

ASL has its own syntax (the arrangement of words and phrases to create a sentence).

**ASL's syntax structure is TOPIC-then-COMMENT.** This is also referred to as "subject" – then "-predicate" sentence structure. The topic is what you are talking about and the comment makes observations about that topic. Topic is for the first item mentioned in a sentence (whether it is the subject or object) and the comment follows, referencing the topic. NOTE: Topics are accompanied by eyebrows up, lean in, brief hold. Then relax for the object of the sentence.

English: The boy is throwing the ball.      The ball is being thrown by the boy.  
ASL: BOY, THREW BALL.                      BALL, BOY THREW.

English: The student read a book.              The book was read by the student.  
ASL: STUDENT, BOOK READ FINISH.        BOOK, STUDENT READ FINISH.

**ASL is flexible with "subject" - "verb" - "object" order.** This is because it depends on what you are trying to do: explain, remind, confirm, negate, or cause to consider.

**If time is established, the sentence structure is: "TIME" "TOPIC" "COMMENT."**

English: Last week, my class was good.      ASL: WEEK-PAST, CLASS GOOD

**ASL does not use "being verbs".**

It is conveyed in head nods or with signs like "HAVE" OR "TRUE".

Note: Drop the "am" and instead nod your head.

English: I am a teacher.                      ASL: I TEACHER (head nod yes)

Practice sentences:

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|----------------------------------|--|
| 1. My dog is a girl.             | _____T ___C __Index (point)<br>MY DOG, GIRL SHE          |
| 2. I met your brother yesterday. | _____time _____T ___C<br>YESTERDAY, YOUR BROTHER, I MET. |
| 3. Hand me your phone.           | _____T _____C<br>YOUR PHONE, GIVE-ME.                    |
| 4. The student threw the paper.  | _____T _____C<br>STUDENT, PAPER THREW.                   |