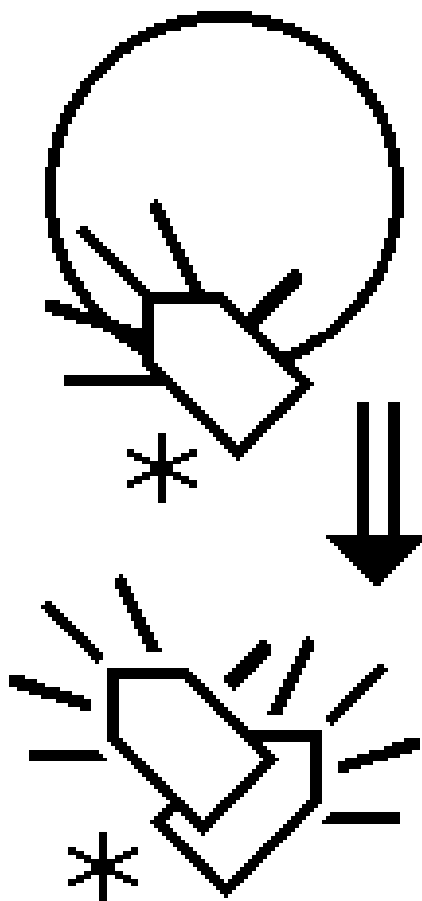


# A Cross-Linguistic Guide to SignWriting<sup>®</sup>

A phonetic approach



Stephen Parkhurst  
Dianne Parkhurst

**A Cross-Linguistic Guide to SignWriting®:  
A phonetic approach**

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Revision 2010

For use at SIL-UND courses during the summer of 2010.

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Stephen and Dianne Parkhurst

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## A note from the authors

SignWriting®, also known as Sutton Movement Writing for Sign Language, was invented by Valerie Sutton in 1974. Over the years the system has changed significantly and has gradually grown in acceptance and popularity in more than 30 countries. While there are other writing systems and notation systems for writing signed languages, we have not found any system that is as useful for writing accurately any sign or movement (including all non-manual movements and expressions) with relative ease and speed. It is also the only writing system that we have tried that is possible to read faster than one can physically produce the signs (outpacing even photos and line drawings in ease and speed of reading).

We have taken much of the material for this manual from a course we developed for teaching SignWriting (SW) to Deaf adults in Spain. That course in Spain focused on teaching the symbols of SW that are used in Spanish Sign Language (or LSE, for *Lengua de Signos Española*) with a heavy focus on reading. It was developed as a 30-hour course, in which the students were not expected to do much homework and much of the in-class time was spent reading stories in LSE. The material was designed so that the simplest and most common symbols were introduced first.

This manual differs from the original course materials in several ways. This is a course for field linguists, not for Deaf signers of one particular language. As a result, this book introduces a larger number of symbols with a focus on understanding the principles behind the symbol formation. While this manual teaches far more handshapes than are likely to appear in any given signed language, even so it is not an exhaustive study; it is almost impossible to teach all the potential handshapes from all the signed languages of the world. However, *any* handshape can be represented accurately, once one understands the principles behind symbol formation.

This course primarily focuses on the *phonetics* of writing rather than the *phonology*. In other words, we focus on details of a sign and not on how to simplify the writing to reflect the system of a particular language. For example, in many languages there may not be a meaningful distinction between a handshape with the thumb extended and the same handshape with the thumb folded over. However, here we will teach all the symbols and leave the task of consolidating non-distinctive symbols for the phonologists and literacy specialists.

The literacy courses in Spain did not expect the students to do a lot of work outside of class. Those courses also focused primarily on reading with less emphasis on writing. Here, many more symbols have been added to the manual. As a result, the student will be expected to do work outside of class, both studying this manual as well as lots of writing practice. The goal of this course is, that by the end, students will be able to sit down in a language-learning situation and accurately and quickly take notes about what they are learning. To reach this level, students will need to put forth a significant effort. As with many skills, “practice makes perfect.”

While the original course placed a heavy focus on non-manuals (e.g., facial expressions and head and body movements), this course is primarily interested in writing individual signs. Non-manuals will be introduced in units 10 – 12. This focus on the manual elements of the sign does not mean that non-manuals are not important or that

this writing system is somehow incapable of representing the rich non-manual structures of signed languages. On the contrary, SW has a very extensive set of non-manual symbols capable of recording the intricacies of non-manual movements. However, due to the limitations of this course, we will leave many of the intricacies of non-manuals for discussion in the phonology and syntax courses (although the symbols will be presented here).

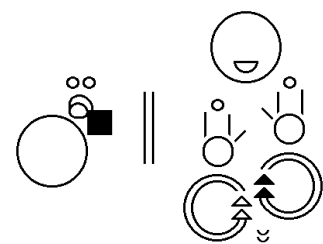
While this course is not a literacy course, we have tried to maintain some of the same basic principles, such as starting with the most basic concepts and most common symbols and gradually moving toward the more difficult and more obscure.

The examples in this book come primarily from Spanish Sign Language (LSE) unless specifically marked otherwise. We have purposely chosen this language because most users of this book will not know LSE. One of the primary goals of this course is that the students develop the skill of seeing a sign or phrase that they have never seen before, copy it accurately with their hands, and then write it down (see it, do it, write it).

This is not a literacy course. We will not discuss issues such as how to design literacy materials or which set of symbols should be used for a particular language. Nor will we discuss the sociolinguistic implications of introducing or using a writing system in a Deaf community. Likewise, we recognize that there are other writing systems out there. We have chosen SW because it is best suited for our purpose of writing quickly and accurately in a field situation. Although there are several computer programs available that use SW, we will focus on handwriting. Computer programs will probably change significantly in the next few years but the writing system will likely remain fairly stable.

We hope you enjoy this course and find it useful.

June 11, 2006  
Steve and Dianne Parkhurst



Book updated June 4, 2010

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# Unit 1

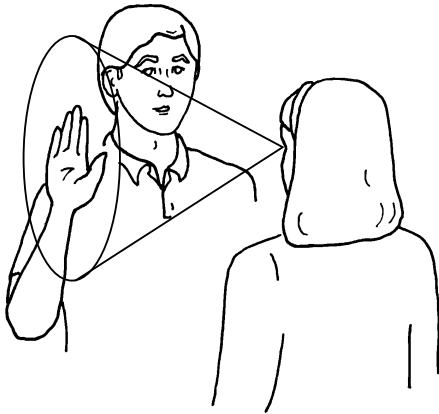
## Contents:

- Observer's perspective and signer's perspective
- Hand orientations
- Contact symbols: touch
- Some basic handshapes
- The head, arm/wrist

# Two perspectives

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## Observer's perspective

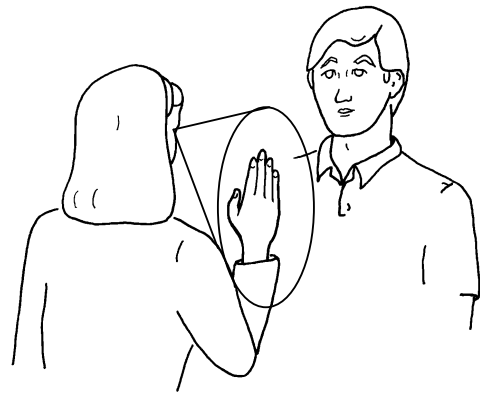


When another person signs to you, you see his hands. You are an observer.

This is called the “observer’s perspective” or *receptive viewpoint*.

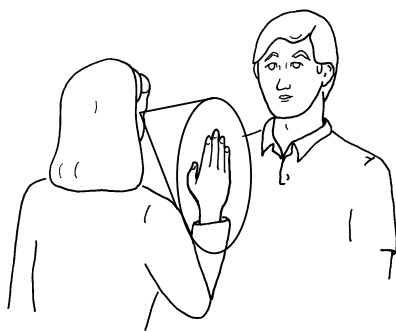
## Signer's perspective

When you sign to someone, you see your own hands. You see the signs from your own perspective.



This is called the “signer’s perspective” or *expressive viewpoint*.

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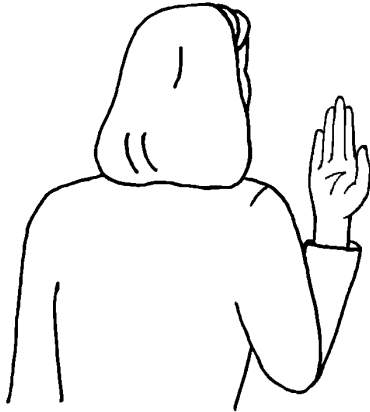
SignWriting is based on the signer’s perspective—how you see your own hands when you sign.



# Hand orientation

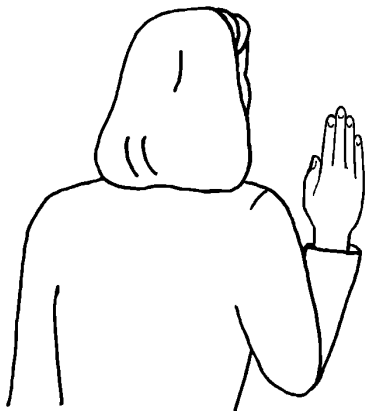
---

When you read and write a sign, you write it the way you see your own hands.



## The palm

If you can see the palm of your hand as you sign, the symbol that represents the hand will be **white** (or not shaded). On a chalkboard, it will be a hollow symbol outlined with chalk.



## The back of the hand

When you see the back of your hand, the symbol that represents the hand will be **black** (or shaded). On a chalkboard, it will be the color of the chalk, which may be white.



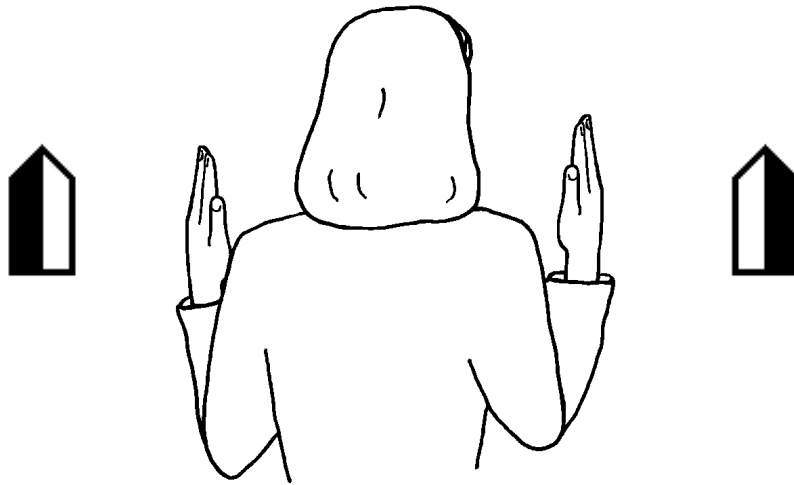
## The side of the hand

When you see the side of your hand, the symbol for the hand will be **half white, half black**.

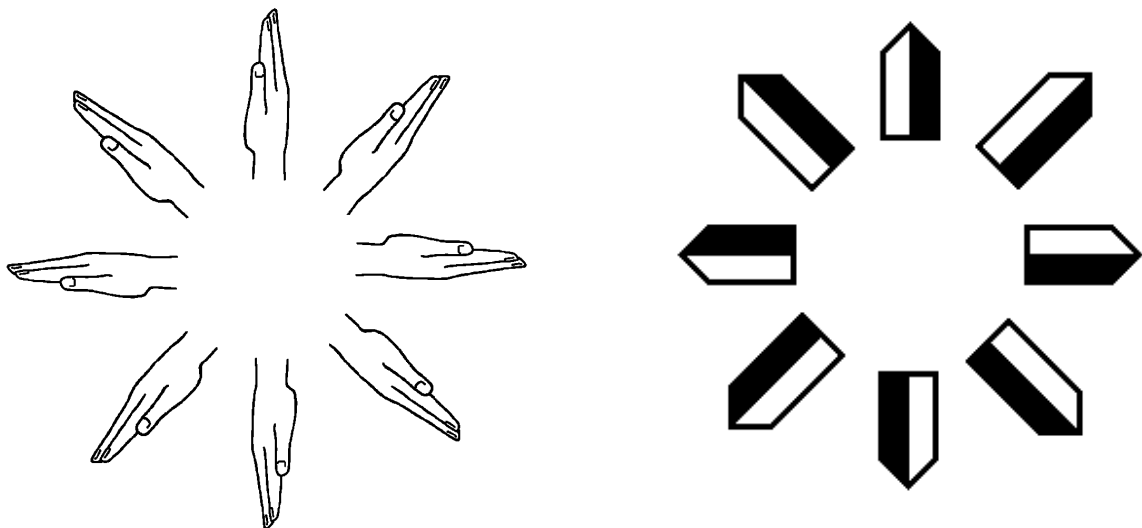
The white/unshaded part of the symbol shows which direction the palm is facing. The black/shaded part of the symbol shows which direction the back of the hand is facing.

The **left** hand

The **right** hand



**Rotating the hand**



You can turn the symbol in any direction.

# Contact symbol: Touch

---

SignWriting includes symbols that tell what kind of contact the hands make during the sign. This is the first contact symbol:

## Touch



An asterisk is used to mean **touch**.

The **touch** symbol is used when the hands touch each other or some part of the body.

Try to read these signs:



TIME OUT

The touch symbol is placed near where the two hands touch



HOUSE

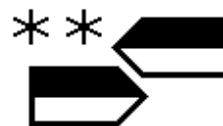
Place two (or more) touch symbols to show that the hands touch two (or more) times.

In a symmetrical sign, both hands move slightly to repeat the contact.

If the sign is not symmetrical, the dominant hand usually moves.



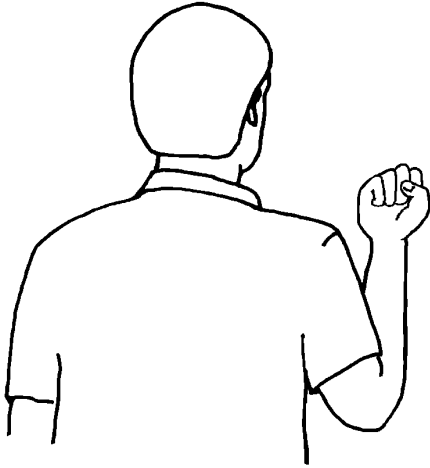
APPLAUD (hearing people)



MINIMUM (LSC)

# New handshapes

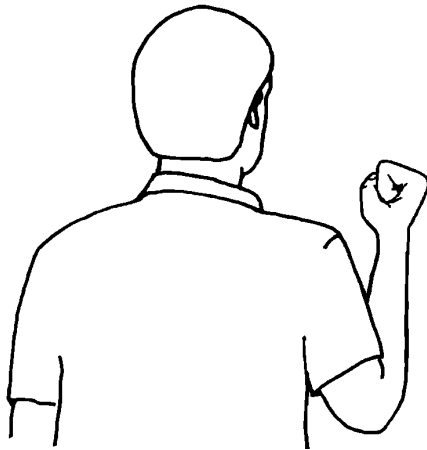
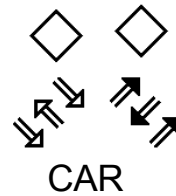
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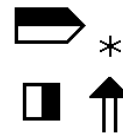
## The closed fist

The closed fist is written as a **square**.

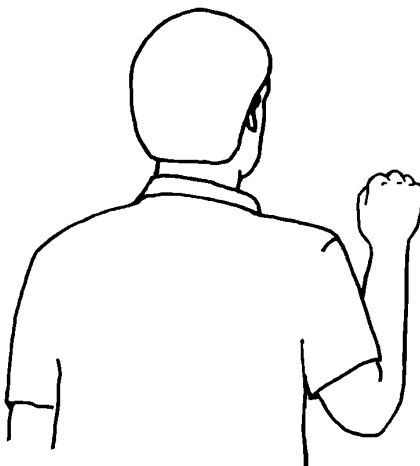
If, when you sign, you see the palm of your hand, the symbol used to represent it will be **white**.



If you see the side of your hand, the symbol will be **half black and half white**.



FULL



If you see the back of your hand as you sign, the symbol will be **black**.

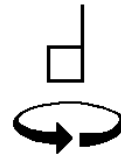


WASH



This square with one line extending from the corner represents the fist with the index finger extended.

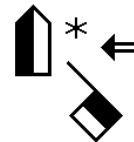
If, when you sign, you see the palm of your hand, the symbol used to represent it will be **white**.



ALONE



If you see the side of your hand, the symbol will be **half black and half white**.



LAW



If you see the back of your hand as you sign, the symbol will be **black**.

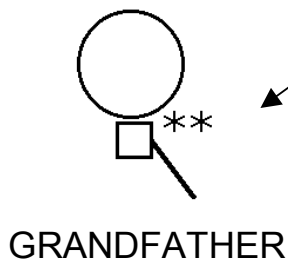
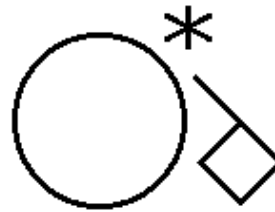
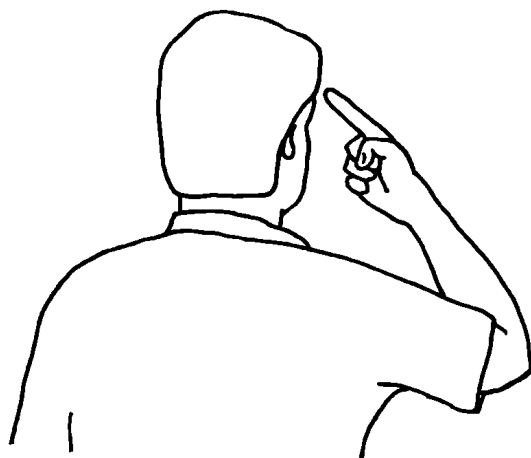


NO

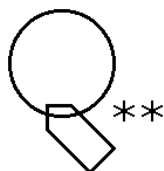
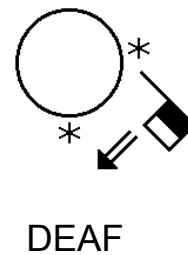
# The head, arm/wrist

A **circle** represents the head. You have to imagine that you are seeing your own head from **behind** you.

