertical letters: B, D, F, I, K, L, R, U, W, X

Open horizontal letters: G, H

Open inverted letters: P, Q

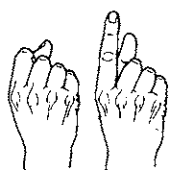
While material presented out of context is more difficult to receive, it is necessary for classroom drill to focus on simple elements in the basic and perhaps early intermediate levels. Drills can be based on material grouped by syllable count, i.e., one-syllable words, then two-syllable words, and on to three- and four-syllable words. Proper names—names of well-known personalities, large cities, major rivers, local communities, and the like—also make good drill practice material. It is helpful to master reading single items, but occasionally students should work with two- or three-word phrases until some proficiency is obvious. Only through regular practice with various drills will students develop fingerspelling receptive skills.

Students must also recognize that most fingerspelling normally occurs as part of a larger signed context. At the intermediate level, they should eventually arrive at the point where such fingerspelling activities happen regularly. Contextual clues play a large part in understanding the overall thought expressed. That is why, in the suggested activities in each lesson, students are asked to use random selections from the sentences in the English to ASL translation exercises for fingerspelling practice.

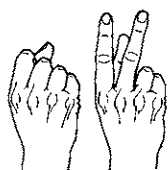
When fingerspelling is used along with signing, it is helpful to provide the receiver with some visual cue to indicate that fingerspelling is going to occur. A quick glance by the communicator toward his or her hand is sufficient. The eyes should immediately move back toward the listener so that eye contact is not lost. This kind of cueing is most beneficial when a complex word or a proper name is about to be introduced. It is helpful, too, to slow down finger movements to a steady, even pace until the complete word is fingerspelled.

Remember that by regular practice through short-term drills, students will develop proficiency in both expressive and receptive fingerspelling.

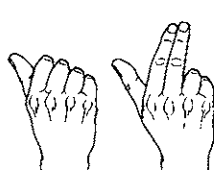
Review of Numbers and Counting



11



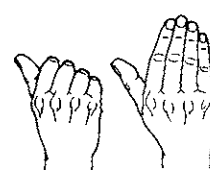
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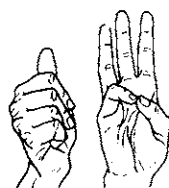
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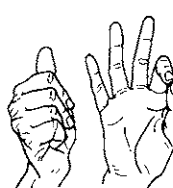
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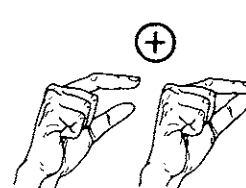
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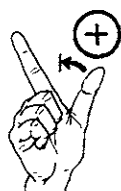
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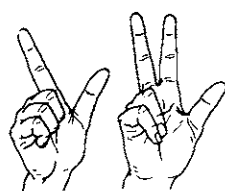
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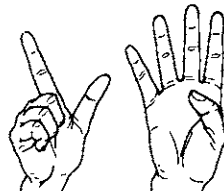
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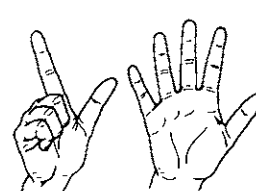
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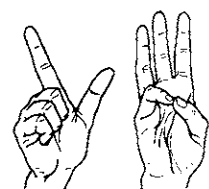
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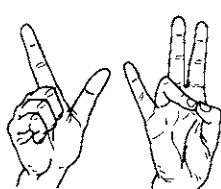
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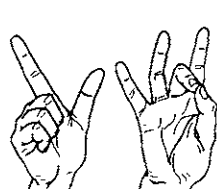
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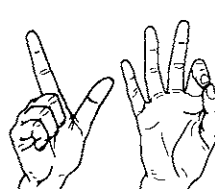
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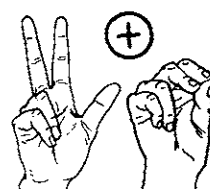
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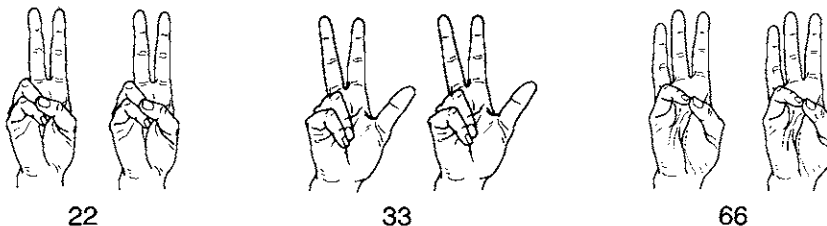


