Lessons in SignWriting

Textbook
by
Valerie Sutton
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The SignWriting System was first invented by Valerie Sutton in 1974.

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Illustrations by Ida Candelaria & Jayne Gunderson
Photos of Hands & Body Diagrams by Adam Frost

Photos of Kevin Clark & Lucinda O'Grady
are captured from the
Lessons In SignWriting Video Series DVD

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With contributions and photos from members of the Deaf Action Committee for SignWriting (the DAC) including...

Adam Frost

Lucinda O’Grady

Kevin Clark

Lessons in SignWriting Textbook by Valerie Sutton
View on YouTube or on DVD. Learn SignWriting at home or in the classroom with these two educational videos. The Lessons In SignWriting Video Series has been shown on USA cable television as educational programs. Two Deaf native signers, Lucinda O’Grady and Kevin Clark, teach the basics of SignWriting in American Sign Language (ASL), with English voice and captions on the screen.

The series includes: Video 1: Introduction to SignWriting (21 minutes) and Video 2: SignWriting Basics (31 minutes). Each DVD includes a paperback booklet with a transcription of the English voice plus a review of the instruction.

View the Lessons in SignWriting Video Series on:

- SignWriting YouTube Channel
  YouTube.com/signwriting

- SignWriting Web Site
  SignWriting.org/lessons

- DVD in SignWriting Shop
  SignWriting.org/shop
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Dedication

This book is dedicated to all of the hard-working, intelligent and generous people who have dedicated their time and knowledge to helping SignWriting improve and grow. Without them, writing signs would still be a dream not yet realized!
Introduction
I am writing to tell you how strongly I feel about SignWriting and how much it can benefit Deaf people.

I was born Deaf to a Deaf family and I am a native American Sign Language (ASL) user. I have been working with Sign Writing since 1982. I was the first Deaf person to write articles in ASL, in SignWriting, for the SignWriter Newspaper. Later, Valerie Sutton and I established....
the Deaf Action Committee for SignWriting (the DAC) in 1988.

I think it is very important to spread the word about SignWriting. ASL is a language in its own right, yet until the development of SignWriting, it was a language without a written form. When I found out about SignWriting I was thrilled to think that at last we would have a way to write our language.

Deaf Americans are one of the very few linguistic minorities that are unable to get books teaching English in
their native language. I feel that we can use SignWriting in order to learn English. Deaf people will benefit greatly from books explaining English grammar and idioms in written ASL.

We can also use it to write down and preserve our stories, poetry and plays. As you know, there are many Deaf playwrights and poets, and up until now, they have not had a way to write the ASL in their literature.
No matter what the project, SignWriting encourages us to read and write and I feel that is important.

All of us hope that you will enjoy learning SignWriting. Your interest and support is a great help to our Deaf community.

Lucinda Batch
Write SignWriting on the web!
Write signs and Sign Language documents: www.SignPuddle.org
Join the SignWriting Email List!
Go to this web page to join:  www.SignWriting.org/forums/swlist
Learn SignWriting on the web!
Download books & view videos: www.SignWriting.org/lessons
Receptive Viewpoint
When someone is facing you, signing to you, you view the signs as an observer. The signer's right side is your left side. This is called the Receptive Viewpoint.
Expressive Viewpoint

When you are signing to someone else, you see signs from your own point of view.
This is called the Expressive Viewpoint.
Which Viewpoint?

Do we write signs from the **Expressive Viewpoint**?...

...or the **Receptive Viewpoint**?
The Expressive Viewpoint

We read and write signs expressively.

SignWriting can be written from either the Receptive or the Expressive viewpoints. This book teaches reading and writing signs from the Expressive Viewpoint.

The Expressive Viewpoint is now the standard in SignWriting publications.

The Receptive Viewpoint is used occasionally when transcribing signs from videotape, or when recording foreign signs in shorthand.

For more information on using the Receptive Viewpoint, refer to Chapter 15.
The Expressive Viewpoint

Read and write signs as if you are looking at your own hands, from your own perspective.

Palm of Hand

When you see the palm of your hand, while you are signing, the symbol for the hand will be white, or hollow.

The palm of the hand is always written with a white, hollow symbol.
Side of Hand

When you see the side of your hand while you are signing, the symbol for the hand will be half black and half white. The white part of the symbol shows where the palm of the hand faces. The dark part represents the back of the hand.

Back of Hand

When you see the back of your hand while you are signing, the symbol will be black, or filled-in. The back of the hand is always written with a black, filled-in symbol.
Left Side of Head

The head is written with a circle, viewed from the back. When the left hand is near the left side of the head, the symbol for the hand is placed to the left:

\[
\text{know}
\]

(hand on the left side)

Note: An asterisk means touch. Two asterisks mean touching two times.
Right Side of Head

The head is written with a circle, viewed from the back. When the right hand is near the right side of the head, the symbol for the hand is placed to the right:

```
know
(hand on the right side)
```

Note: An asterisk means touch. Two asterisks mean touching two times.
Left Side of Face

Pretend you can see through the back of the head. You are reading and writing how your face “feels” when you sign:

Your face feels like this:

know
(mouth pushed up on left side)
Right Side of Face

Pretend you can see through the back of the head. You are reading and writing how your face “feels” when you sign:

know
(mouth pushed up on right side)
know
(mouth pushed up on the right side)
3 Basic Handshapes

**Closed Fist**

When the fingertips touch the palm of the hand, it is called a **Closed Fist**.

A **Closed Fist** is written with a square.

**Open Fist**

When the fingertips touch each other, it is called an **Open Fist**.

An **Open Fist** is written with a circle.

**Flat Hand**

When the fingers stretch straight up, and touch each other, it is called a **Flat Hand**.

A **Flat Hand** is written with a rectangle, with a tip for the fingertips.
3 Basic Handshapes

Closed Fist

Both the letter S and the number 1 in ASL are written with a square for the Closed Fist, since the fingertips touch the palm:

Open Fist

Both the letter O and the letter D in ASL are written with a circle for the Open Fist, since the fingertips touch each other:
3 Basic Handshapes

Closed Fist

Open Fist

Flat Hand
Add Lines for Fingers

Index Hand

D - Hand

5 - Hand
Closed Fist: Adding Fingers

The fingertips touch the palm of the hand in the Closed Fist. If one finger sticks up, then one line extends from the square. If two fingers stick up, then two lines extend:
Open Fist: Adding Fingers

The fingertips touch each other in the Open Fist. If one finger sticks up, then one line extends from the circle. If two fingers stick up, then two lines extend:

1 finger up
Open Fist

2 fingers up
with Open Fist
The fingers are straight together in the Flat Hand. If the thumb sticks out, then one line extends from the rectangle. If all five fingers spread, then five lines extend from the symbol:

- Thumb out: Flat Hand
- 5 fingers spread: 5-Hand
**Rootshapes**

Like roots to a tree, Rootshapes provide the foundation for all hand symbols. Rootshapes are determined by the shape of the LOWEST finger in the handshape. For example, a square for a TIGHT Fist must have at least one finger touching the palm of the hand. A circle for an OPEN fist, has at least one finger close to the palm of the hand, but not touching the palm of the hand.

- **Rootshape: Tight Fist**
  - Tight Fist: At least 1 finger touches palm

- **Rootshape: Circle**
  - At least 1 fingertip touches thumbtip in a curve or...
  - At least 1 curved finger is close to palm of hand

- **Rootshape: Cup**
  - At least 1 finger is curved at the Middle Joint & Tip Joint.
  - There is NO bend or curve at the Knuckle Joint.

- **Rootshape: Hinge**
  - At least 1 finger bends at the Knuckle Joint, while the Middle Joint and Tip Joint lock completely straight.

- **Rootshape: Angle**
  - The Hinge, with fingertips and thumb tip touching

- **Rootshape: Flat Thumb Across**
  - Thumb across palm, four fingers straight up with no bends

- **Rootshape: Flat**
  - Five fingers straight up with no bends

**Action Fingers**

Once the Rootshape is established, the lines for the fingers are attached. The finger lines are called Action Fingers. They extend from the root of the hand like branches on a tree. Action Fingers are more important than the Rootshape, because they are looked at first, just as observers look at the branches of a tree first. Readers focus on Action Fingers first, since they give meaning to the handshape.
Palm Facing
Front View
The hand is parallel with the front wall.
Palm Facing

Top View

The hand is parallel with the floor.
Palm Facing
Front View
The hand is parallel with the front wall.
Palm Facing
Top View
The hand is parallel with the floor.
Palm Facing

Front View

The hand is parallel with the front wall.
Palm Facing
Top View
The hand is parallel with the floor.

space at knuckle joint means hand is parallel to the floor
Palm Facing
Front View
The hand is parallel with the front wall.
Palm Facing
Top View
The hand is parallel with the floor.
Palm Facing
Front View
The hand is parallel with the front wall.
Palm Facing
Top View
The hand is parallel with the floor.

space at knuckle joint means hand is parallel to the floor
Palm Facing
Front View
The hand is parallel with the front wall.
Palm Facing
Top View
The hand is parallel with the floor.

space at knuckle joint means hand is parallel to the floor
Expressive Front View

Signs are written from the signer’s expressive viewpoint. Imagine standing BEHIND the signer, copying what the signer does and feels.

Palm of Hand

The palm of the hand is written with a white or hollow symbol.

Front View
Parallel with Wall Plane

The hand is parallel to the Front Wall. The white symbol shows that the palm faces towards your body, towards the reader.

Side of Hand

The side of the hand is written with a symbol that is half-white and half-dark. The half-white section shows the direction of the palm. The half-dark section represents the back of the hand.

Front View
Parallel with Wall Plane

The hand is parallel to the Front Wall. The thumb of the hand faces towards your body.

Back of Hand

The back of the hand is written with a black or filled-in symbol.

Front View
Parallel with Wall Plane

The hand is parallel to the Front Wall. The black symbol shows that the back of the hand faces towards your body.
Expressive Top View

Signs are written from the signer’s expressive viewpoint. Imagine looking down on the position of the signer, from a bird’s eye view.

