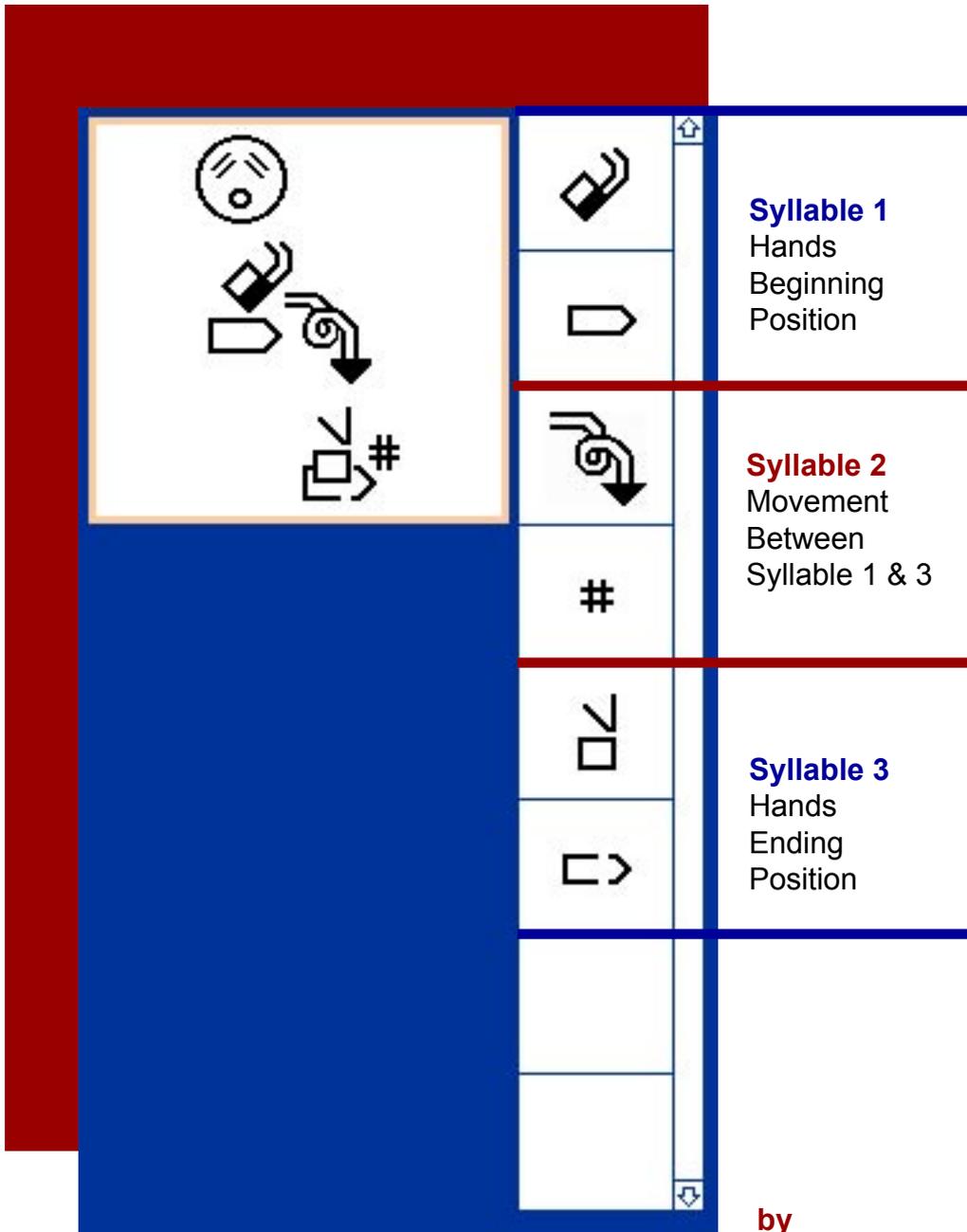


Sutton's

SignSpelling Guidelines 2004

The Order of SignWriting® Symbols Within a Sign



by
Valerie Sutton

**Sutton's
SignSpelling
Guidelines 2004**

**The Order of
SignWriting®
Symbols
Within A Sign**

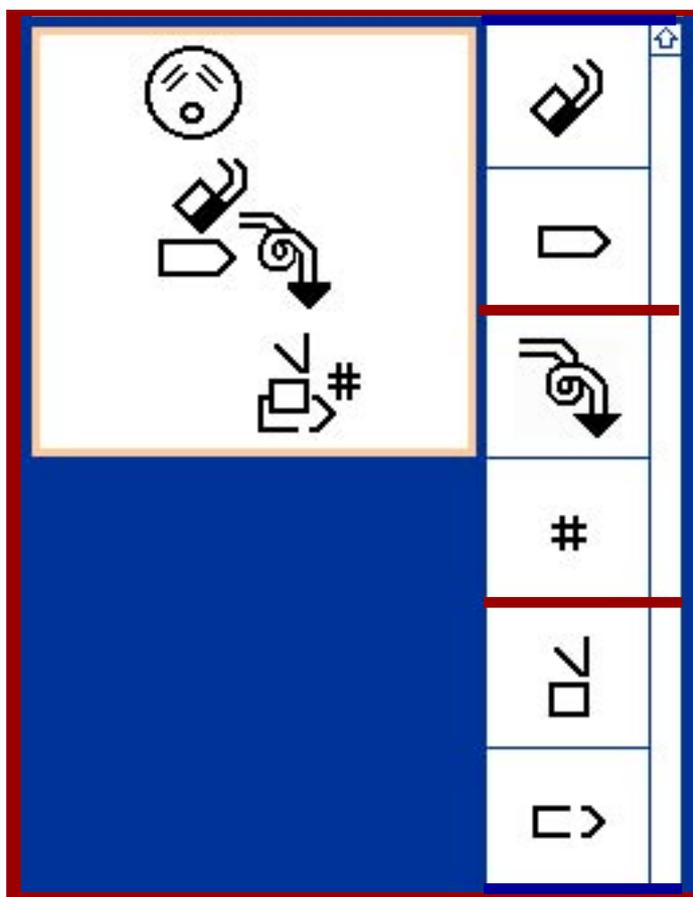
**by
Valerie Sutton**

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Center for Sutton
Movement Writing



SignWriting, a part of Sutton Movement Writing, was first invented by Valerie Sutton in 1974. Development is ongoing to this day, since SignWriting is used by thousands of signers in 27 countries.

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INTRODUCTION

Spoken Language Dictionaries

Dictionaries for spoken languages, such as an English dictionary, or a Norwegian dictionary, use the Roman Alphabet to sort the dictionary in TWO ways...

First, each word has an established SPELLING, that establishes the order of the Roman Alphabet inside ONE word. So a word is a group of Roman Alphabet symbols that are placed sequentially in the order of the sounds that are made when speaking the word.

Second, once each word has its own unique spelling, then all the words are sorted by the Roman Alphabet's alphabetical order, which places the words into groups. The groups are grouped by the Roman Alphabet. All the words that start with "A" are grouped under "A" and so forth...

So there are TWO sequences...one for spelling inside a word, and one for finding the words in groups in the dictionary.

Sign Language Dictionaries

Dictionaries for signed languages, such as American Sign Language (ASL) or Norwegian Sign Language (NSL), do not use the Roman Alphabet to sort by signs. Instead, Sign Language dictionaries are sorted by SignWriting symbols, in TWO different ways...

First, each sign has an established spelling, which establishes the order of the SignWriting symbols inside ONE sign. This is called a SignSpelling (SS). But an SS is not linear. It is not written from left to right. The symbols are in visual clusters. The reader reads the cluster, or unit, as one whole, but there is a sequential order to reading the cluster, and that sequential order becomes the SS.

