
WELCOME TO A NEW SCHOOL YEAR

Starting the School Year Off on the Right Hand

A letter to ASL teachers

Whether this is your first year teaching American Sign Language or your twentieth, each new school year brings a fresh opportunity to inspire students, build confidence, and create a classroom where communication comes to life.

The first few weeks of school are some of the most important of the entire year. Students are getting to know you, becoming comfortable with one another, and learning what it means to communicate in a visual language. During this time, your goal isn't to teach everything. Your goal is to create an environment where students feel excited, supported, and eager to learn.

One of the greatest strengths of ASL is that students experience success almost immediately – they can communicate on the very first day, even if they only know a few signs. Celebrate those early wins. A smile, a laugh, or a successful conversation with a classmate can build confidence that lasts all year.

This resource folder was created to make the beginning of the school year easier and more enjoyable. Inside, you'll find ideas and materials gathered from many years of teaching ASL in high schools, colleges, universities, and community programs:

- Ready-to-teach lesson plans
- Classroom management strategies
- Review and warm-up activities
- Deaf Culture discussion starters
- Ice breakers for the first days
- Printable classroom resources

Please don't feel like you need to use every activity. Choose the ideas that fit your teaching style, your students, and your classroom. Adapt them, build upon them, and make them your own. Every class is unique, and that's one of the things that makes teaching so rewarding.

Most importantly, remember that your enthusiasm sets the tone. Students are much more likely to enjoy learning ASL when they see that you enjoy teaching it.

So be patient, encourage participation, celebrate progress, and create opportunities for students to communicate every day.

Thank you for choosing ASLdeafined as part of your classroom. We are honored to be part of your teaching journey and are committed to supporting you throughout the entire school year.

We wish you and your students a fantastic school year filled with learning, laughter, growth, and meaningful communication.

Welcome back, and here's to an incredible year ahead!

Paul A. Fugate

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Founder & CEO, ASLdeafined

We're here all year.

Questions, ideas, or need a hand with anything in this folder — reach out any time. We're always happy to help.