

May Bell Ringers

ASL: Make It Yours

You’ve learned it. Now USE it.

20 BELL RINGERS · BEGINNER THROUGH LEVEL 5

Start class. Start signing.



MONTHLY FOCUS

Independence • Real-World ASL • Problem Solving • Conversation • Receptive Skills • Creativity • Confidence • Reflection

TEACHER NOTE

May is about independence. Students use what they have learned to solve communication problems, sustain conversations, teach one another, handle unexpected situations, and reflect on their growth. The teacher gradually steps back while students take greater ownership. Bell Ringers should make your life easier — not become another obligation.

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 provides a strong starting point while leaving space for teacher judgment, student contribution, and classroom creativity.

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1

No Teacher Needed

LEVELED

Today’s first instruction is simple:

THE INSTRUCTION

“Start a conversation.”

BEGINNER	Exchange 2 questions and answers.
INTERMEDIATE	Add follow-up questions.
ADVANCED	Keep the conversation going for 45 seconds.
ADVANCED PLUS	Sustain a natural one-minute conversation.
LEVEL 5	Maintain spontaneous conversation using natural turn-taking, clarification, and elaboration.

TEACHER NOTE

Resist the urge to lead. Let students figure it out.

2

Real World: Coffee Shop

LEVELED

IMAGINE

“You’re ordering at a coffee shop or cafe.”

BEGINNER	Order one item.
INTERMEDIATE	Add size and preferences.
ADVANCED	Ask a question or make a change to the order.
ADVANCED PLUS	Handle a misunderstanding.
LEVEL 5	Complete the interaction naturally, including clarification and repair.

MAKE IT YOURS

Use a restaurant, concession stand, food truck, or cafeteria.

3

What Would You Do?

LEVELED

SCENARIO

“You don’t know the sign for something you need to communicate.”

BEGINNER	Gesture or show it.
INTERMEDIATE	Describe it.
ADVANCED	Use multiple communication strategies.
ADVANCED PLUS	Rephrase naturally.
LEVEL 5	Explain why communication competence is more than knowing vocabulary.

TEACHER NOTE

Big Idea: Not knowing one sign doesn’t mean communication stops.

4

Fingerspelling in the Wild

LEVELED

Practice fingerspelling as it actually appears in communication.

WHERE IT SHOWS UP

Names

Places

Brands

Titles

Unfamiliar words

BEGINNER	Recognize 3 words.
INTERMEDIATE	Fingerspell 5 naturally.
ADVANCED	Embed fingerspelling in a message.
ADVANCED PLUS	Blend fingerspelling naturally into conversation.
LEVEL 5	Use and receive fingerspelling within spontaneous discourse.

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You Be the Teacher

ALL LEVELS

Choose something from ASL class that you understand well. Teach it to a partner.

IT COULD BE

Vocabulary

NMS

Grammar

Fingerspelling

Numbers

Deaf culture

Depiction

Then your partner asks you one question.

TEACHER NOTE

Teaching something is a good way to find out whether you really understand it.

6

Real World: Directions

LEVELED

SOMEONE ASKS

“How do I get there?”

BEGINNER	Give 2–3 directions.
INTERMEDIATE	Add landmarks.
ADVANCED	Establish locations in signing space.
ADVANCED PLUS	Clarify when the person misunderstands.
LEVEL 5	Give natural directions while responding to questions.

MAKE IT YOURS

Use your school building.

7

Explain the Rules

LEVELED

Choose a familiar game, sport, or classroom activity.

BEGINNER	Give 2 basic rules.
INTERMEDIATE	Sequence several rules.
ADVANCED	Explain clearly enough for someone to participate.
ADVANCED PLUS	Respond to questions.
LEVEL 5	Adjust the explanation based on what the audience already understands.

8

Conversation Curveball

ALL LEVELS

Partners begin a normal conversation. After 20 seconds, the teacher gives a random new topic. Students must transition naturally.

EXAMPLE

“Weekend → DOGS → SCHOOL → FOOD”

Higher levels should make the transition feel less ridiculous.

TEACHER NOTE

Have fun with the topic changes.

9

What Did They Mean?

LEVELED

Partner A signs a message. Partner B identifies:

BEGINNER	Key information.
INTERMEDIATE	Main idea.
ADVANCED	Details plus meaning.
ADVANCED PLUS	Implied meaning and attitude.
LEVEL 5	Meaning, intent, and an appropriate response.

TEACHER NOTE

Understanding language means more than recognizing signs.

10

Teacher’s Choice

TEACHER CHOICE

It’s May. Teachers are tired. Students are tired. Everybody is tired. What would actually help your class today?

OPTIONS

Review something

Repeat a favorite

Play a visual game

Practice tomorrow’s material

Let the class choose

TEACHER NOTE

Bell Ringers should make your life easier — not become another obligation.

11

Real World: Something Went Wrong

LEVELED

SCENARIO

“You received the wrong order, item, or information.”

