

Twenty project ideas built around ASL grammar. They are grouped by the structure each one practices, so you can pick a project for whatever you are teaching this week. Most scale up or down by level — shorten the sentence count for ASL 1, raise it for ASL 3. **The tag on each card tells you what students actually produce.**

Word order and sentence structure

Topic-comment, time-topic-comment, and the habit of leading with what the sentence is about.

1 Gloss Rewrite Lab

Students take a set of English sentences, rewrite each one in ASL gloss with correct word order, then film both versions and compare.

Analysis

2 Topic-Comment Card Deck

Students build a deck of topic cards and comment cards, draw one of each, and sign the sentence. Wrong pairings get funny fast, which is the point.

Game

3 Time-Topic-Comment Weather Report

Students deliver a short weather or news report, leading every sentence with the time marker before the topic.

Performance

4 Word Order Detective

Students watch a signed clip, transcribe it in gloss, and label the structure used in each sentence.

Analysis

Questions, negation, and conditionals

The grammar that lives on the face as much as the hands.

5 The Eyebrow Experiment

Students film the same sentence three times — as a statement, a yes/no question, and a wh-question — changing nothing but the eyebrows.

Video

6 Classmate Interview

Students interview a partner using at least ten wh-questions, then present what they learned back to the class.

Performance

7 Negation Sort

Students sort signed sentences by how the negation is built: headshake alone, NOT, NONE, or negative incorporation such as DON'T-LIKE.

Analysis

8 If / Then Story Chain

Each student adds one conditional sentence to a chain story, holding the brow raise through the if-clause before delivering the result.

Performance

Space, referencing, and classifiers

Setting things up in space and keeping them there.

9 Two-Character Scene

Students establish two referents in space and hold both placements through an entire dialogue without losing track.

Performance

10 Classifier Storyboard

One student describes a scene using only classifiers. A partner draws what they understood, then the two compare drawing to intent.

Game

11 Give Me Directions

Students give directions from the school to a chosen place using spatial referencing and locative classifiers.

Performance

12 Referent Tracking Chart

Students watch a signed narrative and chart where each referent was placed and whether the signer maintained it.

Analysis

Verbs, time, and aspect

How ASL marks who did what to whom, and when.

13 Directional Verb Chain

A sentence passes around the circle and each student changes who is giving what to whom, using only the direction of the verb.

Game

14 ASL Timeline Map

Students build a visual timeline and place time signs along it, showing how past sits behind the body and future ahead of it.

Build

15 Aspect Inflection Video

Students film one verb inflected three ways — for duration, for frequency, and for continuity — and explain what changed.

Video

16 Number Incorporation Calendar

Students build a personal calendar using number-incorporated time signs such as TWO-WEEK and THREE-MONTH.

Build

Discourse and register

Longer stretches of language, and adjusting for who is watching.

17 Role Shift Retelling

Students retell a short story with two or more characters, using role shift so the audience always knows who is speaking.

Performance

18 Register Switch

Students deliver the same message three times: to a close friend, to a teacher, and to a large audience.

Performance

19 Grammar Error Hunt

Students watch clips containing deliberate grammar errors, identify what went wrong, and sign the corrected version.

Analysis

20 Personal Grammar Reference

Students build their own grammar reference with a filmed example of every structure covered this term.

Portfolio

Why these work

ASL grammar is hard to learn from a rule list, because most of it only shows up in real sentences — on the face, in the space, in the direction a verb travels. These projects put students inside the structure instead of asking them to memorize it, and every one of them produces something you can assess.