Lessons in SignWriting
by Valerie Sutton

with Arabic Translations
by Mohamed Mahmod Abushaira

Part 2
SignWriting Contact Symbols

LESSONS IN
SIGN WRITING

Contact الاتصال

Overview

This lesson explains how Sign Writing shows "contact"; that is, when the hand touches another part of the body. At the end is a list describing each contact symbol.

Contact

Sign Writing includes a group of symbols that show contact between the hand and part of the body. Each symbol shows a different kind of contact.

Example of contact: 

* me
Example of contact:  

hit

Double Contact

Contact symbols often appear in pairs to show double contact; that is, the same action performed twice in a row:

Example of double contact:  

more

Example of double contact:  

clap

Contact Symbols

Six contact symbols are defined in Sign Writing: touch, grasp, in-between, strike, brush, and rub.

* Touch (hand touches part of the body)  

[Symbol: Hand touching body]  

Deaf

اليد تمس جزء من الجسم

Grasp (hand grasps)
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Grasp (hand grasps part of the body)

In-between (touching between fingers)

Example of double contact:

Example of double contact:

Contact Symbols

Six contact symbols are defined in Sign Writing: touch, grasp, in-between, strike, brush, and rub.

* Touch (hand touches part of the body)

+ Grasp (hand grasps part of the body)

Deaf

اليد تمس جزء من الجسم

التلامس بين الأصابع

اليد تمس جزء من الجسم

مARRY
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Part 3, Section 1
SignWriting Movement Symbols

Movement Symbols

Movement symbols in Sign Writing are divided into ten groups. Included are groups showing finger movement, dynamics, and the four movement types.

Group 1: Finger Movement حركة الأصابع

- Finger closes at middle joint:  
  مilk

اغلاق الأصابع من الوسط
Finger opens at middle joint: eleven

فتح الاصبع من الوسط

Finger closes at knuckle joint: bird

ثني الاصبع من قاعدة

Finger opens at knuckle joint: send

الاصبع مفتوحة عند المفصل

Fingers open-close-open at knuckle joint, staying together: goodbye

الاصبع تفتح ثم تغلق ثم تفتح وتشاور مفصلة

Fingers open, close-open twice at knuckle joint, moving separately: fingerspell

الاصبع تفتح ثم تغلق مرتين والاصبع متباعدة

Group 2: Straight Movement Up & Down

الحرطة المستقيمة للعلي والأسفل
Straight movement

Down-down quickly

Up-down quickly

Crossing

Down-down-down quickly

Down-up-down quickly

ódigo
Angle

Right angle

Sharp angle

Right angle twice

Zig-zag

Zig-zag twice

Movement down, forearm rotates
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Movement down, forearm rotates once bad

Movement down, forearm rotates twice very bad

Movement down, forearm rotates in alternating directions

Group 3: Straight Movement Up & Forward, Down & Back

Up & forward afternoon

Down & back

Group 4: Straight Movement Forward & Back

Straight movement

Forward-forward quickly

Forward-back quickly

Crossing

Forward-forward-forward quickly

Forward-back-forward quickly

you
teach
teach
control
correct or edit
cold
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Part 4
SignWriting Dynamics Symbols

Overview

This lesson explains Dynamic Symbols. They are applied to movement symbols to show "Movement Dynamics", to facial expressions, and to handshapes in special cases, such as Classifiers.

Movement Dynamics

Dynamics Symbols are small symbols placed over or near movement symbols to show the intensity, the speed, or the "quality" of movement.

Simultaneous Line
Both hands move at the same time.

Alternating Lines
The right moves in one direction.
- Alternating Lines
  The right moves in one direction, while the left moves simultaneously in the opposite direction.

- One-Moves-While-The-Other-Is-Still
  The right moves, while the left remains still. Then the left moves, while the right remains still.

- slow movement
  حركة بطيئة
  long ago

- smooth movement
  حركة انسحابية
  few

- fast movement
  حركة سريعة
  must

- tense movement
  حركة مشدودة
  American

- relaxed movement
Lessons In SignWriting with Arabic Translations, Dynamics Symbols

Facial Expressions تعبير الوجه

Facial Expressions showing tension:

- ~ (tension in lips)
- ~~ (tension in cheeks)
- ~ (in the mouth)
- ~ (~ in the cheek)
- ~ (up)
- * (up)
- ** (up)
- ~ (in the cheek)
- ~ (in the mouth)

Facial Expressions علامات الوجه

- ~ (their, his, hers)
- ~ (good point)
- ~ (yours)
- ~ (perfect)
- ~ (know what I mean?)

Classifiers & Other Applications

When the Tension Symbol is placed over a single handshape, it represents a hand that remains stable through many signs, while the other hand signs, referring to it. For example:

- ~
- *
- ~
- *
- ~
- ~
- ~

In the example above, the sign for "computer" was marked by the left hand remaining in a "c" handshape. Notice that the Tension Symbol above the "c" handshape is a written marker for this "establishment in space".
Another example is the sign for "plate". It is "established in space" by the Tension Symbol. Then the left hand may stay in that position, while the right hand signs, referring to it. The Tension Symbol is the "marker" for plate:

plate   plate-it   plate-blue

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Part 5, Section 1
SignWriting Facial Expressions

Overview

This lesson explains how Sign Writing shows facial expressions. At the end is a list describing each face symbol.