Second, once each sign has its own unique SignSpelling, then all the signs are sorted by the Sign-Symbol-Sequence (SSS), which places the signs into groups. The groups are grouped by the SSS. Signs can be found in the dictionary, based on what handshape starts the sign, in the sequence of the SSS.

The Difference Between the SS and the SSS...

Both the SS and SSS are necessary to create printed dictionaries sorted by signs.

1. SignSpellings (SS)

The order of SignWriting symbols inside one sign. SignSpellings divide each sign into Sign-Syllables...The Sign-Syllables establish in each sign, which cluster of symbols comes first, second etc...

2. Sign-Symbol-Sequence (SSS)

The entire list of SignWriting symbols placed in a specific order, so that once a SignSpelling is established, the dictionary can sort those signs into groups, so that dictionary users can find the signs based on their handshape and other details.

SignWriting has clusters of symbols that form to make a visual unit. These visual units do have a sequence...but it is not written from left to right. Instead, sometimes the symbol that is the first in the sign, can be placed underneath the face. Sometimes the hands begin at the bottom of the sign, following the up arrows up to the top of the cluster, and other times it can start in the center of the sign, moving out, etc. So even though the SignWriting movements are sequential, visually they are not strung from left to right, as in spoken languages.



The purpose of this manual is to teach the rules behind establishing SignSpellings (SS). The SSS is explained in a separate manual.

Questions?! Feel free to write to me anytime!

Valerie Sutton
Sutton@SignWriting.org

SymbolBank and SignSpelling Databases

In SignBank, there are two separate databases working together, to create Sign-To-Word Dictionaries. The SSS is established by the **SymbolBank Database**, but SignSpellings are established in the **SignSpellings Database**...The two databases can be seen in the SignBank Editor program, in two separate columns:

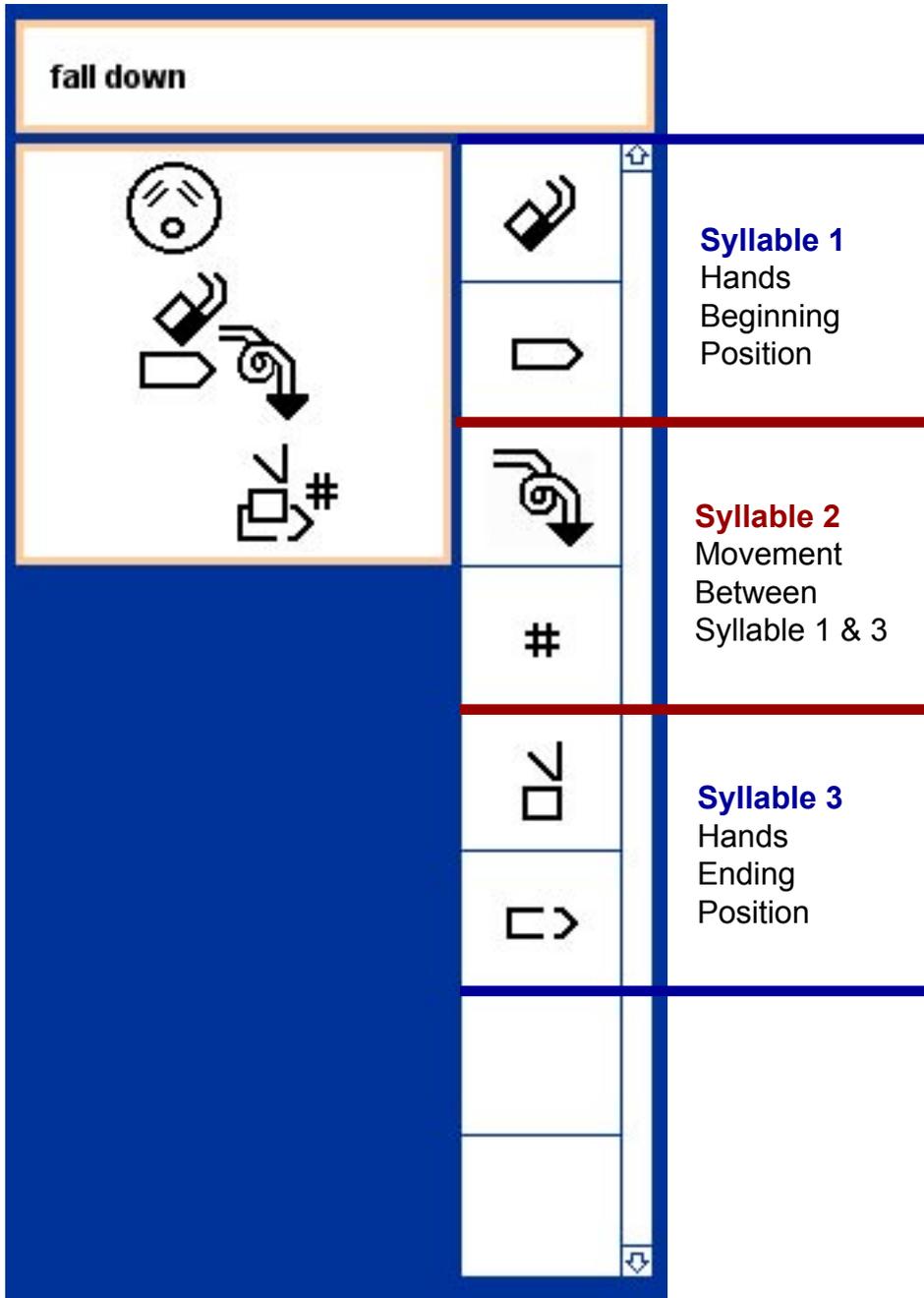
The screenshot displays the SignBank Editor interface with the following components:

- SignBankEditor.fp5**: The main application window title.
- SymbolBank Database**: A vertical column on the right labeled **SSS** containing a list of symbols. A callout box points to this column with the text: "SymbolBank Database creates the SSS".
- SignSpelling Database**: A vertical column on the left labeled **SignSpelling** containing a list of symbols with associated numbers and delete icons. A callout box points to this column with the text: "SignSpelling Database creates the Spelling Column".
- Selected Symbol**: A box at the bottom right showing the currently selected symbol from the SignSpelling database.
- alarm**: A text label in a box below the main workspace.
- Main Workspace**: A large area containing a symbol with the text ****** and a house icon.

Symbol	Number
⌋	1
⌋	2
**	3

SignWriting Syllables

A SignSpelling consists of a series of **SignWriting Syllables**. Syllables are written sequentially in time. Syllable 1 always comes before Syllable 2. But inside each Syllable, time stands still. The symbols inside one Syllable are "happening at the same time". So SignSpellings are BOTH simultaneous and sequential.



Syllable Spelling Order

Each **SignWriting Syllable** has its own spelling order. Syllables 1 and 3 are Hand Syllables. Syllable 2 is a Movement Syllable.

