

ASL Grammar Quick Reference Sheets

This reference guide summarizes key ASL grammar concepts for easy student use.

1. Sentence Structure

- ASL typically uses Topic-Comment structure.
- Example: ENGLISH: 'I am going to the store.' → ASL: STORE I GO.

2. WH- Questions

- WH- words often go at the end of the sentence.
- Use furrowed brows and a head tilt.
- Example: 'Where are you going?' → YOU GO WHERE?

3. Yes/No Questions

- Raise eyebrows, tilt head forward, and hold last sign.
- Example: 'Are you hungry?' → YOU HUNGRY YOU?

4. Non-Manual Markers (NMMs)

- WH- Questions: furrowed brows
- Yes/No Questions: raised eyebrows
- Negation: head shake
- Affirmation: head nod
- Topic markers: raised brows with slight pause

5. Negation

- Use head shake and/or the sign NOT.
- Example: 'I don't like coffee.' → COFFEE I LIKE NOT.

6. Directional Verbs

- Verb movement shows subject and object.
- Example: GIVE, SHOW, HELP: can indicate who is doing what to whom.

7. Time Indicators

- Time comes first in a sentence.

- Example: 'Yesterday I went to school.' → YESTERDAY SCHOOL I GO.

8. Classifiers

- Represent nouns or describe size/shape/movement.
- Types: CL:1 (person), CL:3 (vehicle), CL:5 (group), CL:B (flat surface), etc.

9. Role Shifting

- Used to show dialogue or multiple perspectives.
- Shift body and eye gaze to indicate different people.

10. Glossing Tips

- Use all caps: I GO STORE.
- No punctuation, use markers (e.g., WHQ, Y/N-Q, NMM).
- Underline or label classifiers and directional verbs.