

Classifier Roadmap

Five levels, from recognizing a handshape to telling a story

The five levels

1

LEVEL 1

Introduction

- › What classifiers are and why ASL needs them
- › The three parts: handshape, movement, location
- › Recognize basic classifiers when they see them

FOCUS CL:1 CL:3 CL:B CL:5

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LEVEL 2

Basic Use

- › Use the common classifier handshapes on their own
- › Show movement with a classifier
- › Use space to show where something is

EXAMPLE A person walking. A car driving down a road.

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LEVEL 3

Combining Classifiers

- › Hold two classifiers at once, one on each hand
- › Keep handshapes consistent through a description
- › Describe how objects interact with each other

EXAMPLE One car passing another car on the highway.

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LEVEL 4

Classifier Storytelling

- › Describe a whole event, not a single object
- › Use visual perspective — show it from inside the scene
- › Build detailed scenes that hold together

EXAMPLE Retelling an accident, or describing a place in detail.

5

LEVEL 5

Advanced Use

- › Complex classifier sequences, one flowing into the next
- › Spatial mapping held consistently across a long stretch
- › Fluent storytelling without dropping the picture

EXAMPLE Extended narratives and natural conversation.

Moving up a level

A student is ready to move up when they can do the level's work without being told which handshape to use.