**Palm of Hand**

*Top View  Parallel with Floor Plane*

The hand is parallel to the floor. You are looking down at your palm from overhead. The white symbol has a space at the knuckle joint representing the Horizon Line. A hand symbol with the Horizon Line crossing over the knuckles means the hand is “parallel with the floor” read from the Top View.

**Side of Hand**

*Top View  Parallel with Floor Plane*

The hand is parallel to the floor. You are looking down at the side of your hand (your thumb) from overhead. The hand symbol has a space at the knuckle joint representing the Horizon Line. A hand symbol with the Horizon Line crossing over the knuckles means the hand is “parallel with the floor” read from the Top View.

**Back of Hand**

*Top View  Parallel with Floor Plane*

The hand is parallel to the floor. You are looking down at the back of your hand from overhead. The hand symbol has a space at the knuckle joint, representing the Horizon Line. A hand symbol with the Horizon Line crossing over the knuckles means the hand is “parallel with the floor” read from the Top View.
Hands Relate to Center

In the International SignWriting Alphabet, all hand symbols are designed to relate to the Center of the Body. Imagine a Center Line going down the center of your body. The **Majority of Action Fingers** are directed towards the center. Left hands are written to the left of the Center Line. Right hands are written to the right of the Center Line.
The Wall Plane
Hand symbols parallel to the Front Wall look the same whether they are far from the chest, close to or touching the chest, or behind the body. You can FEEL the position of the palm facing. It remains the same symbol no matter how close or far it is.

The Floor Plane
Hand symbols parallel to the Floor look the same whether they are high above the head, in the middle in front of your chest, or low at hip level. You can FEEL the position of the palm facing. It remains the same symbol no matter how high or low it is.
Hands Pointing to the Side
Hand symbols with the fingers pointing to the side can be written from the Front View, parallel to the Front Wall Plane, or from the Top View, parallel to the Floor Plane. Both symbols are correct, since side-to-side can be seen from the Front View or the Top View. Choose to write the simpler symbols seen from the Front View, parallel to the Front Wall, since they are less complicated for quick reading:

Choose the Front View
The Front View writes the palm of the hand with a white or hollow symbol.

Front View Is Easier to Read
When the fingers point to the side wall, it is best to write the symbol parallel to the Front Wall because the symbol is easier to read.

Top View Is Correct but...
The Top View of the hand is written with a half-white half-dark symbol with the Horizon Line across the knuckles.

Top View Is Harder to Read
When the fingers point to the side wall, it is correct to write the symbol parallel to the Floor, but it is harder to read and therefore not recommended.
10 Groups of Hands

There are ten groups of hand symbols in the International SignWriting Alphabet. The hands are grouped according to which fingers are used. These ten groups are the beginning of the Sign Symbol Sequence, the order of symbols used to look up signs in SignWriting dictionaries by Sign-Symbols. Handshapes used in all signed languages are included. All ten groups are listed on the following pages. An easy way to remember these groups is to count from one to ten in American Sign Language (ASL).

1. **Group 1:** Index Finger
2. **Group 2:** Index & Middle Fingers
3. **Group 3:** Index, Middle & Thumb
4. **Group 4:** Four Fingers
5. **Group 5:** Five Fingers
6. **Group 6:** Baby Finger
7. **Group 7:** Ring Finger
8. **Group 8:** Middle Finger
9. **Group 9:** Index & Thumb
10. **Group 10:** Thumb
## 10 Groups of Hands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand</th>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>SymbolGroup</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Index</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>SymbolGroup_2</td>
<td>Index Middle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>SymbolGroup_3</td>
<td>Index Middle Thumb</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image4.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>SymbolGroup_4</td>
<td>Four Fingers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image5.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>SymbolGroup_5</td>
<td>Five Fingers</td>
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<tr>
<td><img src="image6.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>SymbolGroup_6</td>
<td>Baby Finger</td>
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<td><img src="image7.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>SymbolGroup_7</td>
<td>Ring Finger</td>
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<td>SymbolGroup_8</td>
<td>Middle Finger</td>
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<tr>
<td><img src="image9.png" alt="Image" /></td>
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<td>Index Thumb</td>
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<td><img src="image10.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>SymbolGroup_10</td>
<td>Thumb</td>
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<tr>
<td>BaseSymbol</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BaseSymbol 1</td>
<td>Index</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BaseSymbol 2</td>
<td>Index on Circle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BaseSymbol 3</td>
<td>Index on Cup</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BaseSymbol 4</td>
<td>Index on Oval</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BaseSymbol 5</td>
<td>Index on Hinge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BaseSymbol 6</td>
<td>Index on Angle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BaseSymbol 7</td>
<td>Index Bent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BaseSymbol 8</td>
<td>Index Bent on Circle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BaseSymbol 9</td>
<td>Index Bent on Fist Thumb Under</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BaseSymbol 10</td>
<td>Index Raised Knuckle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BaseSymbol 11</td>
<td>Index Cup</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BaseSymbol 12</td>
<td>Index Hinge on Fist</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BaseSymbol 13</td>
<td>Index Hinge on Fist Low</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BaseSymbol 14</td>
<td>Index Hinge on Circle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Front View
Hands Parallel With The Wall

one-half
Deaf
where

Top View
Hands Parallel To The Floor

happen
you
also
Front View
Hands Parallel With The Wall

dinner
dating
democracy

Top View
Hands Parallel To The Floor

do-do?
dessert
doctor
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BaseSymbol</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Index Middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Index Middle on Circle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Index Middle Bent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Index Middle Raised Knuckles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Index Middle Hinge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Index Up, Middle Hinge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Index Hinge, Middle Up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Index Middle Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Index Middle Unit, Index Bent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Index Middle Unit, Middle Bent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Index Middle Unit, Cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Index Middle Unit, Hinge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Index Middle Cross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Index Middle Cross on Circle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Middle Bent Over Index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Index Bent Over Middle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Front View
Hands Parallel With The Wall

see
two minutes
stupid

Top View
Hands Parallel To The Floor

two of them
read
twenty-two
# Group 3
Index Middle Thumb

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>BaseSymbol 31</strong></td>
<td>Index Middle Thumb</td>
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<td><strong>BaseSymbol 32</strong></td>
<td>Index Middle Thumb on Circle</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>BaseSymbol 33</strong></td>
<td>Index Middle Straight, Thumb Bent</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>BaseSymbol 34</strong></td>
<td>Index Middle Bent, Thumb Straight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>BaseSymbol 35</strong></td>
<td>Index Middle Thumb Bent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>BaseSymbol 36</strong></td>
<td>Index Middle Hinge Spread, Thumb Side</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>BaseSymbol 37</strong></td>
<td>Index Up, Middle Hinge, Thumb Side</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>BaseSymbol 38</strong></td>
<td>Index Up, Middle Hinge, Thumb Unit</td>
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<td><strong>BaseSymbol 39</strong></td>
<td>Index Hinge, Middle Up, Thumb Side</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>BaseSymbol 40</strong></td>
<td>Index Middle Up Spread, Thumb Forward</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>BaseSymbol 41</strong></td>
<td>Index Middle Thumb Cup</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>BaseSymbol 42</strong></td>
<td>Index Middle Thumb Circle</td>
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<td><strong>BaseSymbol 43</strong></td>
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<td>Thumb Between Index Middle Straight</td>
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<tr>
<td>BaseSymbol 46</td>
<td>Index Middle Unit, Thumb Side</td>
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<td>BaseSymbol 47</td>
<td>Index Middle Unit, Thumb Side Unit</td>
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<td>BaseSymbol 48</td>
<td>Index Middle Unit, Thumb Side Bent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BaseSymbol 49</td>
<td>Middle Thumb Hook, Index Up</td>
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<tr>
<td>BaseSymbol 50</td>
<td>Index Thumb Hook, Middle Up</td>
<td></td>
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<td>BaseSymbol 51</td>
<td>Index Middle Unit Hinge, Thumb Side</td>
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<td>BaseSymbol 52</td>
<td>Index Middle Cross, Thumb Side</td>
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<td>BaseSymbol 53</td>
<td>Index Middle Unit, Thumb Forward</td>
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<td>BaseSymbol 54</td>
<td>Index Middle Unit Cup, Thumb Forward</td>
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<tr>
<td>BaseSymbol 55</td>
<td>Middle Thumb Cup, Index Up</td>
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<tr>
<td>BaseSymbol 56</td>
<td>Index Thumb Cup, Middle Up</td>
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<tr>
<td>Image</td>
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<td>Middle Thumb Circle, Index Up</td>
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<td>BaseSymbol_58</td>
<td>Middle Thumb Circle, Index Hinge</td>
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<td>BaseSymbol_59</td>
<td>Index Thumb Angle Out, Middle Up</td>
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<td>BaseSymbol_60</td>
<td>Index Thumb Angle In, Middle Up</td>
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<td><img src="image6.png" alt="Image" /></td>
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<td>Index Middle Thumb, Unit Hinge</td>
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<td><img src="image7.png" alt="Image" /></td>
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<td>Index Middle Thumb, Angle</td>
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<tr>
<td><img src="image12.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>BaseSymbol_68</td>
<td>Index Thumb Hook, Middle Hinge</td>
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Front View
Hands Parallel With The Wall

Denmark  third  $3.00

Top View
Hands Parallel To The Floor

three of them  vehicle  awkward
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<thead>
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<th>BaseSymbol_69</th>
<th>Four Fingers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Four Fingers Bent</td>
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<td>BaseSymbol_71</td>
<td>Four Fingers Hinge</td>
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<td>BaseSymbol_72</td>
<td>Four Fingers Unit</td>
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<td>BaseSymbol_73</td>
<td>Four Fingers Unit Split</td>
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<td>BaseSymbol_74</td>
<td>Four Fingers Unit Claw</td>
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<td>BaseSymbol_75</td>
<td>Four Fingers Unit Bent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BaseSymbol_76</td>
<td>Four Fingers Unit Hinge</td>
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Front View
Hands Parallel With The Wall

list
talk
$4.00

Top View
Hands Parallel To The Floor

four of them
talk-talk-talk
forty-four
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>Five Fingers Spread Heel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>Five Fingers Spread, Four Bent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>Five Fingers Spread, Four Bent Heel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>Five Fingers Spread Bent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>Five Fingers Spread Bent Heel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>Five Fingers Spread, Thumb Forward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>Five Fingers Spread Cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>Five Fingers Spread Cup Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86</td>
<td>Five Fingers Spread Hinge Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>Five Fingers Spread Oval</td>
</tr>
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<td>88</td>
<td>Five Fingers Spread Hinge</td>
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<td>89</td>
<td>Five Fingers Spread Hinge, Thumb Side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>Five Fingers Spread Hinge, No Thumb</td>
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<tr>
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## Group 5
Five Fingers

