

Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education

ASL Skills Checklist



Enter date when skills observed at imitative stage, elicited stage, and mastered spontaneous stage. Zone of proximal learning is determined by 10 skills in a row mastered spontaneously and 10 skills in a row not mastered spontaneously. Mastered spontaneously should only be marked if student demonstrates without model or prompt and the skill is observed multiple times. Results should be reported as: *Child's proximal zone of ASL skills range from kindergarten to 2nd grade.* (example for report wording)

Student Name:	DOB:	Age:	
Skill:	Stage:		
KINDERGARTEN	Imitated	Elicited	Spontaneous
Recognize common high-frequency signs (e.g., LIKE, WANT, WHY)			
Recognize signs incorporate agentive suffix (e.g., TEACHER = TEACH+PERSON, PILOT = PLANE+PERSON)			
Recognize signs with inflections (e.g., comparatives, superlatives, and plural; SIT-FOR-A-LONG-TIME, SHE-GIVES-HIM)			
Identify meaning of numerically incorporated signs (e.g., 1-YEAR-OLD vs. ONE-O'CLOCK = TIME+ONE)			
Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and signing to compose a visual-story map narrating a single event or several loosely linked events, tell about the events in the order in which they occurred, and provide a reaction to what happened			
Use the full range of handshapes			
Form plural nouns by modifying parameters			
Use question signs and non-manual markers (e.g., WHO-Q, WHAT-Q, WHY-Q, WHERE-Q, HOW-Q, WHEN-Q)			
Use the most frequently occurring prepositions through referents (e.g., CL: 3 CAR NEXT-TO CL-5 TREE, HURT-ON-TUMMY)			
Produce and expand complete sentences in shared language activities			
Use non-manual markers and classifiers to produce frequently occurring adjectives and adverbs			
Produce sentences with indicating verbs (e.g., BOY-THERE-TELL-ME)			
Use pronouns as spatial referents (e.g., BOTH-OF-US, BOTH-OF-THEM, CL: 1 person)			
Use inflection to indicate temporal markers (e.g., movement, non-manual signals)			
Use role-shifting and/or non-manual markers to represent categories (e.g., shapes, food) to gain a sense of the concepts the categories represent			
Confirm understanding of storytelling or storysigning or information signed or through other media by asking and answering questions about key details and requesting clarification if something is not understood			

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FIRST GRADE	Imitated	Elicited	Spontaneous
Produce phonological groupings (sign families and patterns, e.g., positions of power at shoulder area: BOSS, CAPTAIN, COLONEL; feelings at chest area: HAPPY, ANGRY, THRILLED)			
Demonstrate correct principles of numbering systems (i.e., cardinal numbers and ordinal numbers)			
Use classifiers to show location of one object or person in relation to others (e.g., referents and prepositions)			
Sign informative/explanatory texts in which they name a topic, supply some facts about the topic, and provide some sense of closure			
Sign opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or name the text they are signing about, state an opinion, supply a reason for the opinion, and provide some sense of closure			
Sign narratives in which they recount two or more appropriately sequenced events, include some details regarding what happened, use temporal signs to signal event order, and provide some sense of closure			
Ask and answer questions about what a signer says in order to gather additional information or clarify something that is not understood			
Raise hands into signing frame space			
Use common, proper, and possessive nouns. (e.g., name signs, open palm to demonstrate possessiveness)			
Use temporal signs to convey a sense of past, present, and future (e.g., YESTERDAY I EAT, EAT I nms-NOT-YET)			
Use frequently occurring descriptive classifiers and other adjectives (e.g., DCL, ECL, SCL, ICL, BCL)			
Produce simple sentences with indicating verbs using eye gaze and locative signs			
Use frequently occurring conjunctions (e.g., PLUS, OTHER, THAT, list form, head nod)			
Use numerical incorporation			
Use the manipulation of non-manual markers in topicalization			
With teacher scaffolding, understand and use figurative language versus literal language using metaphors, similes, and analogies (e.g., EAT-YOUR-WORDS, EYES-POP-OUT)			
Distinguish shades of meaning through non-manual markers (e.g., WORK-LONG-TIME nmm: teeth vs. WORK-LONG-TIME nmm: pursed lips)			

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SECOND GRADE	Imitated	Elicited	Spontaneous
Manipulate phonological parameters to play on signs (e.g., SMALL-WORLD with pinky, UNDERSTAND with four fingers or pinky to show intensity)			
Distinguish shades of meaning among closely related inflectional verbs (e.g., TOSS, THROW, HURL) and closely related adjectives through use of depiction and nonmanual markers (e.g., CL: 1 YOUNG-PERSON, CL: BENT 1: OLD PERSON)			
Create complex sentences to indicate a sequence of events and use step-by-step instructions using correct sequence markers (e.g., transition words)			
Produce rhetorical questions			
Produce simple and complex conditional sentences			
Produce simple and complex sentences with indicating verbs using plural pronouns as referents. (e.g., I-GIVE-THEM, THEY-TOLD-US)			
Manipulate spatial referents when incorporating frequently occurring prepositions through classifiers, eye gaze, and locative signs (e.g., role shifting, CL: 5 BIG-HOUSE-nearby, CL:5 BIG-HOUSE-far away)			
Use frequently occurring conjunctions (e.g., WHY-Q, WRONG, FINISH, HAPPEN)			
Maintain hands in signing frame space			
Recount or describe key ideas or details from a storytelling or storysigning or information signed or through other media			
Sign narratives in which they recount a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events, including details to describe actions, thoughts and feelings, use temporal signs, inflections, and phrases to signal event order, and provide a sense of closure			

