

Skill Development Activity: IMPROVING FINGERSPELLING AND NUMBERS

These activities assume that the interpreter is already competent in English spelling. If English spelling is deficient, it should be addressed as a prerequisite.

Activities:

For receptive skill development:

- View a recording of a Deaf person signing a narrative.
- As fingerspelled items occur, stop the tape and write the recognized letters on a sheet of paper. Attempt to record at least the beginning and ending letter.
- After viewing the narrative in its entirety, review the list of fingerspelled items and use your closure skills to determine what the fingerspelled items might be. If you cannot identify the word specifically, identify it in terms of whether it is the name of a person, place, thing, event, or miscellaneous item.
- Repeat viewing the narrative and insert your anticipated word. Evaluate whether it fits in terms of form and content. If not, repeat the process, trying to isolate additional letters.
- Repeat the process with a variety of narratives.

For expressive skill development:

- View a recording of a Deaf person signing a narrative.
- As fingerspelled items occur, stop the tape and generate your own spelling production of the word.
- After completing the viewing and production of each fingerspelled item, replay the narrative. This time, fingerspell the words simultaneously as they appear in the narrative. In other words, shadow the fingerspelling.
- Replay the narrative one more time. This time, shadow sign the entire text, including the fingerspelled items as they occur within context.
- As a final step, generate your own rendition of the narrative, incorporating the appropriate fingerspelled items in a natural manner. This step is a re-telling of the text in your own words, but retaining the incorporation of the fingerspelled items as they occurred in the narrative.
- Repeat the process with a variety of narratives.

Both of these activities can be used with numbers as well as with fingerspelled items.

Maintain a journal of fingerspelled items and numbers that you observe in interactions with Deaf Community members. Review and practice the production of these items in isolation and in a self-generated context on a regular basis. Have a colleague drill you from your journal for receptive skill practice.

Resources

Free Online Materials

ASL Storytime from the Department of Sign Language and Interpretation at Gallaudet University

- This series includes three volumes, each containing stories with a broad variety of ASL features.
- Available on YouTube.
 - Volume 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HLxddLdxbOw>
 - Volume 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wAGx5CXgmTU>
 - Volume 3: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xqx4wCZoCMU>

NOTE: These stories are good for practice of many ASL features so use them with other instructional sheets in addition to this one!

TerpTalks from the National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers (NCIEC)

- This series includes diverse ASL and English texts available for practice interpreting.
- There is no charge for accessing these materials, although you may be required to register to access.
- Available on NCIEC's website: <http://www.interpretereducation.org/tim/terptalks/browse/>

Purchasable Materials

The following resources may be available for use from your local interpreter education program or through your public library. If the library does not have them, request that they purchase them for community use.

ASL Numbers: Developing Your Skills from Sign Media (www.signmedia.com)

- This series teaches the rules and patterns of ASL's complex numbering systems. Each part of the series features explanations and demonstrations of a variety of Deaf models signing numbers in context.
- Check your comprehension and production with the practice drills included.
- Lecture information is presented in ASL with a spoken English voice-over.

Fingerspelling: Expressive and Receptive Fluency by Joyce Groode from DawnSignPress

(<https://www.dawnsign.com/store>)

- This resource includes a 24-page instructional booklet and Vimeo On Demand.
- The focus is on receiving and producing fingerspelled items as units of meaning.

Fingerspelling Practice Tapes from Sign Media (www.signmedia.com)

- This series includes four parts simulating real life situations by showing a wide variety of fingerspelling rates, rhythms, and styles and includes both male and female, left and right handed signers. Camera angles allow you to practice reading fingerspelling from a variety of conversational views.
- Each of the hour-long parts concludes with a 40-item multiple choice tests for your use in evaluating progress. As well, each part contains two instructional sections and a self-correcting comprehensive section.

Interpreter Practice Materials from Sign Media (www.signmedia.com)

- This set of 33 DVDs includes 12 simultaneous texts, 12 consecutive texts, 7 one-to-one situations, 2 small groups, 6 ASL texts and 6 English texts.
- Excellent for individual, study group, or classroom skill development exercises.