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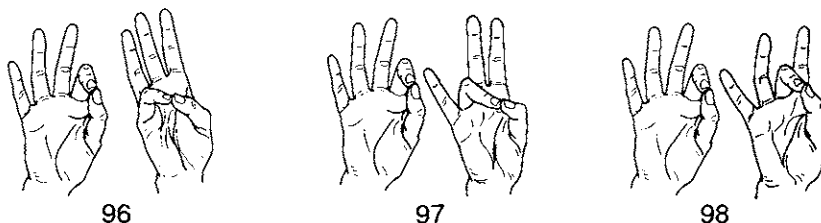
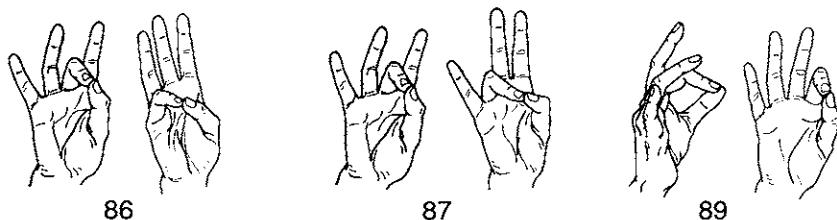
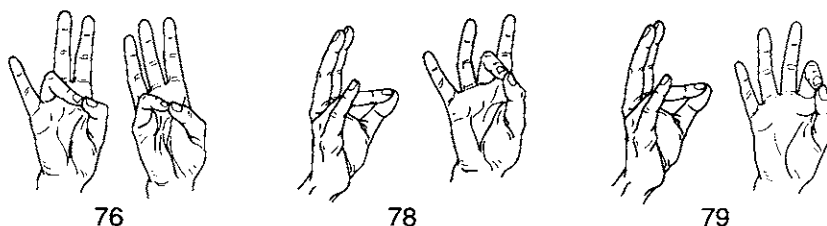
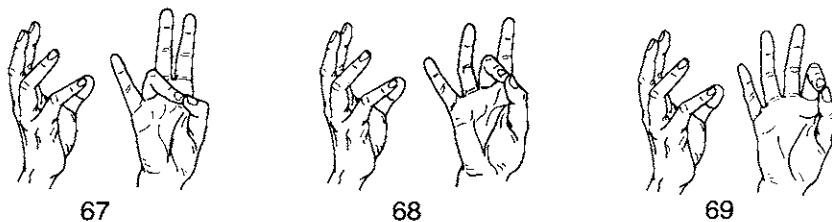


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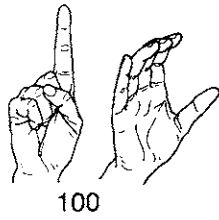
Double digits are formed simply by moving the number from left to right in a gentle arc. The numbers, 66, 77, 88, and 99 require a short, quick break between the digits for clarity.



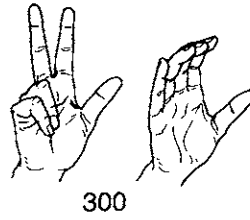
In signing numbers, such as the ones illustrated here, it is important to follow one simple "rule" for clarity, that is, to avoid confusing numbers which might look alike from a distance. The "rule" is when the *smaller* digit is first, the hand position is slightly downward to the right and it moves up left to the larger digit. Conversely, when the *larger* digit is first, the hand position is straight up and it drops down slightly to the right as it forms the second or smaller digit.



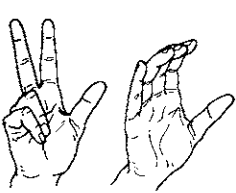
The hundreds are generally formed with the number of hundreds, followed rapidly by the "C" handshape. Learn the abbreviated form as well as the more formal one. The abbreviated form is generally used in everyday conversations, the formal one before audiences where distance may require concise clarity.



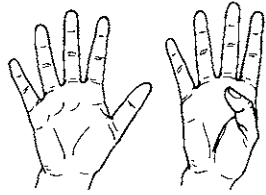
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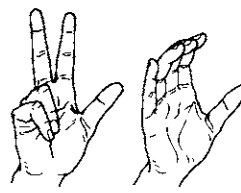
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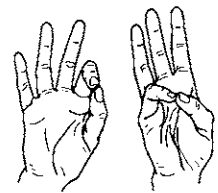
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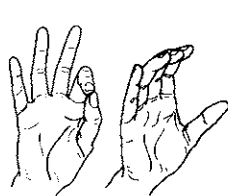
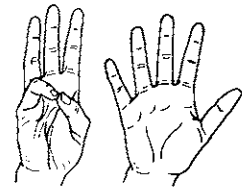
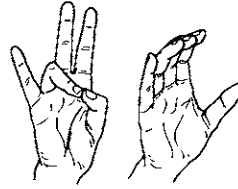
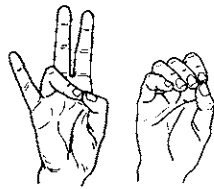
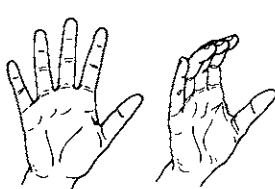
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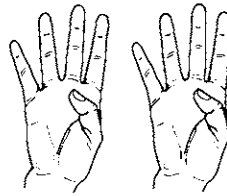
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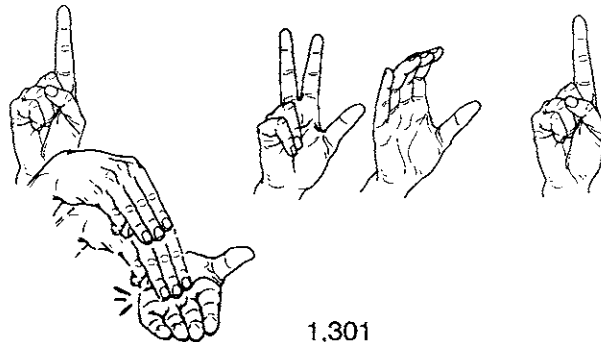
765



944



The thousands are formed with the number of thousands, followed by the "M" handshape brought down against the opposite palm, fingertips touching palm.



1,301

