

Ready-to-Go Substitute Lessons

Beginner ASL — Level 1

Ten offline activities a substitute can run today — no ASL knowledge required, no prep, and nothing more than paper and pencils.

PURPOSE

These offline substitute lessons are designed for Beginning ASL Level 1 classes. They require little or no preparation, no ASL knowledge from the substitute, and minimal materials (typically paper and pencils). The activities reinforce communication, Deaf culture, and student reflection while preparing students for future ASL lessons.

Recommended Activities

Choose one, or combine two for a full class period.

1 ASL Learning Journal

Students reflect on why they chose ASL, what they hope to learn, challenges they anticipate, and questions they have about the course.

2 Deaf Awareness Reading

Provide a one-page reading about topics such as American Sign Language, Deaf culture, eye contact, facial expressions, or respectful communication, followed by comprehension questions.

3 Prepare for the Next Lesson

Students think about tomorrow's topic (such as greetings or introductions) by answering reflection questions that activate prior knowledge.

4 Deaf Community Reading

Short biographies or articles about Deaf schools, athletes, actors, artists, or historical figures, with follow-up questions.

5 Fingerspelling Preparation

Alphabet practice, name activities, and pre-fingerspelling exercises that prepare students for future lessons.

6 Communication Reflection

Students consider how people communicate in different situations and reflect on the importance of visual communication.

7 Classroom Discussion Cards

The substitute reads discussion prompts while students participate in guided conversations about communication and inclusion.

8 Vocabulary Prediction

Students predict what vocabulary they expect to learn during the upcoming unit and explain their reasoning.

9 Mini Poster Activity

Students create a poster promoting the importance of learning ASL, Deaf awareness, or effective communication.

10 Goal Setting

Students establish personal goals for the course and keep the page in a portfolio to revisit later in the year.

LOOKING AHEAD

Develop a complete series of self-contained substitute packets for Beginner Level 1, so teachers can simply make copies and leave the packet with the substitute. Each packet should include:

[Substitute instructions](#)
[Student directions](#)
[Printable activities](#)
[Exit ticket](#)
[Answer key](#)