

The many meanings of *last*

Name _____

Date _____

DIRECTIONS

The word *last* is printed in bold in every sentence below. Read each group and notice how its meaning shifts — and how the sign changes along with it. Then write your own sentences on the blank lines.

1 FINAL IN ORDER

coming after everyone or everything else

- ♦ The smallest puppy ate **last**.
- ♦ He was **last** to recite his poem.
- ♦ She was in the **last** stage of cancer.

2 BEFORE (PREVIOUS)

the one just past, most recently gone by

- ♦ That happened **last** night.
- ♦ **Last** week we went to the Michigan Bean Factory.
- ♦ My son's Bar Mitzvah was **last** year.

3 COMPLETE (THE END OF)

nothing more of it is left to come

- ♦ I hope we haven't seen the **last** of Mark.
 - ♦ That's the **last** of that situation.
 - ♦ We haven't seen the **last** of her.
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4 CONTINUE (ENDURE)

to keep going, to hold up over time

- ♦ Shoes **last** longer if you polish them.
 - ♦ How long did the movie **last**?
 - ♦ Good quality materials always **last** longer.
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5 FINALLY

after a long wait, at the end of it all

- ♦ At long **last**, it stopped raining.
 - ♦ At **last**, he is here.
 - ♦ That's it! At **last** we won.
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6 HIGHEST (FINAL AUTHORITY)

the top of the ladder; nothing ranks above it

- ♦ The Ph.D. is the **last** degree in educational circles.
 - ♦ The Supreme Court has the **last** word in the interpretation of American Law.
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7 FINE (POLITE)

the newest and most stylish; the height of fashion

- ◆ This is the **last** thing in haircuts.
 - ◆ Jean skirts seem to be the **last** thing in fashion.
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CHALLENGE

In most of these groups *last* describes something – which one, or when. In one group *last* is an action word instead: it tells you that something keeps going. Find that group. Then write one sentence where *last* is an action, and one where *last* describes. Would you sign them the same way?

THINK ABOUT IT

All seven groups use the same English word, but they do not share the same meaning – and in ASL they do not share the same sign. Choose one of your own sentences from each group and be ready to sign it for the class.