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THIRD GRADE	Imitated	Elicited	Spontaneous
Introduce the topic or text they are signing about, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure that lists reasons			
Provide reasons that support the opinion			
Use linking signs and phrases (e.g., CL: 3-LIST, FOR-FOR-Q, spatial referents) to connect opinion and reasons			
Use linking signs (e.g., SAME, SECOND, UNDERSTAND++) to connect ideas within categories of information			
Sign narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using character introduction, natural sequence of events, and dialogue			
Use temporal signs, inflections, and phrases to signal event order			
Utilize full breadth of signing frame space			
Use frequently occurring descriptive classifiers and other adjectives (e.g., BPCL, LCL, MCL)			
Use frequently occurring conjunctions (e.g., PLUS, OTHER, FOR-FOR)			
Use frequently occurring phonology through depictions, eye gaze, and locative signs (e.g., VEHICLE-cl NEXT-TO HOUSE, HURT-ON-TUMMY)			
Create compound sentences with indicating verbs to demonstrate sequences of events (e.g., THEY-GAVE-US-I-GIVE- HER)			
Produce compound sentences using negations or as conditionals			
Can produce, evaluate, and ensure subject-verb-object agreement			
Distinguish literal and nonliteral meanings of signs and phrases in context (e.g., READ-MIND, STUCK)			
Distinguish shades of meaning among related words that describe states of mind or degrees of certainty (e.g., KNEW, BELIEVE, SUSPECT, HS: 1 THINK, two hands HS: 1 THINK)			
Use signs that signal spatial and temporal relationships (e.g., JUST-NOW CAR ALMOST HIT BIKE, LUCKY CL: 3 BIKE-STOP-QUICK)			

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FOURTH GRADE	Imitated	Elicited	Spontaneous
Demonstrate command of the structure of standard ASL grammar and usage when signing			
Choose signs and phrases to convey ideas precisely			
Explain the meaning of simple similes and metaphors (e.g., BRAIN+CRACK, MIND+BLOW) in context			
Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific signs, fingerspelled words, and phrases, including those that signal precise actions, emotions, or states of being (e.g., PUZZLED, STUMPED) and that are basic to a particular topic (e.g., ANIMALS, PRESERVE, and DANGER+SHRINK) when discussing animal preservation)			
Use dialogue (role-shifting) and description to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations			
Link ideas within categories of information using signs and phrases (e.g., OTHER, ALSO, RH-Q WHY, list referents)			
Link opinion and reasons using signs and phrases (e.g., FOR EXAMPLE, RH-Q HOW, ALSO, IDEA-SAME, ADD)			

FIFTH GRADE	Imitated	Elicited	Spontaneous
Link opinion and reasons using signs, phrases, and clauses (e.g., THEREFORE, HAPPEN, SPECIFICALLY)			
Link ideas within and across categories of information using signs, phrases, and clauses (e.g., POINT, use contrastive structure, conditionals)			
Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue (role-shifting), description, and pacing, to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations			
Explains rules of a game or sport in an accurate but simple way			
Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific signs, fingerspelled words, and phrases, including those that signal contrast, addition, and other logical relationships (e.g., UNDERSTAND++, BUT, B-U-T, #BUT, CAN, RESULT-WHAT-Q)			

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SIXTH GRADE	Imitated	Elicited	Spontaneous
Use words, phrases, depiction, and clauses (e.g., RELATE; PARALLEL-TO; ALIKE; SAME+IDEA) to clarify the relationships among claim(s) and reasons			
Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters			
Use a variety of transition signs, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another			
Use precise signs, depiction, and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events			
Vary sentence patterns for meaning, viewer interest, and style			
Recognize variations from standard ASL in their own and others' signing and identify and use strategies to improve expression in conventional language			

SEVENTH GRADE	Imitated	Elicited	Spontaneous
Fingerspell correctly and use a chaining approach when introducing new academic signs			
Use precise signs, depiction, and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events			
Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text			

EIGHTH GRADE	Imitated	Elicited	Spontaneous
Use a variety of transition signs, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence, signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another, and show the relationships among experiences and events			

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HIGH SCHOOL	Imitated	Elicited	Spontaneous
Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in signs in order to address a question or solve a problem			
Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases			
Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation and its significance, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events			
Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome (e.g., a sense of mystery, suspense, growth, or resolution)			
Use precise signs and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters			
Defines abstract nouns by mentioning key features or functions			
Understands and produces slang			
Provides clear and detailed explanation of rules of a game or sport			