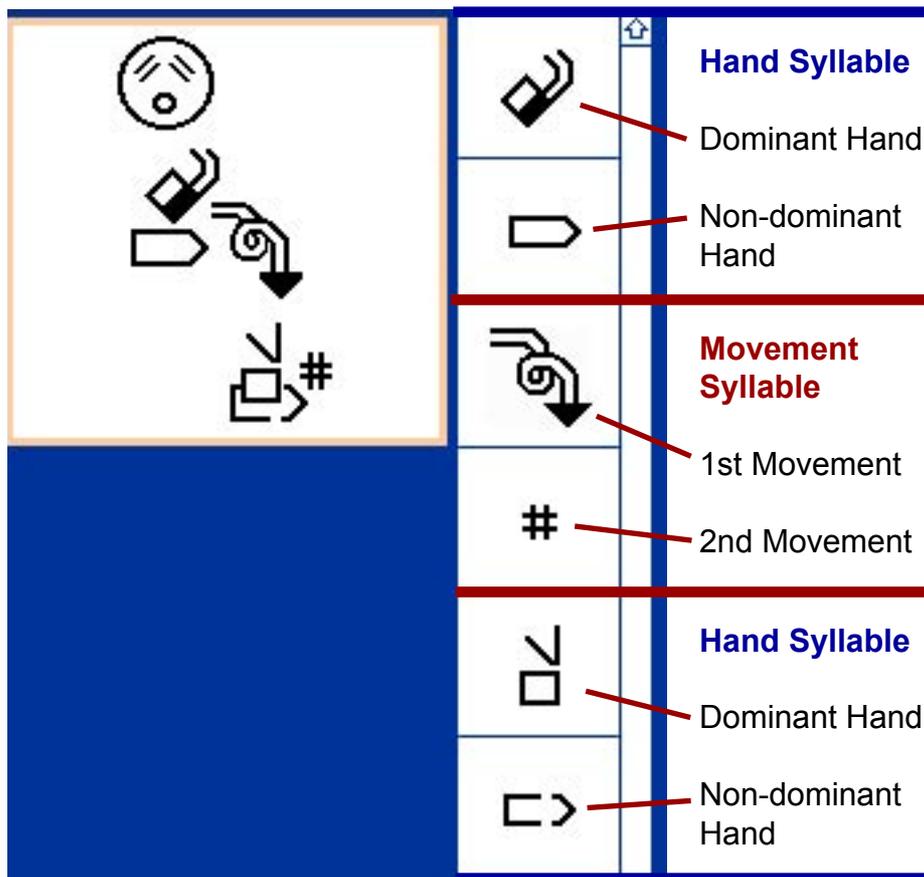
Basic or Detailed Spellings?

There is a choice. You can choose to spell with simplicity or you can choose to spell with great detail. It depends on the length of your dictionary. A big dictionary requires more detailed spellings.

Simple Spellings (Basic)

Hand Syllables: 1. Dominant Hand. 2. Non-Dominant Hand.

Movement Syllables: 1. Movement of dominant hand. 2. Movement of non-dominant hand (in the sequence that it happens in time).



Detailed Syllable Spelling Order (Most Detail Possible)

Hand Syllables

1. Dominant Hand
2. Non-Dominant Hand
3. Location Dominant
4. Location Non-Dominant
5. Arm Position
6. Shoulder Position
7. Head Position
8. Facial Expression
9. Syllable Depth Location

Movement Syllables

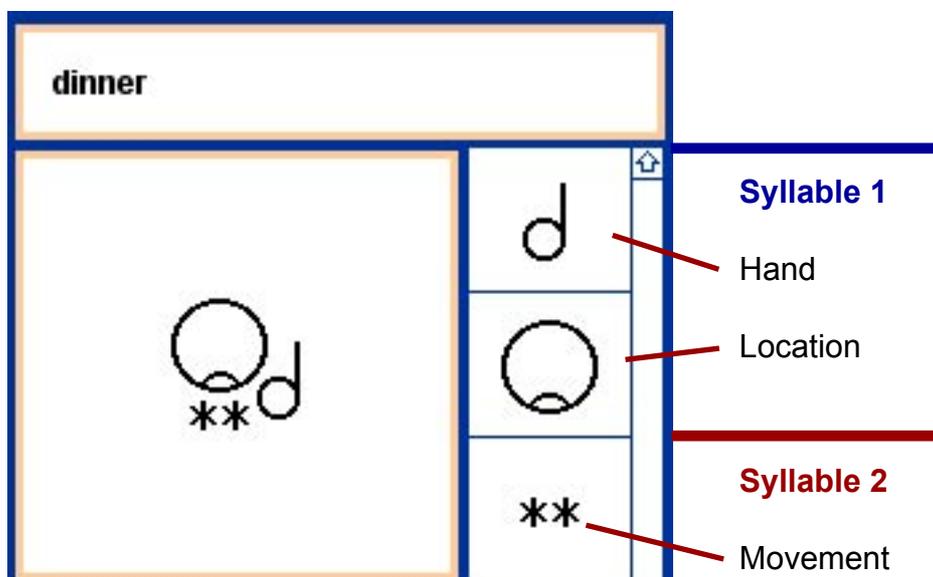
1. 1st Movement Dominant
2. 1st Movement Non-Dominant
3. 2nd Movement Dominant
4. 2nd Movement Non-Dominant
5. Syllable Depth Location

Choose Meaningful Details

Most spellings are neither detailed nor basic, but instead are somewhere in-between. Too many Location Markers are rarely needed. Try to find a "happy medium"...Not too much detail, but just a enough to differentiate between similar signs...