BEGINNER	Identify the problem.
INTERMEDIATE	Explain what’s wrong.
ADVANCED	Ask for a solution.
ADVANCED PLUS	Handle questions and clarification.
LEVEL 5	Resolve the interaction politely and naturally.

TEACHER NOTE

Useful communication repair and pragmatic language.

12

ASL Survival Challenge

ALL LEVELS

You have five minutes. Communicate with your partner using ASL and visual communication only.

IF YOU DON’T KNOW A SIGN

Describe it

Show it

Gesture it

Fingerspell it

Rephrase it

But don’t stop.

TEACHER NOTE

Challenge: How long can you keep communication going?

13

The One-Minute Expert

LEVELED

Choose something you know a lot about — anything school appropriate.

FOR EXAMPLE

SportsVideo gamesAnimalsMusicCarsCookingArtTechnology

BEGINNER	20 seconds.
INTERMEDIATE	30 seconds.
ADVANCED	45 seconds.
ADVANCED PLUS	60 seconds.
LEVEL 5	60 seconds plus questions from the audience.

TEACHER NOTE

ASL becomes more powerful when students use it to talk about things they care about.

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Fix It Yourself

LEVELED

Teacher intentionally signs something incorrectly or awkwardly.

IT COULD INVOLVE

NMSTimeSpaceMovementQuestion structureFingerspellingPerspective

BEGINNER	Notice the issue.
INTERMEDIATE	Correct it.
ADVANCED	Explain why.
ADVANCED PLUS	Offer another possible version.
LEVEL 5	Explain how context could change the best choice.

MAKE IT YOURS

Teacher chooses the skill.

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Student Choice Day

STUDENT CHOICE

Students choose today’s Bell Ringer from **any previous month**. There is one requirement: explain why you chose it. Then do it.

TEACHER NOTE

A year-end review without announcing “review day.”

16

Something I Couldn’t Do Before

LEVELED

Think back to the beginning of the year.

FINISH THE THOUGHT

“Before, I couldn’t _____. Now I can.”

BEGINNER	Identify one skill.
INTERMEDIATE	Explain what changed.
ADVANCED	Give an example.
ADVANCED PLUS	Explain what helped you improve.
LEVEL 5	Reflect on how your communication has developed.

TEACHER NOTE

Students may choose something outside ASL if they prefer.

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Real World: Meet Someone New

LEVELED

IMAGINE

"You're meeting another ASL user for the first time."

BEGINNER	Introduce yourself and ask 2 questions.
INTERMEDIATE	Exchange basic information.
ADVANCED	Find a shared interest.
ADVANCED PLUS	Sustain the conversation naturally.
LEVEL 5	Navigate introductions, follow-up questions, topic shifts, and closing the conversation.

TEACHER NOTE

ASL isn't a classroom performance. It's communication.

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Can You Handle the Unexpected?

LEVELED

Teacher begins a scenario. Halfway through, something changes.

EXAMPLES

You're ordering food — they're out of what you want.

You're giving directions — the road is closed.

You're telling a story — someone interrupts with a question.

Higher levels must adjust naturally.

TEACHER NOTE

Real communication requires flexibility.

19

60 Seconds — No Preparation

LEVELED

Teacher gives the topic. Students get five seconds to think. Then go.

BEGINNER	20 seconds.
INTERMEDIATE	30 seconds.
ADVANCED	45 seconds.
ADVANCED PLUS	60 seconds.
LEVEL 5	60 seconds plus follow-up interaction.

TEACHER NOTE

Don't expect perfection. We're measuring communication confidence, not rehearsed performance.

20

Look What I Can Do

MONTHLY REFLECTION

FINISH THE THOUGHT

"One thing I can do in ASL now that I'm proud of is..."

BEGINNER	Identify it.
INTERMEDIATE	Explain it.
ADVANCED	Demonstrate or give an example.
ADVANCED PLUS	Explain how you developed the skill.
LEVEL 5	Reflect on how you've changed as a communicator.

TEACHER NOTE

Teacher Wrap-Up: Ask, "What do you want to be able to do *next*?"

May’s Big Idea

May is the transition from structured classroom practice toward independent communication.

Students solve problems, sustain conversations, teach one another, adapt when something goes wrong, and use ASL to discuss topics that matter to them.

GRADUAL RELEASE

WHAT STUDENTS TAKE OVER BY MAY

Select activities	Repair communication
Teach skills	Make choices
Reflect on what they can do	

THE TEACHER STEPS BACK

Earlier in the year, the teacher provides more structure. By May, that support is withdrawn on purpose — students select activities, repair communication, teach skills, make choices, and reflect on what they can now do independently.

GUIDING IDEA

ASLdeafined helped provide the tools. The teacher helped students learn how to use them. Now the tools belong to the students.

Which ones worked? Notes for next May



A Year of ASL: Bell Ringers

May — ASL: Make It Yours

You’ve learned it. Now USE it.