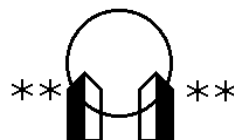
When you are signing with your right hand close to or touching the right side of your head, you write the symbols for the hand and the contact at the right side of the circle, overlap the hand and the head, or write the contact on the head itself:



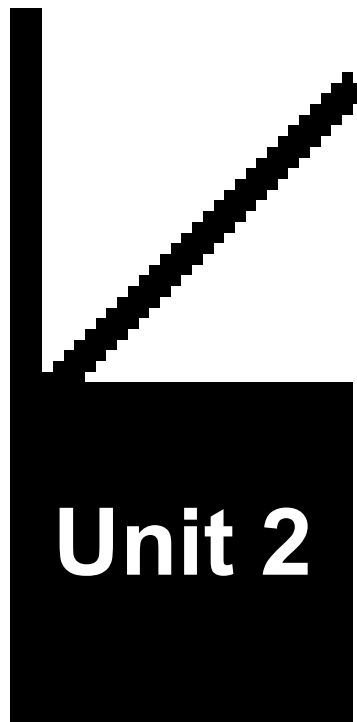
The bar attached to this hand represents the wrist or arm. It helps show clearly which part of the fist is touching under the chin. The **arm bar** connects to the center of the bottom of the hand; here, it's at a 45° angle from the hand.



AGE



CONFESS (to a priest)

A graphic consisting of a solid black square at the bottom. From the top-left corner of this square, a vertical black line extends upwards. From the top-right corner of the square, a diagonal line made of small black squares extends upwards and to the right, meeting the vertical line at its top end.

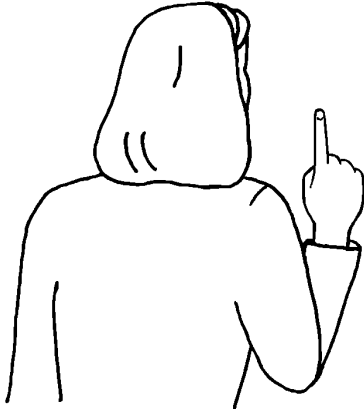
# Unit 2

## Contents:

- Hand orientations: the “top-down” point of view
- Straight up-and-down movements
- Contact symbol: brush
- Some basic handshapes
- Straight forward-and-back movements

# Two points of view

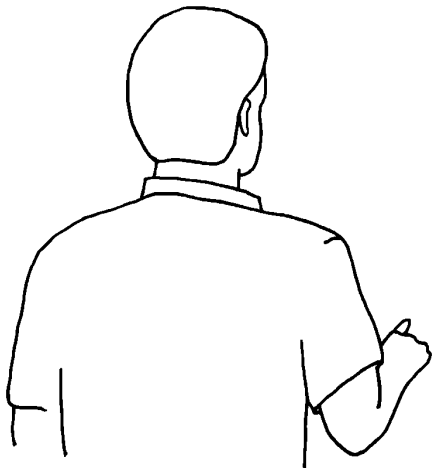
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## Forward view

Hand parallel to the front wall

When the hand is vertical/upright, or **parallel to the front wall**, it's easy to see what its configuration is when looking from the forward point of view.



But when your hand is horizontal, or **parallel to the floor**, it's hard to see what its configuration is from the forward point of view.

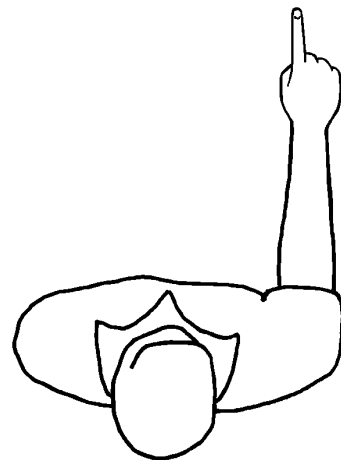
**What can we do???**

---

## Top-down view

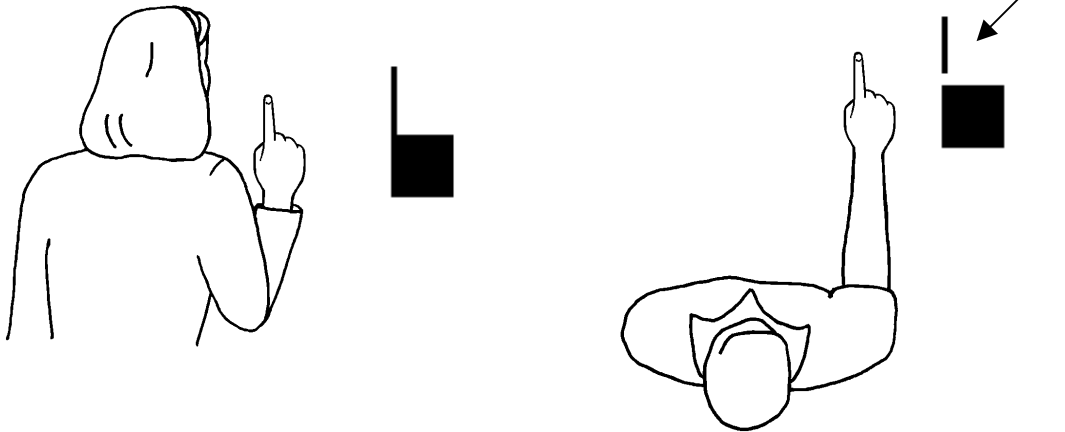
Hand parallel to the floor

Because it's hard to see its configuration from the forward point of view, when your hand is parallel to the floor, you write it as if you were seeing it from above.

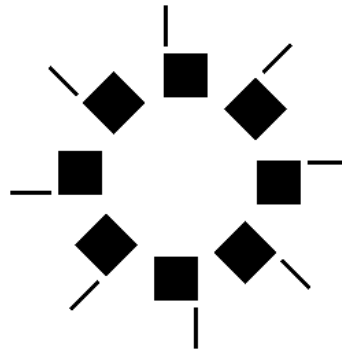




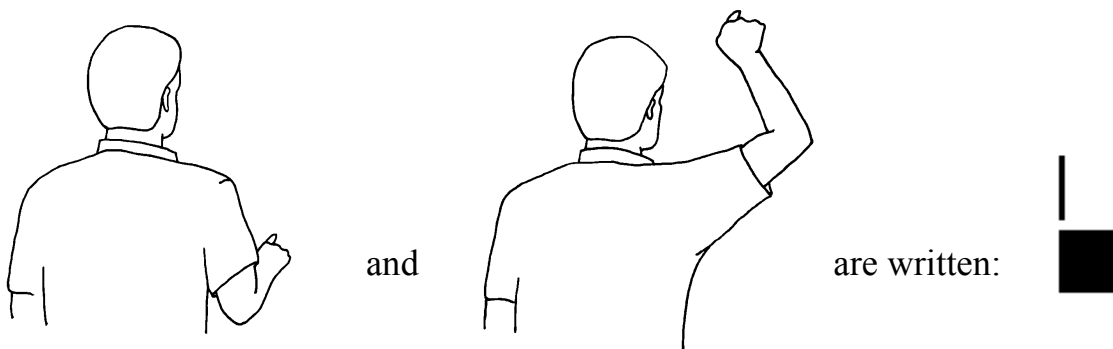
A small **gap** between the symbol for the hand and the symbol(s) for the fingers means that the hand is parallel to the floor. You pretend to look down on it.



This symbol can be rotated in all directions too.



Remember: this symbol means that the hand is parallel to the floor. It doesn't matter if you can actually look down on it or not.

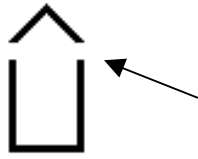
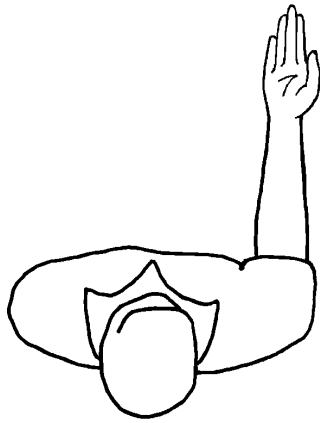


We'll look at some examples of configurations that we already know, but this time they'll be written from above, parallel to the floor.

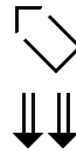
		<p>The <b>gap</b> between the hand and the fingers means that the hand is parallel to the floor.</p>
		<p>UNCLE</p>
		<p>SAME</p>

Note that these two symbols represent the same orientation:

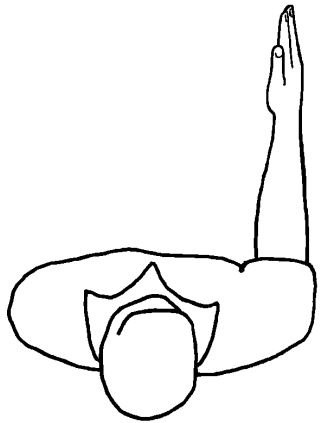
$$\text{---} \square = \text{---} \blacksquare$$



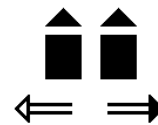
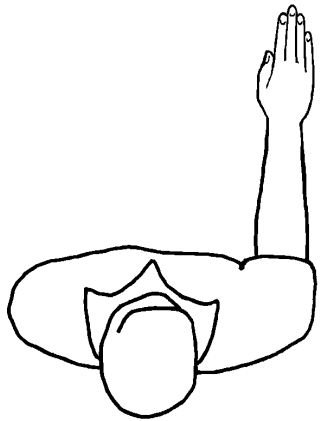
When the hand has no fingers extended, the **gap** is at the level of the **knuckles**. The gap means that the hand is parallel to the floor.



IMPORTANT

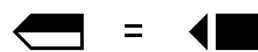


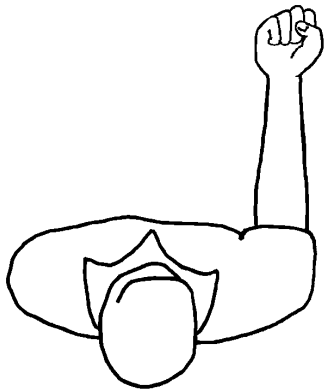
COMPANION



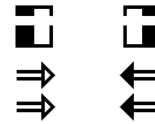
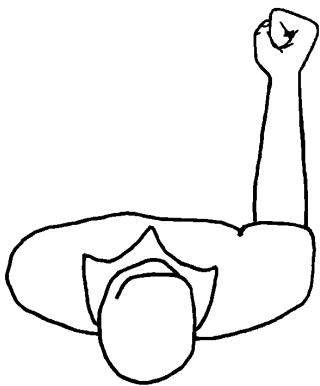
TABLE

Note that these two symbols represent the same orientation:

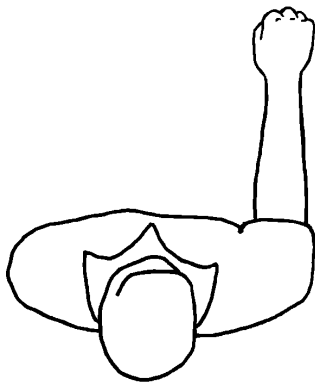




The **gap** at the level of the **knuckles** means that the hand is parallel to the floor.



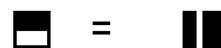
COLD



When one hand touches the opposite wrist or arm, we use a line to represent the arm. The contact symbol is written close to the point of contact.

TIME

Note that these two symbols represent the same orientation:

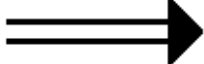


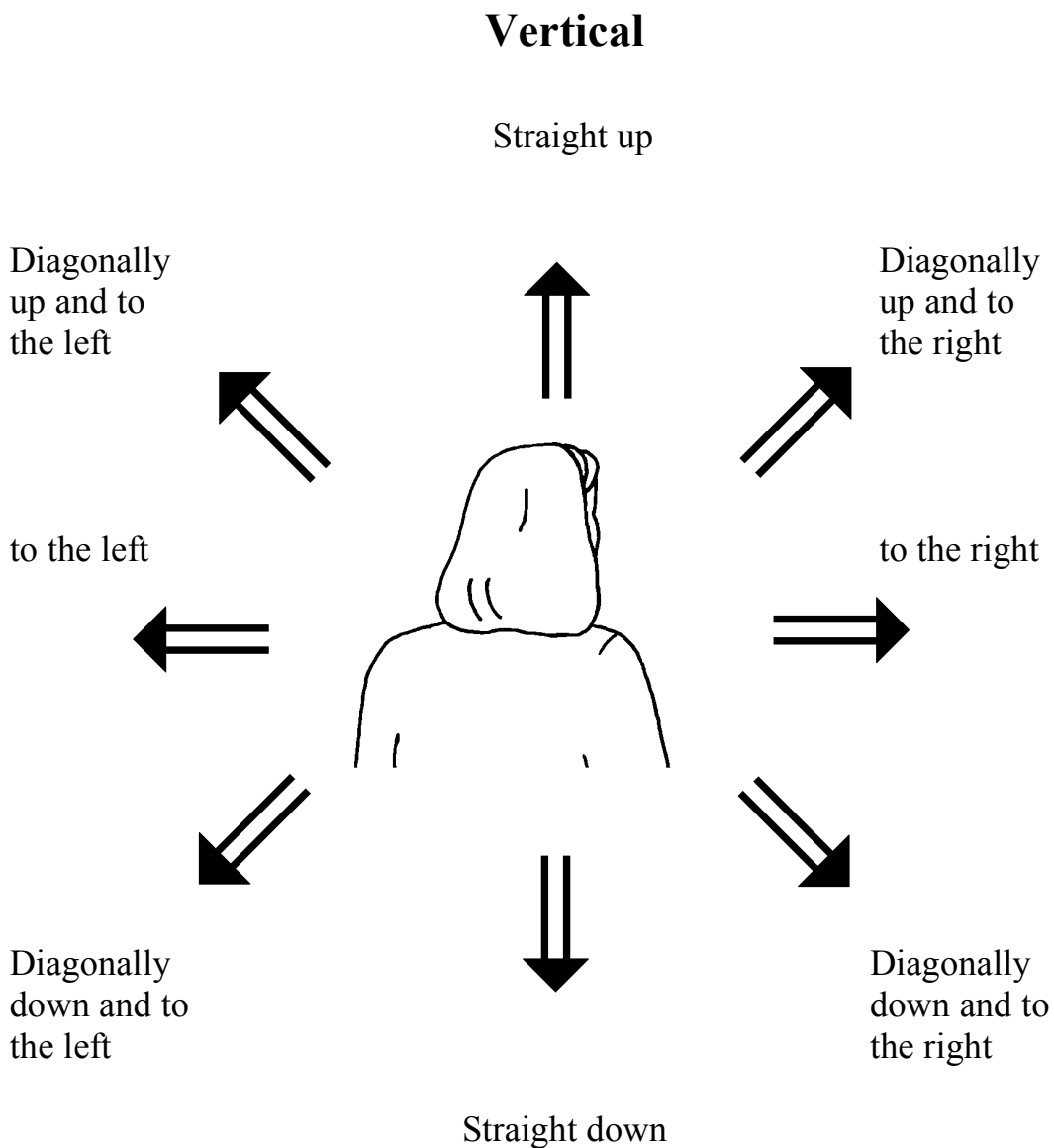
# Movement arrows

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## Up-down movements

Up-down movements are parallel to an imaginary wall in front of the signer, on the vertical plane.

They are written with **double-stemmed arrows**: 

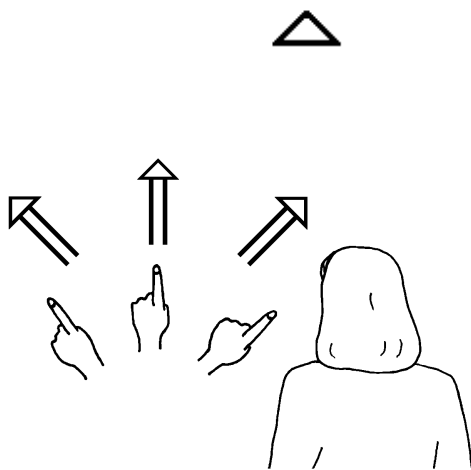


# Left- and Right-hand movements

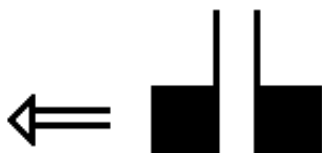
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## Left-hand movements

When the arrow head is **white**, it means that the **left** hand moves:

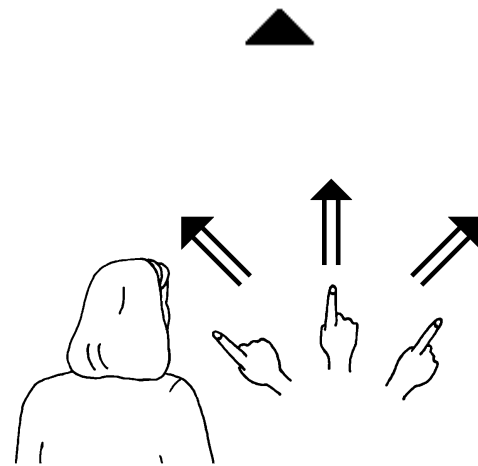


In the following example, only the left hand moves.



