

Engaging Strategies for Teaching Verb Lessons in ASL

1. Chunking & Categorizing

Instead of presenting all 20 verbs at once, group them into smaller sets of 5–7. Categories: action (run, jump), mental (think, remember), communication (say, ask), helping verbs (give, help). This reduces overload and helps students make connections.

2. Sign + Context Practice

Verbs make the most sense when they're seen in action. Mini skits: Pair students up and give each pair 2–3 verbs. They create a quick skit using those verbs in context. Scenario cards: 'You're late for school—use 3 verbs to explain why.'

3. Directionality Practice (Unique to ASL Verbs)

ASL verbs often show movement between signer and receiver. Verb Toss Game: Students 'send' verbs across the room. Example: GIVE is signed toward a classmate. The receiver then 'returns' another verb like ASK.

4. Retention Activities

Verb Charades: One student signs silently, the class guesses. Flash Verb Battles: Two students face off, teacher calls out a verb, first to sign it correctly gets the point. Memory Match: Match English words with signed verbs.

5. Incorporating Pronouns & Objects

Once students know pronouns (I, YOU, HE/SHE, WE, THEY), layer them into verbs. Practice 'I GIVE YOU,' 'YOU HELP ME,' 'WE ASK THEM.' This makes verbs part of sentences instead of isolated signs.

6. Expressive Practice

Journal Prompts in ASL: Students sign a quick 1-minute video journaling what they 'did yesterday' using at least 5 verbs. Exit Ticket: At the end of class, each student signs one sentence with a verb before leaving.

7. Spiral Review

Don't leave verbs behind after the lesson. Start each class with a 'Verb Warm-up' where students sign 3 random verbs from previous lessons. Mix new verbs with old ones in dialogues.

■ Key Point: Students retain verbs best when they're not just drilling, but living in the language.