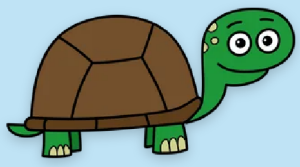
AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE · DEAF CULTURE AND MANNERS · GRADES 2–5

What Is ASL?

Read about American Sign Language and answer the questions.

Name: _____ **Date:** _____



Read

American Sign Language, or ASL, is a language you see instead of hear. Signers use their hands, their faces and their bodies to share ideas. Many Deaf and hard of hearing people in the United States and much of Canada use ASL, and so do their families and friends.

ASL is not English on the hands. It has its own words and its own grammar, the rules for putting signs together. A sentence in ASL often puts its signs in a different order than English does.

Sign language is not the same all over the world. Many countries have their own. British Sign Language is very different from ASL, even though people in both countries speak English. ASL is related to French Sign Language, because a Deaf teacher from France helped start the first lasting school for the deaf in America in 1817.

Fingerspelling, spelling a word letter by letter, is one part of ASL. Signers use it for names, places and words that do not have a sign.

Answer the questions.

What does ASL stand for?

_____

Signers use their hands. What else do they use?

_____

Is ASL the same as English? How do you know?

_____

Is sign language the same everywhere in the world?

_____

When do signers use fingerspelling?

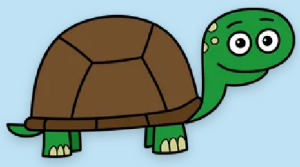
_____

Art © Kevin Coulston

ANSWER KEY · DEAF CULTURE AND MANNERS · GRADES 2–5

Answer Key: What Is ASL?

Answers for grown-ups. Where kids write their own ideas, the key shows one example.



Read

American Sign Language, or ASL, is a language you see instead of hear. Signers use their hands, their faces and their bodies to share ideas. Many Deaf and hard of hearing people in the United States and much of Canada use ASL, and so do their families and friends.

ASL is not English on the hands. It has its own words and its own grammar, the rules for putting signs together. A sentence in ASL often puts its signs in a different order than English does.

Sign language is not the same all over the world. Many countries have their own. British Sign Language is very different from ASL, even though people in both countries speak English. ASL is related to French Sign Language, because a Deaf teacher from France helped start the first lasting school for the deaf in America in 1817.

Fingerspelling, spelling a word letter by letter, is one part of ASL. Signers use it for names, places and words that do not have a sign.

Answer the questions.

What does ASL stand for?

American Sign Language

Signers use their hands. What else do they use?

Their faces and their bodies

Is ASL the same as English? How do you know?

No. It has its own words and grammar.

Is sign language the same everywhere in the world?

No. Many countries have their own.

When do signers use fingerspelling?

For names, places and words with no sign

Art © Kevin Coulston