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<tr>
<td>92</td>
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<tr>
<td>93</td>
<td>Flat Heel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94</td>
<td>Flat, Thumb Side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>Flat, Thumb Side Heel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96</td>
<td>Flat, Thumb Bent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97</td>
<td>Flat, Thumb Forward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>Flat Split Index, Thumb Side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99</td>
<td>Flat Split Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Flat Split Center, Thumb Side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>Flat Split Center, Thumb Side Bent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102</td>
<td>Flat Split Baby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>103</td>
<td>Claw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>104</td>
<td>Claw, Thumb Side</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Claw, No Thumb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>106</td>
<td>Claw, Thumb Forward</td>
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# Group 5
Five Fingers

<table>
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<td><img src="image5.png" alt="Image" /></td>
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<td><img src="image15.png" alt="Image" /></td>
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<tr>
<td><img src="image16.png" alt="Image" /></td>
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## Group 5
Five Fingers

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<td>BaseSymbol_124</td>
<td>Hinge Open</td>
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<tr>
<td>BaseSymbol_125</td>
<td>Hinge Open, Thumb Forward</td>
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<td>BaseSymbol_126</td>
<td>Hinge</td>
</tr>
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<td>BaseSymbol_127</td>
<td>Hinge Small</td>
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<td>BaseSymbol_129</td>
<td>Hinge, Thumb Side</td>
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<tr>
<td>BaseSymbol_130</td>
<td>Hinge Open, No Thumb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BaseSymbol_131</td>
<td>Hinge, No Thumb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BaseSymbol_132</td>
<td>Hinge, Thumb Side Touches Index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BaseSymbol_133</td>
<td>Hinge, Thumb Between Middle Ring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BaseSymbol_134</td>
<td>Angle</td>
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</table>
Front View
Hands Parallel With The Wall

America
cool (very fine)
hello

Top View
Hands Parallel To The Floor

wait
condense
snow
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BaseSymbol</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>137</td>
<td>Index Middle Ring on Hinge</td>
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<td>138</td>
<td>Index Middle Ring on Angle</td>
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<td>139</td>
<td>Baby Hinge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>140</td>
<td>Index Middle Ring, Bent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>141</td>
<td>Index Middle Ring, Unit</td>
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<td>142</td>
<td>Index Middle Ring, Unit Hinge</td>
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<tr>
<td>143</td>
<td>Baby Down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>144</td>
<td>Baby Down, Ripple Straight</td>
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<tr>
<td>145</td>
<td>Baby Down, Ripple Curved</td>
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<td>146</td>
<td>Baby Down, Others Circle</td>
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<td>147</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Baby Up on Fist Thumb Under</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BaseSymbol_149</td>
<td>Baby Up on Circle</td>
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<td>BaseSymbol_152</td>
<td>Baby Raised Knuckle</td>
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<td>Baby Bent</td>
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<td>Baby Touches Thumb</td>
</tr>
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<td>BaseSymbol_155</td>
<td>Baby Thumb</td>
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<td>Baby Thumb on Hinge</td>
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<td>BaseSymbol_157</td>
<td>Baby Index Thumb</td>
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<tr>
<td>BaseSymbol_158</td>
<td>Baby Index Thumb on Hinge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BaseSymbol_159</td>
<td>Baby Index Thumb, Index Thumb Angle Out</td>
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<td>BaseSymbol_160</td>
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<td>Baby Index on Circle</td>
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<td>Baby Index on Hinge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BaseSymbol_164</td>
<td>Baby Index on Angle</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Front View
Hands Parallel With The Wall

sixteen
six hours
six thousand

Top View
Hands Parallel To The Floor

six of them
six weeks
sixty-six
<table>
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<td>Index Middle Baby on Circle</td>
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<td><img src="image" alt="BaseSymbol_167" /></td>
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<td><img src="image" alt="BaseSymbol_169" /></td>
<td>Index Middle Baby on Angle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="BaseSymbol_170" /></td>
<td>Index Middle Cross with Baby</td>
</tr>
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<td><img src="image" alt="BaseSymbol_171" /></td>
<td>Index Middle Cross with Baby on Circle</td>
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<td><img src="image" alt="BaseSymbol_173" /></td>
<td>Ring Down, Index Thumb Hook, Middle Hinge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="BaseSymbol_174" /></td>
<td>Ring Down, Middle Thumb Angle, Index Cross</td>
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<td>179</td>
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<td>181</td>
<td>Ring Middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>182</td>
<td>Ring Middle Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>183</td>
<td>Ring Middle Raised Knuckles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>184</td>
<td>Ring Index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>185</td>
<td>Ring Thumb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>186</td>
<td>Ring Thumb Hook</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Front View
Hands Parallel With The Wall

seventeen
seven hours
seven thousand

Top View
Hands Parallel To The Floor

seven of them
seven weeks
seventy-seven
## Group 8
### Middle Finger

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>BaseSymbol_189</td>
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<td>![Image]</td>
<td>BaseSymbol_190</td>
<td>Index Ring Baby on Hook Out</td>
</tr>
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<td>BaseSymbol_191</td>
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<td>BaseSymbol_192</td>
<td>Index Ring Baby on Hook Under</td>
</tr>
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<td>![Image]</td>
<td>BaseSymbol_193</td>
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</tr>
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<td><img src="image4.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><strong>BaseSymbol_202</strong></td>
<td>Middle Up, Thumb Side</td>
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<td>Middle Thumb Hook</td>
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<td><img src="image6.png" alt="Image" /></td>
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<td><strong>BaseSymbol_205</strong></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Front View
Hands Parallel With The Wall

eighteen
eight hours
eight thousand

Top View
Hands Parallel To The Floor

eight of them
eight weeks
eighty-eight
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td><img src="BaseSymbol_207.png" alt="Image" /></td>
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<td>209</td>
<td><img src="BaseSymbol_209.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Middle Ring Baby on Cup</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>211</td>
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<td>221</td>
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<td>222</td>
<td>Index Thumb Side on Hinge</td>
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<td>226</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Index Thumb Side, Both Bent</td>
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<tr>
<td>228</td>
<td>Index Thumb Side, Index Hinge</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>229</td>
<td>Index Thumb Forward, Index Straight</td>
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</tr>
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<td>230</td>
<td>Index Thumb Forward, Index Bent</td>
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<td>Image</td>
<td>BaseSymbol</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>Index Thumb Curlicue</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Index Thumb Curve, Thumb Inside on Claw</td>
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<td><img src="image5" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>BaseSymbol_235</td>
<td>Index Thumb Curve, Thumb Under</td>
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<td>Index Thumb Cup Open</td>
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<td>BaseSymbol_239</td>
<td>Index Thumb Hinge Open</td>
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<td>Index Thumb Hinge Large</td>
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<td>BaseSymbol_241</td>
<td>Index Thumb Hinge</td>
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<td>BaseSymbol_242</td>
<td>Index Thumb Hinge Small</td>
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<td>BaseSymbol_243</td>
<td>Index Thumb Angle Out</td>
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<tr>
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<td>BaseSymbol_244</td>
<td>Index Thumb Angle In</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image15" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>BaseSymbol_245</td>
<td>Index Thumb Angle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Front View
Hands Parallel With The Wall

Fridays
interpret
form

Top View
Hands Parallel To The Floor

nine of them
decide
ninety-nine
Front View
Hands Parallel With The Wall

life

law

library

Top View
Hands Parallel To The Floor

both of us

little

language
# Group 10

## Thumb

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image9.png" alt="Thumb Between Ring Baby" /></td>
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</tr>
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<td>Thumb Under Two Fingers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Thumb Over Two Fingers</td>
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<tr>
<td><img src="image12.png" alt="Thumb Under Three Fingers" /></td>
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<td>Thumb Under Three Fingers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image13.png" alt="Thumb Under Four Fingers" /></td>
<td>BaseSymbol 258</td>
<td>Thumb Under Four Fingers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image14.png" alt="Thumb Over Four Raised Knuckles" /></td>
<td>BaseSymbol 259</td>
<td>Thumb Over Four Raised Knuckles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image15.png" alt="Fist" /></td>
<td>BaseSymbol 260</td>
<td>Fist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image16.png" alt="Fist Heel" /></td>
<td>BaseSymbol 261</td>
<td>Fist Heel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Two Ways to Write Thumb Towards Reader

The side view of the Thumb Hand can be written in two ways. The dot for the thumb projecting directly toward the reader is the official symbol of the ISWA 2010. But some writers choose to write a line for the thumb to the side, rather than the dot. The line for the thumb is always placed on the dark side of the symbol. Both methods mean the same thing and are correct:
Front View
Hands Parallel With The Wall

dentist
India
drunk

Top View
Hands Parallel To The Floor

other
ahead
remember
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The American Manual Alphabet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Heel of Hand or Top View?
Flat hands with the fingers pointing straight forward, with the arm parallel to the Floor Plane, can be written from a special viewpoint called the Heel of Hand “Wrist View”, or from the traditional Top View:

Two Ways to Write The Same Handshape
...use either symbol...

Heel of Hand Wrist View ...OR... Top View

---

Two Ways to Write The Same Handshape
...use either symbol...

Heel of Hand Wrist View ...OR... Top View
Heel of Hand or Top View?
Use Either Symbol

Heel of Hand Wrist View ...OR... Top View

Heel of Hand Wrist View ...OR... Top View

Heel of Hand Wrist View ...OR... Top View

85
Heel of Hand or Top View?
Fists with the knuckles directed straight forward, with the arm parallel to the Floor Plane, can be written from a special viewpoint called the Heel of Hand “Wrist View”, or from the traditional Top View:

Two Ways to Write The Same Handshape
...use either symbol...