## Right-hand movements

When the arrow head is **black**, the **right** hand moves:



In this example, only the right hand moves.



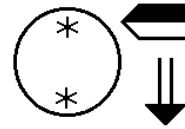
Examples of signs that use one hand:



SHORT



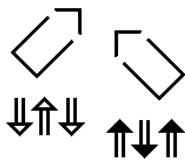
NO



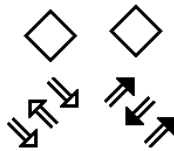
FATHER

In the examples below, each hand moves several times. When there are several arrows for each hand, we read the sign's movement **from the center toward the edges** or **from the top to the bottom**.

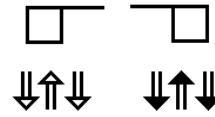
Examples:



TO WEIGH



CAR

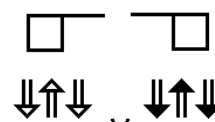
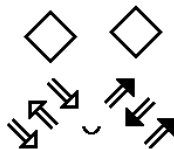
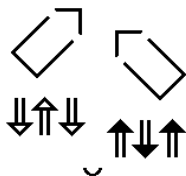


TO ARGUE

Sometimes seeing all those arrows can be confusing. One simple tool to help us remember where to start reading the arrows is the one written at the right, called a **tie**. The tie helps us remember that these two arrows are "tied together" and their movements are **simultaneous**, happening at the **same time**.



Examples:



# Contact symbol: brush

---

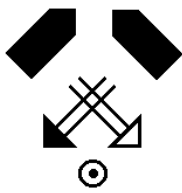
**Brush**



This type of contact is written as a circle with a dot in the center.

**Brush** is a light contact in which the hand slides across another surface and then separates again.

Examples:



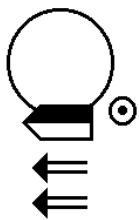
NIGHT



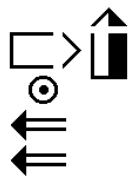
MORNING



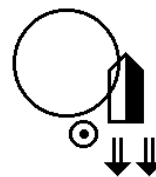
TO GO



OCTOBER




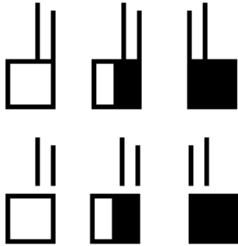


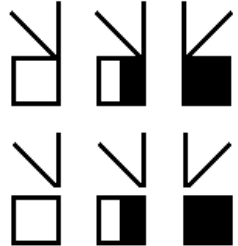
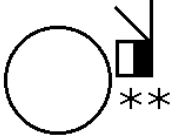

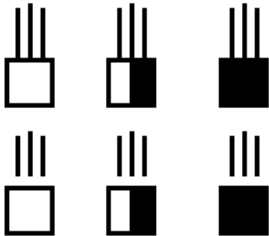


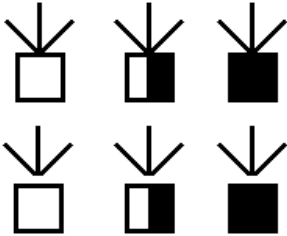
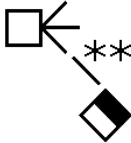
LESSON



CARING



# More handshapes

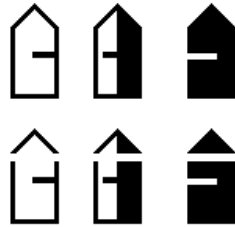
Handshape:	Is written like this:	Example:
		 BLACK
		 PERU
		 PARLIAMENT (LSC)
		 THIRD

**Handshape:**

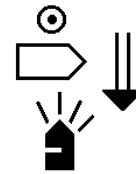
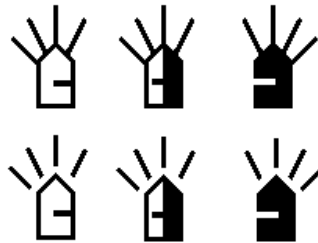
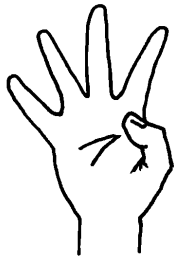
**Is written  
like this:**

**Example:**

---



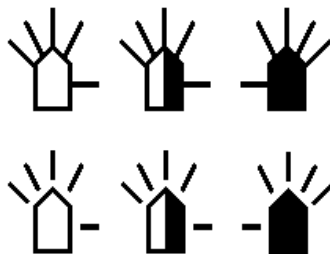
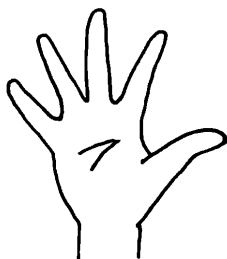
PROGRAM



BARCELONA



OBEY

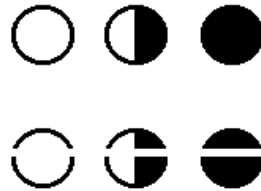
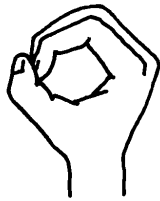


SIGN

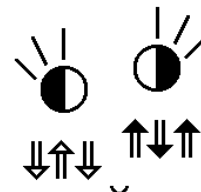
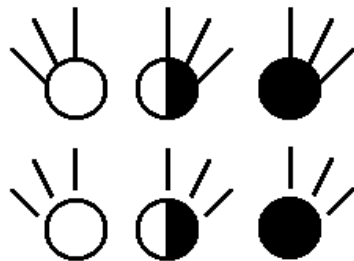
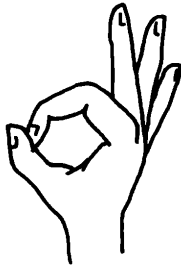
**Handshape:**

**Is written  
like this:**

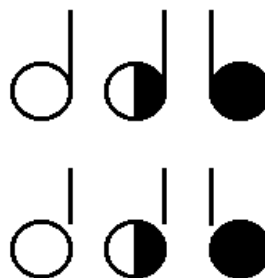
**Example:**



TUBE

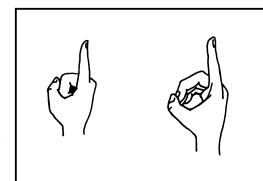


JUSTICE



CELL PHONE

Note that these handshapes have a circular base. The circle base is only used in handshapes where the circular form of the fingers is important. In many languages, these two handshapes are interchangeable; even when the base is relaxed, forming a circle, signers do not view the circular form as important to the meaning of the sign. In other languages, these handshapes are viewed as distinct and the form of the base *is* important.

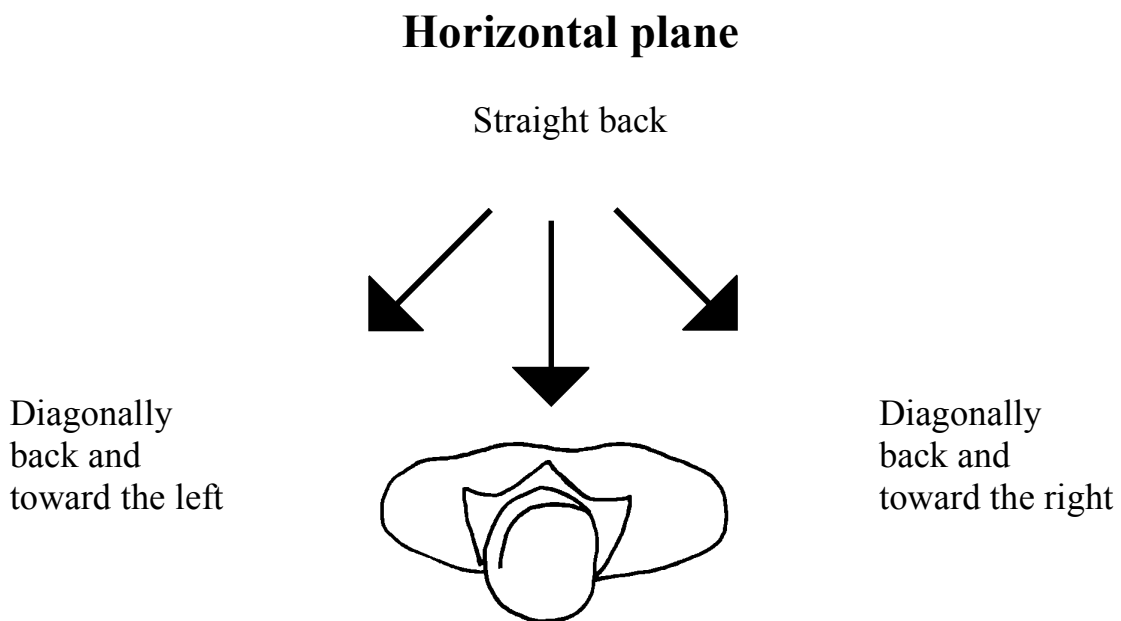
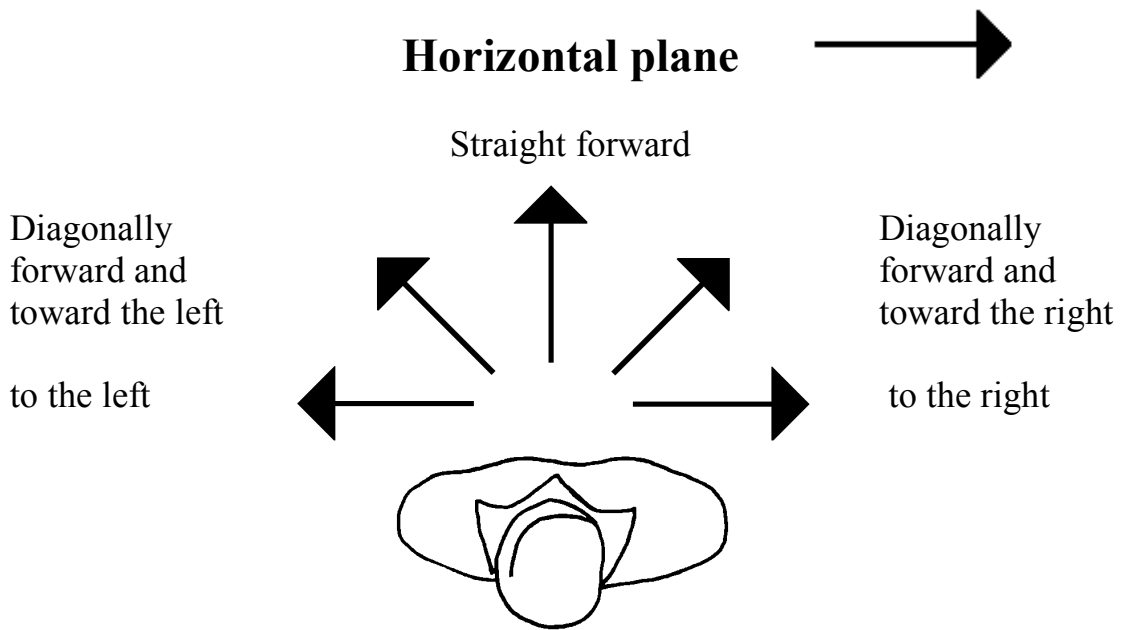


# More movement arrows

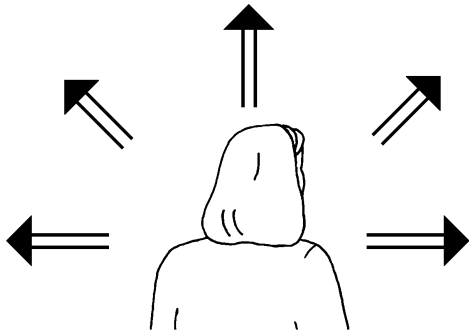
---

## Forward-and-back movement

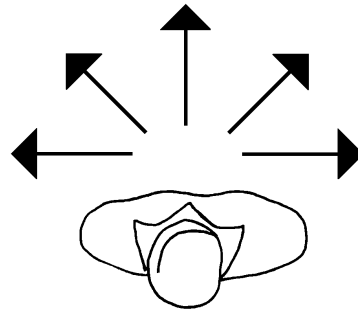
Forward-and-back movement is movement that is parallel to the floor.  
It is written with **single-stemmed arrows**:



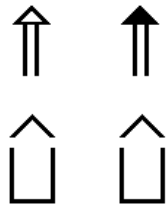
**Up-down movement**



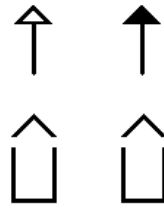
**Forward-and-back movement**



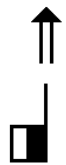
Note the difference between these pairs of signs:



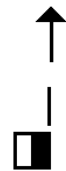
STAND UP, EVERYBODY



TO HELP

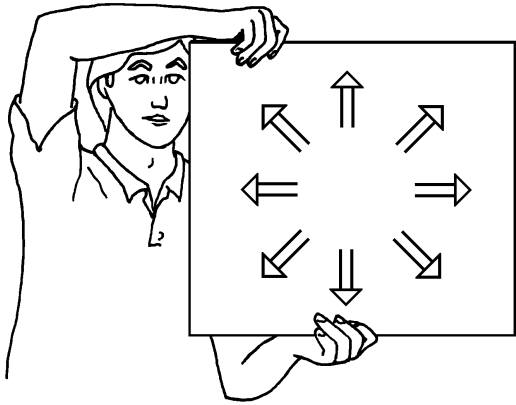


UP

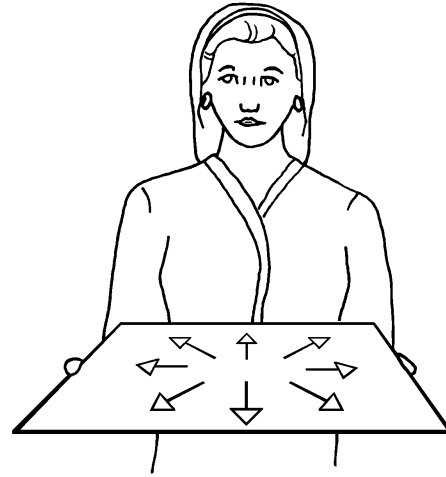


YOU

Remember: these groups of arrows represent **movements on two planes**:

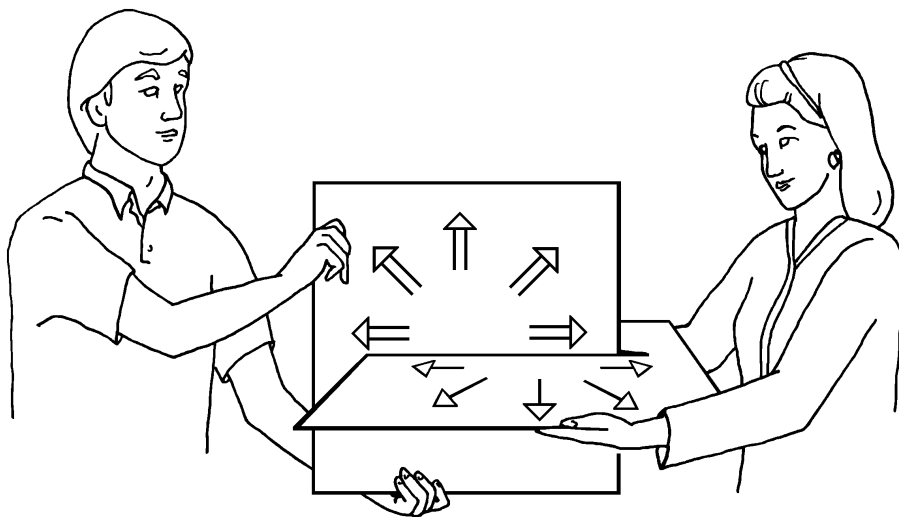


Movements that are parallel to the wall, or up-and-down

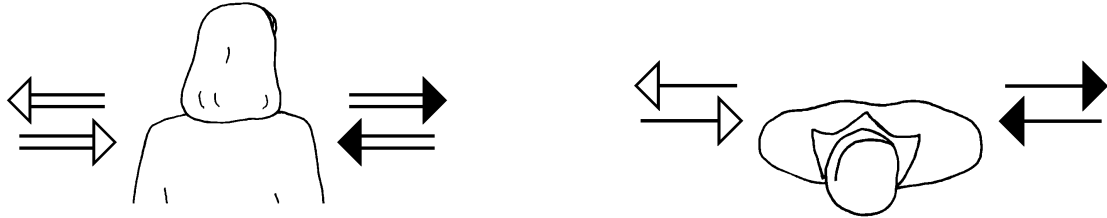


Movements that are parallel to the floor, or forward-and-back

When the two planes overlap, some arrows on each plane represent the same movements toward the sides.

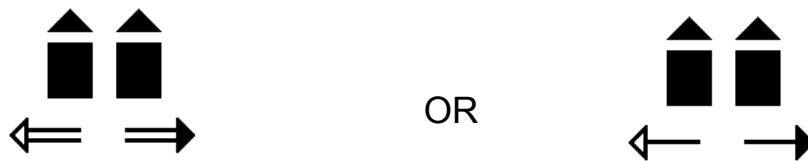


Straight movement toward the sides can be written using double-stemmed or single-stemmed arrows. *The arrows below represent the same movements:*



These double-stemmed arrows are the same as these single-stemmed arrows.

