

33 ASL Warm-Up & Bell Work Activities

Five levels, from first-year beginner to advanced fluency



HOW IT WORKS

Post one activity as students enter class. Choose the level that matches your group — or let students pick their own. Most activities take about **5 minutes** and need little or no teacher preparation.

LEVEL 1 · BEGINNER

01 – 07

- 1 Fingerspelling Practice**
Write down 10 names or vocabulary words and fingerspell them to yourself.
- 2 Alphabet Speed Drill**
Go through the ABCs as quickly and clearly as possible.
- 3 Number Warm-Up**
Sign numbers 1–50, or higher depending on progress.
- 4 Mirror Practice**
Use a mirror or phone camera to check the clarity of your handshapes.
- 5 ASL Flashcards**
Flip through a set of 10–15 vocabulary words learned last class.
- 6 Silent Conversations**
Without a voice, sign 2–3 sentences about your morning.
- 7 Matching Game**
Match written English words on a handout to their ASL gloss.

LEVEL 2 · INTERMEDIATE

08 – 14

- 8 Vocabulary Chain**
Sign one vocabulary word, then sign another related to it. Continue until you run out.
- 9 Describe Your Weekend**
Write 2–3 sentences in gloss, then practice signing them.
- 10 Fingerspelling Challenge**
Fingerspell five new places, names, or objects you've seen recently.
- 11 Numbers in Context**
Practice signing today's date, the time, and the weather temperature.
- 12 Deaf Culture Quick Write**
Write down one fact you know about Deaf culture, then sign it to yourself.
- 13 Role Shift Practice**
Sign a short two-person dialogue, shifting between roles.
- 14 Silent Sketch**
Draw an object, then sign its ASL word.

LEVEL 3 · ADVANCED

15 – 20

- 15 ASL Story Retell**
Think of a short story — a cartoon or movie scene — and practice retelling it in ASL.
- 16 Classifier Warm-Up**
Choose one object (car, animal, book) and practice 3–4 classifiers for it.
- 17 Gloss Translation**
Translate an English sentence into ASL gloss, then sign it.
- 18 Facial Expression Drill**
Pick one sentence and change its meaning using only facial grammar: question, negation, emphasis.
- 19 ASL Synonyms**
Think of three ways to sign the same idea. *Example: HAPPY, EXCITED, SATISFIED.*
- 20 Dialogue Journals**
Record a short self-conversation in ASL on your phone, then review it for clarity.

21 Debate Prompt

Write a short argument — for example, “School uniforms are good/bad” — and practice presenting it in ASL.

23 Story Sequencing

Choose five vocabulary words and create a mini-story linking them.

25 Classifier Challenge

Use classifiers to describe a short action sequence, such as a car accident or a ball game.

22 Perspective Switching

Retell the same event from two perspectives using role shift.

24 ASL Grammar Drill

Take an English sentence and restructure it into correct ASL grammar.

26 ASL Idiom Hunt

Recall and sign one ASL idiom, then explain its meaning.

27 Current Events in ASL

Pick a headline and summarize it in ASL.

29 Interpreter Warm-Up

Watch a short captioned video, mute the sound, and interpret into ASL.

31 Cultural Reflection

Write one thought about Deaf culture and sign it as if presenting to an audience.

33 SimCom Elimination

Practice staying fully in ASL without mouthing English words.

28 Silent Debate

Prepare three points for or against a topic. Sign them clearly and persuasively.

30 ASL Poetry Practice

Practice signing a short ASL poem, or create one of your own.

32 Narrative Expansion

Take a basic sentence (“I went to the store”) and expand it into a full narrative with details and classifiers.

MOVING BETWEEN LEVELS

Levels describe the response, not the student. The same activity can be run at any level by changing how much detail, structure, and expression you expect back.

LEVELS 1–2

Accuracy first: clear handshapes, steady fingerspelling, single signs and short sentences.

LEVELS 3–4

Structure and nuance: ASL grammar, classifiers, role shift, and facial grammar.

LEVEL 5

Fluency and audience: extended narrative, persuasion, and staying fully in ASL.