

November Bell Ringers

Deaf Culture & Community

20 BELL RINGERS · BEGINNER THROUGH LEVEL 5

Start class. Start signing.



MONTHLY FOCUS

Deaf Culture • Community • Gratitude • Conversation • Storytelling • Perspective • Receptive & Expressive Skills

TEACHER NOTE

November blends meaningful community and cultural reflection with seasonal activities. Veterans Day activities are respectful and nonpolitical. Thanksgiving activities include alternatives so teachers can adapt them for their students and school communities. Use them, change them, skip them, and make them yours.

HOW DIFFERENTIATION WORKS

Most activities include Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced, Advanced Plus, and Level 5 options. Some are intentionally marked **All Levels**. Teachers may move students up or down as appropriate.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

ASLdeafined gives teachers a strong starting point without removing teacher creativity or professional judgment.

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1

Signs of Gratitude

LEVELED

BEGINNER	Sign 3 things you’re thankful for.
INTERMEDIATE	Sign 3 things and explain why you chose one.
ADVANCED	Describe someone or something you appreciate and why.
ADVANCED PLUS	Give a short personal reflection using appropriate transitions and NMS.
LEVEL 5	Give a spontaneous reflection on gratitude, appreciation, or something you may normally take for granted.

MAKE IT YOURS

Use appreciation, happiness, or “something good in my life” instead of gratitude.

2

Community Connections

LEVELED

BEGINNER	Identify 3 people or places that are part of a community.
INTERMEDIATE	Explain how a person can be connected to one.
ADVANCED	Describe what makes a community strong.
ADVANCED PLUS	Compare two types of communities.
LEVEL 5	Discuss how language, shared experiences, and identity can contribute to community.

3

Visual Telephone

ALL LEVELS

Students form a line. The first student sees a short signed message from the teacher and signs it to the next person. The message continues down the line. The last student signs what they received. Compare the beginning and ending messages.

TEACHER NOTE

Keep this playful. The goal is receptive attention, not embarrassing mistakes.

4

What Makes a Culture?

LEVELED

BEGINNER	Identify things groups may share: language, food, traditions, stories, etc.
INTERMEDIATE	Give examples of cultural traditions.
ADVANCED	Explain how language and culture can be connected.
ADVANCED PLUS	Discuss why culture is more than holidays and food.
LEVEL 5	Explain how language, history, values, norms, experiences, and community can interact within culture.

MAKE IT YOURS

Connect the discussion naturally to Deaf culture.

5

Deaf Culture Quick Think

LEVELED

QUICK THINK

“What is one thing you’ve learned about Deaf culture?”

BEGINNER	Identify one idea.
INTERMEDIATE	Explain it.
ADVANCED	Give an example.
ADVANCED PLUS	Connect it to language and community.
LEVEL 5	Explain why understanding cultural context matters when learning ASL.

MAKE IT YOURS

Use something you’ve recently discussed in class.

6

Who Am I Thankful For?

ALL LEVELS

Think of someone you appreciate. Without giving their name, describe who they are, how you know them, something they have done, and why they matter. Partners try to understand the relationship.

7

Service & Sacrifice

VETERANS DAY

BEGINNER	Learn or review signs related to service, military, veteran, country, and thank you.
INTERMEDIATE	Explain in simple ASL what Veterans Day recognizes.
ADVANCED	Explain the difference between recognizing someone’s service and simply celebrating a holiday.
ADVANCED PLUS	Discuss ways communities recognize veterans.
LEVEL 5	Give a thoughtful short reflection on service, sacrifice, or appreciation.

TEACHER NOTE

Students should not be required to disclose whether they or family members have military experience.

8

Thank You Without “Thank You”

ALL LEVELS

Without using the sign THANK-YOU, communicate appreciation to someone. Use facial expression, explanation, examples, body language, and context. Partners identify what made the message feel appreciative.

TEACHER NOTE

Big Idea: Meaning is bigger than one vocabulary word.

9

A Veteran’s Story

LEVELED

Teacher provides a short, age-appropriate story about a fictional veteran.

BEGINNER	Identify key people and actions.
INTERMEDIATE	Retell the main idea.
ADVANCED	Summarize the story.
ADVANCED PLUS	Retell it from another perspective.
LEVEL 5	Discuss the central message or theme.

MAKE IT YOURS

The teacher supplies the story.

10

Teacher’s Choice

TEACHER CHOICE

Today’s Bell Ringer belongs to you. What have your students struggled with recently? Turn it into a 5-minute challenge.