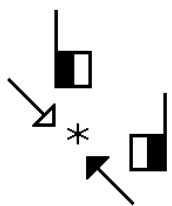
The sign TABLE can be written either way:



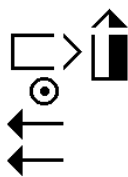
They are exactly the same.

---

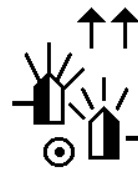
Examples of single-stemmed arrows:



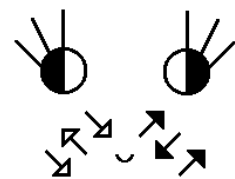
TO MEET



LESSON



TO EXPLAIN



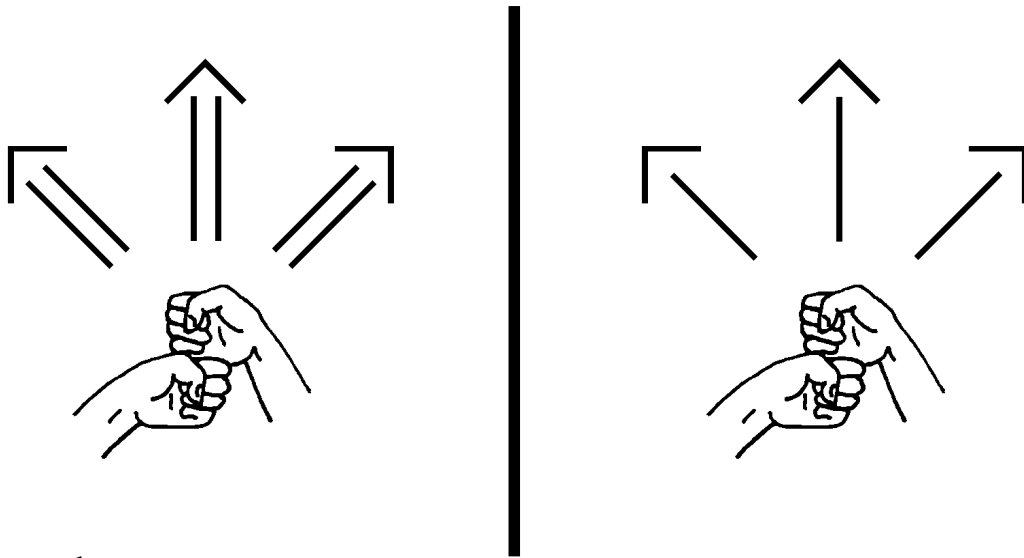
THEATER

## Both hands move as one unit

There are times when the two hands move together as a single unit. Sometimes the use of a separate arrow for each hand becomes confusing and it is difficult to know where to put the arrows. This usually happens when the two hands are touching each other or they follow the same trajectory. In these cases, we use a special kind of arrow head:



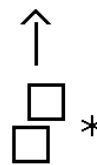
We call this an “open” arrow head (it is neither black nor white), and it means that both hands move together as one unit.



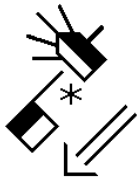
Examples:



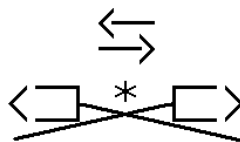
TRUCK



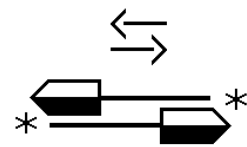
TROPHY



TO DISCRIMINATE  
AGAINST

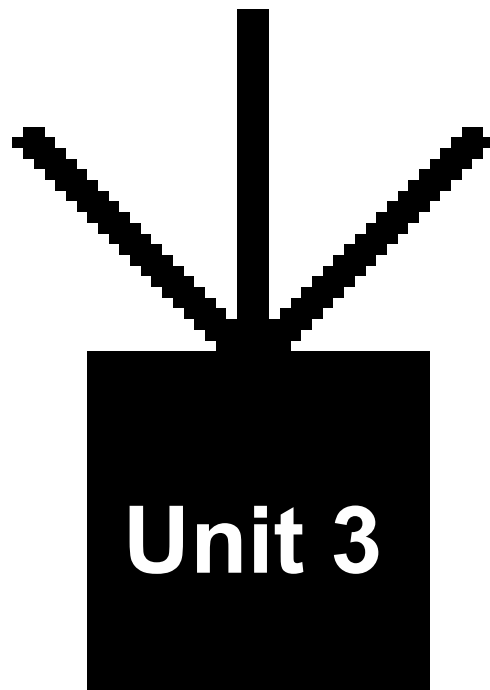


BABY (from two perspectives)



BABY



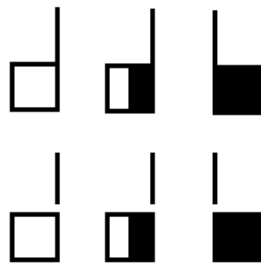


Contents:

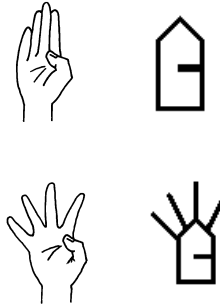
- Handshape anatomy: thumb
- Signs that touch the body, arms and face
- Changes in handshape and orientation

# Handshape anatomy: thumb

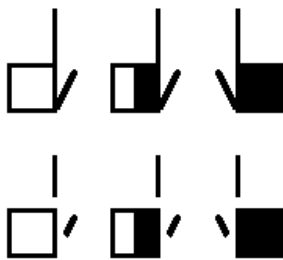
As we have already seen, an opposed flexed thumb that is holding down the other fingers is usually not written.



These thumbs are written:



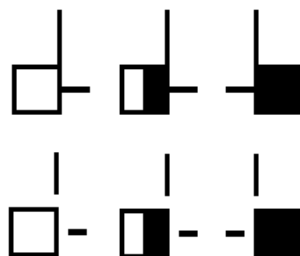
When the unopposed non-extended thumb is up to the side together with the other fingers, it looks like this:



An exception to this rule is the “flat” or “open” handshape:

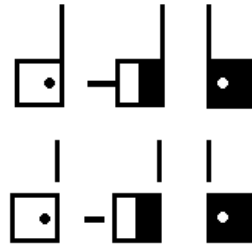
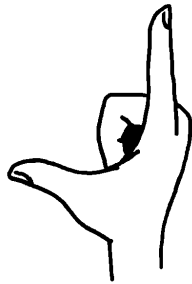


When the unopposed extended thumb is out to the side, it looks like this:



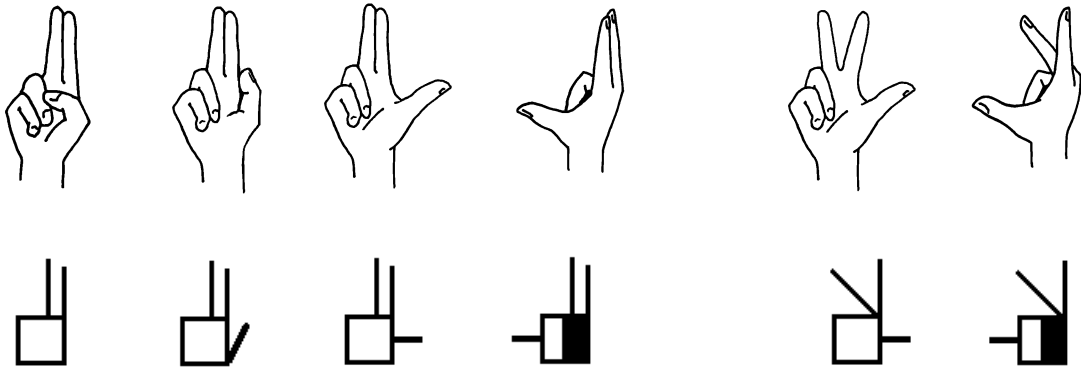
Notice that from the side view, the thumb extends from the **black** part of the hand.

When the opposed non-flexed thumb is straight forward, it looks like this:


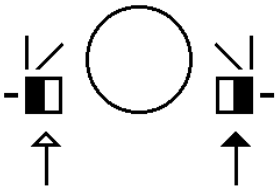
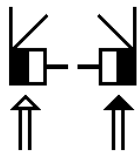
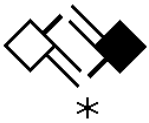
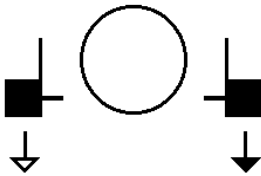



Notice that from the side view, the thumb extends from the **white** part of the hand.

Some new handshapes that follow these rules:

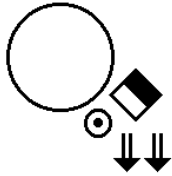


Examples:

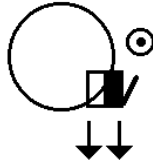
		
CLUB MEMBER	HOTEL	ELEVATOR
		
RENAULT (car mfg.)	RECEIVE RECOGNITION	LAW (LSC)



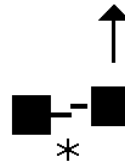
Examples:



MISCHIEVOUS



APPLE



FROM NOW ON



DOORBELL



Note: These three handshapes are often allophones; i.e., the thumb's position does not change the meaning of the sign. If the thumb position is not important, most writers choose to write the second HS, leaving the first and third symbols for those situations when the thumb position is important. Until you have studied a language long enough to know what's important, **write all details**.

Example:



CHURCH

# The body

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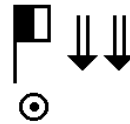
Sometimes the hands touch the body. When one hand touches the center of the chest, we write the contact symbol under the hand symbol.



ME



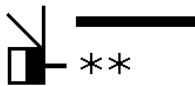
MY



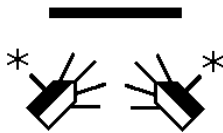
TO FEEL

---

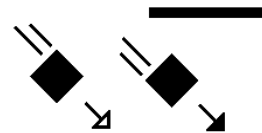
When the hands touch one side of the chest or the shoulders, this heavy bar represents the shoulders. This bar is also used when the hands are close to one side of the body without touching it.



ELEGANT



VACATION

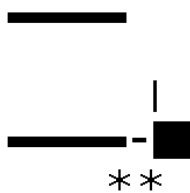


TO GO HUNTING

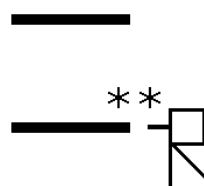
## The hips

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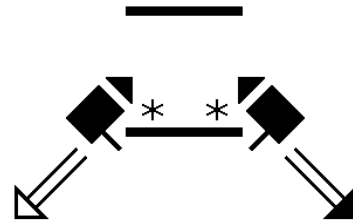
The second bar represents the hips. When the hands move near the waist, touch the waist or some part of the body near the waist, we write two bars (the top one represents shoulders and the bottom one, hips) and place the hands in relation to the hips. Note that a single horizontal bar **always** represents the shoulders. You **must** write two bars if you refer to the hips.



GOVERNMENT  
(LSM)



DOG (LSE, in  
La Coruña)

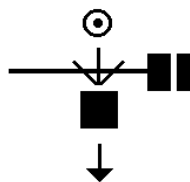


SKIRT

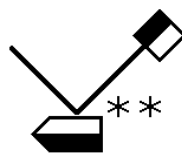
## The arm

---

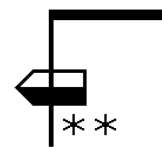
When the hand touches anywhere on the arm, we use a long line to represent the arm. If the focus is on the wrist or forearm, the arm bar is attached to the hand. If the point of contact is the upper arm, it is attached to the shoulder. The line must be long enough so that it will not be confused with a finger.



CAPTAIN



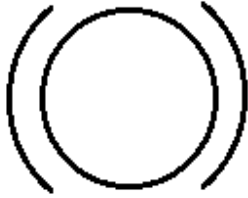
STINGY



SHORT SLEEVES

# Back of head, back, and buttocks

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**back of the head**

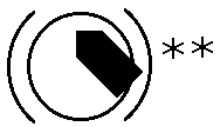
These curved lines are written at the sides of the circle that represents the head to show that the hand is behind the head.

1

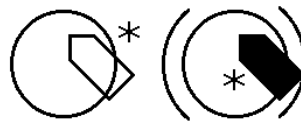


Remember that your perspective doesn't change: just as the height of the hand (page 11) does not affect your ability to write it as if you are seeing it from above, so the position of the head does not change the hand's orientation. In these two examples, the orientation of the hand is the same: in the first, the back of the hand is touching the face; in the second, the palm of the hand touches the back of the head.

2



**PONYTAIL**

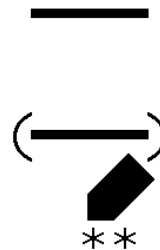


**HYPOCRITE**

This same principle can be used for showing the back and the buttocks.



**BACK**



**HAM**

# The face

Most of the time the hand (number 1 below) or the touch symbol (number 2) can be placed directly on the head symbol to show contact with the **forehead, temples, cheeks, jaw and chin**. Other times, piling up symbols becomes confusing. Another option is to place a **scoop** (number 3) on the point of contact, and place the hand and other symbols nearby.

1 2 3

These three options for the sign GERMANY all represent the thumb touching the forehead. Option 1 is a bit unclear due to the overlap of the symbols. Option 2 could be misunderstood as touching two separate locations on the forehead. Option 3 uses the “scoop” to show the location and the touch symbol to show that it is the thumb that touches the forehead.

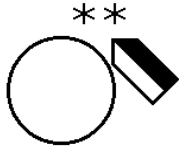
Examples:

DIRTY BELIEVE DIALOGUE

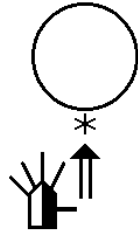
Note: this sign does not touch the chin, but it is signed directly in front of the chin area.



When the hand touches the perimeter of the face, we do not use the scoop. This includes signs that touch the **top or side of the head**, and **under the chin**.



LEADER (LSC)



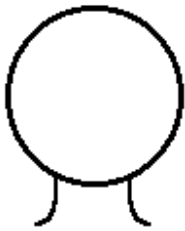
UPSET



OH, NO!

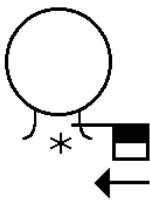
## The neck

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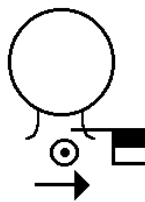


the neck

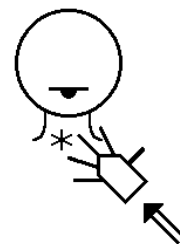
This is the symbol used to represent the neck, to show that the hands touch or are close to the neck.



TO LOSE



SIN



REPULSIVE

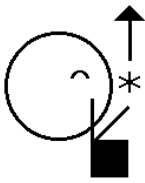
# The eyes and eyebrows

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When the focus of a sign is the eyes, or when the point of contact is the eyes or near the eyes, we write small semi-circles to represent (open) eyes.



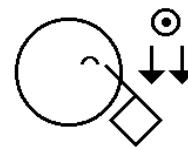
Examples:



TO SEE



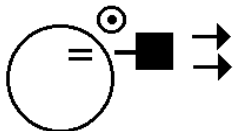
EYES



GARLIC

---

When the point of contact is the eyebrows, we use this symbol. (Later we will introduce facial expressions that include raised and lowered eyebrows.)



JOSE MARI (name sign)

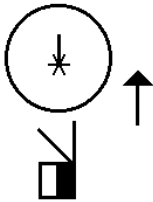
# The nose and mouth

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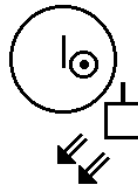


When the nose is the point of contact for a sign, a short vertical line down the center of the face represents the nose. The contact symbol can be written on the nose line, on the face near it, or off to the side of the face, whichever is clearer or more exact.

Examples:



TWO YEARS

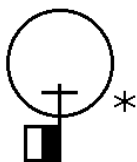
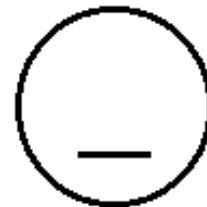


WINE

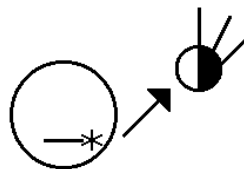


MAN (LSC)

When the mouth is the point of contact or the focus of a sign, a short horizontal line is used to represent the mouth. (Later we will see that there are many mouth symbols used to represent the facial expressions and mouth patterns.) The simple horizontal line is the neutral mouth symbol and is only used as a point of contact.



QUIET



CIGAR

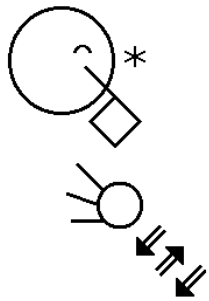


TO SMOKE

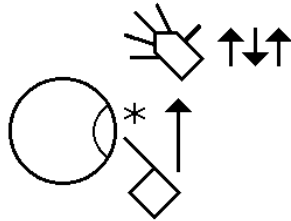
# Changes in handshape and orientations

---

When a sign **starts with one *handshape* and ends with another**, if it is not obvious what the second one will be, we write both the initial and the final handshape. To read the sign, start with the handshape that is closer to the straight end of the arrow, and move the hand toward the arrow head. If there are no arrows that indicate which symbol is read first, we read from top to bottom and left to right.