Heel of Hand Wrist View ...OR... Top View

Two Ways to Write The Same Handshape
...use either symbol...

Heel of Hand Wrist View ...OR... Top View
Finger Direction Is Meaningful

Two ways to write the same position: The Top View of the Back of the Hand can be written at a slant. Some writers feel this looks more like real life, because the fingers are directed down.

Both angles are correct.
Action Fingers Directed Towards The Face

Finger direction relates to the Center of the Body. Action Fingers that bend at the knuckle joint in Angle, Hinge, Cup or Curve hand positions direct the fingers into the Center of the Body. The white palm shows the palm is facing the body, with a slight hint that the palm is slightly turned toward the Center too.

Fingers Are Directed Toward the Center
...when the palm is facing the body...
Some ASL signs as examples:

- glass
- oral
- no-to-me
- wolf
- information
- Jew
- clown
- going out
- illness
- lucky
- prefer
- birthday
- eat
- blow a kiss
Action Fingers Directed Up

Angle Hand Symbols
Point the tip of the angled fingers in meaningful directions.

When writing Angle Hands, write the direction of the fingers based on what “feels correct” for the meaning of the sign. Then look at your palm. Where is the palm facing? If the palm is facing the ceiling, then it is parallel to the floor. It will be white with a space at the knuckle joint.

ASL sign for WET, or SOFT

See page 100 for Five Fingers Spread with Thumb Forward

Finger Direction Is Up

See page 151 for Angle Handshape

This sign can be found in: Cat in the Hat in ASL, page 1
http://www.signbank.org/SignPuddle1.6/canvas.php?ui=1&sgn=5&sid=144
Some ASL signs as examples:

Jewish
grow
soft
soft
soft
give to you
lose
money
poor
waste
gay
dissolve
twelve
Action Fingers Directed Out
Away From The Body

This is very rare. If the majority of Action Fingers are directed to the outside, away from the Center of the Body, as in the sign for FAIRY GODMOTHER in ASL, then it is written pointing out.

Action Fingers Directed To The Outside in the Sign for Fairy Godmother
6 Contact Symbols

1. Touch
2. Grasp
3. Between
4. Strike
5. Brush
6. Rub

** Touch Contact is written with an asterisk.

** Touch is defined as the hand gently contacting another part of the body.
Touch Contact

* *

dating

Deaf
Grasp

Grasp Contact is written with two crossed lines.

Grasp is defined as the hand grasping or pinching a part of the body or a prop, such as clothing.

Between

Between Contact is written with a Contact Symbol between two lines.

Between is defined as contacting between two fingers or other parts of the body.
**Strike**

*Strike Contact* is written with two lines crossing two lines.

Strike is defined as the hand contacting a surface with force.

---

**Brush**

*Brush Contact* is written with a circle with a dark dot in the center.

Brush is defined as movement that first contacts and then moves OFF the surface.
Brush Contact

monthly

easy  excuse me
Circular Rub

Circular Rub Contact is written with a spiral.

Rub is defined as contact that moves, but stays ON the surface.

coffee  chocolate

circular rub contact

eager  neat

Straight Rub

Straight Rub Contact is written with the same spiral symbol, but the spiral symbol is connected with a straight arrow.

When the Rub Contact symbol is connected with an arrow, it rubs in a straight line (not in a circle). It stays ON the surface but moves in the direction of the arrow.
Rub Contact

temperature

coffee

nice
Finger Movements
6 Finger Symbols

1. Squeeze, Middle Joint Closes
2. Flick, Middle Joint Opens
3. Hinge, Knuckle Joint Closes
4. Hinge, Knuckle Joint Opens
5. Hinge, Knuckles Open & Close Together
6. Trill, Knuckles Open-Close Alternating

*Middle Joint Squeeze & Flick*  
*Knuckle Joint Hinge & Trill*

Middle Joint Finger Movements, also called Squeeze and Flick Movements, are written with small dots.  
Knuckle Joint Finger Movement, also called Hinge and Trill Movements, are written with small arrows.
Middle Joint Opens

When the middle joint of the finger flicks open (goes from bent to straight), this opening flicking movement is written with a hollow dot. The dot is placed near the finger that flicks. Two dots represent two flicks.

Middle Joint Closes

When the middle joint of the finger squeezes tight (bends down or in), this closing finger movement is written with a dark dot. The dot is placed near the finger joint that does the squeezing. Two dots represent two squeezes.

eleven  understand

huh?  milk
Knuckle Joint Closes

The middle joint of the finger locks, while the knuckle joint bends down, like the Hinge on a door. This *closing knuckle movement* is written with a small arrow that points down. The arrow *pushes* the fingers down. Two arrows mean 2 hinges.

Knuckle Joint Opens

The middle joint of the finger locks, while the knuckle joint bends up, like the Hinge on a door. This *opening knuckle movement* is written with a small arrow that points up. The arrow *pulls* the fingers up. Two arrows mean 2 hinges up.
Knuckle Joints

Open-Close

The fingers move together in the same direction, as a unit. The knuckle-joints of the fingers open and close (bend up and down) together. This **open-close knuckle movement** is written with one row of small connected arrows pointing up and down.

Knuckle Joints

Alternate

The fingers do not move together in a unit. Instead they hinge in opposite directions. One moves up, as the other moves down. This **Alternating Finger Movement**, also called **Finger Trills**, is written with two rows of small arrows pointing up and down.
Sequential Finger Movement
...specific finger-by-finger opening and closing...

**a name sign**
Just follow the arrows. The movement starts at the stem of the arrow, and moves toward the arrowheads. So in this sign, the baby finger bends first, finishing in the A handshapes at the side of the head.

**Sequential Finger Movement That Closes**
From The Middle Joint

...very specific finger-by-finger closing of the fingers...

Exact details of which finger closes first, second and third.

**Sequential Finger Movement That Opens**
From The Middle Joint

...very specific finger-by-finger opening of the fingers...

Exact details of which finger opens first, second and third.

In the example to the left, the sign for FEW opens the index finger first, then the middle finger, ring finger and baby finger.

**FEW**
in American Sign Language
(one of several ways to write this sign)
Straight Movement
Wall Plane

The Wall Plane is parallel with the front wall.
Floor Plane

The Floor Plane is parallel with the floor.
**Signing Space**
Signing space is the area in which you move while you sign. It is the distance you can reach in front, below and above you. Signing space travels with you wherever you go....

Think of your signing space like a room. It has a front and back wall and a floor and ceiling. It is divided into planes. A plane is an imaginary flat surface that dissects your signing space.

There are two planes used in SignWriting: the Wall Plane and the Floor Plane. The Wall Plane is parallel with the front and back walls. The Floor Plane is parallel with the floor and ceiling. All movement symbols in SignWriting relate to these two planes.
Floor Plane
The Floor Plane cuts the body like a tabletop, from front to back. Movement parallel with the Floor Plane is forward and back. It is written with single stemmed-arrows.

Wall Plane
The Wall Plane cuts the body like a door, from side to side. Movement parallel with the Wall Plane is up and down. It is written with double-stemmed arrows.
The Planes

Wall Plane

Floor Plane
The Planes

Wall Plane
Double-Stemmed Arrows

Floor Plane
Single-Stemmed Arrows
Up-Down Movement

Up-Down Movement is parallel with the Front Wall or your chest. It is written with double-stemmed arrows:
Forward-Back Movement

Forward-Back Movement is parallel with the Floor or a table top. It is written with single-stemmed arrows:

- Forward
- Back
- Forward Diagonal
- Back Diagonal
Movement With The Right Hand
A dark arrowhead.

Movement With The Left Hand
A light arrowhead.
Movement To The Side

Movement to the side can be viewed from either the Front View or the Top View. It can be written with either double-stemmed or single-stemmed arrows.

**Front View**

**General Arrowhead**

*Writes Overlapping Paths*

When a right movement arrow writes ON TOP OF a left movement arrow, the two movement paths overlap each other. The two arrows blend together. The dark arrowhead and the light arrowhead become one arrowhead, called the **General Arrowhead**.

Often the hands are contacting when moving in overlapping paths, but it is NOT ONLY for contacting hands. For example, two hands can be parallel, side by side, without contact, and then both move to the same side, so that the right arrow writes on top of the left arrow. This creates a **General Arrowhead**.

**Top View**

**I help you.**

**follow**

**plan**
Do not confuse these arrows:

Double stemmed arrows mean movement is UP.

Single stemmed arrows mean movement is FORWARD.
Straight Movement

Up or Down

A double-stemmed arrow means that the movement is straight up or down, parallel with the front wall. The movement is flat with the front of your body.

monthly
disappear

Straight Movement

Forward or Back

A single-stemmed arrow means that the movement is forward or back, parallel with the floor. You are looking down, on top of the movement.

excuse me
eager
Up-Down Straight Movement

Up-Down movement is parallel with the Front Wall. It is written with **double-stemmed** arrows:

- **Wall-Plane-Straight**
  Movement From Elbow

- **Wall-Plane-Flex**
  Movement From Wrist

- **Wall-Plane-Double**
  Small, Quick Movement

- **Wall-Plane-Nod**
  Small, Quick Movement

- **Wall-Plane-Cross**
  Cross 1 Way, Then Other

- **Wall-Plane-Triple**
  Small, Quick Movement

- **Wall-Plane-Nod-&-A-Half**
  Small, Quick Movement

- **Wall-Plane-Rooftop**
  Diagonal-Straight

- **Wall-Plane-Corner**
  Straight-Corner

- **Wall-Plane-Check**
  Diagonal-Corner-Straight

- **Wall-Plane-Box**
  Straight-Corner-Straight

- **Wall-Plane-ZigZag**
  Straight-Corner-Diagonal

- **Wall-Plane-Peaks**
  Mountain Tops

- **Wall-Plane-Twist**
  Straight with Rotation

- **Wall-Plane-Twist-Twist**
  Straight with Rotation

- **Wall-Plane-Twist-Shake**
  Straight with Rotation
Up-Down Straight Arrows

Movement Parallel With The Front Wall

exam, test

house

system

square
Forward-Back Straight Movement

Forward-Back movement is parallel with the floor. It is written with single-stemmed arrows:

- **Floor-Plane-Straight**
  Movement From Elbow

- **Floor-Plane-Corner**
  Straight-Corner

- **Floor-Plane-Flex**
  Movement From Wrist

- **Floor-Plane-Check**
  Diagonal-Corner-Straight

- **Floor-Plane-Double**
  Small, Quick Movement

- **Floor-Plane-Box**
  Straight-Corner-Straight

- **Floor-Plane-Nod**
  Small, Quick Movement

- **Floor-Plane-ZigZag**
  Straight-Corner-Diagonal

- **Floor-Plane-Cross**
  Cross 1 Way, Then Other

- **Floor-Plane-Peaks**
  Mountain Tops

- **Floor-Plane-Triple**
  Small, Quick Movement

- **Floor-Plane-Twist**
  Straight with Rotation

- **Floor-Plane-Nod-&-A-Half**
  Small, Quick Movement

- **Floor-Plane-Twist-Twist**
  Straight with Rotation

- **Floor-Plane-Road-Bend**
  Diagonal Straight

- **Floor-Plane-Twist-Shake**
  Straight with Rotation
Forward-Back Straight Arrows
Straight movement parallel with the floor.

