

UNDERSTANDING VISUAL SUPPORTS

LEARNING SUPPORT ACTIVITIES • TEACHER RESOURCE

Visual supports are tools that help students better understand, organize, remember, and communicate information. Because American Sign Language is a visual language, visual supports naturally enhance instruction by making learning more accessible for all students. These supports benefit learners with and without disabilities by reducing cognitive load, increasing independence, and reinforcing new concepts.

What Are Visual Supports?

Visual supports include pictures, photographs, symbols, diagrams, graphic organizers, schedules, checklists, color coding, written cues, and demonstrations. They provide students with a visual reference that reinforces instruction and promotes understanding.

Why Visual Supports Matter

- Increase comprehension of new concepts.
- Improve attention and memory.
- Reduce confusion and anxiety.
- Encourage independence and organization.
- Support a wide variety of learning needs.

What You May Notice in an ASL Classroom

- Students follow directions more independently.
- Increased participation during lessons.
- Better retention of vocabulary and concepts.
- Greater confidence when completing assignments.
- Fewer requests for repeated directions.

Benefits for All Students

- Supports visual learners.
- Helps multilingual learners and students with disabilities.
- Makes abstract ideas more concrete.
- Encourages active engagement.
- Creates consistent classroom routines.

Examples of Visual Supports

- Vocabulary picture cards.
- Graphic organizers.
- Visual schedules and checklists.
- Anchor charts and posters.
- Demonstration videos and teacher modeling.

★ Remember

Visual supports are not a replacement for instruction—they strengthen instruction. When paired with meaningful ASL communication and active learning, visual supports help every student access the same learning objectives through a clear and engaging pathway.