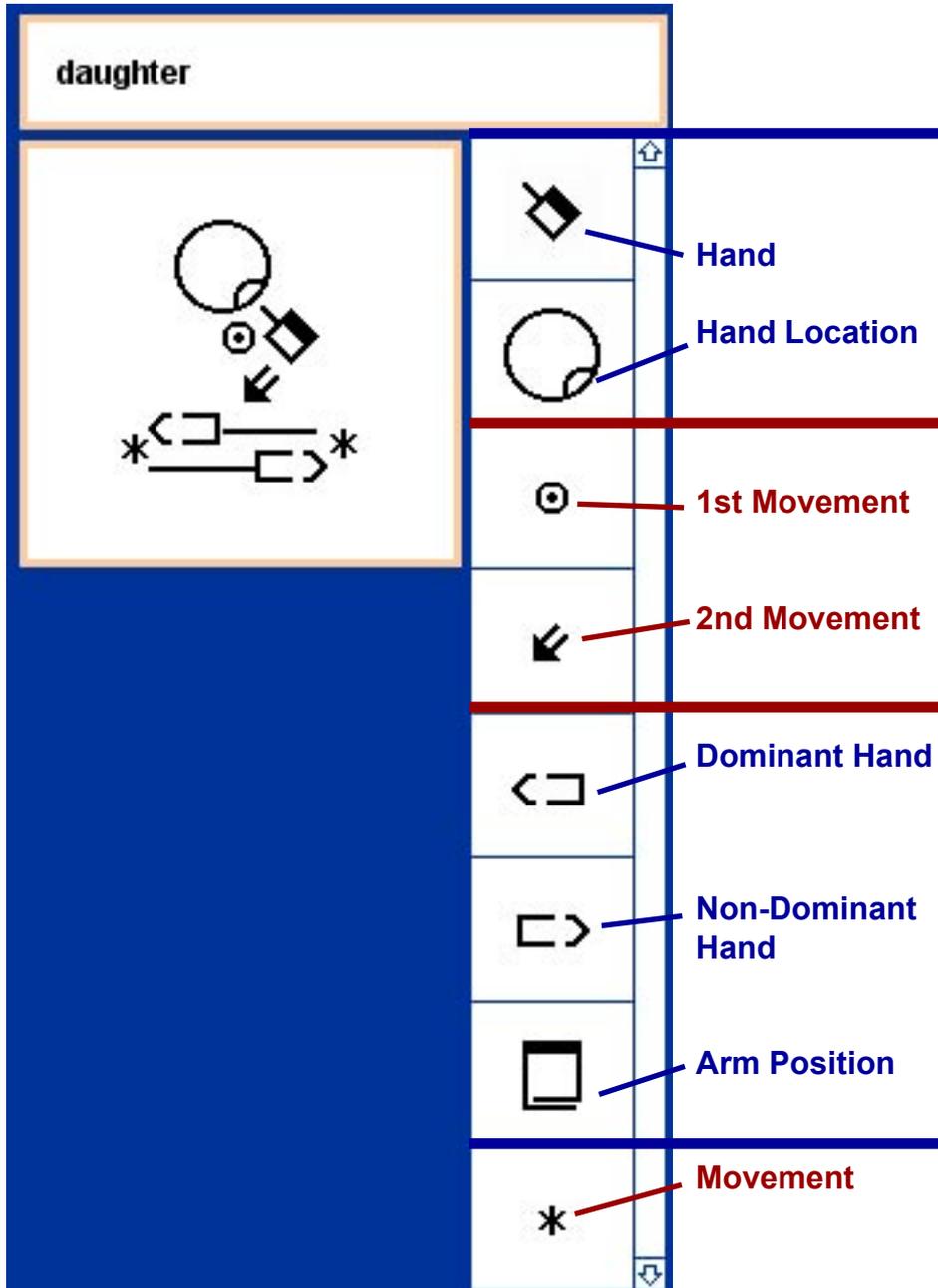
Location That Has Meaning Should Be Included

In the example below, the location marker for the hand is on the chin, and is a necessary part of the spelling, since it gives meaning to the sign. When location gives "meaning" it should be included:



SignSpelling Examples

The sign for "daughter" in American Sign Language:



SignSpelling Examples

When No Hand Dominates

Even though these hands are equal, and one is not dominating the other, we have to choose one or the other to be first. So keep your choice (right or left) consistent with the rest of the entries in the dictionary.

Dominant and Non-Dominant Movements

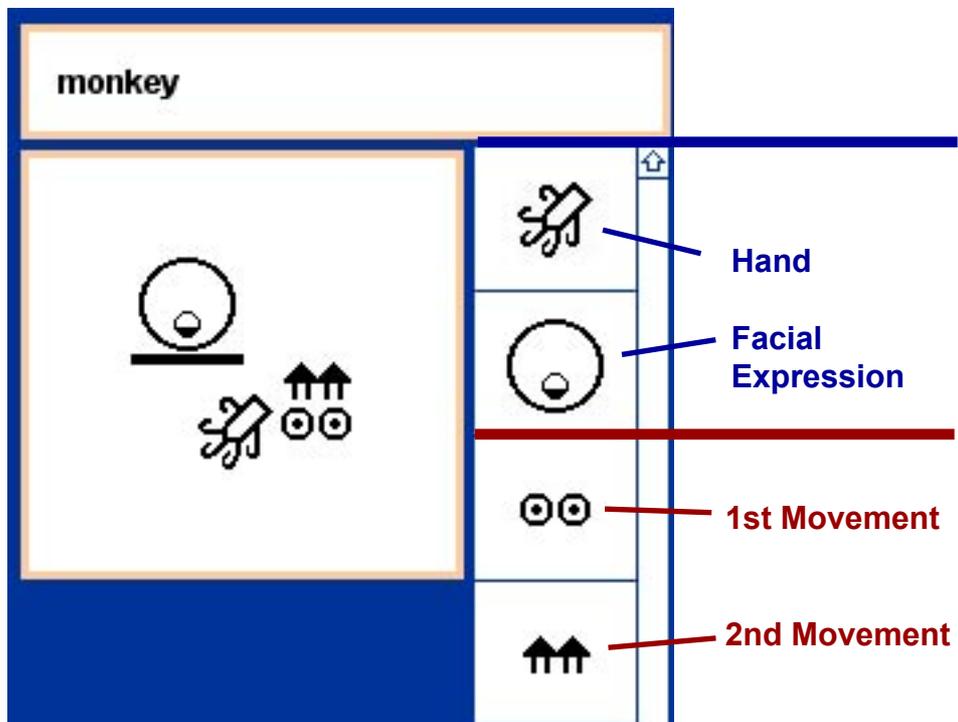
The movement for the dominant hand is placed first, and the movement for the non-dominant hand is placed second.

