



ASLdeafined

Beginner Level 1 Curriculum Guide

Teacher Edition

Authentic ASL. Affordable Access.

www.ASLdeafined.com

ACTFL Target: Novice Mid

Welcome Letter

Welcome to ASLdeafined. Since 2008, our mission has been to make American Sign Language and Deaf Culture accessible to learners of all ages.

This curriculum guide was created to help teachers implement a structured, engaging, and standards-informed ASL program. Beginner Level 1 gives students a strong foundation in visual communication, Deaf Culture, grammar, receptive skills, expressive skills, and interpersonal communication.

Thank you for helping students build communication skills while fostering appreciation for the Deaf community.

Paul Fugate

Founder & CEO, ASLdeafined

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Course Description

Beginner Level 1 introduces students to the foundations of American Sign Language and Deaf Culture. Students develop receptive, expressive, and interpersonal communication skills through authentic ASL conversations, visual language activities, grammar instruction, Deaf culture exploration, stories, and real-world communication experiences.

Recommended Grade Levels	Grades 6-12
Course Length	Full Year Course
ACTFL Target	Novice Mid
Expected Growth	Novice Low to Novice Mid

Course Outcomes

Receptive Skills

- Understand familiar vocabulary and phrases.
- Recognize fingerspelled words and names.
- Follow simple conversations.
- Understand basic ASL narratives.

Expressive Skills

- Introduce themselves.
- Describe people, places, and things.
- Discuss family, school, food, hobbies, and daily life.
- Use appropriate facial expressions and non-manual markers.

Interpersonal Skills

- Exchange personal information.
- Ask and answer questions.
- Participate in simple conversations.
- Demonstrate appropriate visual communication behaviors.

Cultural Competency

- Demonstrate Deaf etiquette.
- Understand attention-getting strategies.
- Understand the significance of name signs.
- Identify important individuals in Deaf history and culture.

Year at a Glance

Unit	Theme	Primary Focus
Unit 1	Visual Communication & Introductions	Foundational communication, fingerspelling, numbers, and classroom signs
Unit 2	About Me & Everyday Communication	Personal information, emotions, questions, pets, and everyday signs
Unit 3	Descriptions & Personal Characteristics	Colors, clothing, body, character, and descriptions
Unit 4	Family, Relationships, Daily Life, Time & Food	Family, calendar, food, age, illness, and daily life
Unit 5	School, Classroom Vocabulary & Professionals	School, careers, transportation, library, and technology
Unit 6	Hobbies, Activities & Recreation	Sports, weather, celebrations, hobbies, and Deaf figures

Unit 1: Visual Communication & Introductions

Essential Question

How do Deaf and hearing people communicate using a visual language?

Unit Overview

Students learn the foundations of ASL communication through greetings, introductions, fingerspelling, numbers, classroom communication, and Deaf cultural norms.

ASLdeafined Lessons

- Alphabet
- Grammar - Concept
- Numbers 1-20
- Grammar - Signing Space
- Deaf Culture 1
- Fingerspelling 1
- Classroom Essentials 1
- Classroom Essentials 2
- Tips on Learning ASL
- Meet & Greet
- Math Number Challenge 1
- Survival Words
- Grammar - Fingerspelling
- Grammar - Palm Orientation
- Quiz 1
- Fingerspelling 2

Grammar Focus	Deaf Culture Focus
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Signing Space- Fingerspelling- Palm Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Eye Contact- Attention Getting- Visual Communication- Deaf Etiquette

Featured Resources

- Deaf Culture 1

Suggested Assessment

Self-Introduction Video

Unit 2: About Me & Everyday Communication

Essential Question

How do we share information about ourselves using ASL?

Unit Overview

Students learn to discuss personal information, emotions, preferences, daily experiences, and common conversation topics.

ASLdeafined Lessons

- Grammar - Topicalization
- Grammar - Personal vs. Possessive Pronouns
- Verb 1
- Grammar - Handshape and Location
- Question Words
- Grammar - Time, Topic, Comment
- Emotions
- Grammar - Facial Expressions
- Numbers 21-40
- Food 1
- Feelings
- Grammar - Name Signs
- Pronouns
- Grammar - Movement
- Grammar - Words Not Used in ASL
- Grammar - Question Words
- Grammar - Interrogative
- Time 1
- Deaf Culture 2
- Animals 1
- Math Number Challenge 2
- Seasons and Days of the Week
- Action Verbs 1
- Domestic Pets

Grammar Focus	Deaf Culture Focus
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Topicalization- Pronouns- Personal vs. Possessive Pronouns- Question Words- Time, Topic, Comment- Facial Expressions- Name Signs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Name Signs- Deaf Community Values- Facial Expressions as Meaning

Featured Resources

- Deaf Culture 2

Suggested Assessment

About Me Presentation

Unit 3: Descriptions & Personal Characteristics

Essential Question

How do we describe people, places, and things in ASL?

