

Conjunctions in ASL connect clauses, ideas, and events. They combine specific signs with facial expression and body movement to show cause, effect, contrast, or sequence.

Common conjunction signs

WHY

Means “because” when the facial grammar goes with it.

HAPPEN

Connects cause and effect.

RAIN HAPPEN GAME CANCEL

FRUSTRATE / HIT

Shows that something unexpected happened.

UNDERSTAND + headshake

Works like “but.”

WRONG

Means “suddenly” or “unexpectedly.”

FIND

Connects a realization or a discovery.

Non-manual signals

Raised eyebrows

Connecting two related ideas, as in if / then.

Headshake and shift

Showing contrast, as in but.

Pause and body lean

Separating one clause from the next.

Where they go

ASL conjunctions usually appear at the **start of the second clause**.

Sometimes no sign is needed at all — a pause or a body shift does the connecting on its own.

Examples

I couldn't go to the party because I was sick.

PARTY I GO CAN'T. WHY? SICK.

I was driving, then suddenly my car stopped.

DRIVE. WRONG! CAR STOP.

I studied hard, but I still failed.

STUDY HARD. UNDERSTAND-NOT, FAIL.

Key takeaway

In ASL, conjunctions are not just signs. Timing, facial expression, and body movement do as much of the connecting as the hands do.