- hello
- nothing
- right (direction)
- ask a question
Writing Movement On Diagonal Planes

Let's review what we have already learned!

Writing movement is based on imaginary planes that cut space. The Plane that is parallel with the front wall, is called the Wall Plane. Up-Down Movement is parallel with the Wall Plane. It is written with double-stemmed arrows.

Imagine a rocketship that travels straight up. Up Movement is written with double-stemmed arrows:
The Plane that is parallel with the floor, is called the Floor Plane. Forward-Back Movement is parallel with the Floor Plane. It is written with single-stemmed arrows. Imagine driving a car. Think of the line in the center of the road. Forward Movement is written with single-stemmed arrows:
The Diagonal Plane
Space is also divided by diagonal planes. The Up-Diagonal Plane starts low at your feet and extends up towards the front wall. It is both forward and up.

Forward or Back Diagonal
A horizontal bar means away from your chest. A dot means towards your chest.
**Up-Forward Diagonal Movement**
Imagine an airplane taking off, traveling toward the horizon. *Up-Forward-Diagonal-Movement* is written with a double stemmed arrow. A horizontal line, representing the horizon, crosses the stemline.

![Up-Forward Diagonal Movement](image)

**Down-Back Diagonal Movement**
Imagine an airplane coming in for a landing, traveling towards you. *Down-Back-Diagonal Movement* is written with double-stemmed arrows. A dark dot is written on the stem of the arrow. The dot represents the nose of the plane as it is coming towards you.

![Down-Back Diagonal Movement](image)
Do Not Confuse These Arrows

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Up</th>
<th>Up-Forward-Diagonal</th>
<th>Forward</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Do Not Confuse These Arrows

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Down</th>
<th>Down-Back-Diagonal</th>
<th>Back</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Curved Movement
Up-Down Curved Movement

Up-Down movement is parallel with the front wall. It is written with double-stemmed arrows:

1. Curve Up-Side

2. Curve Up-Up

3. Curve Up-Down-Up

4. Curve Up-Loop-Up
Up-Down Curved Arrows

The curves are parallel with the wall.

drive

but

shape, figure

spaghetti
Forward-Over or Back-Over
Curved Movement

Forward-Back movement is parallel with the floor.
It is written with single-stemmed arrows.

The thinner section means far from the body.

The thick, dark section means close to the body.

Close & Far Perspective
Like looking down a road, close is wider and darker.

1. Forward-Over
2. Forward-Over-Over
3. Forward-Loop-Over
4. Forward-Over-Under
5. Back-Over
7. Back-Loop-Over
8. Back-Under-Over
Forward-Under or Back-Under
Curved Movement

Forward-Back movement is parallel with the floor.
It is written with single-stemmed arrows.

The thinner section means far from the body.
The thick, dark section means close to the body.

Close & Far Perspective
Like looking down a road, close is wider and darker.

1. Forward-Under

2. Forward-Under-Under

3. Forward-Loop-Under

4. Forward-Under-Over

5. Back-Under:


7. Back-Loop-Under

8. Back-Over-Under
Forward-Side or Back-Side
Curved Movement

The movement is parallel with the floor. It is written with single-stemmed arrows.

The thinner section means far from the body.

The thick, dark section means close to the body.

Close & Far Perspective
Like looking down a road, close is wider and darker.
Side-Forward-Side or Side-Back-Side
Curved Movement

Forward-Back movement is parallel with the floor.
It is written with single-stemmed arrows.

1. Side-Forward-Side
2. Side-Forward-Side Twice
3. Side-Forward-Side Loop
4. Side-Forward-Side Snake
5. Side-Back-Side
6. Side-Back-Side Twice
7. Side-Back-Side Loop
8. Side-Back-Side Snake

The thinner section means far from the body.
The thick, dark section means close to the body.

Close & Far Perspective
Like looking down a road, close is wider and darker.
Side-Forward-Side

Side-Back-Side
Forward-Back Curved Arrows
The curves are parallel with the floor.

across

we

grandmother

us

allow

workshop

announce

area
Axial Movement
Axial Movement

There are two types of Axial Movement:
1. Rotation Movement of the Forearm
2. Flexing Movement of the Wrist

Rotation
SignWriting includes symbols which show rotation movements made with your forearm. The forearm does not travel. It stays in one place and rotates.

Rotation Symbols place a curved arrow on an "axis". The "axis-line" represents the forearm. The rotation revolves around this axis.

A double-lined axis-line represents an axis that is parallel with the wall. The forearm is up and the rotation revolves around this up-down axis:

Forearm points upward, rotates:

Right forearm is up. Rotation describes the curve of the baby finger forward and side. The forearm does not travel, but stays in place (see note below).

Right forearm is up. Rotation describes the curve of the thumb back towards the chest and then side. The forearm stays in place. (see note below).

Note: The two movements above are technically the same. The difference is the feeling of the baby finger or the feeling of the thumb leading the rotation. Some signs push and some signs pull. See Push-Pull Writing Rules.
Right forearm is up. Rotation describes the curve of the baby finger side, forward, and then side again. The forearm does not travel, but simply rotates in place.

Right forearm is up. Rotation describes the curve of the thumb side, back and then side again. The forearm does not travel, but simply rotates in place.

A single-lined "axis-line" represents an axis parallel with the floor. When the forearm is pointing forward, parallel with the floor, the "axis-line" is a single line pointing forward:

Forearm points forward, rotates

Right forearm is forward, parallel with the floor. Rotation describes the curve of the thumb up and side. The forearm does not travel, but stays in place.

Right forearm is forward, parallel with the floor. Rotation describes the curve of the baby finger down and side. The forearm stays in place as it rotates.

Note: The two movements above are technically the same. The difference is the feeling of the baby finger or the feeling of the thumb leading the rotation. Some signs push and some signs pull. See Push-Pull Writing Rules.
Right forearm is forward, parallel with the floor. Rotation describes the curve of the baby finger side, down and side again.

Right forearm is forward, parallel with the floor. Rotation describes the curve of the thumb side, up and side again.

Note: The two movements above are technically the same. The difference is the feeling of the baby finger or the feeling of the thumb leading the rotation. Some signs push and some signs pull. See Push-Pull Writing Rules.
When the forearm is parallel with the floor, but pointing side, the "axis-line" is a single horizontal line pointing side.

Forearm points sideways, rotates

Right forearm is side, parallel with the floor. Rotation describes the curve forward, up and over. The forearm does not travel, but stays in place as it rotates.

Right forearm is side, parallel with the floor. Rotation describes the curve back, up and over. The forearm does not travel, but stays in one place as it rotates.

Right forearm is side, parallel with the floor. Rotation describes the curve forward, down and under. The forearm does not travel, but stays in place.

Right forearm is side, parallel with the floor. Rotation describes the curve back, down and under. The forearm does not travel, but stays in one place as it rotates.

Rotation, Forearm Side
Forearm Parallel with Floor

third  apple  begin
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Side-Over &amp; Side-Down-Side Rotations</th>
<th>Side-Under &amp; Side-Up-Side Rotations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Side-Over Double Rotation</td>
<td>2. Side-Under Double Rotation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Side-Down-Side Double Rotation</td>
<td>5. Side-Up-Side Double Rotation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| aerobics | baptism | broom |
Forward-Over & Back-Over Rotations

1. Forward-Over Single Rotation
2. Forward-Over Double Rotation
3. Forward-Over Alternating Rotation
4. Back-Over Single Rotation
5. Back-Over Double Rotation
6. Back-Over Alternating Rotation

Forward-Under & Back-Under Rotations

1. Forward-Under Single Rotation
2. Forward-Under Double Rotation
3. Forward-Under Alternating Rotation
5. Back-Under Double Rotation
6. Back-Under Alternating Rotation

apple  bald  weight
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forward-Side &amp; Back-Side Rotations</th>
<th>Side-Forward-Side &amp; Side-Back-Side Rotations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Forward-Side Single Rotation</td>
<td>1. Side-Forward-Side Single Rotation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Forward-Side Double Rotation</td>
<td>2. Side-Forward-Side Double Rotation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Forward-Side Alternating Rotation</td>
<td>3. Side-Forward-Side Alternating Rotation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

blue comparison books
Traveling Rotation
A few movement symbols combine "traveling" movement with an added rotation. The forearm rotates as the arm moves in a specific direction. The rotation symbol is placed on the stem line of the arrow.

1. Wall-Plane-Twist Straight With Rotation
2. Wall-Plane-Twist-Twist Straight With Rotation
3. Wall-Plane-Twist-Shake Straight With Rotation

Shaking Rotation
Shaking Rotation does not define how many rotations you make. Instead, it is a fast, shaking motion. It can be written with or without an arrowhead. The dark and light arrowheads are needed at times, to show which arm is doing the shaking:

- Shaking Movement, Forearm Up or Down, Parallel with the Wall Plane
- Shaking Movement, Forearm Forward, Parallel with the Floor Plane
**Wrist-Flexing Movement**

The wrist remains stable while the hand moves in different directions. This flexing motion is written with a horizontal line cutting the wrist. The horizontal line represents the axis of motion. Small arrows point in the direction of the flexing motion. The arrows represent the direction of the hand as it moves.