Facial Expressions

Facial expressions in Sign Writing are based on the following symbol:

●

The other face symbols are variations of this symbol. For instance:
NOTE - When your hand is near the right side of your head, the hand symbol is placed to the right of the head symbol:

Example of facial expression showing forehead:

Example of eyebrows & mouth:

Example of eyes:

Example of nose:

Example of facial expression showing illness:

Example of facial expression showing bitter taste:

Example of facial expression showing look at:

Example of facial expression showing bore:
Example of tongue:

مثال على اللسان

NOTE - In SignWriter, use the Change key to see all the variations of the face symbols. If you do not find the variation there, then try the Rotate Key.

Face Symbols

رموز الوجه

Face symbols in Sign Writing are divided into ten groups: forehead, eyebrows, eyes, eye gaze, cheeks, nose, mouth, tongue, teeth, and others.

Group 1: Forehead

الجبهة

Forehead

الجبهة

Forehead wrinkled

الجبهة متحركة

illness
Group 2: Eyebrows

- Eyebrows up, inside
  - agree
  - المالأجتان للاعلى والداخل

- Eyebrows straight
  - المالأجتان مستقيمان

- Eyebrows down
  - who
  - المالأجتان للاسفل

- Eyebrows down, inside
  - المالأجتان للاسفل والداخل
Eyebrows up, outside

المحابان للأعلى والخارج

Eyebrows down, outside

المحابان للأسفل والخارج

Group 3: Eyes

الميّن

Eyes open  look at

الميّن مفتوحان

Eyes squeezed

الميّن مغلقان بشل مضخّط

Eyes closed

الميّن مغلقان

Eyes half-open
Eyes half-open

المован نصف مفتوحان

Eyes half-closed

الميون نصف مغلقان

Eyes wide open

الميون مفتوحان بتساع

Eyelashes

روش العينان

Group 4: Eye Gaze

Eye gaze up

الميون عداء للعلى

Eye gaze up, to one side
Eye gaze up, to one side

المتقبول جانبا للاعلى

Eye gaze sideways

المتقبول للجانب

Eyes wide open

المتقبول مفتوحا بشكل مستقيم

Eyelashes

روموش العينين

Group 4: Eye Gaze

المتقبول العينين

Eye gaze up

المتقبول للاعلى

Eye gaze up, to one side

المتقبول للاعلى بشكل جانبي
Eye gaze sideways

العينان عَدَقانًا جانباً

Eye gaze down, to one side

العينان عَدَقان للاسفل بشكل جانبي

Eye gaze down

العينان عَدَقان للاسفل

Eye gaze forward

العينان عَدَقان للإمام

Eye gaze forward, to one side

العينان عَدَقان للإمام بشكل جانبي

Eye gaze sideways

العينان عَدَقان للجنب
Eye gaze back, to one

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SignWriting in Arabic Nations Directory
Overview

This lesson explains two things Sign Writing uses to show the body: body position and body movement. At the end is a list describing each body symbol.

Body Position

Sign Writing includes symbols which show the position of the shoulders, head, torso, and arms.

Shoulder Position

Shoulders are shown with the following symbol, which can point in three directions:
To show shoulder positions up and down, the following symbols are used:

- Shoulders (straight)
- Right shoulder forward
- Left shoulder forward
- Both shoulders lowered

Example of shoulder position:

Example of shoulder position:

Example of shoulder position:
NOTE - In SignWriter, use the Change key to see all the variations of the shoulder symbols.

Sign Writing includes a symbol which shows the shoulders in a top view. It is used to show the distance between the body and the hands:

- Shoulders (top view)

Example of top-view shoulder position:

You help him/her.

Head Position: موقع الرأس

Head position is shown by adding a line to the shoulder symbol. The line represents your nose:

- Head straight الرأس مستقيم
- Head tilted to the right الرأس مائل للليمين
- Head tilted to the left الرأس مائل لليسار
To show your head looking up or down, 
the following symbols are used:

 onze
 Head straight الرأس مستقيم
 onze
 Head looking up الرأس ينظر للأعلى
 onze
 Head looking down الرأس ينظر للاسفل

to show your head turned to the right or left, 
the head position line is moved to the side
of the shoulder symbol:

 onze
 Head straight الرأس مستقيم
 onze
 Head turned to the right الرأس محتوى للليمين
 onze
 Head turned to the left الرأس محتوى لليسار

Sign Writing includes a number of symbols that 
combine shoulder and head positions into one 
symbol. For instance:

tilde
 Right shoulder forward; 
head looking up & to the 
right, tilted left

ektef l'aamal rass lanaara lalaal al alimal
ali

NOTE - In Signwriter, use the unange key to see 
all the variations of the head position symbols.
Torso Position

"Torso" refers to the upper body: from your shoulders to your waist. Sign Writing shows torso position with the following symbol:

📍 Torso position موقع الجذع

This symbol, which always appears next to a shoulder symbol, can point in eight directions:

-forward للامام
📍📍📍

-back للخلف
📍📍

- Torso leans forward الجذع ينحني للامام
📍📍📍

- Torso leans to the side الجذع ينحني إلى الجانب
→→→

- Torso leans back الجذع ينحني للخلف
📍📍📍

Arm Position موقع الذراع

Sign Writing adds lines for arms occasionally, when the arm is contacted or crossed. You will find arm lines under the - key (right next to the number 0 key) on the Sign Keyboard.

baby

day
Body Movement

Sign Writing uses the movement symbols to show movement of the head, shoulders, and torso.

Head Movement

Head movement is shown by placing a movement symbol above the head symbol. Consider the following symbol:

Head turns up

Double-stem movement symbols show rotational movements such as nodding or shaking your head.

Single-stem movement symbols show "projecting" head movement with no rotation of the head:

Head projects forward
Example of head movement:

Yes. I understand.

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