

Get Out of the Video Stack

Practical ways to cut ASL grading time without cutting rigor — assessment formats, rubrics, feedback, and the boundaries that keep the pile from refilling.

Grading is not teaching. Every hour in the stack is an hour not spent designing better practice.

Practice is what actually moves proficiency.

TAKE-HOME VIDEO

25 students × a 4-minute clip, watched **twice**, plus 3 minutes of typed comment — **11 minutes per student.**

4h 35m

of your evenings, per assessment

IN-CLASS CONFERENCE

25 students × 90 seconds of live exchange, scored before the next student sits down — **about two class periods.**

0h 00m

nothing goes home with you

Your numbers will differ. Run them once with your real class size and clip length — the arithmetic is usually the most persuasive thing in the room.

ASK FIRST

Before you grade anything: **who reads this, and what do they do differently because of it?** If the answer is nobody and nothing, it's ceremony, not assessment. That one question usually empties a third of the pile.

The Biggest Lever

Most ASL grading pain is video grading pain.

ROTATING CONFERENCES

Pull one student at a time for a 90-second exchange while the class works on a partner task. Score it on the spot.

CLASS COST

About two periods

TAKE-HOME

None. You finish at the bell.

ASSESSES

Interpersonal — the mode video can't reach

PAIRED ASSESSMENT

Watch two students converse and score both at once, live or from a single shared recording.

CLASS COST

Half of solo video

TAKE-HOME

Halved, if you record at all

ASSESSES

Interpersonal, on a more authentic task than signing at a camera

WHOLE-CLASS RECEPTIVE

Sign once to the whole room. Students respond on paper. Grades like a quiz.

CLASS COST

About ten minutes

TAKE-HOME

A paper stack, not a video queue

ASSESSES

Interpretive — usually the undertested mode. Ideal for fingerspelling and numbers.

Conference Protocol

In order. The order is what keeps it to one period.

- 1 Give the class a partner task with a *visible output*, so you can see at a glance who is working.
- 2 Post the conference order and a running clock. Students manage the queue themselves.
- 3 Sign the prompt once. Ninety seconds of exchange. Stop at the cap, mid-sentence if necessary.
- 4 Score on the rubric *before* the next student sits down. Never defer — deferring is how the stack re-forms.
- 5 Give one correction, the single most useful one, and send them back to the partner task.
- 6 Mark absentees on the list and catch them in the next rotation, not after school.

WORTH SAYING

A live 90-second exchange is not a lesser assessment than a polished four-minute video. It is a **harder** one — unrehearsed, two-way, and impossible to edit. You are trading grading hours for better evidence, not for less of it.

Six Swaps

Same rigor. A fraction of the hours.

INSTEAD OF

Rewatching a clip until you have caught everything.

Grade on one viewing. No rewinding. This is more valid, not less: if it took you three passes to catch, a Deaf conversational partner would not have caught it either.

INSTEAD OF

“Submit a three-to-five minute clip.”

Cap it at ninety seconds — and stop watching at the cap. Ninety seconds shows you everything four minutes shows you. The cap only saves time if you enforce it.

INSTEAD OF

Watching, taking notes, then scoring.

Score while watching. Submit when it ends. One pass, one decision, no revisiting. The second pass rarely changes the score.

INSTEAD OF

Typing a paragraph of written comments.

Record a twenty-second signed reply. Faster than typing, it is receptive practice, it stays in the target language, and students actually watch it. Probably the highest value-per-minute change on this page.

INSTEAD OF

Writing the same correction out on every paper.

Mark a short code and give students the legend. You stop rewriting the same sentence forty times a semester, and students start recognising their own pattern.

INSTEAD OF

Grading every video a student submits.

Assign many. Grade one per unit. Self-review is the only way a student ever sees their own signing, so assign it freely. Assigning costs nothing; grading all of it costs your weekends.

A STARTER LEGEND — ADAPT TO YOUR OWN RECURRING ERRORS

SP Signing space too small or drifting

NMM Non-manual marker missing

MO English mouthing

FS Fingerspelling clarity or rhythm

CL Classifier choice or handshape

EG Eye gaze or referent tracking

Keep it to six or fewer, put it on a half sheet students keep in their folder, and teach the codes before you ever use them.

Rubrics

Fewer decisions, not better decisions.

FOUR-POINTS- NOT-A-HUNDRED

Score on a four-point scale. Nobody can defend the difference between an 84 and an 87 in signing. Every extra gradation is another decision you make twenty-five times.

FOUR-CRITERIA-MAX

Cap the rubric at four rows. Grading time scales with criteria × students, so a six-row rubric costs you fifty percent more for no added information.

ONE-RUBRIC- ALL-YEAR

Use the same expressive rubric all year, adding one unit-specific row when you need it. You get fast, and students internalize the standard instead of relearning it every unit.

SINGLE-POINT

Describe only what proficient looks like; leave the margins blank to write in. Faster to build, faster to fill, and the feedback beats a row of checked boxes.

Let Students Notice

Not offloading — noticing is the skill.

SELF-SCORE-FIRST

Students submit a self-assessment on your rubric alongside the work. You confirm or adjust rather than scoring from zero. When their score matches yours, that agreement is itself evidence their eye is developing.

THEY-PICK-THE-CLIP

Let students choose the thirty seconds you grade. They do the selection work, and choosing well requires watching themselves critically.

CHECKLIST-GATE

A pre-submission checklist gates the assignment. Anything on the list that is obviously wrong comes back unscored. This filters out the submissions that eat the most time for the least learning.

PEER-RECEPTIVE-CHECK

A signs, B writes down what they understood, A reads it. The gap between intent and comprehension is the feedback, and you are not in the loop at all.

Feedback That Lands Faster

Speed beats volume.

WHOLE-CLASS-NOT-INDIVIDUAL

Note the three most common errors as you grade, then teach ten minutes on them. One act of feedback reaching everyone, instead of writing the same note eighteen times.

FEEDBACK-BEFORE-SCORE

Return the feedback and hold the grade a week. Students engage with it while it still has consequences. Once the number appears, reading stops.

SAY-IT-ONCE

Don't repeat in writing what you already said out loud. If you corrected it in class, it has been delivered.

Boundaries

The pile refills unless something stops it.

CONTRACT-HOURS-ONLY

Grade in a fixed block, in the building, or not at all. Work expands to fill whatever time it is given.

ONE-ENTRY-PER-WEEK

Cap the gradebook at one entry per week. If a policy pushes for more, ask what decision each additional entry informs.

NO-LATE-FORMATIVE

Practice has an expiration date. Its value was in the timing. Late practice is not the same object.

REASSESS-WITH-EVIDENCE

Require evidence of new practice, plus a window, before a retake. Otherwise you have built a machine that regrades the same work indefinitely.

TEN-MINUTE-RULE

If one student's work has taken more than ten minutes, stop and schedule five minutes of conversation. Talking is faster than writing, and the student retains more of it.

The short version: move assessment into the room, cut the number of decisions each score requires, and let students do some of the noticing. What's left is small enough to finish before you go home.