---

**ASL Sign For "Yes-Yes"**
Wrist Flexing Down Twice

**ASL Sign For "Flag"**
Wrist Flexing Forward and Back Towards the Chest

---

chat  before  basketball
Circular Movement
Circular Movement

Arm Circles
Arm circles parallel to the Wall Plane are double-stemmed circles. Arrows mark exactly where the circular movement starts. When reading Circle Symbols, place your hand where the arrows are located on the circle, and then move in the direction of the arrows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Single Arm Circles</th>
<th>Double Arm Circles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Side-To-Side</td>
<td>Side-To-Side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parallel Wall Plane</td>
<td>Parallel Wall Plane</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. One Circle
   Starts High

2. One Circle Starts
   High-Diagonal-Right

3. One Circle
   Starts Right Side

4. One Circle Starts
   Low-Diagonal-Right

5. One Circle
   Starts Low

6. One Circle Starts
   Low-Diagonal-Left

7. One Circle
   Starts Left Side

8. One Circle Starts
   High-Diagonal-Left

1. Two Circles
   Start High

2. Two Circles Start
   High-Diagonal-Right

3. Two Circles
   Start Right Side

4. Two Circles Start
   Low-Diagonal-Right

5. Two Circles
   Start Low

6. Two Circles Start
   Low-Diagonal-Left

7. Two Circles
   Start Left Side

8. Two Circles Start
   High-Diagonal-Left
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Single Circles</th>
<th>Double Circles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Forward-Back</strong></td>
<td><strong>Forward-Back</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sagittal &amp; Floor Planes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sagittal &amp; Floor Planes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Forward-Back Circle Parallel with Side Wall</td>
<td>1. Forward-Back Circle Parallel with Side Wall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Forward-Back Circle Left High Diagonal</td>
<td>2. Forward-Back Circle Left High Diagonal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Forward-Back Circle Parallel with Floor</td>
<td>3. Forward-Back Circle Parallel with Floor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Forward-Back Circle Left Low Diagonal</td>
<td>4. Forward-Back Circle Left Low Diagonal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Forward-Back Circle Parallel with Side Wall</td>
<td>5. Forward-Back Circle Parallel with Side Wall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Forward-Back Circle Right Low Diagonal</td>
<td>6. Forward-Back Circle Right Low Diagonal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Forward-Back Circle Parallel with Floor</td>
<td>7. Forward-Back Circle Parallel with Floor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Forward-Back Circle Right High Diagonal</td>
<td>8. Forward-Back Circle Right High Diagonal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

ideas international inferior
**Wrist Circles**

Wrist circles are written with solid lines. Arrows are placed outside the circle. When reading Wrist Circle Symbols, place your hand at the arrow, and then move in that direction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Single Wrist Circles</th>
<th>Double Wrist Circles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Side-To-Side</strong></td>
<td><strong>Side-To-Side</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parallel Wall Plane</strong></td>
<td><strong>Parallel Wall Plane</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **One Circle**                      | 1. **Two Circles**                       |
| Starts High                           | Start High                               |

2. **One Circle Starts**               | 2. **Two Circles Start**                 |
| High-Diagonal-Right                   | High-Diagonal-Right                      |

3. **One Circle**                      | 3. **Two Circles**                       |
| Starts Right Side                     | Start Right Side                         |

4. **One Circle Starts**               | 4. **Two Circles Start**                 |
| Low-Diagonal-Right                    | Low-Diagonal-Right                       |

5. **One Circle**                      | 5. **Two Circles**                       |
| Starts Low                            | Start Low                                |

6. **One Circle Starts**               | 6. **Two Circles Start**                 |
| Low-Diagonal-Left                     | Low-Diagonal-Left                        |

7. **One Circle**                      | 7. **Two Circles**                       |
| Starts Left Side                      | Start Left Side                          |

8. **One Circle Starts**               | 8. **Two Circles Start**                 |
| High-Diagonal-Left                    | High-Diagonal-Left                       |
Single Wrist Circles
Forward-Back
Sagittal & Floor Planes

1. Forward-Back Circle
   Parallel with Side Wall

2. Forward-Back Circle
   Parallel with Side Wall

3. Forward-Back Circle
   Parallel with Side Wall

4. Forward-Back Circle
   Parallel with Side Wall

5. Forward-Back Circle
   Parallel with
   Floor

6. Forward-Back Circle
   Parallel with Floor

Double Wrist Circles
Forward-Back
Sagittal & Floor Planes

1. Forward-Back Circle
   Parallel with Side Wall

2. Forward-Back Circle
   Parallel with Side Wall

3. Forward-Back Circle
   Parallel with Side Wall

4. Forward-Back Circle
   Parallel with Side Wall

5. Forward-Back Circle
   Parallel with
   Floor

6. Forward-Back Circle
   Parallel with Floor

who
ingear hearing person
beautiful
### Arm & Wrist Circles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Image</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>festival</td>
<td><img src="image1" alt="festival" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>imagine</td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="imagine" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beautiful</td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="beautiful" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hot</td>
<td><img src="image4" alt="hot" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>establish</td>
<td><img src="image5" alt="establish" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>same</td>
<td><img src="image6" alt="same" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>continuously</td>
<td><img src="image7" alt="continuously" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use</td>
<td><img src="image8" alt="use" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>worried</td>
<td><img src="image9" alt="worried" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>who</td>
<td><img src="image10" alt="who" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Facial Expressions
Facial Expressions
There are ten groups of facial expressions, including the forehead, eyebrows, eyes & eyegaze, ears & cheeks, breathing & nose, mouth, tongue, teeth, chin and other parts.

**Facial Circle**

- **Neutral Facial Circle**

**Forehead**

- **Neutral Forehead**
- **Wrinkled Forehead**

**Eyebrows**

- **Eyebrows Up**
- **Eyebrows Neutral**
- **Eyebrows Down**
- **Right Eyebrow Up**
- **Left Eyebrow Up**
- **Right Eyebrow Neutral**
- **Left Eyebrow Neutral**
- **Right Eyebrow Down**
- **Left Eyebrow Down**
Eyebrows continued...

Eyebrows Down Inside

Right Eyebrow Down Inside

Left Eyebrow Down Inside

Eyebrows Up Inside

Right Eyebrow Up Inside

Left Eyebrow Up Inside

Eyebrows Down Outside

Right Eyebrow Down Outside

Left Eyebrow Down Outside

Eyebrows Up Outside

Right Eyebrow Up Outside

Left Eyebrow Up Outside
Eyes

Eyes Open

Right Eye Open

Left Eye Open

Eyes Squint

Right Eye Squints

Left Eye Squints

Eyes Closed

Right Eye Closed

Left Eye Closed

Eyes Squeezed

Tightly Together

Bug Eyes

Eyes Half Open

Right Eye Half Open

Right Eye Half Shut

Left Eye Half Open

Left Eye Half Shut

Eyelashes

Right Eyelash

Left Eyelash
Eyegaze

Eyegaze Up

Eyegaze Up-Diagonal

Eyegaze Side

Eyegaze Down-Diagonal

Eyegaze Down

Eyegaze Back-Diagonal

Eyegaze Back

Eyegaze Side

Eyegaze Forward

Eyegaze Forward-Diagonal

Ears

Ears Right Ear Left Ear
Cheeks

- Cheeks Filled With Air
- Right Cheek Filled With Air
- Left Cheek Filled With Air
- Cheeks Without Air
- Right Cheek Without Air
- Left Cheek Without Air
- Cheeks Sucked-In
- Right Cheek Sucked-In
- Left Cheek Sucked-In
- Cheeks Tense High
- Right Cheek Tense High
- Left Cheek Tense High
- Cheeks Tense Middle
- Right Cheek Tense Middle
- Left Cheek Tense Middle
- Cheeks Tense Low
- Right Cheek Tense Low
- Left Cheek Tense Low
- Whole Face Over To The Right
- Whole Face Over To The Left
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Breathing</th>
<th>Mouth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Air Out</td>
<td>Mouth Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air In</td>
<td>Straight, Closed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhale</td>
<td>Closed Mouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inhale</td>
<td>Protrudes Forward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Closed Smile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Closed Smile with Pressure on Sides of Mouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Open Smile, Half Straight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Closed Frown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Closed Frown with Pressure on Sides of Mouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Open Smile, Half Straight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Half Frown, Half Straight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Open Mouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Open Mouth Protrudes Forward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Open Mouth Wrinkles Around Sides of the Mouth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Breathing**
  - Air Out
  - Air In
  - Exhale
  - Inhale

- **Nose**
  - Neutral Nose
  - Contact Tip of Nose
  - Wrinkle Nose
  - Wiggle Nose
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mouth Expression</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oval Open Mouth Horizontal</td>
<td>Double Wrinkles Left Side Mouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rectangular Open Mouth Horizontal</td>
<td>Single Wrinkles Around Mouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oval Open Mouth Vertical (Yawn)</td>
<td>Single Wrinkle Right Side Mouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rectangular Open Mouth Vertical</td>
<td>Single Wrinkle Left Side Mouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiss</td>
<td>Tense Lips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiss Protrudes Forward</td>
<td>Tense Lips Protrude Forward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lips Sucked In Pressed Together</td>
<td>Tense Lips Sucked Back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Lip Over Lower Lip</td>
<td>Lip Corners Both Up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Lip Over Upper Lip</td>
<td>Lip Corner Up Right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double Wrinkles Around Mouth</td>
<td>Lip Corner Up Left</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double Wrinkles Right Side Mouth</td>
<td>Upper Lip Up In the Middle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Tongue**

- Tongue Sticks
  - Outside & Up
  - Outside & Up Diagonal
  - Outside & Side
  - Outside & Down Diagonal
  - Outside & Down
  - Outside & Up Diagonal
  - Outside Straight Center Mouth
  - Outside Curled Center Mouth

- Tongue Licks Lip
  - Outside & Up
  - Outside & Up Diagonal
  - Outside & Side
  - Outside & Down Diagonal
  - Outside & Down
  - Outside & Up Diagonal
  - Outside Center Mouth
Tongue
continued...