DANGEROUS

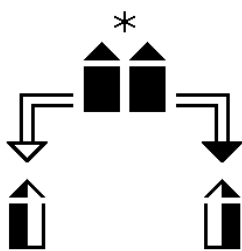


FAMOUS

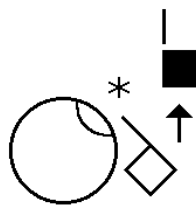


TWENTY

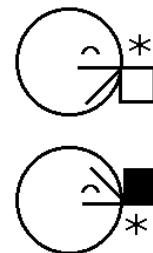
When a sign **starts with one *orientation* and ends with another**, if it is not obvious what those orientations will be, we write both the initial and the final orientations.



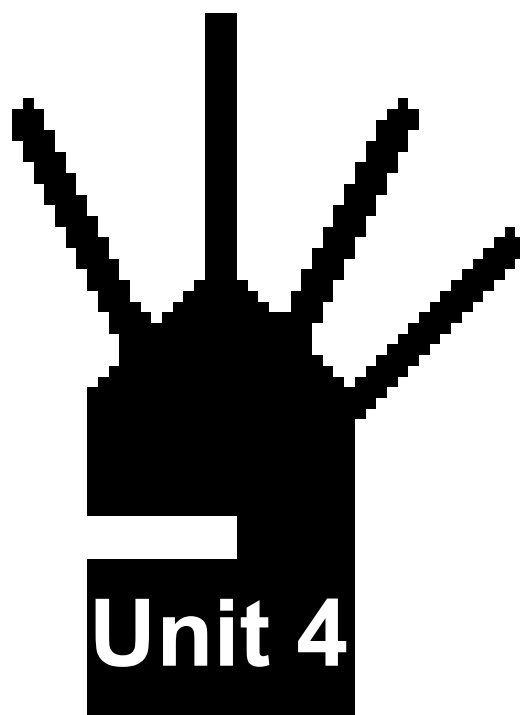
TABLE



TO KNOW



EXPERIENCE

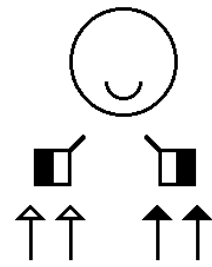
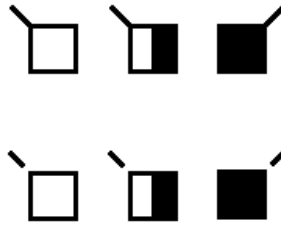


Contents:

- Handshape anatomy: pinky, middle and ring fingers
- Some complex arrows
- Straight movements on the “side-wall” plane
- Basic punctuation

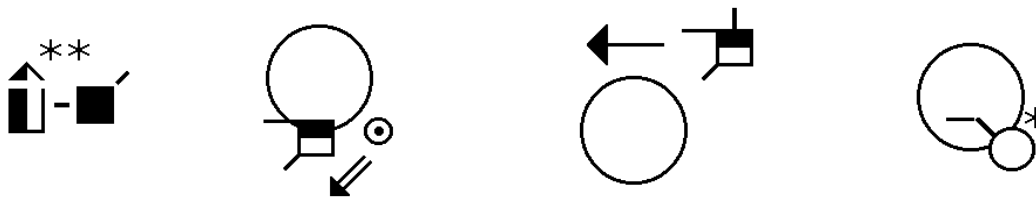
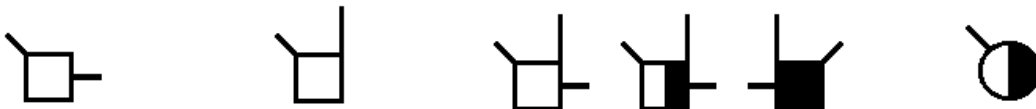
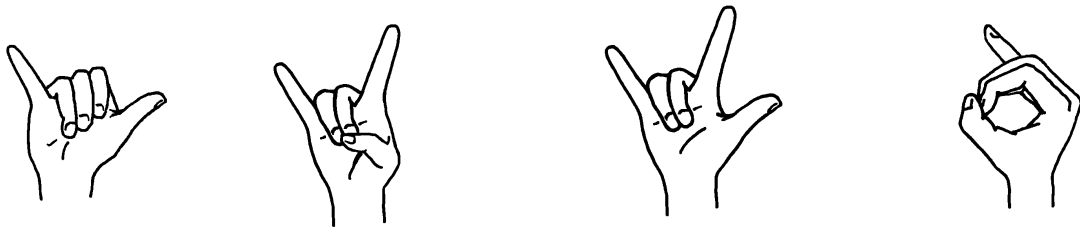
# Handshape anatomy: pinky finger

The pinky extends at a 45-degree angle from the corner of the base. Notice that on the side view, the pinky extends from the white corner.



TO HAVE FUN

More pinky handshapes:



NEAR

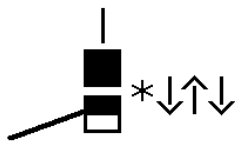
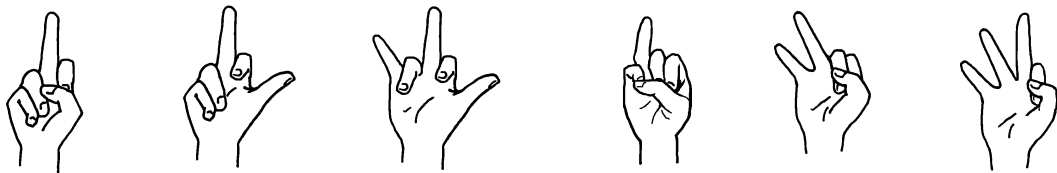
MISTAKE

AIRPLANE  
FLY OVER (ASL)

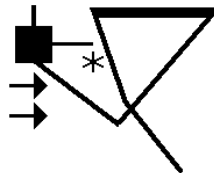
PIPE

# Middle and ring fingers

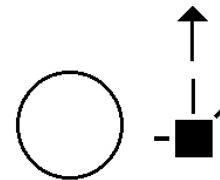
The **middle** finger is longer than the index and extends at a 90-degree angle from the center of the base. The **ring** finger is shorter than the middle finger and is usually placed between the corner and the middle of the base. The exception to that rule is when only the ring and pinky fingers are extended.



ARMY TANK



TATTOO

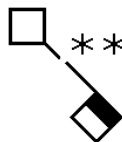


FIGHTER JET

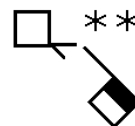
Note: the arm bar is thicker and longer than the middle finger. As in TATTOO, when the orientation of the hand is awkward, it may be necessary to write both arms to make it clear which hand is the dominant hand.



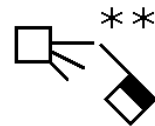
YOUNGER BROTHER  
(Hong Kong SL)



FIRST



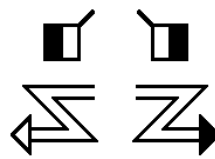
SECOND



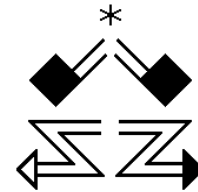
THIRD

# More movement arrows

We can write more complex movements on the two planes (the front wall and the floor) using the single-stemmed and double-stemmed arrow convention that we use for straight arrows.



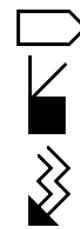
HAPPY



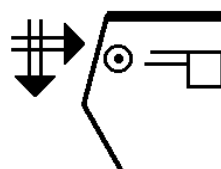
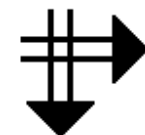
INTERNATIONAL



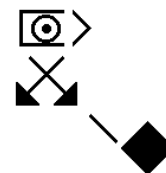
DENMARK



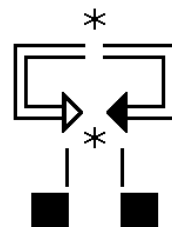
READ



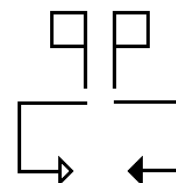
RED CROSS



CANCEL



SQUARE SHAPE



SQUARE SHAPE

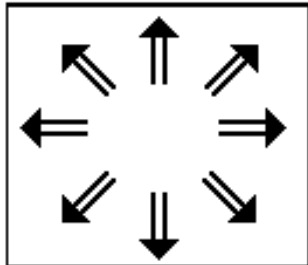




# More straight movements

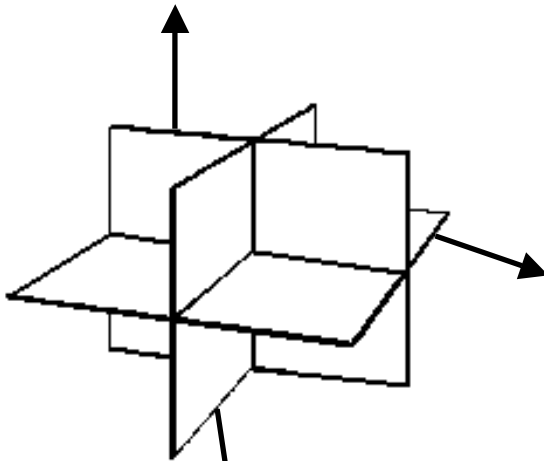
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We have already seen straight arrows on two different planes (1 and 2):

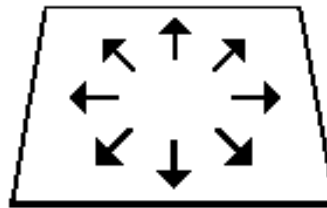


Plane 1 (x,y): parallel to the front wall

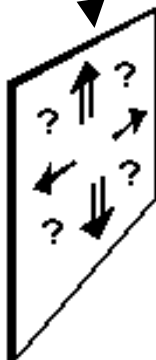
All these movements are written with double-stemmed arrows.



Plane 2 (x,z): parallel to the floor



All these movements are written with single-stemmed arrows.

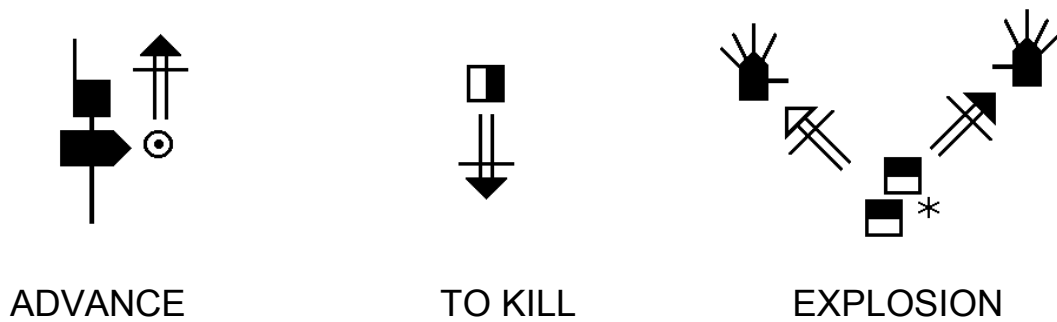
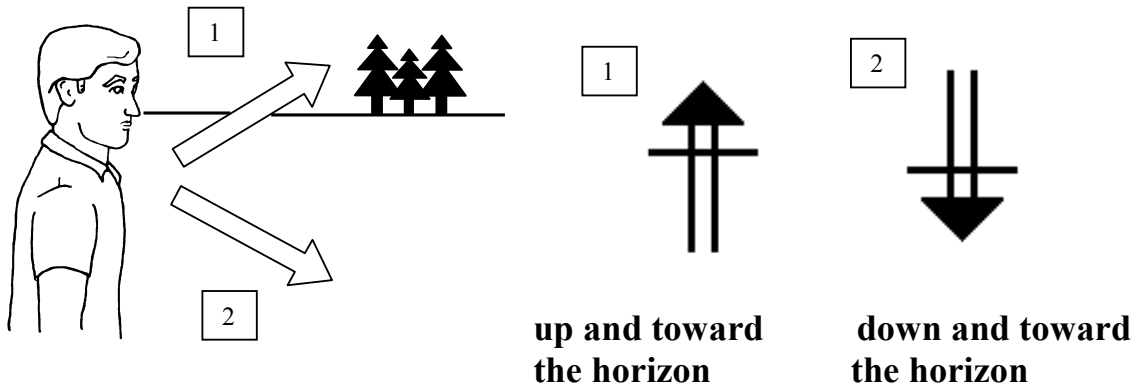


Plane 3 (y,z): parallel to the side wall

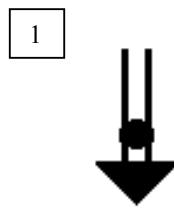
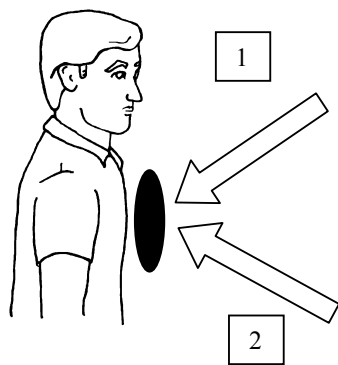
The four movements shown at left are taken from the other two planes.

But what about diagonal movements on this plane?

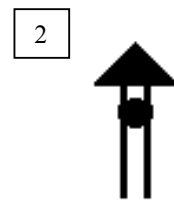
A horizontal line written across an up or down arrow is used to represent straight movement that moves away from the signer, up or down. The line can be thought of as representing the distant horizon. The horizontal line is close to the head of the arrow to show that the end point of the movement is away from the body (toward the horizon).



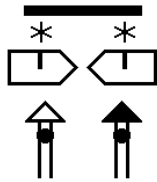
A black dot written between the lines of an up or down arrow is used to represent diagonal movements that move closer to the body in a straight diagonal line. The black dot is closer to the head of the arrow to show that the endpoint of the movement is closest to the body. Note that the black dot does not imply that the hand actually touches the body. The dot is only used as a relative point of reference.



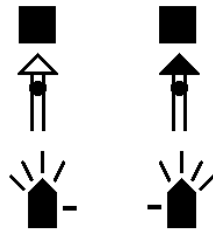
**down and  
toward the body**



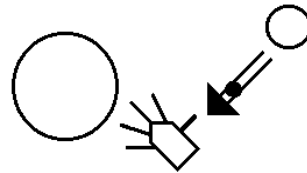
**up and toward  
the body**



**BED SHEETS**



**RESCUE**



**GRACE**

# Basic punctuation

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Punctuation is mostly used for writing texts, not for phonetic transcription. However, a few basic punctuation marks are useful.

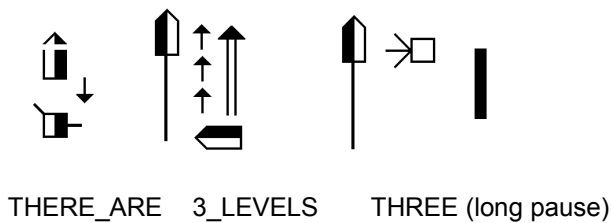
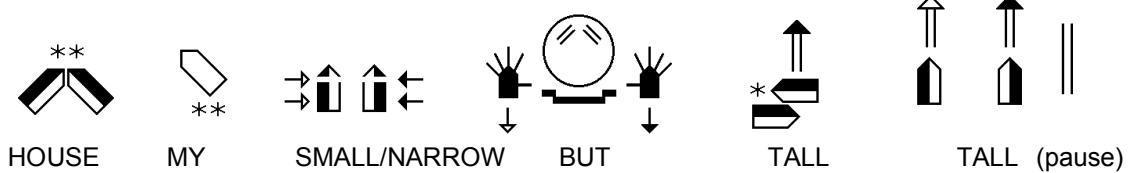
The symbol that corresponds to a **period** can be viewed as a long pause or a completion of an idea. At this point signers usually blink and might put their hands in a neutral position briefly.

The symbol that we use for a **comma** refers to a short pause, sometimes while a signer mentions a list of items. We will introduce the full range of punctuation later in this course.

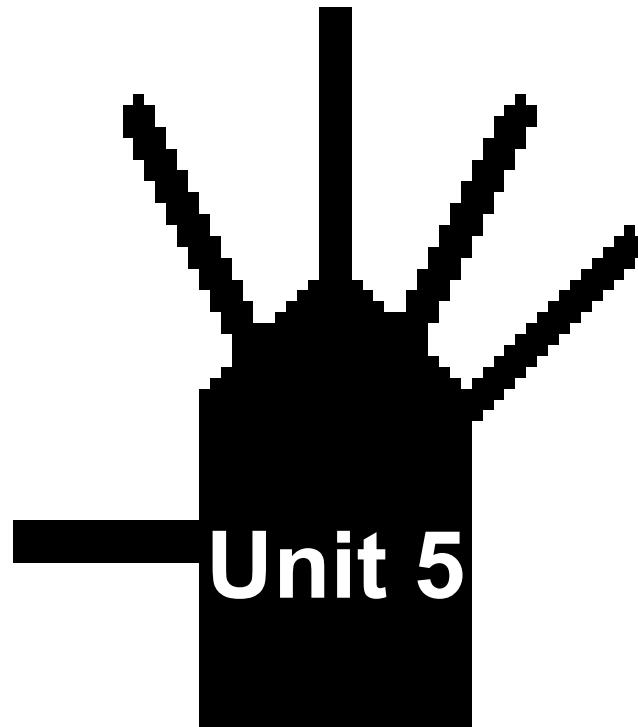
When we write a complete sentence, we finish the sentence with this symbol, which represents a **period**:



Two thin lines represent a **comma**. We use commas between items in a list or between related ideas. The use of commas helps us visually separate one idea from another.



“My house is narrow but tall, it has three floors.”