rabbit	
	 Dominant Hand
	 Non-Dominant Hand
	 Dominant Hand Location
	 Non-Dominant Hand Location
	 Movement Dominant Hand
	 Movement Non-Dominant Hand

SignSpelling Examples

Facial Expressions

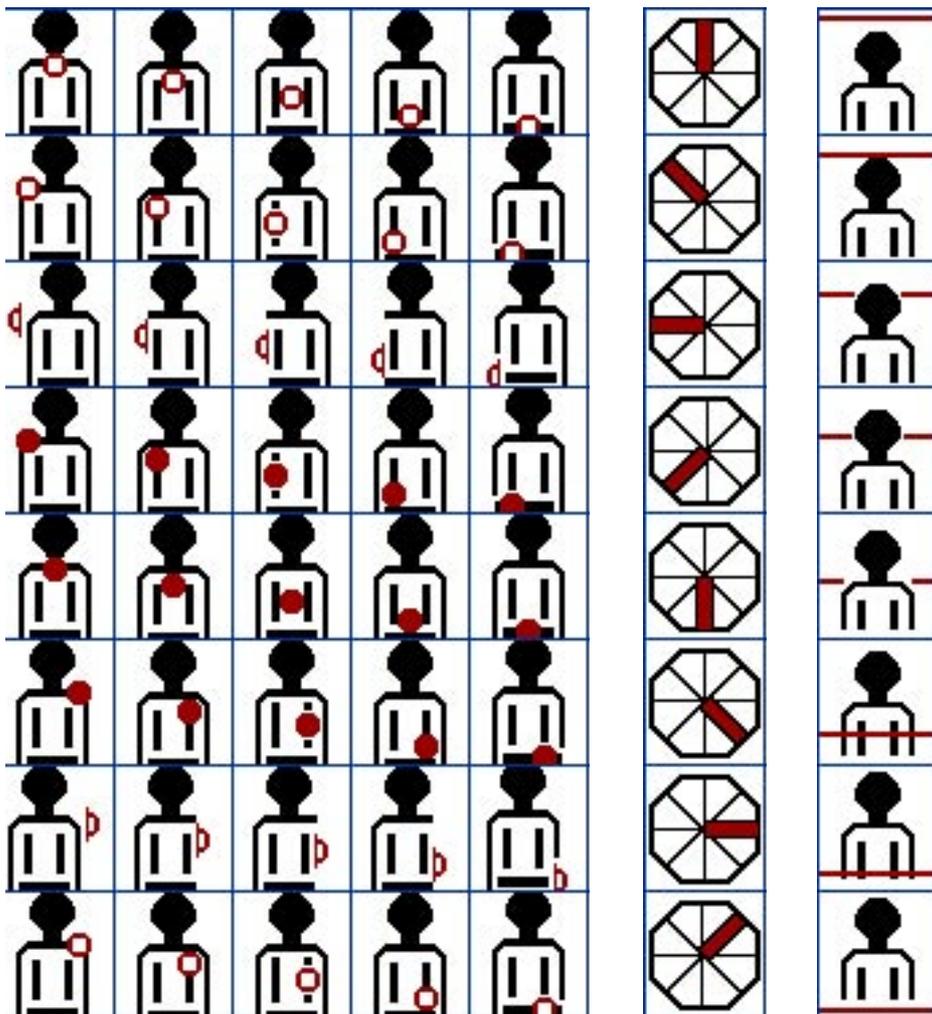
When a Facial Expression gives true meaning to a sign, then it should be included in the spelling. In the sign for "monkey" below, the mouth is open and the tongue is resting on the bottom of the mouth. That just looks like a monkey! The Facial Expression is placed at the end of the beginning Syllable.