- Tongue Tip Touches Inside Up
- Tongue Tip Touches Inside Up Diagonal
- Tongue Tip Touches Inside Side Left
- Tongue Tip Touches Inside Down Diagonal
- Tongue Tip Touches Inside Down
- Tongue Tip Touches Inside Down Diagonal
- Tongue Tip Touches Inside Side Right
- Tongue Tip Touches Inside Up Diagonal

- Tongue Inside Rests Roof Mouth
- Tongue Inside Rests Up Diagonal
- Tongue Inside Rests Left Side
- Tongue Inside Rests Down Diagonal
- Tongue Inside Rests Bottom
- Tongue Inside Rests Down Diagonal
- Tongue Inside Rests Right Side
- Tongue Inside Rests Up Diagonal
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teeth</th>
<th>Chin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teeth Neutral</td>
<td>Chin Up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mouth Open</td>
<td>Chin Up-Diagonal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Teeth</td>
<td>Chin Up-Diagonal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touch Tongue</td>
<td>Chin Side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Teeth</td>
<td>Chin Down-Diagonal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touch Tongue</td>
<td>Chin Down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Teeth</td>
<td>Chin Down-Diagonal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touch Lower Lip</td>
<td>Chin Down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Teeth</td>
<td>Chin Side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touch Upper Lip</td>
<td>Chin Up-Diagonal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teeth Bite Lip</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teeth Bite</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right Side of Lip</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teeth Bite Left Side of Lip</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chin continued...

- Chin Forward
- Chin Forward-Diagonal
- Chin Side
- Chin Back-Diagonal
- Chin Back
- Chin Back-Diagonal
- Chin Side
- Chin Forward-Diagonal

Other

- Question
- Face
- Neck
- Back of Head
- Excited
- Hair
The Head
The Head
The Head can be seen from different viewpoints:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Front View</th>
<th>Contact Center Front of Face</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Back View</td>
<td>Contact Center Back of Head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Side View</td>
<td>Contact Center Side of Head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Side View</td>
<td>Contact Center Side of Head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top View Facing Front</td>
<td>Contact Center Top of Head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top View Facing Diagonal</td>
<td>Contact Center Top of Head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top View Facing Diagonal</td>
<td>Contact Center Top of Head</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Rim of Head & Face

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Front View</th>
<th>Back View</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rim of Front of Face</td>
<td>Rim of Back of Head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rim Of Face Chin</td>
<td>Rim Back of Head Low (Above Neck)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rim Of Face Diagonal Low</td>
<td>Rim Back of Head Diagonal Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rim Of Face Cheek</td>
<td>Rim Back of Head Behind Ear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rim Of Face Diagonal High</td>
<td>Rim Back of Head Diagonal High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rim Of Face High, Between Forhead and Top of Head</td>
<td>Rim Back of Head High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rim Of Face Diagonal High</td>
<td>Rim Back of Head Diagonal High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rim Of Face Cheek</td>
<td>Rim Back of Head Behind Ear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rim Of Face Diagonal Low</td>
<td>Rim Back of Head Diagonal Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Rim of Head & Face

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top View</th>
<th>Side View</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rim of Top of Head</td>
<td>Rim of Side of Head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rim Top of Head Back</td>
<td>Rim Side of Head Under Ear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rim Top of Head Diagonal Back</td>
<td>Rim Side of Head Diagonal Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rim Top of Head Side</td>
<td>Rim Side of Head Towards Nose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rim Top of Head Diagonal Forward</td>
<td>Rim Side of Head Diagonal High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rim Top of Head Forward</td>
<td>Rim Side of Head Over Ear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rim Top of Head Diagonal Forward</td>
<td>Rim Side of Head Diagonal High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rim Top of Head Side</td>
<td>Rim Side of Head Towards Back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rim Top of Head Diagonal Back</td>
<td>Rim Side of Head Diagonal Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rim of Head & Face

Front View
Relating To
The Side of Head

- Relating to Under Chin
- Relating to Side of Head Down Diagonal
- Relating to Side of Head
- Relating to Side of Head Up Diagonal
- Relating to Top of Head
- Relating to Side of Head Up Diagonal
- Relating to Side of Head
- Relating to Side of Head Down Diagonal

Front View
Touching The Side of Head

- Touching Under Chin
- Touching Side of Head Down Diagonal
- Touching Side of Head
- Touching Side of Head Up Diagonal
- Touching Top of Head
- Touching Side of Head Up Diagonal
- Touching Side of Head
- Touching Side of Head Down Diagonal
Head Movement

Face-Direction Movement Symbols

The nose moves in the direction of the arrows. The neck bends and stretches as the nose moves.
Head Movement

Head-Direction Movement Symbols
The entire head travels in the direction of the arrows. The nose remains straight, and the neck does not bend.
Head Positions

Face Direction Lines

This is not movement. It is a stable position marking the direction of the nose and face, relating to the shoulders.

Face Direction, Center
Face Direction, Center, Tilt Right
Face Direction, Center, Tilt Left
Face Direction, Side Right, Center
Face Direction, Side Left, Center
Face Direction, Side Right, Tilt Right
Face Direction, Side Right, Tilt Left
Face Direction, Center Up
Face Direction, Center Up, Tilt Right
Face Direction, Side Right, Up
Face Direction, Side Right, Up, Tilt Right
Face Direction, Side Right, Up, Tilt Left
Face Direction, Center Down
Face Direction, Center Down, Tilt Right
Face Direction, Side Right, Down
Face Direction, Side Right, Down, Tilt Right
The Body
Shoulder Positions & Movements

- Shoulders
- Right Shoulder Up (Position)
- Both Shoulders Up (Position)
- Right Shoulder Down (Position)
- Both Shoulders Down (Position)
- One Shoulder Up, One Shoulder Down (Position)
- Shoulder Moves Up
- Shoulder Moves Up-Diagonal
- Shoulder Moves Down-Diagonal
- Shoulder Moves Down
- Shoulder Moves Forward
- Shoulder Moves Forward-Diagonal
- Shoulder Moves Back-Diagonal
- Shoulder Moves Back
- Shoulder Moves Up & Down
- Shoulder Moves Forward & Back
Torso (Upper Body) Positions & Movements

Torso (Upper Body) Pulls Up

Torso (Upper Body) Sinks Down

Torso Moves in a Curve, Up & Side

Torso Bends to the Left Side (Arrow Pushes Torso Up & Side)

Torso Twists to the Left Side (Arrow Pushes Torso in a Left Rotation)

Torso Twists to the Right Side (Arrow Pushes Torso in a Right Rotation)

Upper Torso (Ribcage) Tilts Forward

Upper Torso (Ribcage) Tilts Forward Diagonal

Upper Torso (Ribcage) Tilts Side

Upper Torso (Ribcage) Tilts Back-Diagonal

Upper Torso (Ribcage) Tilts Back

Rocking Motion From the Ribcage
Upper Torso Tilts (Rocks) Back & Forward

Rocking Motion From the Ribcage
Upper Torso Tilts (Rocks) Back-Forward-Back
Upper Body Tilts

Rocking Motion from the Hip Joint
The upper body tilts or rocks back and forth. The neck and torso do not bend. They remain straight, moving in a unit from the hip joints.
Dynamics Symbols

1. **Movement Dynamics** are small symbols placed near movement arrows. They indicate movement that is fast, slow, smooth, tense, relaxed, simultaneous, alternating, and uneven-alternating:

![Movement Dynamics](image1)

2. **Handshape Dynamics** mark classifiers. They mark a hand that is held in one place for a long time.

![Handshape Dynamics](image2)

3. **Facial Dynamics** show tense or relaxed facial muscles. The Tense Symbol is used for lips that press together, for raised cheeks, and for squeezed eyes.

![Facial Dynamics](image3)

4. **Punctuation Dynamics** show the speed, timing and quality of entire phrases and sentences.

![Punctuation Dynamics](image4)

5. **Unit Dynamics** marks the influence of one symbol on a whole group of signs. The **Unit-Connecting Line** is used to show one facial expression influencing several signs.

![Unit Dynamics](image5)
Movement Dynamics

Simultaneous Line
Both hands move at the same time.

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

Un-Even Alternating
One Moves While The Other One Is Still
The right hand moves while the left remains still. Then the left moves while the right remains still.

Slow Movement

Smooth Movement

Fast Movement

Fast Movement with Emphasis

Tense Movement

Tense Movement with Emphasis

Relaxed Movement

Relaxed Movement with Emphasis
Handshape Dynamics
Writing Classifiers

Classifiers are written with the handshape, plus a Classifier Marker. The Classifier Marker is a Tension Symbol. It is placed under the handshape.

In this sentence, Goldilocks sees a bowl of porridge. The bowl is established in space by a feeling of tension, a little like the feeling of placing something on a table. It anchors the visual picture of a bowl in space. The Tension Symbol marks that feeling. It is always placed under the handshapes.

Once the classifier is established, one hand continues to mark the classifier, held in the same position, while the other hand does other signs. The Tension Symbol remains under the hand that marks the classifier.

Goldilocks is discussing the porridge. She is saying that she sees the bowl, and then eats the porridge from it. But the porridge is too hot!!
Facial Dynamics
Related To Handshape Dynamics

Facial expressions are essential to writing Sign Language stories and literature. They mark grammar and emphasis. The Tense Lips symbol shows the dynamics of the lips tensing as the hand is established in space by a classifier. Tension on the lips and near the hands are oftentimes written together.

Below: The Classifier for "bed" in American Sign Language, is written with a Tension Symbol under the handshape to mark the classifier. At the same time, the lips also tense, giving the feeling of "anchoring the classifier" in space.

This bed is placed to the left side. It is established in the **left space**, to the left of the facial expression. The **lips tense** as the classifier is placed in space.

This bed is placed in the center. It is established in the **center space**, directly under the facial expression. The **lips tense** as the classifier is placed in space.

