

50 REVIEW GAMES GAME 09

Speed Signing

Many partners, short conversations, fast confidence

Speed Signing is a high-energy review activity that gives students repeated opportunities to communicate with many classmates in a short amount of time. Frequent partner changes build confidence, improve receptive skills, and reinforce previously learned vocabulary.

TIME NEEDED

15–25 minutes

GROUP SIZE

Whole class

GRADE LEVELS

Middle, High, College

01 Purpose & Objective

Review vocabulary and conversational skills through multiple short ASL conversations. The short clock is the point — sixty seconds is long enough for a real exchange and too short to rehearse, so students communicate rather than recite.

Students will practice communicating with several partners while accurately using previously learned ASL vocabulary and grammar.

02 Materials & Skills

Materials

- Timer with a visible display
- Conversation prompt cards (*optional*)
- Vocabulary list (*optional*)

ASL Skills Practiced

- Expressive and receptive ASL
- Conversational turn-taking
- Fingerspelling
- Vocabulary recall under time pressure

03 Setup

1. Arrange students in two lines or two concentric circles, facing each other with enough space to sign comfortably.
2. Pair each student with the person across from them.
3. Set the timer for 60–90 seconds per prompt.
4. Agree on a visual time signal. A buzzer is useless in a voice-off room — flick the lights, or raise a hand and let students pass the signal down the line.
5. Decide the rotation before the first round so the change takes seconds, not minutes.

Before You Start

Post the prompt where both lines can see it. Students who have to ask what the prompt was spend the first fifteen seconds of a sixty-second conversation sorting it out.

04 Directions

1. Begin the timer.
2. Partners complete one conversation prompt using only ASL.
3. When time expires, one line or circle rotates to create new partners.
4. Repeat with a new prompt.
5. Continue until students have communicated with several classmates.

Managing the Rotation

Only one side moves. In two lines, one line stays put and the other shifts one place to the right; the student who runs off the end walks around to the opposite end. In concentric circles, the inner circle stays and the outer circle steps one position clockwise. If both sides move, pairs repeat within a few rounds and the point of the activity is lost.

With an odd number of students, join the rotation yourself rather than forming a trio — trios drift into two signers and one spectator.

05 Conversation Prompts

Work down the list in order, or draw one at random for each round.

1. Introduce yourself.
2. Ask and answer three WH-questions.
3. Discuss your favorite food.
4. Describe today's weather.
5. Talk about your family.
6. Describe your daily routine.
7. Discuss your favorite hobby.
8. Plan a weekend activity.
9. Describe an animal without naming it.
10. Use five vocabulary words from the current lesson.
11. Fingerspell your favorite city.
12. Describe your dream vacation.
13. Explain your favorite season.
14. Share something you learned this week.
15. Create a short question-and-answer conversation.

06 Variations

Beginning

Use simple question-and-answer prompts with a vocabulary list in view.

Intermediate

Require complete ASL sentences and at least one follow-up question per partner.

Advanced

Include role shifting, classifiers, or opinion-based discussion where partners must disagree.

Challenge Mode

Cut the conversation time to 45 seconds, or hand out a surprise vocabulary word that must appear naturally in the exchange.

07 Assessment Ideas

Observe students for:

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Accuracy of vocabulary | ☐ Fluency and pacing |
| ☐ Eye contact and nonmanual markers | ☐ Receptive understanding of each partner |
| ☐ Follow-up questions, not one-word answers | ☐ Willingness to communicate with anyone |

You cannot watch everyone in a room of moving pairs. Pick one line and follow it through three rotations, then switch sides next session.

08 Troubleshooting

IF THIS HAPPENS

TRY THIS

Pairs run dry before time is up

Require one follow-up question, or shorten the clock to 45 seconds.

The same partners keep recurring

Check that only one side is rotating, and that the end student wraps to the far end.

Voices and mouthing creep in

Pause the room, reset with a silent count of five, and restart the clock.

Students miss the time signal

Use lights or a relayed hand signal down the line rather than anything audible.

Paul's Best Practice

Rotate partners frequently. Students become stronger communicators when they interact with many different signing styles rather than the same partner every day.

Fluency is built one new pair of hands at a time.

Why It Works

Students receive repeated practice in a low-pressure environment while building confidence and improving conversational fluency. Each rotation also resets the stakes — a conversation that went badly is over in sixty seconds, and the next partner has no idea it happened.

Quick Tips

- ✓ Keep conversations moving.
- ✓ Encourage natural communication rather than memorized responses.
- ✓ Celebrate effort and improvement.
- ✓ Use a visual time signal everyone can see.
- ✓ Rotate only one side so pairings stay fresh.

Continue Exploring

Next in the collection:

- ▶ Game #10: Picture Prompt
 - ▶ Game #11: Vocabulary Basketball
 - ▶ Game #12: Roll the Dice
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Extend the Activity

Close with sixty seconds of writing: which partner was hardest to read, and why. Students usually name a specific difference — signing speed, size, a hand they had not seen before — and that answer is the receptive skill lesson for the next class.