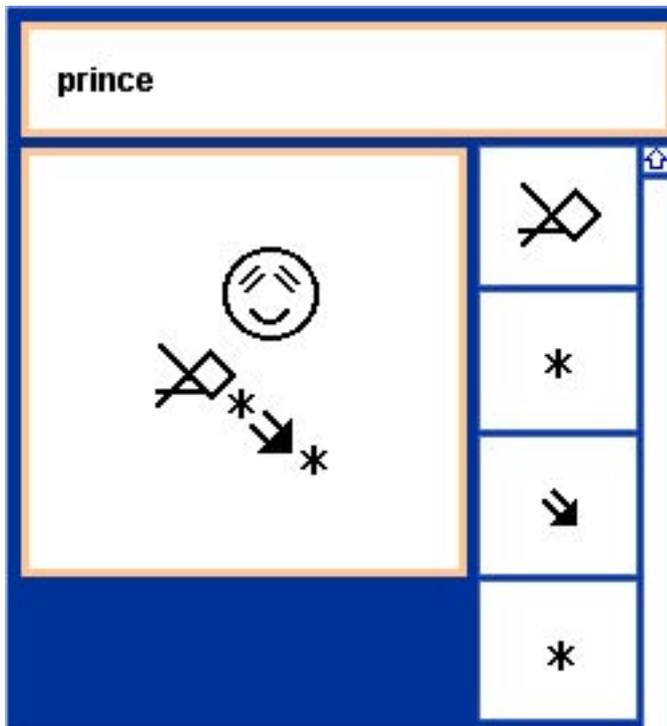


"Pronunciation Guides"

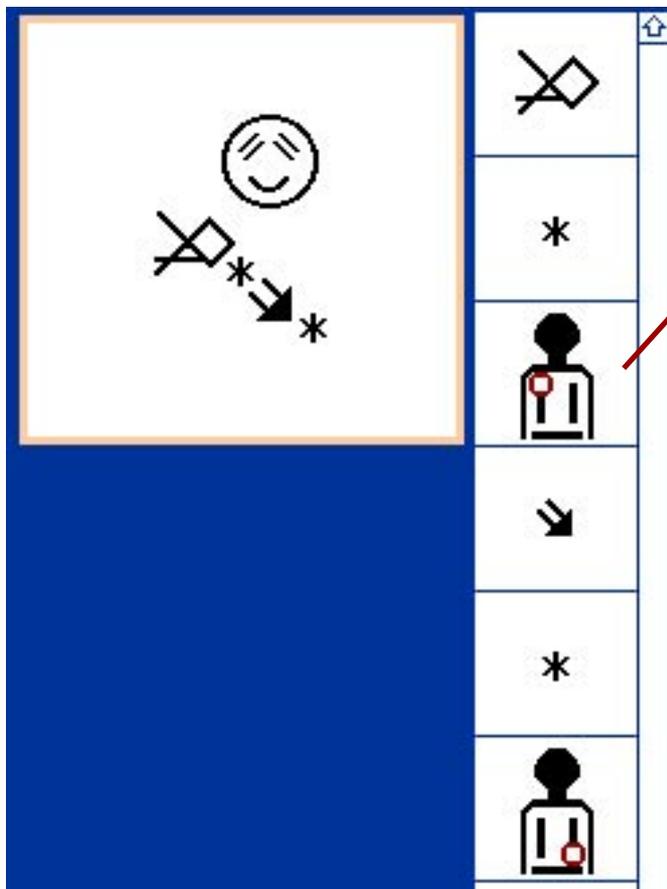
SignWriting can be sorted by detailed Location Markers that are not actually written in the signs themselves. The markers show precise location of contact on the body, or precise location in space. They can also show a dictionary-reader how to "produce" a sign properly. Is there something comparable in spoken languages? This question was discussed on the SignWriting List on November 2, 2002. Bill Reese, a SignWriting List member wrote: "In a way, it seems a bit like the pronunciation guides given in a dictionary for how to pronounce a word. All the marks for that are not in the spelling of the word itself. This sent me looking for a dictionary. In my dictionary, it lists the spelling of the word, broken up into syllables, followed by the pronunciation of the word in parenthesis." Bill Reese

Some Location Markers in SignBank for Research Use





Simplified
Spelling
For
Everyday Use



Detailed
Spelling
For Research

These little men are Location Markers. They represent location for computer sorting.

Meanwhile, the little men are NOT actually written in the sign itself. In the real writing, the location is obvious because the hand placement and contact is underneath the head in the center of the body, so the centering under the head establishes the location.

Sorting Dictionaries by Sign-Symbols

Ten Sections to Sign Language Dictionaries

Sign-to-Word dictionaries are sorted by Sign-Symbol-Sequence (SSS). First, all signs are placed under one of these ten sections. These are the section headers in the dictionary (see next 2 pages):



01-01-001-01: Index Finger



01-02-001-01: Index-Middle Fingers



01-03-001-01: Thumb-Index-Middle Fingers



01-04-001-01: Four Fingers



01-05-001-01: Five Fingers



01-06-001-01: Baby Finger



01-07-001-01: Ring Finger



01-08-001-01: Middle Finger



01-09-001-01: Index-Thumb



01-10-001-01: Thumb



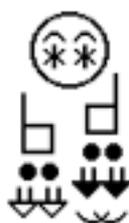
Germany



one



mouse



cry



dream



eleven



temperature



red



black





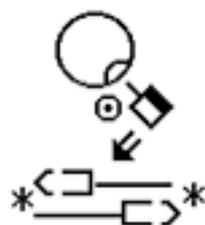
nineteen



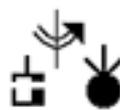
letter



seventeen



daughter



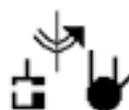
sixteen



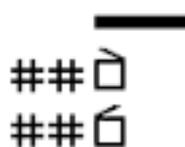
girl



ten



eighteen



army



Establishing Spellings in the SignBank Editor

The screenshot shows the SignBank Editor interface. At the top, a sign is displayed with a hand icon and the text "**". Below this, the word "alarm" is entered. The main panel is titled "SignSpelling" and contains a list of spelling symbols. The list is as follows:

Symbol	Number
□	1
■	2
□	3
**	4

Each row in the list has a trash icon to its right. On the left side of the list, there are labels: "Insert Lookup Header Symbol 1-10" (pointing to the first row), "Insert Spelling Symbol 1" (pointing to the second row), "Insert Spelling Symbol 2" (pointing to the third row), and "Insert Spelling Symbol 3" (pointing to the fourth row).

This sign needs the following information:

1. Lookup Header
This is the Hand-Group of Spelling Symbol 1.
2. Spelling Symbol 1
Dominant Hand
3. Spelling Symbol 2
Non-Dominant Hand
4. Spelling Symbol 3
Dominant Movement



airplane

Establishing Spellings in the SignBank Editor

This sign needs the following information:

SignSpelling

Insert Lookup Header Symbol 1-10

Insert Spelling Symbol 1

Insert Spelling Symbol 2

1. Lookup Header
This is the Hand-Group of Spelling Symbol 1.

2. Spelling Symbol 1
Dominant Hand

3. Spelling Symbol 2
Dominant Movement



Establishing Spellings in the SignBank Editor

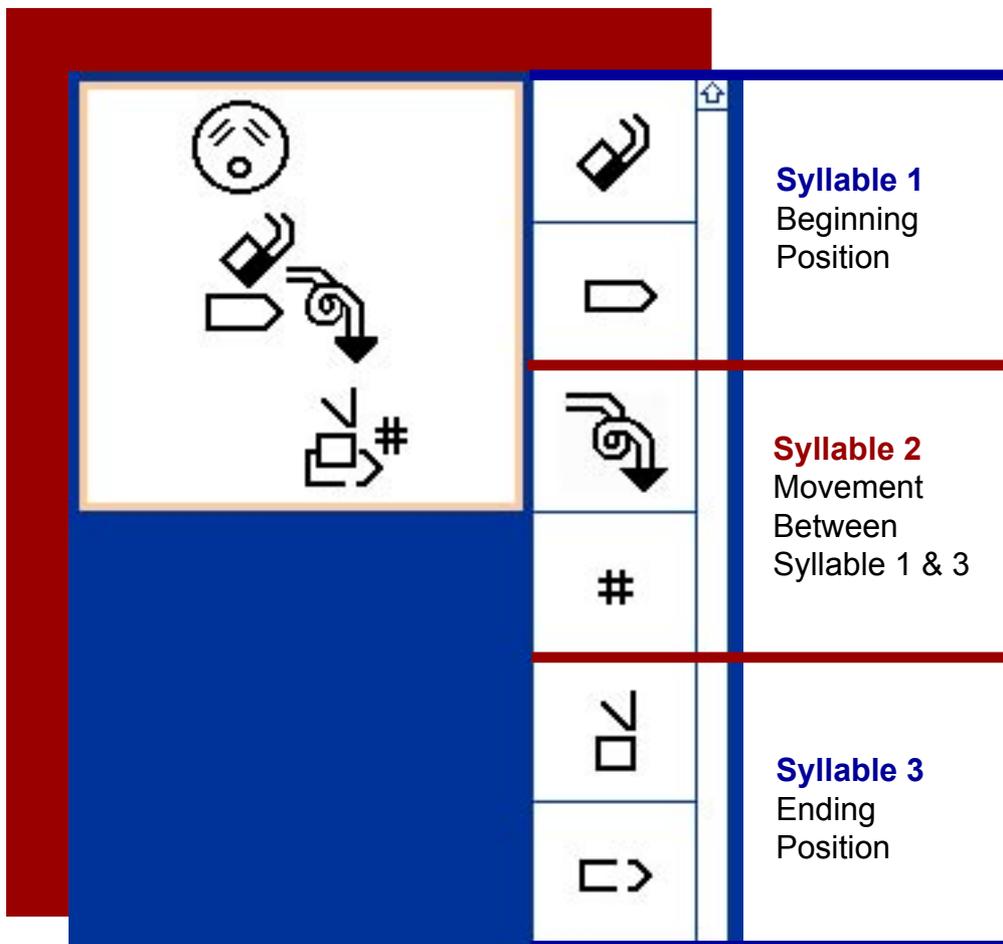
apple

SignSpelling

Insert Lookup Header Symbol 1-10		1
Insert Spelling Symbol 1		2
Insert Spelling Symbol 2		3
Insert Spelling Symbol 3		4
Insert Spelling Symbol 4		5

This sign needs the following information:

1. Lookup Header
This is the Hand-Group of Spelling Symbol 1.
2. Spelling Symbol 1
Dominant Hand
3. Spelling Symbol 2
Dominant Location
4. Spelling Symbol 3
Dominant Movement 1
5. Spelling Symbol 4
Dominant Movement 2



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