This bed is placed to the right side. It is established in the **right space**, to the right of the facial expression. The **lips tense** as the classifier is placed in space.
Unit Dynamics
Unit-Connecting Lines

Influence is written with a Unit-Connecting Line.

The Unit-Connecting Line is useful for Sign Language researchers. It is used to show the influence of one facial expression on a group of signs.

When one symbol influences a group of symbols or signs, the symbol that is influencing the group is written first. Then a line is written, like a bracket, connecting the symbol with the group it influences.

When SignWriting is written vertically, the Unit Connecting Line is written to the side of the vertical column, as shown here. The Unit Line is grey or lighter than the signs.

In Spain, the Unit Connecting Line is used for horizontal SignWriting literature. When writing horizontally, the Unit Connecting Line is written under or over the writing.

In Sutton DanceWriting, the Unit-Connecting Line is used often to show the influence of one movement symbol on a group of other symbols. In SignWriting, it is rarely used for everyday use.
Punctuation
PAUSE
(similar to a Comma in English)

END OF SENTENCE
(similar to a Period in English).

PAUSE BEFORE END OF PHRASE
(similar to a Semi-Colon in English).

QUESTIONING PAUSE BEFORE END OF PHRASE
(similar to a Question Mark in English).
When a sentence or phrase ends in a question, there is a slight pause at the end. The semi-colon symbol is used to write that pause at the end, but it must be combined with signs that write the grammatically necessary Facial Expressions and Head Movements that occur in sign languages when asking questions, including Head Forward and Eyebrows Up or Down.

PAUSE BEFORE LISTING ITEMS
(similar to a Colon in English.)
This is used in the middle of a sentence, marking a new phrase that lists items 1, 2, 3 and so on.

PAUSE BEFORE & AFTER A SUB-PHRASE
(similar to Parentheses in English.)
Marks a second thought inside a sentence, starting with the curved-up symbol and ending in the curved down parentheses.
Punctuation Dynamics

Sign Language sentences with feeling!

SignWriting, like other writing systems, has punctuation. A dark line at the end of a SignWriting sentence is the equivalent to a period in English. It marks the end of the sentence or phrase. Two lines represent a pause, or comma.

SignWriting can add more feeling to sentences by adding Dynamics Symbols to the Punctuation.

The Fast Symbol represents a sentence executed quickly, with speed. This is similar to an Exclamation Point in English.

Slow, Smooth, Tense and Relaxed Dynamic Symbols can also be placed near Punctuation Symbols to give the feeling of slow, smooth, tense or relaxed sentences.
English Translation: Writing ASL from the Deaf perspective.
English Translation: Where is the house?
English Translation: Baby Bear asks “Who are you?”
Goldilocks saw the bears, became frightened, shot out of the house, and ran all the way home.
Writing Signs

SignSpelling Guideline 1
First, write the Position of Contact

When starting to write a sign, ask yourself: “Is there a Position of Contact in this sign?”. Are the hands contacting each other? Are the hands contacting the Face or Body? Write that Position of Contact first, which becomes the “Center of the Sign”.

When writing the Position of Contact, try to place the two contacting symbols as close to each other as possible. Try to make it look like it does in real life. There should be very little space between the two contacting symbols.

SignSpellings revolve around the Position of Contact like a small universe. The Position of Contact is the Center of the Sign, and the Movement and Contact Symbols relate to that center.

The Position of Contact is important because it holds the meaning in a sign. The eye focuses on the Position of Contact when reading. The Position of Contact is like a unit.

Writing the Position of Contact also creates smaller signs in width and height, which makes writing in vertical columns more centered and compact, making the columns themselves less wide.

Writing the Position of Contact gives a visual picture of the sign. Since you can see the two hands are touching by their close placement, the single Touch Contact Star is rarely necessary. It is not wrong to write the single Touch Contact Star, but it is not necessary either. This simplifies the writing of signs.

Double Touch Contact Stars are written no matter what, because Double Touch, or Touch-Touch, is a movement, not a position. It is only single Touch Contact Stars that can be eliminated.
SignSpelling Guideline 1

The two contacting symbols, such as the Hands and Face, are written close to each other. Then Movement Symbols are placed nearby.

Sometimes the entire sign is nothing but the Position of Contact, with no other symbols needed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correct</th>
<th>Not Correct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Correct Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Not Correct Image" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Correct Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image4" alt="Not Correct Image" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image5" alt="Correct Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image6" alt="Not Correct Image" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image7" alt="Correct Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image8" alt="Not Correct Image" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image9" alt="Correct Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image10" alt="Not Correct Image" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image11" alt="Correct Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image12" alt="Not Correct Image" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Writing Signs

SignSpelling Guideline 2
Every Sign Has A Center

Every sign has a Center, like a little universe (the Sun is the center and the planets rotate around it). The Center of the Sign gives the sign focus for the reader. It is an Anchor, that grabs your attention.

1. The Position of Contact is usually the Center of the Sign:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEET (ASL)</th>
<th>SEE (ASL)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Position of Contact is the Center of this Sign</td>
<td>Position of Contact is the Center of this Sign</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. If there is NO contact, then the Beginning Position is the Center:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CURTAINS (ASL)</th>
<th>YOU (ASL)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beginning Handshapes are the Center of this Sign</td>
<td>Beginning Handshape is the Center of this Sign</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Movement Symbols relate to the Center like planets rotating around the Sun in 8 possible directions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>forward</th>
<th>forward</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>back</td>
<td>back</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The beginning handshape is in the middle of space. The movement symbol "drags the handshape" in different directions.

The beginning handshape is placed near the beginning stem of the arrow.
Writing Signs

SignSpelling Guideline 3
Step-by-Step Writing Process

1. The Position of Contact is written first. It is the Center of the sign.

2. There are 8 possible placements of Movement Symbols around the Center. The arrows PULL or DRAG the hands in the direction of the arrow. Imagine a Movement wheel with 8 spokes:
Step-by-Step Writing Process continued

3. Choose the arrow from the Movement Wheel

If the movement is straight UP, choose the UP arrow. Keep the UP arrow in the same spatial-relationship to the CENTER as it was when all the other arrows were in the Wheel. The UP arrow, in other words, is always placed ABOVE the CENTER of the sign, pulling it UP:
Step-by-Step Writing Process continued

If the movement is straight FORWARD, choose the FORWARD arrow. Keep the FORWARD arrow in the same spatial-relationship to the CENTER as it was when all the other arrows were in the Wheel.

The FORWARD arrow, in other words, is always placed ABOVE the CENTER of the sign, pulling it FORWARD:
Step-by-Step Writing Process continued

If the movement is FORWARD-DIAGONAL, choose the FORWARD-DIAGONAL arrow. Keep the FORWARD-DIAGONAL arrow in the same spatial-relationship to the CENTER as it was when all the other arrows were in the Wheel.

The FORWARD-DIAGONAL arrow is always placed above and to the diagonal:

![Forward Diagonal Diagram]

The Back Arrow is placed BELOW the Center. This means the movement is coming straight back towards your chest...

![Back Diagram]
If the movement is CURVED, choose the CURVE arrow needed. Keep the CURVED arrow in the same spatial-relationship to the CENTER as it was when all the other arrows were in the Wheel.
Step-by-Step Writing Process continued

If the movement is a ROTATION ARROW, choose the ROTATION ARROW needed. Keep the ROTATION ARROW in the same spatial-relationship to the CENTER as it was when all the other arrows were in the Wheel.

If the curve of the Rotation Arrow is curved down, it is usually placed under the hands. If the curve of the Rotation Arrow is curved up, then it is usually placed above the hands.
Step-by-Step Writing Process continued

EXCEPTION: Occasionally arrows can collide with other symbols, such as the Facial Circle or the Shoulder Line. When this happens there is no choice but to place the Movement Arrow a little to the side to avoid the collision. This happens mostly when contacting the Face.

Three ASL Signs that are exceptions:

really

not

good

If the Facial Circle had not been there, these signs would be written like this:
About This Article

Charles-Michel de l’Éppe

written in American Sign Language by Adam Frost

Based on an earlier article signed by Lucinda O’Grady

in ASL on video and transcribed by Charles Butler Neto.

This article appears in the new ASL Wikipedia:

ASL WIKIPEDIA

http://www.signwriting.org/encyclopedia
1 SignWriting Reference Manual
Manual 1: SignWriting Basics
Learn the basics of SignWriting with this slender, 42 page, spiral-bound manual. An introduction to reading and writing any sign language, it gives a summary of hand symbols, contact symbols, finger movements, arm movements, facial expressions, and reading of sign language literature. All examples are in American Sign Language (ASL). Free for download on the web, and only $10.00 in the SignWriting Shop. ISBN: 978-0-914336-49-5

2 SignWriting Reference Manual
Manual 2: SignWriting Hand Symbols, ISWA 2010
This 300-page spiral-bound reference manual devotes a full page to each of the 261 hand symbols of the International SignWriting Alphabet (ISWA 2010), used to write over 40 sign languages on the web in SignPuddle Online. Each page shows one handshape with 6 photos showing 6 different palm facings. The corresponding SignWriting symbol is placed next to each photo. Additional SignWriting instruction is included in the front and the back of the book. ISBN: 978-0-914336-86-0

3 SignWriting Reference Manual
Manual 3: American Sign Language Hand Symbols
This 115-page spiral-bound reference manual devotes a full page to each of the 83 hand symbols used to write American Sign Language in SignWriting. Each page shows one handshape with 6 photos showing 6 different palm facings. The corresponding SignWriting symbol is placed next to each photo. Additional SignWriting instruction is included in the front and the back of the book. Written & photographed by Deaf ASL professor Adam Frost in collaboration with Valerie Sutton. ISBN: 978-0-914336-82-2

4 SignWriting Lessons on the Web
Web lessons show moving handshapes with symbols
Adam Frost’s photos of his own hands move from one palm facing to another, on 261 web pages, each devoted to one of the 261 hand symbols of the ISWA 2010. This popular site is located in SignWriting Lessons Online. Take a visit:

ISWA 2010 Symbol Lessons Online
Animated GIFs by Adam Frost
http://www.signwriting.org/lessons/iswa/