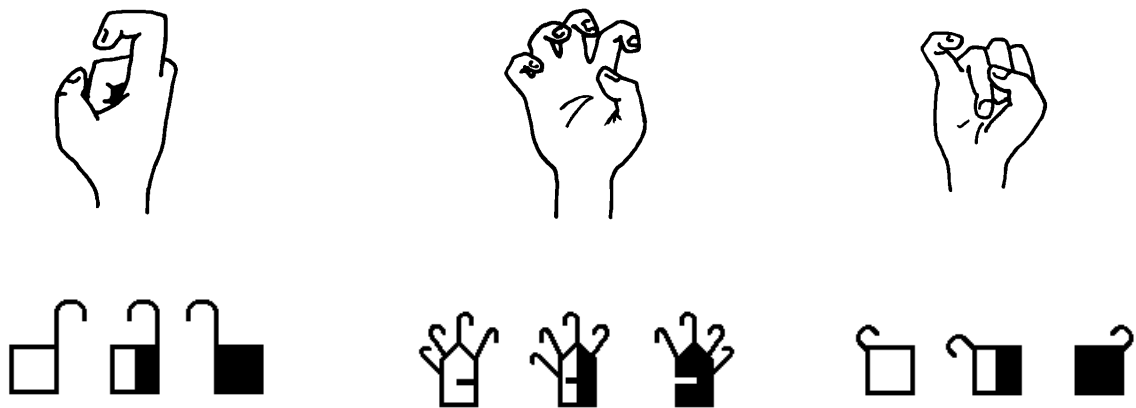
Contents:

- Handshape anatomy: hooked fingers
- Circular movements
- Contact symbols: rub, hold, in-between and strike

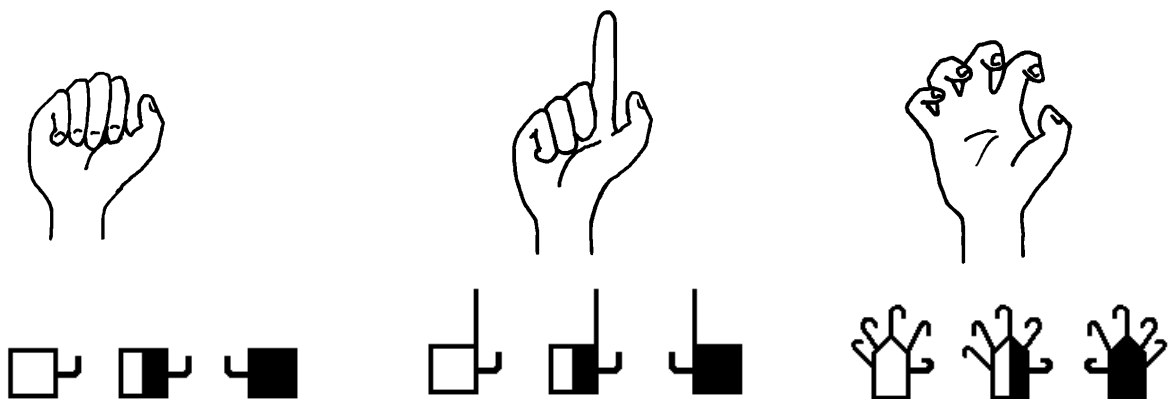
# Handshape Anatomy: “hooked” fingers

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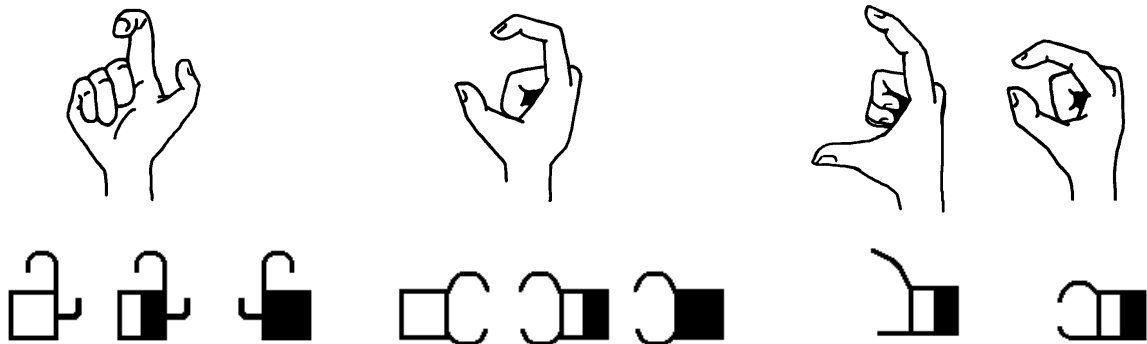
“Hooked” handshapes refer to handshapes that flex the finger joints (phalangeal joints). Notice which direction the fingers hook when the hand is rotated. On the front and back orientations, the fingers curl toward the part where the thumb would be. On the side view, the fingers curl toward the palm.



The thumb (when flexed and unopposed) always curls upward.



Thumb to the side (flexed, unopposed) vs. thumb forward (opposed):

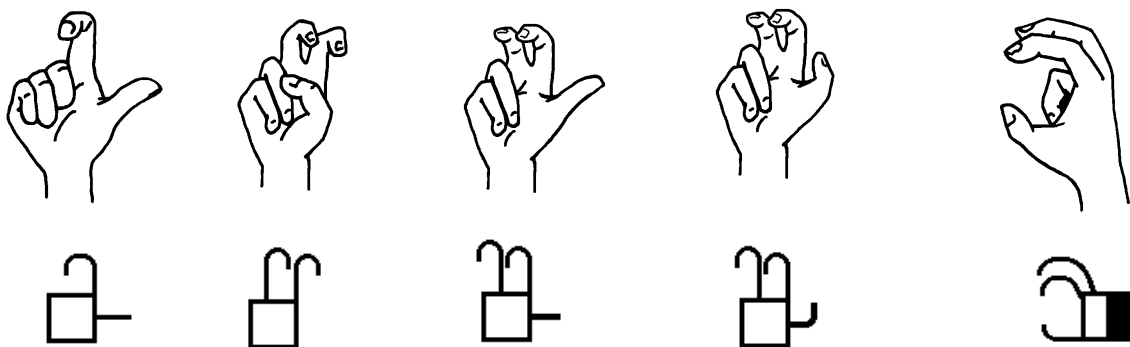


Note: The index finger is turned away from the thumb on the front and back views. This helps us see that the index and thumb are not on the same plane. Compare this with the next three handshapes.

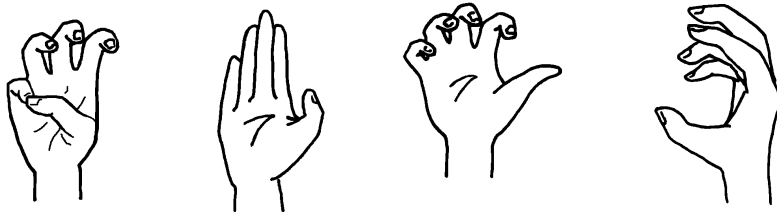
Note: On the thumb-forward handshapes, the index comes out of the top corner on the same side as the thumb. This shows more clearly the relative size of the gap between the thumb and fingers.

Note: The gap can be larger or smaller than the normal gap. Many signed languages don't make this gap size distinction except in classifier constructions where the exact gap corresponds to a real-life measurement.

More hooked handshapes:



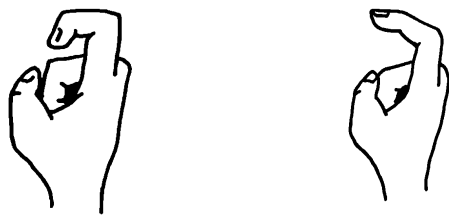
More handshapes:



Notice: this last handshape has a different base shape. We will see more examples of this kind of base in the next unit.



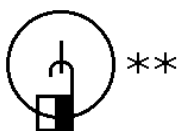
Degree of finger flex:



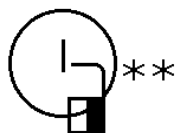
The degree of flexing may not be contrastive in some languages. However, the less-hooked symbol is more accurate when the point of contact is the tip of the index finger.



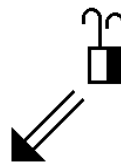
Examples:



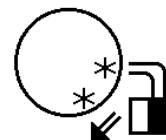
ANTIQUE



JUNE



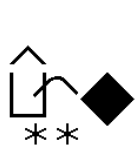
TO COME



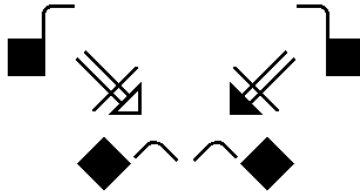
JUNE (LSC)



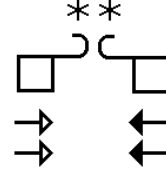
More examples:



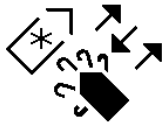
TELEGRAPH



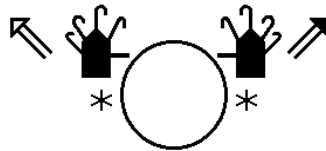
TO AGREE TO MEET



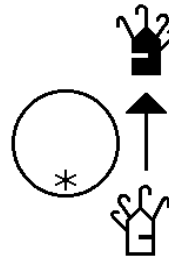
ENEMY



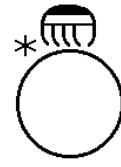
DOUBT



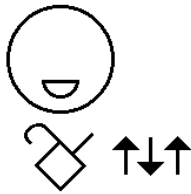
DEER



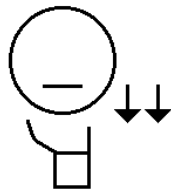
TO INSULT



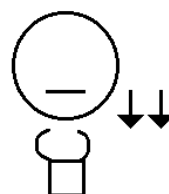
KING



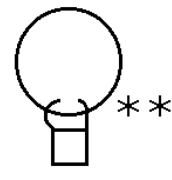
LAUGHTER



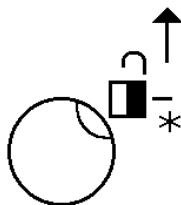
PIZZA



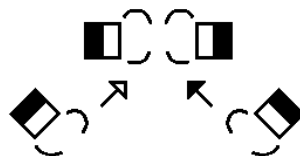
COOKIE



ENGLISH



TOWN



GROUP

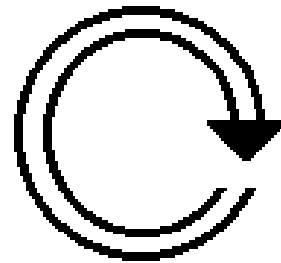


SLEEP (LSC)

# Circular Movement

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SignWriting has arrows for various kinds of circular movements. This first type of circular movement starts at the elbow; the forearm and hand move as a unit with no wrist rotation. The arrow head shows the direction of the movement and the number of circles; it may also show the place where the movement starts. We will look at this type of movement on three planes.



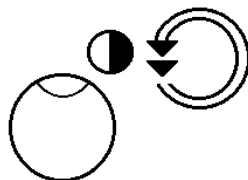
Plane 1 (x,y)  
Circular movement

When the hand moves in a circle on the same plane as the front wall, the movement you would use to wash a window, the movement is written with this arrow (plane 1).

This circular movement is always the same distance from the body.



TO LOOK FOR



OPINION



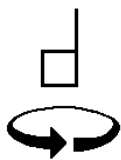
WASHING MACHINE

When the hand moves in a circle in a movement like you would use to wash a table with a cloth, this movement is written with this arrow (plane 2).



Plane 2 (x,z)  
Circular movement

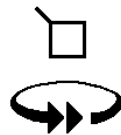
The arrow stem is **thicker** when the hand is **closer to the body** and **thinner** when the hand moves **farther from the body**.



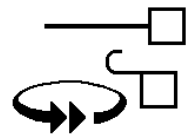
ALONE



OIL

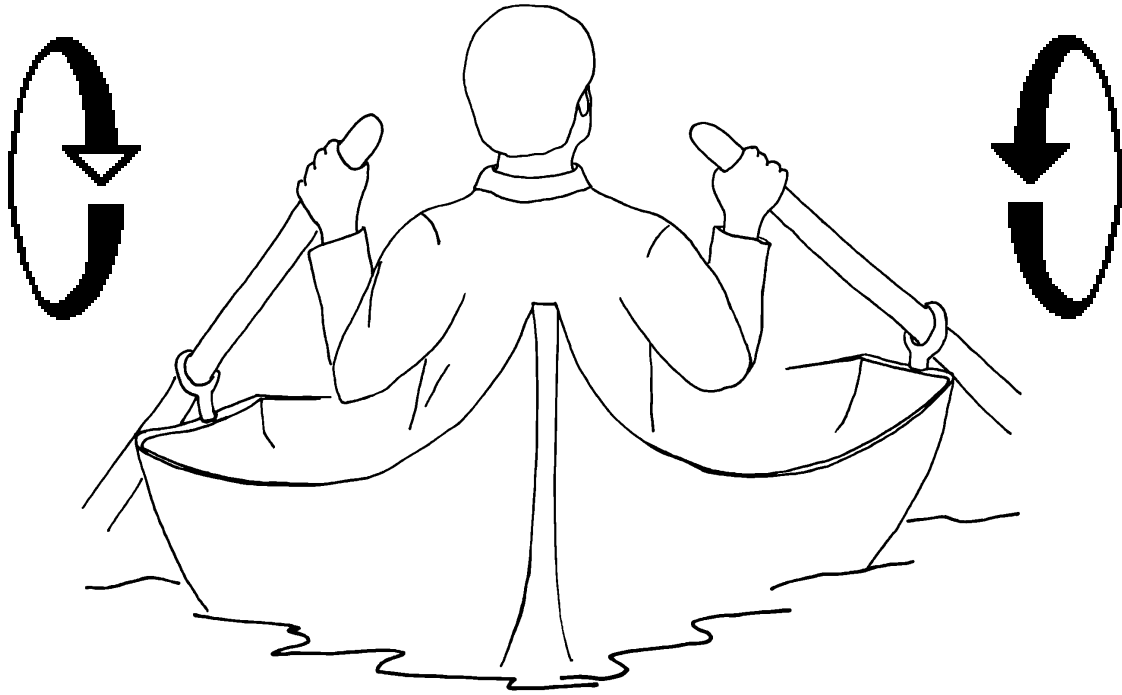


BOSS



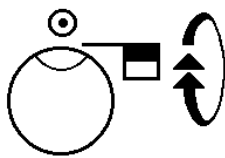
AUGUST

Plane 3 (y,z)  
Circular movement

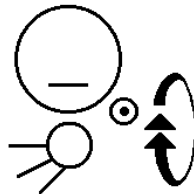


When the hand moves in a circle, the same movement used for rowing a boat, the movement is written like this (plane 3).

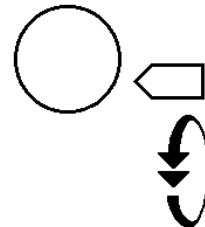
The arrow stem is **thicker** when the hand is **closer to the body** and **thinner** when the hand is **farther from the body**.



CULTURE




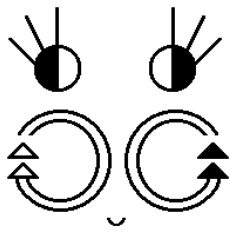
GOOD AFTERNOON



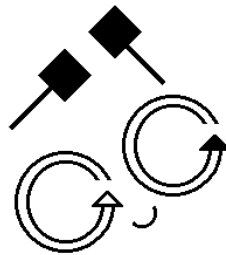
LONG AGO

# Two-handed movements

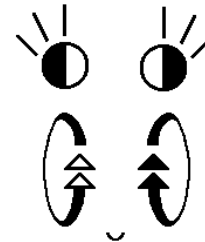
When a movement is written for both hands, this **tie** symbol  **unites** the movements to indicate that that both hands move at the same time. The movement is **simultaneous**.



NOTHING

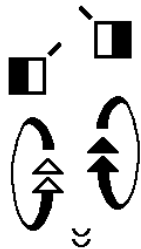


DEFEND

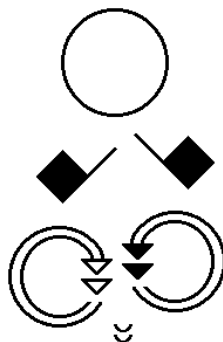


ALWAYS

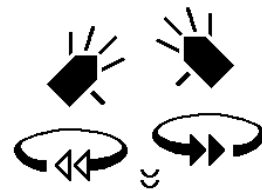
When the circular movement is written for both hands and the hands alternate, this symbol is used to show that the hands alternate as they circle. To make it clearer that the hands are alternating, the hands and circle symbols can be slightly offset from each other.



BICYCLE



PROBLEM



DOMINOES

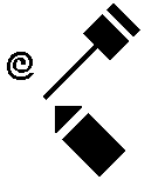
# Contact symbol: rub

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## Rub (in a circle)

The motion of rubbing in a circle is written with a **spiral**.

A **rub** is when your hand makes circular contact with another part of the body, staying in constant contact without ever separating.



GOVERNMENT



NICE TO MEET YOU



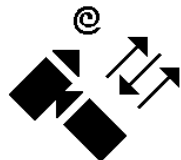
PHARMACY

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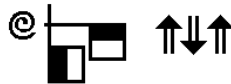
## Rub (in a straight line)

This type of contact is written with the same spiral symbol, along with one or more arrows.

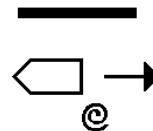
When the rub symbol is written with an arrow, the arrow determines the direction of the movement. The movement is made with constant contact in the direction(s) of the arrow(s).



