

# Sign Language on the Internet

by Judith Maginnis Kuster

Free sign language resources are abundant on the Internet and have a variety of uses. Sign language with verbal stimulation is often recommended for children with normal hearing who have language delays; finger-spelling can reinforce spelling skills; and children and adults with hearing impairments and hearing family members often use sign.

Students in communicative disorders and deaf education programs often learn American Sign Language (ASL), and it is also taught in classes on sensitivity to disability. The Internet contains many excellent materials to provide practice.

## Signed Alphabet

Bill Vicar's ASL University provides ASL hand shapes for the letters of the English alphabet ([www.lifefprint.com/asl101/fingerspelling/abc.htm](http://www.lifefprint.com/asl101/fingerspelling/abc.htm)), downloadable PC or Mac versions of finger spelling font ([www.lifefprint.com/asl101/pages-layout/gallaudettruetypefont.htm](http://www.lifefprint.com/asl101/pages-layout/gallaudettruetypefont.htm)), and manual alphabet charts ([www.lifefprint.com/asl101/topics/sign-language.htm](http://www.lifefprint.com/asl101/topics/sign-language.htm)).

Practice deciphering signed words of varying lengths and at different speeds (<http://asl.ms/>).

See a video demonstrating the signed alphabet and an ASL fingerspelling chart ([www.coloroflanguage.com/fingerspelling.htm](http://www.coloroflanguage.com/fingerspelling.htm)).

My Smart Hands offers an excellent video of the ABC song/ASL alphabet (search "My Smart Hands" at [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)).

Type in letters or words to see them finger-spelled in animation ([www.pbs.org/wnet/soundandfury/culture/sign\\_flash5.html](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/soundandfury/culture/sign_flash5.html)).

Funbrain's "Sign the Alphabet" ([www.funbrain.com/signs/index.html](http://www.funbrain.com/signs/index.html)) displays a sign and the student enters the correct answer.

Make your own finger-spelling flash cards from downloadable illustrations at Apples for the Teacher ([www.apples4theteacher.com/asl/flashcards/lettersabcd.html](http://www.apples4theteacher.com/asl/flashcards/lettersabcd.html)), Enchanted Learning ([www.enchantedlearning.com/language/asl/flashcards/](http://www.enchantedlearning.com/language/asl/flashcards/)) and ABC Teach ([www.abcteach.com/directory/basics/sign\\_language/flashcards/](http://www.abcteach.com/directory/basics/sign_language/flashcards/)).

## Signed Vocabulary Words

Michigan State University's American Sign Language Browser (<http://commtechlab.msu.edu/sites/aslweb/browser.htm>), the ASL dictionary of words and a few phrases ([www.lifefprint.com/dictionary.htm](http://www.lifefprint.com/dictionary.htm)) and Signing Savvy ([www.signingsavvy.com/](http://www.signingsavvy.com/)) provide videos of ASL signs.

ASLPro.com ([www.aslpro.com/](http://www.aslpro.com/)) provides a fingerspell quiz ([www.aslpro.com/cgi-bin/aslpro/fingerspell.cgi](http://www.aslpro.com/cgi-bin/aslpro/fingerspell.cgi)) as well as a main dictionary and religious, conversational, and ASL for babies dictionaries.

Static and animated finger-spelling quizzes with answers and with no answers are available in the ASL University site ([www.lifefprint.com/asl101/fingerspelling/index.htm](http://www.lifefprint.com/asl101/fingerspelling/index.htm)).

Basic ASL: First 100 Signs ([www.lifefprint.com/asl101/pages-layout/concepts.htm](http://www.lifefprint.com/asl101/pages-layout/concepts.htm)) and Sign Language for Babies ([www.aslpro.com/cgi-bin/aslpro/aslpro.cgi](http://www.aslpro.com/cgi-bin/aslpro/aslpro.cgi)) have ASL signs used frequently by parents and their young children.

Lesson Tutor's Dictionary Index ([www.lessontutor.com/eesASLdictionarylinks.html](http://www.lessontutor.com/eesASLdictionarylinks.html)) has ASL words illustrated in simple line drawings.

K8AIT Sign Language Dictionary (<http://wings.avkids.com/Book/Signing/index.html>) has animated signs.

## Comprehension Practice

Signwriting Children's Stories ([www.signwriting.org/library/children/](http://www.signwriting.org/library/children/)) has several children's stories (including *The Cat in the Hat*) and poems in sign.

On "Sign Design," the PBS character Arthur demonstrates how to sign a name, ask questions, and more (<http://pbskids.org/arthur/print/signdesign/>).

"Sign Language Games" from Kiddie Signs has six free sign language activities ([www.kiddiesgames.com/en/sign\\_language\\_games.php](http://www.kiddiesgames.com/en/sign_language_games.php)).

Video Examples of ASL by Douglas Dunn ([www.wordwiz72.com/interp/aslvideos.html](http://www.wordwiz72.com/interp/aslvideos.html)) has links to ASL interpretation of Dr. Martin Luther King's speeches and songs including John Lennon's "Imagine" and Elton John's "World Without Borders."

Free sign-language-learning videos are available online by registering with the Described and Captioned Media Program ([www.dcmp.org/About/Default.aspx](http://www.dcmp.org/About/Default.aspx)), which also lends video materials. To find ASL materials on this Web site, open "Browse" then "Deafness," then "Sign Language." Among the popular

videos available for streaming are the Bravo Family Beginning ASL Video courses.

PBS' "Voices of Deafness" ([www.pbs.org/wnet/soundandfury/culture/voices.html](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/soundandfury/culture/voices.html)) has several short video clips featuring individuals who are deaf. It offers material for learning about deaf culture or turn off the audio and practice understanding sign.

ASL University has 45 lessons to download ([www.lifeprint.com/asl101/lessons/lessons.htm](http://www.lifeprint.com/asl101/lessons/lessons.htm)), a free 84-page workbook ([www.lifeprint.com/asl101/curriculum/index.htm](http://www.lifeprint.com/asl101/curriculum/index.htm)), lessons in deaf culture ([www.lifeprint.com/asl101/pages-layout/culture1.htm](http://www.lifeprint.com/asl101/pages-layout/culture1.htm)), and an extensive directory of common abbreviations and terms ([www.lifeprint.com/asl101/pages-layout/culturestudyguide.htm](http://www.lifeprint.com/asl101/pages-layout/culturestudyguide.htm)).

Lifelinks ([www.lifelinks.net](http://www.lifelinks.net)) is an on-demand video interpreting and relay service that offers live translation service for those with hearing impairments. The site also contains short ASL educational videos ([www.lifelinks.net/videos.html](http://www.lifelinks.net/videos.html)) on health and medical topics.

Keith Wann, a comedian who is deaf, provides several ASL comedy clips ([www.keithwann.com/clips.html](http://www.keithwann.com/clips.html)).

Finally, for additional practice in interpreting signed English, check DeafVIDEO TV

(<http://asl.deafvideo.tv/>), ASL vloggers ([www.deafvideo.tv/vloggers/](http://www.deafvideo.tv/vloggers/)), or search for ASL videos (enter "ASL" at <http://video.google.com/>).

*Judith Maginnis Kuster, MS, CCC-SLP, is a professor in the Department of Speech, Hearing, and Rehabilitation Services at Minnesota State University, Mankato. Contact her at [judith.kuster@mnsu.edu](mailto:judith.kuster@mnsu.edu). An archive of Kuster's columns can be found at [www.mnsu.edu/comdis/kuster4/leader.html](http://www.mnsu.edu/comdis/kuster4/leader.html). Links from previous columns, however, may no longer be functional.*