

5 Parameters in American Sign Language: Course 4 Day 21

1. Handshape - This is the shape of your hand that is used to create the sign.
2. Movement - This is the action that makes the sign.
3. Palm orientation - This is the orientation of your palm.
4. Location - This is the location of the sign on your body.
5. Non-manual Markers - This is the various facial expressions or body movements that are used to create meaning.

It's important to note that changing any of the five parameters of a sign could change the meaning of a sign.

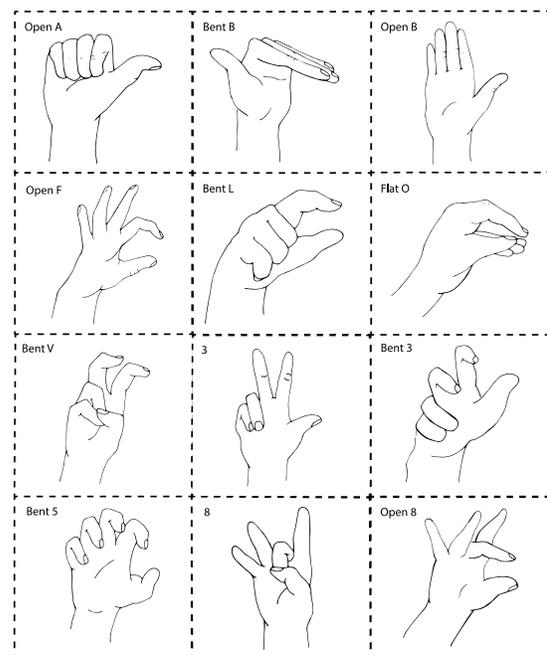
Parameter #1: Handshape

Specific handshapes are used to form a sign. In addition to the American Sign Language alphabet and number signs, there are modified handshapes commonly used. It is important to know how to accurately form these handshapes. Changing the handshape can change the meaning of a sign.

Examples: MIND-KNOW, PLEASE-SORRY
(ENERGY – MUSCLE – POWER
AUTHORITY)

Hand Shapes

Name _____
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Parameter #2: Movement

The movement of a sign is the action used to create the sign. Movements vary depending on the intent of the sign. It can move up and down, forward or backward, repeatedly, in an arch, etc. If you change the movement, you can change the meaning of a sign.

Examples: ONLY-ALWAYS, HOW MUCH-MANY, SUNRISE-SUNSET

Parameter #3 Palm Orientation:

This refers to the direction in which your palm is facing. Most common orientations are: up, down, forward, inward, or to the side. A sign often changes throughout the production of a sign (i.e. DON'T WANT). If you change the palm orientation, you could be changing the meaning of the sign.

Examples: SICK-SICK OF YOU, AGAINST-AGAIN, CHEESE-MOVIE

Parameter #4 Location:

The location is where you place and form the sign. If you change the location, you could be changing the meaning of the sign.

Examples: REMEMBER-SURGERY, TALL-SHORT, MINE-YOURS-THEIRS

Parameter #5: NMM

Facial expressions fall under the category of "non-manual markers" (NMM). Non-manual markers consist of the various facial expressions, head tilting, shoulder raising, mouthing, and similar signals that we add to our hand signs to create meaning.

There are approximately 100 mouth movements in ASL that are used to convey an adverb, adjective, or a description to give meaning to a sign. If you change your NMM, you could be changing the meaning of the sign.

Examples: LATE-NOT YET, RAIN-POUR DOWN (HAPPY-VERY HAPPY, WH?, YES/NO, FINISH)