EXCUSE ME



TEMPERATURE



TO WANT

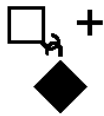
## Contact symbol: hold

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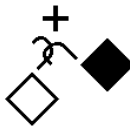
We use a “plus” sign to represent a **hold**.



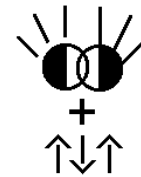
**Hold** means that the hand grabs and holds another part of the body. It can also mean to grab and hold the hair, the ear, a piece of clothing, etc.



MARRIED



BROTHER (LSC)

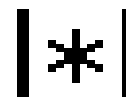


FRIEND

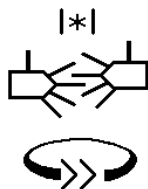
## Contact symbol: in-between

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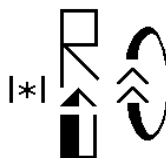
The symbol for **in-between** is an asterisk between two vertical lines.



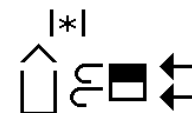
**In-between** means a contact between two other body parts. It is most often used for contact between the fingers, but it can also mean that the nose is between the fingers or the hand is between the upper arm and the body.



AMERICA



RIDE A HORSE



TICKET

# Contact symbol: strike

Strike or **hit** is written using the “pound” sign (a tic-tac-toe grid).



**Strike/hit** means contact that is more forceful than a simple touch. In LSE, it intensifies a sign.

BLACK			VERY BLACK
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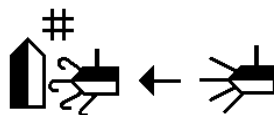
HARD			VERY HARD
------	--	--	-----------

BECAUSE			GUILT
---------	--	--	-------

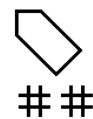
Other examples:



SERPENT

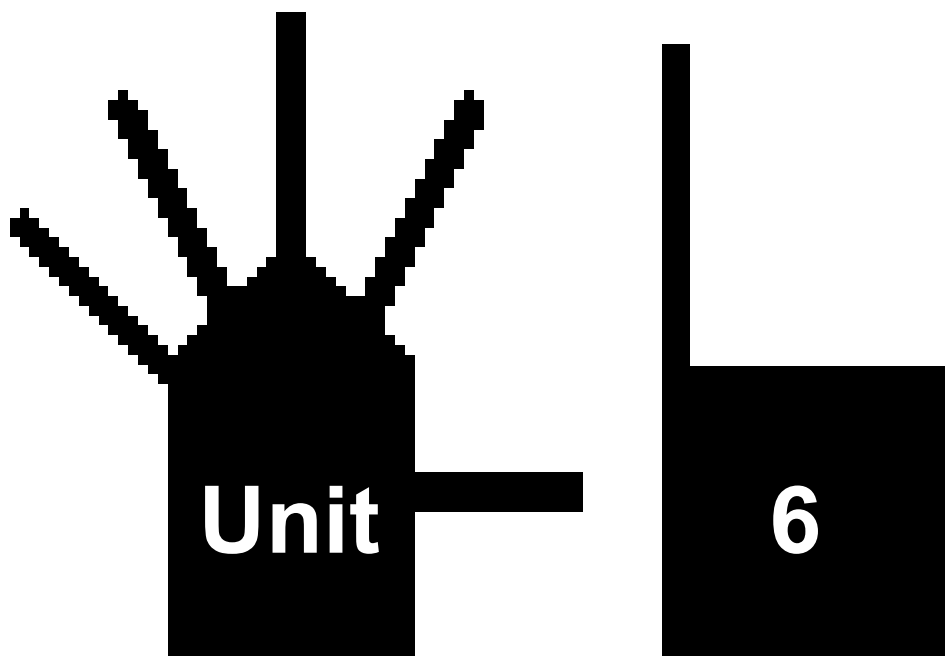


CRASH



BELONGS TO ME



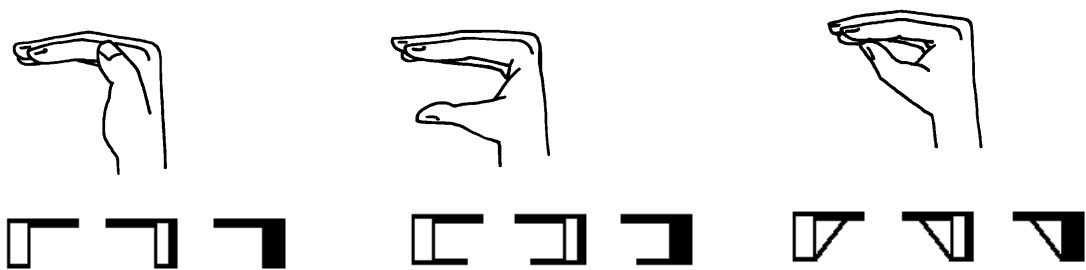
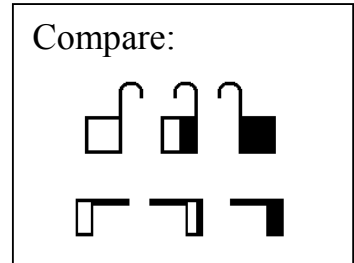


Contents:

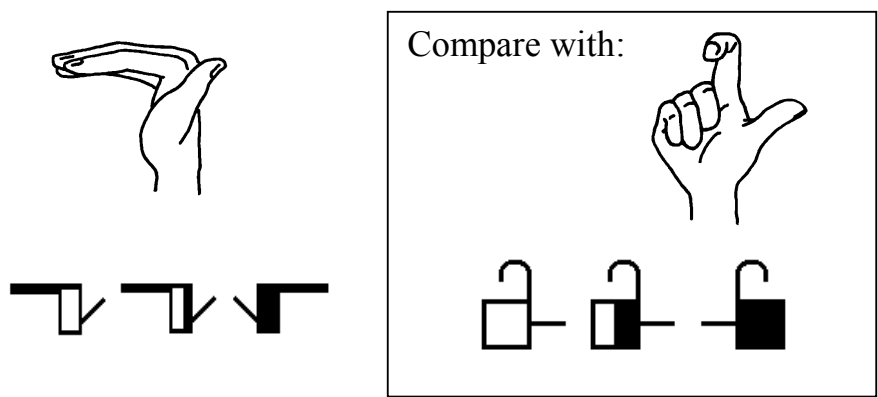
- Handshape anatomy: bent handshapes
- Finger movement

# Handshape anatomy: “bent” fingers

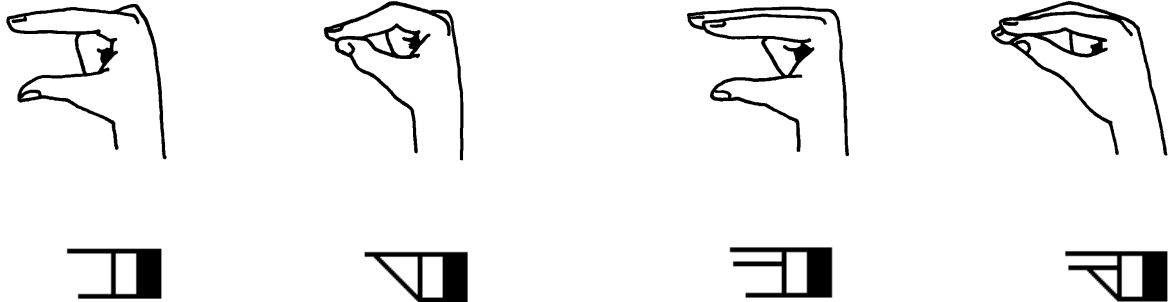
Bent handshapes refer to those handshapes where the fingers bend from the knuckle joint closest to the hand (metacarpal joint). These handshapes rotate like the hooked handshapes. If the fingers and thumb point in the same direction, the fingers point toward the palm of the hand.



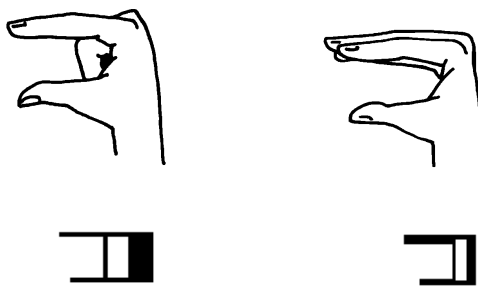
There are exceptions to this rotation rule. As we saw with the hooked fingers (and illustrated below), when the bent fingers are on a separate plane from the extended thumb, the fingers must face the opposite direction from the thumb.



More “bent” handshapes:



Notice the difference between these two handshapes.

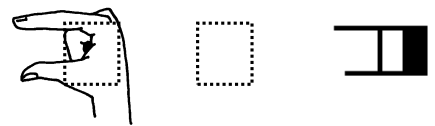


**Thickness of the fingers:**

The handshape with only one finger extended uses a thin line for the finger. The handshape that represents multiple fingers uses a thick line.

**Shape of the base:**

The **square** base is used when **at least one finger tip is touching the palm**:



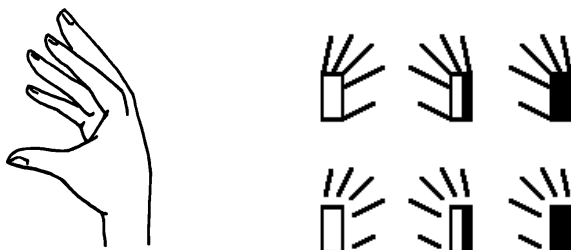
The **rectangular** base is used when **all fingers are away from the palm**:



The **5-sided** base is used when **all fingers are either fully extended or hooked** (but not bent).



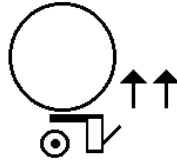
Here the fingers are bent and spread.



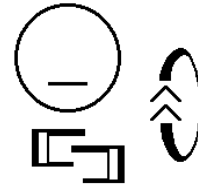
Examples:



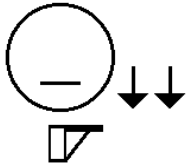
AFTERNOON (LSC)



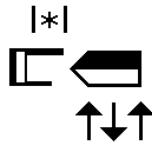
SOMETHING



SUB SANDWICH



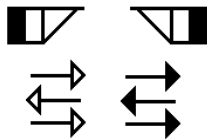
FOOD



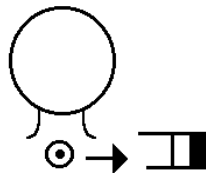
SEND PHONE MESSAGES



EGYPT



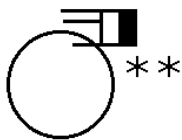
ARGUE



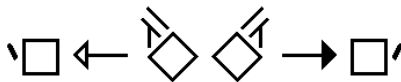
PRIEST



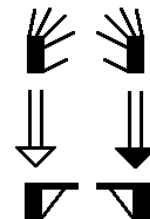
LITTLE BY LITTLE



INTELLIGENT (LSM)



DISAPPEAR

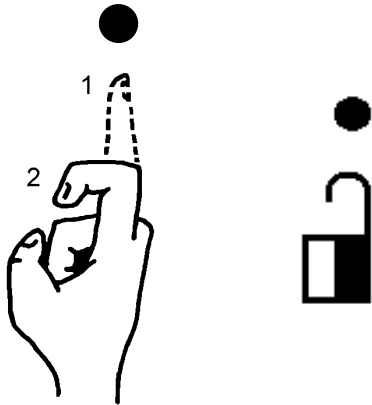


TURN OFF THE LIGHT

# Finger movements

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## Middle (phalangeal) joint closes



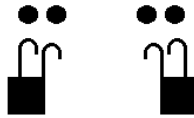
When the finger closes in the middle, as in a squeeze, this finger movement is written as a **black dot**.

We write the black dot near the finger that closes. Two black dots means two squeezes.

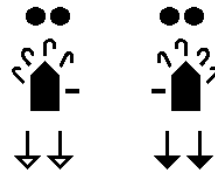
Examples:



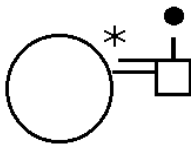
TO NEED



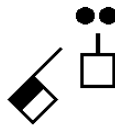
NEW



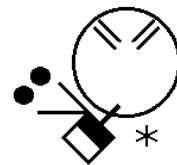
TO LEARN



SUICIDE

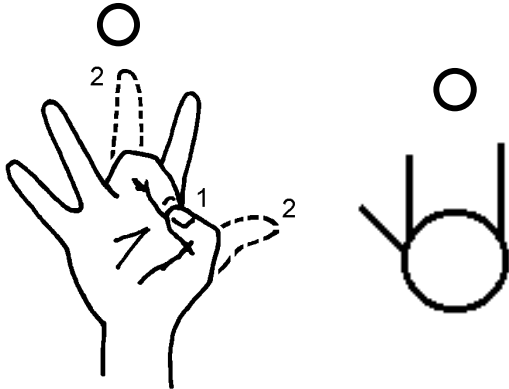


LIGHT A CANDLE



AWFUL

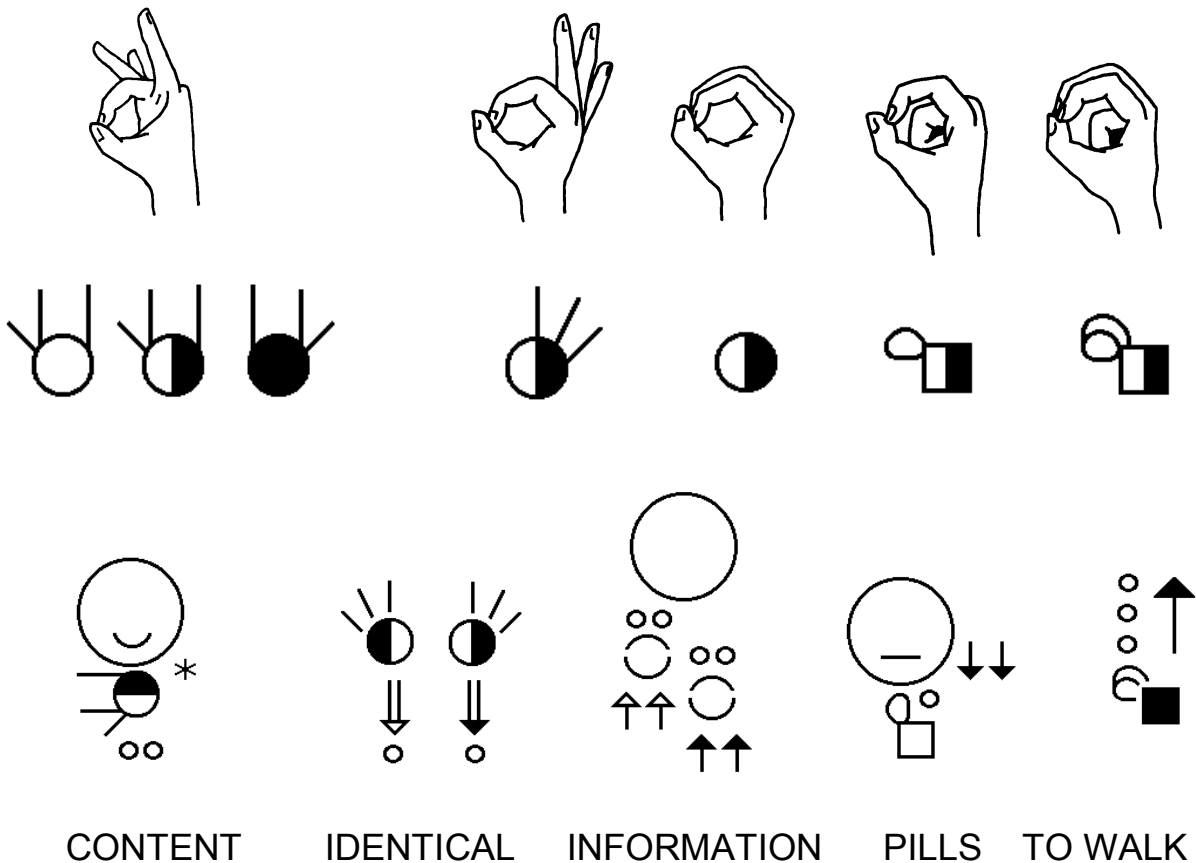
## Middle (phalangeal) joint opens



When the fingers are extended, as in a flick, the opening movement is written as a **white circle**.

We write the circle near the fingers that flick open or near the place where the movement is done. Two circles means two flicks.

A few handshapes that are commonly used with flicks:



If one configuration is more important than the other, we write the most important one. Usually the initial handshape is the most important; however, there are a few examples in which the end handshape is more important. These signs sometimes start with an “O” or a “1”, and some start with an ASL “8”, but they finish with these handshapes:



12



13

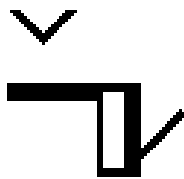
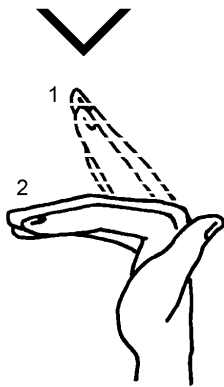


14



15

### Bending the fingers (metacarpal joint)

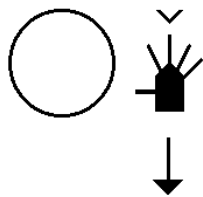


When the fingers bend from the knuckle, this movement is written as the tip of a small arrow head that points down.

When there are two arrow heads, the fingers bend twice.