Unit Overview

Students expand their ability to describe appearance, clothing, personality traits, emotions, body vocabulary, and visual details using ASL grammar and non-manual markers.

ASLdeafined Lessons

- Colors
- Clothing
- Grammar - Sentence Structure
- Grammar - Glossing
- Human Body
- Grammar - Negation
- Verb 3
- Grammar - Non-Manual Markers
- Math Number Challenge 3
- Character
- Adverbs 1
- Hair Descriptions
- Fingerspelling 3
- Grammar - Adjectives
- Grammar - Noun vs. Verb
- Grammar - Affirmative vs. Negative
- Verb 2
- Famous Reading - Lou Ferrigno
- Grammar - Parameters
- Deaf Culture 3
- Adjectives (Size)
- Numbers 41-60
- Food 2
- Directional Verbs
- Time 2
- Clothing Descriptions
- Clothing Accessories

Grammar Focus	Deaf Culture Focus
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Noun vs. Verb- Affirmative vs. Negative- Sentence Structure- Glossing- Parameters- Negation- Non-Manual Markers- Adjectives- Directional Verbs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Deaf Community Identity- Famous Deaf and Hard of Hearing Individuals

Featured Resources

- Lou Ferrigno
- Deaf Culture 3

Suggested Assessment

Descriptive Presentation

Unit 4: Family, Relationships, Daily Life, Time & Food

Essential Question

How do relationships influence our daily lives?

Unit Overview

Students learn to discuss family, extended family, daily routines, food, calendar concepts, age, illness, and time while strengthening question forms, indexing, referencing, and tense markers.

ASLdeafined Lessons

- Family
- Grammar - Time Sequence
- Grammar - Yes & No Questions
- Verb 4
- Numbers 61-80
- Fruits & Veggies
- Grammar - Referencing (Pointing)
- Verb 5
- Famous Reading - Helen Keller
- Extended Family
- Grammar - Initialized Signs
- Winter
- Age
- Grammar - Tense Markers
- Famous Reading - Thomas Gallaudet & Laurent Clerc
- Beverages 1
- Grammar - Directional Verbs
- Prepositions
- Math Number Challenge 4
- Grammar - Indexing (Listing)
- Deaf Culture 4
- Calendar
- Symptoms of Illness 1
- Food 3
- Religion 1
- Grammar - Pointing
- Symptoms of Illness 2

Grammar Focus	Deaf Culture Focus
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Time Sequence- Yes/No Questions- Directional Verbs- Prepositions- Indexing / Listing- Referencing / Pointing- Initialized Signs- Tense Markers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Deaf History- Community Relationships- Thomas Gallaudet- Laurent Clerc- Helen Keller

Featured Resources

- Thomas Gallaudet & Laurent Clerc
- Helen Keller
- Deaf Culture 4

Suggested Assessment

Family Story Presentation

Unit 5: School, Classroom Vocabulary & Professionals

Essential Question

How do education and careers shape our future?

Unit Overview

Students learn vocabulary connected to school, careers, transportation, hygiene, money, courses, life events, libraries, math, technology, and future planning.

ASLdeafined Lessons

- Growing Up by Jonelle 1
- Numbers 81-100
- Verb 6
- Grammar - Various Types of Numbers
- Professionals 1
- Transportation
- Personal Hygiene
- College Courses
- Professionals 2
- Life Events
- The Library
- College 1
- Number Variations
- Math Terms
- Grammar - Numbers Are Nouns
- Math Number Challenge 5
- Deaf Culture 5
- Time 3
- Age & Years
- Money Variety
- Food Measurements
- School 1
- Courses
- School by Levi 2
- Jobs and Occupations
- Around the School
- Career Planning
- Computer Terms

Grammar Focus	Deaf Culture Focus
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Numbers Are Nouns- Various Types of Numbers- Age & Years- Money Variety- Food Measurements- Number Variations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Deaf Education- School Experiences- Career Opportunities- Personal Narratives

Featured Resources

- Growing Up by Jonelle 1
- School by Levi 2
- Deaf Culture 5

Suggested Assessment

Career Exploration Presentation

Unit 6: Hobbies, Activities & Recreation

Essential Question

How do hobbies and recreation help define who we are?