NEED AN IDEA?

Vocabulary

Fingerspelling

Numbers

NMS

Receptive Skills

Grammar

TEACHER NOTE

Your students. Your classroom. Your choice.

11

The Perfect Thanksgiving Plate

LEVELED

BEGINNER	Choose 3 foods for your perfect plate.
INTERMEDIATE	Explain your favorite and least favorite.
ADVANCED	Rank 5 Thanksgiving foods and defend your choices.
ADVANCED PLUS	Convince your partner that your plate is superior.
LEVEL 5	Debate Thanksgiving food opinions naturally.

MAKE IT YOURS

Use “perfect celebration meal,” favorite foods, or another shared meal topic.

12

Family Doesn’t Look One Way

LEVELED

BEGINNER	Review family and relationship vocabulary.
INTERMEDIATE	Describe a fictional family or group.
ADVANCED	Explain relationships among several people using space.
ADVANCED PLUS	Tell a short story involving multiple family or community members.
LEVEL 5	Discuss how the concept of family can include biological, chosen, extended, and community relationships.

TEACHER NOTE

Students never have to describe their own families.

13

Pass the Story

ALL LEVELS

STUDENT #1 BEGINS

“Yesterday something unexpected happened...”

They sign one piece. Student #2 continues, then Student #3, and so on. The class must maintain the people, locations, and basic storyline already established.

TEACHER NOTE

Let it become funny while preserving visual consistency.

14

Thanksgiving Table Visual Challenge

LEVELED

Imagine a table with food and objects.

BEGINNER	Establish 3 objects in signing space.
INTERMEDIATE	Describe where 5 objects are located.
ADVANCED	Give detailed spatial relationships.
ADVANCED PLUS	Describe people interacting with objects around the table.
LEVEL 5	Create a dynamic visual scene using perspective, depiction, and spatial consistency.

MAKE IT YOURS

Use a restaurant table, party, picnic, or cafeteria.

15

Would You Rather? — Fall Edition

ALL LEVELS

TODAY’S QUESTION

“Would you rather jump into a huge pile of leaves, or walk through deep snow?”

Students choose and explain. Then students create their own Would You Rather question. Higher-level students challenge someone’s answer with a follow-up question.

TEACHER NOTE

The same prompt naturally differentiates by language level.

16

Student Challenge

STUDENT CHOICE

Students create today’s Bell Ringer. This month’s requirement: **it must involve another person**. Teacher chooses one, or saves several.

POSSIBLE FORMS

ConversationReceptive challengeVisual gameStoryVocabulary challenge

TEACHER NOTE

Students help build the classroom’s Bell Ringer collection.

17

Recipe Without Words

LEVELED

Choose a simple food. Do not name it initially. Show how you prepare, mix, cut, cook, and serve it.

BEGINNER	Gestures and individual actions.
INTERMEDIATE	Sequence actions.
ADVANCED	Use depiction and transitions.
ADVANCED PLUS	Give a detailed process explanation.
LEVEL 5	Use natural procedural discourse.

Partners guess what’s being made.

18

One Thing I’d Change

LEVELED

Think about something at school, home, in your community, or the world that you would improve.

BEGINNER	Identify one thing.
INTERMEDIATE	Give a reason.
ADVANCED	Explain the problem and proposed solution.
ADVANCED PLUS	Discuss possible advantages and disadvantages.
LEVEL 5	Present and defend a position while acknowledging another perspective.

TEACHER NOTE

Keep the focus on language, reasoning, and respectful perspective-taking.

19

Gratitude Chain

ALL LEVELS

Student #1 signs something they appreciate. Student #2 briefly responds and adds their own. Student #3 continues. The challenge: **don’t repeat something already mentioned**. Students must pay attention to everyone before them.

TEACHER NOTE

Receptive practice hidden inside a gratitude activity.

20

November Reflection — Community Is...

LEVELED

FINISH THE THOUGHT

“Community is...”

BEGINNER	Give 3 signs or concepts.
INTERMEDIATE	Give a short explanation.
ADVANCED	Give an example from something learned this month.
ADVANCED PLUS	Connect language, culture, and community.
LEVEL 5	Give a spontaneous reflection on how communication helps create belonging.

TEACHER NOTE

Teacher Wrap-Up: Ask, “What did someone else say that made you think?”

November moves students from simply using ASL toward thinking about the people and ideas behind it.

People	Culture	Language	Relationships
Gratitude	Perspective		

ASLdefined gives teachers a strong starting point without removing teacher creativity or professional judgment.

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