

INTRO TO ASL

Week 1: Introduction to ASL and Basics

Student Handout

Topics:

1. What is ASL?
 - Definition: American Sign Language (ASL) is a complete, natural language that uses hand movements, facial expressions, and body language to convey meaning. It is primarily used by the Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities in the United States and parts of Canada.
 - Key Features:
 - Visual language
 - Distinct grammar and syntax different from English
 - Incorporates non-manual markers (e.g. facial expressions, body posture)
2. A Brief History of ASL:
 - Early influences: ASL originated in the early 1800's, influenced by French Sign Language (LSF) and homegrown signing systems in America.
 - Key figure: Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet traveled to France to learn from Laurent Clerc, a Deaf educator, and together they founded the American School for the Deaf in 1817.
 - Evolution: Over time, ASL developed independently, becoming a rich and fully developed language.
3. Introduction to Deaf Culture:
 - Core Values: Community, visual communication, and shared experiences.
 - Importance of Identity: The term "Deaf" (with a capital "D") refers to cultural identity and pride, while "deaf" (lower case "d") refers to the audiological condition.
 - Etiquette:
 - Maintain eye contact.
 - Don't interrupt visual conversations.
 - Use visual cues to get someone's attention (e.g., light tapping on the shoulder).
 - Avoid Assumptions: Many Deaf individuals value their culture and do not see deafness as a disability.
4. ASL Grammar Basics:
 - Subject-Verb-Object structure.
 - Pointing for pronouns (he/she/it/this) and sweeping motions for plural pronouns (they/those/you-all).

Vocabulary

Greetings & Polite Expressions	Actions	Identity & Roles	Pronouns & Demonstratives	Numbers	Church Vocabulary
-Thank you -Nice/clean -No -Yes -What -Where -Who -Why	-Again -Learn -Like -Meaning -Meet -Sign -Slow -Understand	-Deaf -Hearing -Student -Teacher -Name	-He/she/it/me/you/this (point) -They/them/those (sweeping) -You all (sweeping)	-1 -2 -3 -4 -5 -6 -7 -8 -9 -10	-Church -Prayer -Bible -Worship -God