Unit Overview

Students learn to discuss hobbies, sports, celebrations, kitchen vocabulary, weather, holidays, larger numbers, and Deaf cultural figures while strengthening rule of 9, rhetorical, and plurality.

ASLdeafined Lessons

- Famous Reading - Dummy Hoy
- Famous Reading - Chuck Baird
- Grammar - Rule of 9
- Sports
- Famous Reading - Bray
- Numbers in Hundreds
- Weather 1
- Thanksgiving
- Grammar - Plurality in ASL
- Deaf Coffee
- Kitchen
- Grammar - Cardinal Numbers
- Toys
- Celebrations
- Math Number Challenge 6
- Verb 7
- Grammar - Rhetoricals

Grammar Focus	Deaf Culture Focus
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Rule of 9- Cardinal Numbers- Numbers in Hundreds- Rhetoricals- Plurality in ASL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Deaf Athletes- Deaf Artists- Deaf Community Events- Deaf Coffee

Featured Resources

- Dummy Hoy
- Chuck Baird
- Bray
- Deaf Coffee

Suggested Assessment

Personal Interests Presentation

Grammar Progression

Unit	Grammar Targets
Unit 1	Signing Space Fingerspelling Palm Orientation
Unit 2	Topicalization Pronouns Personal vs. Possessive Pronouns Question Words Time, Topic, Comment Facial Expressions Name Signs
Unit 3	Noun vs. Verb Affirmative vs. Negative Sentence Structure Glossing Parameters Negation Non-Manual Markers Adjectives Directional Verbs
Unit 4	Time Sequence Yes/No Questions Directional Verbs Prepositions Indexing / Listing Referencing / Pointing Initialized Signs Tense Markers
Unit 5	Numbers Are Nouns Various Types of Numbers Age & Years Money Variety Food Measurements Number Variations
Unit 6	Rule of 9 Cardinal Numbers Numbers in Hundreds Rhetoricals Plurality in ASL

Deaf Culture Progression

Unit	Culture Targets and Featured Resources
Unit 1	Eye Contact Attention Getting Visual Communication Deaf Etiquette Featured: Deaf Culture 1
Unit 2	Name Signs Deaf Community Values Facial Expressions as Meaning Featured: Deaf Culture 2
Unit 3	Deaf Community Identity Famous Deaf and Hard of Hearing Individuals Featured: Lou Ferrigno, Deaf Culture 3
Unit 4	Deaf History Community Relationships Thomas Gallaudet Laurent Clerc Helen Keller Featured: Thomas Gallaudet & Laurent Clerc, Helen Keller, Deaf Culture 4
Unit 5	Deaf Education School Experiences Career Opportunities Personal Narratives Featured: Growing Up by Jonelle 1, School by Levi 2, Deaf Culture 5
Unit 6	Deaf Athletes Deaf Artists Deaf Community Events Deaf Coffee Featured: Dummy Hoy, Chuck Baird, Bray, Deaf Coffee

Assessment Framework

Assessment should include a balance of receptive, expressive, interpersonal, grammar, and cultural tasks.

Assessment Area	Examples
Receptive	Video comprehension, vocabulary recognition, fingerspelling recognition, signed directions
Expressive	Presentations, self-introductions, descriptions, narratives, demonstrations
Interpersonal	Partner conversations, interviews, question-and-answer exchanges, role plays
Cultural	Reflections, Deaf Culture discussions, Famous Deaf People activities, etiquette demonstrations

End-of-Course Expectations

Students completing Beginner Level 1 should demonstrate ACTFL Novice Mid proficiency and be able to:

- Introduce themselves.
- Exchange personal information.
- Describe people and objects.
- Discuss family and relationships.
- Discuss school experiences.
- Discuss hobbies and interests.
- Participate in simple ASL conversations.
- Demonstrate appropriate Deaf cultural awareness and etiquette.

Official ACTFL Target: Beginner Level 1 = Novice Mid

About ASLdeafined

Founded in 2008, ASLdeafined provides comprehensive American Sign Language instruction for schools, colleges, libraries, families, and independent learners.

- 800 + Themed lessons
- 18,000+ video dictionary entries
- Teacher lesson plans
- Deaf Culture resources
- Stories and readings
- Mobile app access
- Student progress tracking
- Syncs with Canvas, Schoology, Classlink, and Safari Montage
- Online access for classroom, homeschool, library, and independent learning
- Plethora of Teacher Resources
- Much Much More