

Fingerspelling Etiquette

How to hold your hand, and when to spell at all

Forming the letters

1

Dominant hand only

If you are right handed, spell with your right hand. Pick one hand and stay with it.

2

Do not bounce

Hold your hand steady and let the letters change. Bouncing makes them hard to read.

3

Palm faces out

Your palm points toward the person you are talking to. The letter **H** is the exception.

Double letters

Slide

These letters slide sideways when they double.

O A S L M E R

Bounce

These letters bounce when they double.

B C D F G I N P R T

The Z exception

Double **Z** does not follow either rule. Watch how it is made inside a word such as **pizza**.

When do we fingerspell?

1

Names of places

Cities, states, streets, and buildings.

2

Proper nouns

People's names, brands, and titles.

3

Words we don't know

If you do not have the sign yet, spell it.

4

For emphasis

Spelling a word you could sign makes it stand out.

5

Words that are simply easy to spell

Some short words come out faster spelled than signed. It depends on the conversation — **car** is a common one.