

Non-Manual Markers

Twelve reinforcement activities, and what to prepare for each

How to use this

Twelve ways to make students practise the face rather than only the hands. Each card says what students do, then lists the two things you need to make or gather beforehand.

Tick the boxes as you build your materials. Most are reusable once made, and several share the same reference chart — that chart is on page 3.

Activities

1 Facial expression practice

Students produce individual markers and check what their own face is actually doing.

TO PREPARE

- ☐ **Handout** — images of expressions such as raised eyebrows or puffed cheeks, each paired with the grammar it carries
- ☐ **Mirrors** — a compact mirror per student

2 Emotion charades

One student conveys an emotion using face and body alone. The class guesses.

TO PREPARE

- ☐ **Emotion cards** — words or pictures for happy, confused, angry, and so on
- ☐ **Scoring sheet** — a tally sheet to track guesses

3 Video analysis

Students watch signed material and name the markers they catch.

TO PREPARE

- ☐ **Video links** — ASL storytelling or dialogue from trusted channels
- ☐ **Checklist** — common markers to watch for — furrowed brows for WH-questions, head tilt for rhetorical questions

4 Storytelling challenge

Students tell a short story, graded on whether the face carries the grammar.

TO PREPARE

- ☐ **Story prompts** — cards with situations such as a lost dog, or an ideal vacation
- ☐ **Rubric** — a simple scale for markers, clarity, and creativity

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Activities, continued

5 Emoji to ASL

Students turn an emoji into a signed sentence with the marker that fits it.

TO PREPARE

- ☐ **Emoji flashcards** — cards with room to write the sentence they come up with
- ☐ **Emoji chart** — a reference linking emojis to emotions and matching markers

6 Contrastive structures

Students set two topics against each other using body shift and markers.

TO PREPARE

- ☐ **Visual guide** — diagrams of body shift contrasting two topics, such as dogs and cats
- ☐ **Practice sentences** — incomplete sentences students finish with a contrast

7 Sentence transformation

One neutral sentence, signed several ways to carry different tones.

TO PREPARE

- ☐ **Sentence list** — neutral sentences to be made happy, sarcastic, or surprised
- ☐ **Tone guide** — a cheat sheet of tones and the markers that produce them

8 ASL Mad Libs

Students fill blanks in glossed sentences and supply the marker each one needs.

TO PREPARE

- ☐ **Templates** — fill-in-the-blank gloss sentences that call for markers
- ☐ **Prompt guide** — suggested markers by sentence type — furrowed brows for WH-questions

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The last four activities, and the marker reference they all use

Activities, continued

9 NMM bingo

You sign; students mark the marker they saw.

TO PREPARE

- ☐ **Bingo boards** — squares for eyebrows raised, pursed lips, head shake, and the rest
- ☐ **Cheat sheet** — what each marker looks like and what it does grammatically

10 Role-playing scenarios

Pairs act out an everyday situation, with the markers doing the grammatical work.

TO PREPARE

- ☐ **Scenario cards** — asking for directions, ordering at a restaurant, and similar
- ☐ **Feedback form** — peer or teacher notes on marker use

11 Simon Says

Students produce the marker you call, at speed, and drop out when they miss.

TO PREPARE

- ☐ **Reference chart** — the markers in play — head nod, eyebrows raised, and so on
- ☐ **Tracker** — a sheet for counting correct markers per student

12 Video and image examples

A reference set to build once and reuse across every other activity here.

TO PREPARE

- ☐ **Flashcards** — images of expressions, with QR codes to demonstration videos if you want them
- ☐ **Photo examples** — stills of signed sentences captioned with the marker in use

Marker cheat sheet

MARKER	WHAT IT DOES
Eyebrows raised	Marks a yes/no question. Held across the whole question, not just the last sign.
Eyebrows lowered	Marks a WH-question — who, what, when, where, why, how.
Head shake	Negation. Runs across the signs being negated.
Head nod	Affirmation, or confirming what was just signed.
Head tilt	Rhetorical questions, and conditional if-clauses.
Body shift	Contrast between two topics, or a change of speaker in dialogue.