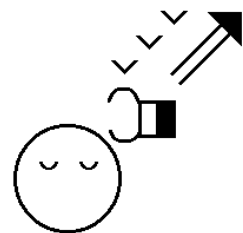
PILLOW



UNDERSTAND

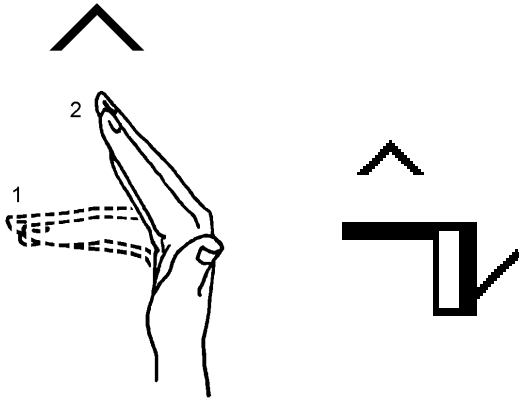


A LOT



DREAM

## Opening the fingers (metacarpal joints) from the bent position



When straight fingers are extended from the bent position, the movement is written as a small arrow head that points upward.

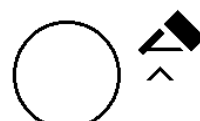
When there are two arrow heads, the fingers are extended twice.



TO EXPEL



UGLY



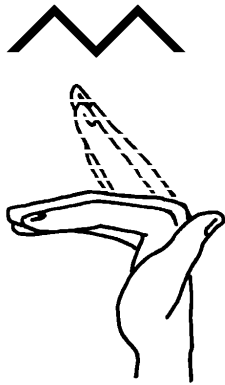
TURN ON LIGHT



INTELLIGENT



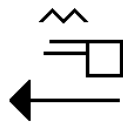
## Opening and bending the fingers (metacarpal joints)



The fingers move together, opening and closing from the knuckles, as if they were one unit. They are bent and extended together. This movement is represented by a string of arrow heads that point up and down, usually turned to match the up-and-down movement of the fingers.



ANGEL



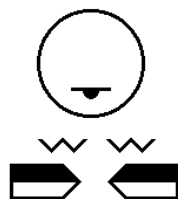
FISH



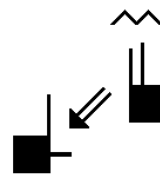
MOUNTAIN



BUTTERFLY

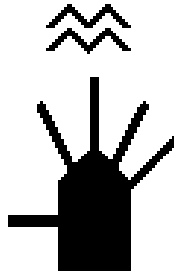


WEAK



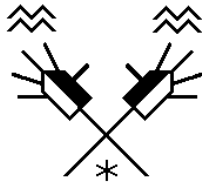
FRAMED PAINTING

## Alternating opening and closing of the fingers from the knuckle (metacarpal) joints



The fingers alternate moving up and down, like when you drum your fingers on a table.

The symbol for this alternating movement is a double row of small arrow heads pointing up and down (2, 3 or 4 peaks).



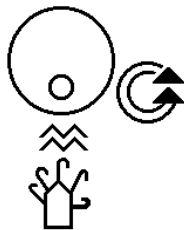
TO PLAY



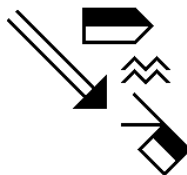
SPIDER



SPEAK



SPICY HOT

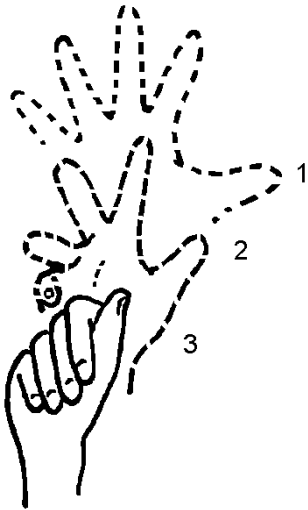


SCUBA DIVING



VACATION

## Closing the hand from the knuckles, one finger at a time



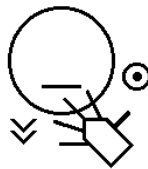
The fingers close once, one at a time, starting from the little finger and ending with the index finger.

The symbol used to represent this single close of the hand is two arrow heads, one inside the other, pointing down.

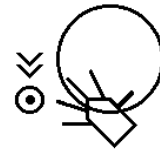
Remember: when a sign starts with one configuration and ends with another, if it is not clear what the two configurations are, we write both the first and the second. Also, if the index closes first, write the symbols closer to the index finger, angling toward the pinky (see note on page 70).



TO STEAL



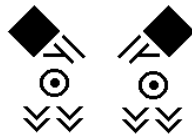
COLORS



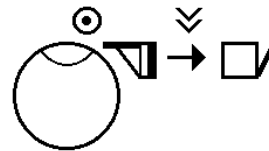
TO KNOW A PERSON



UNITED STATES

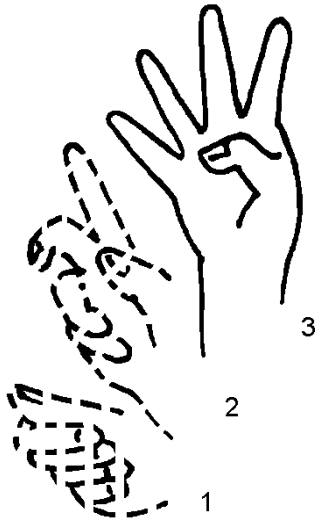


SUGAR



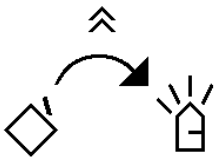
TO FORGET

## Opening the hand from the knuckles, one finger at a time

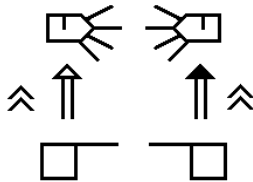


The fingers are extended, opening the hand one finger at a time, starting with the index and ending with the little finger.

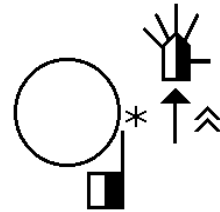
The symbol for this alternating opening of the hand is two small arrow heads, one inside the other, pointing up.



SEVERAL

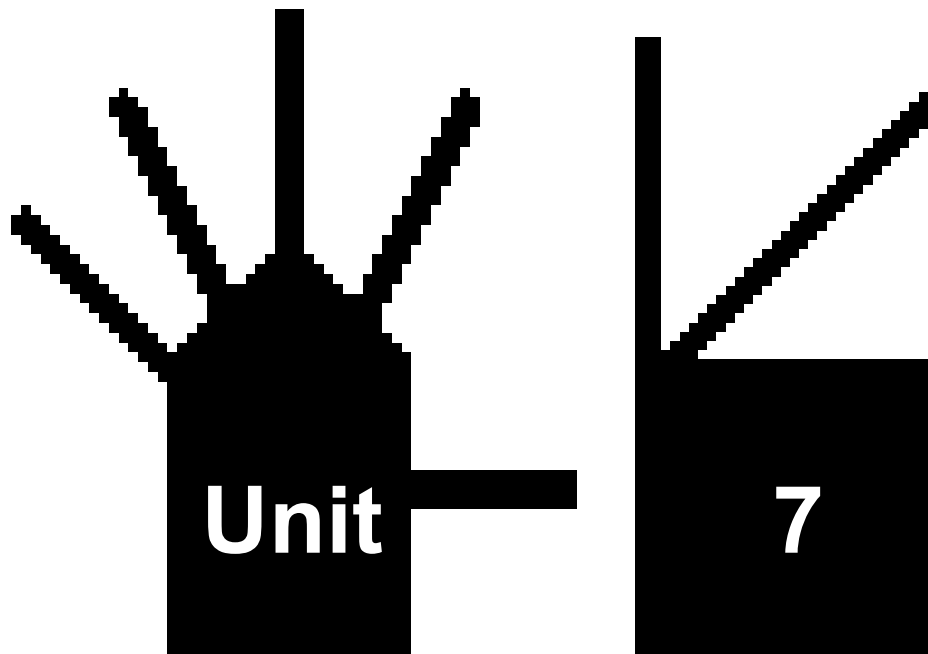


BUILDING



STAY UP UNTIL DAWN

Note: In some languages, opening or closing the hand one finger at a time can start with the pinky or the index/thumb. In some cases it may be contrastive and you will need to specify which finger starts the process.

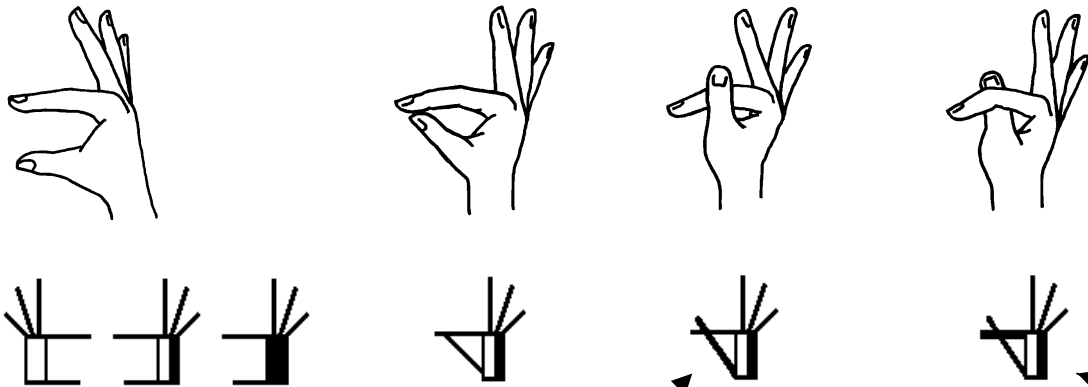


Contents:

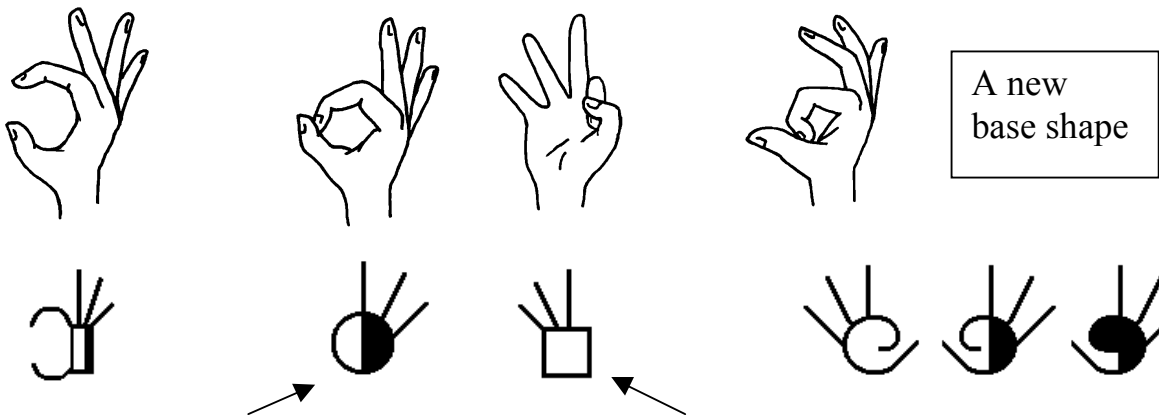
- Handshape anatomy: “mixed” handshapes
- Arcs on three planes
- Touching the ear or hair

# Handshape Anatomy: “mixed” handshapes

There are a number of handshapes whose fingers have mixed degrees of flexion. For example, some fingers may be extended and others bent, as in the following examples:

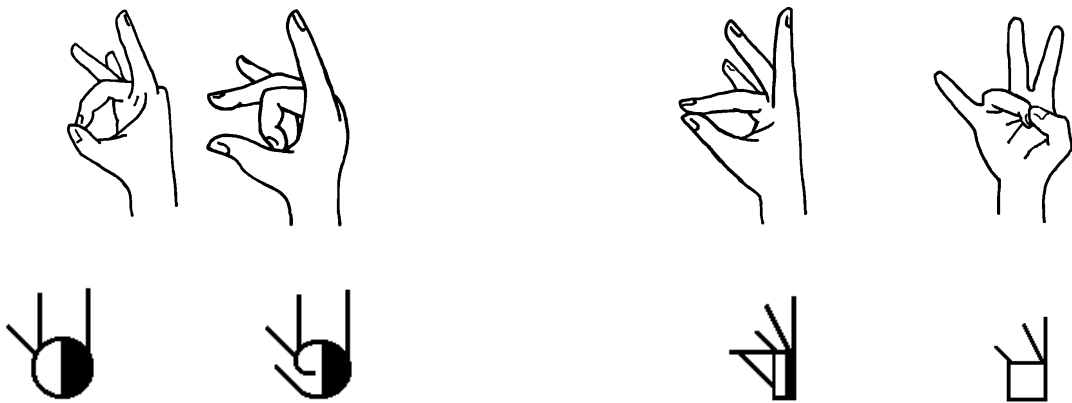
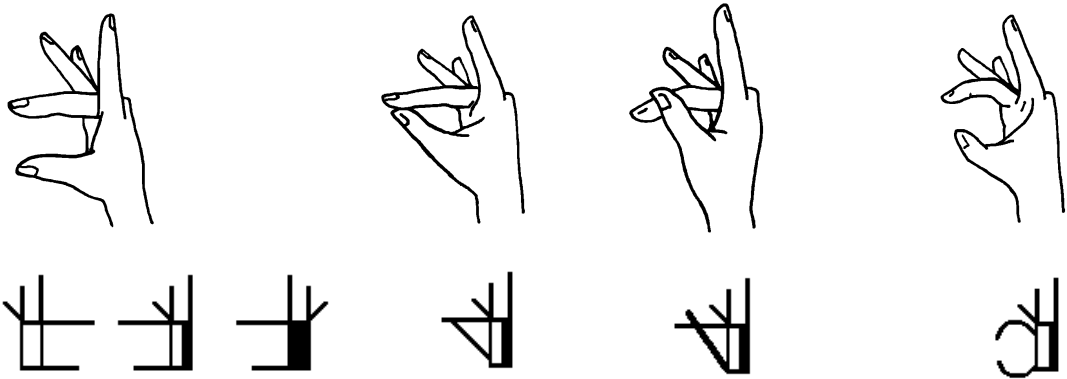


Notice that when the thumb is in front of the index finger (i.e., on the outside), the thumb is written with a thicker line than the index. When the index is in front (on the outside), its line is thicker.

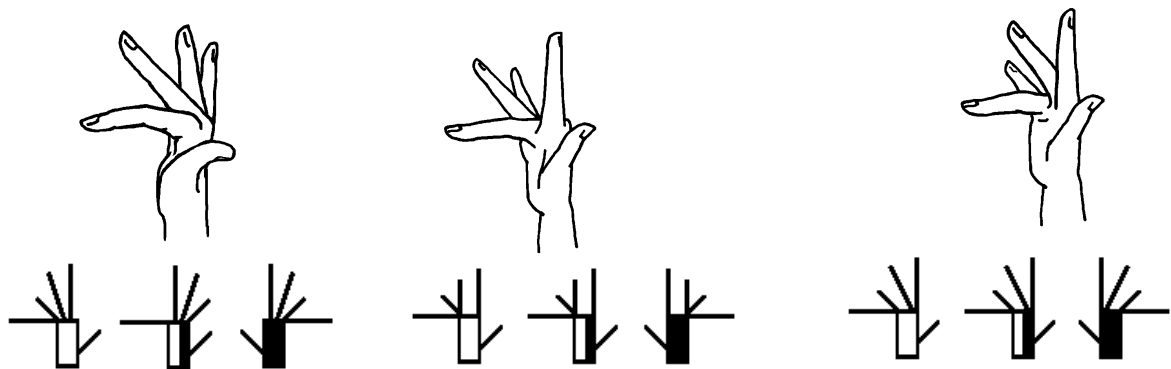


The difference between these two handshapes is that the one on the left focuses on the circle shape of the index and thumb; the one on the right only focuses on the extended fingers.

Notice how the SW symbols for the extended fingers differ: the handshapes on the previous page have the index forward; the handshapes below have the middle or ring finger forward.



The following handshapes show one finger bent forward, with the others extended. When the thumb and bent finger are on different planes, the finger and the thumb must be shown on different sides of the hand symbol.

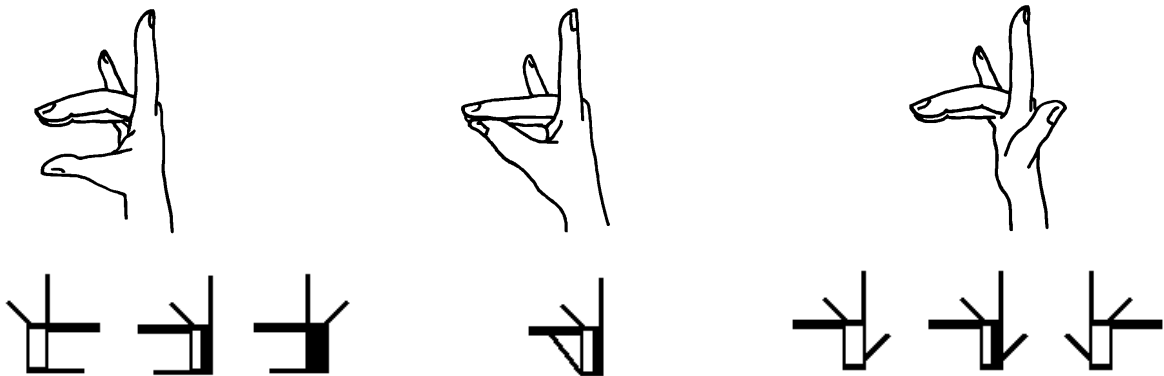


INDEX extended

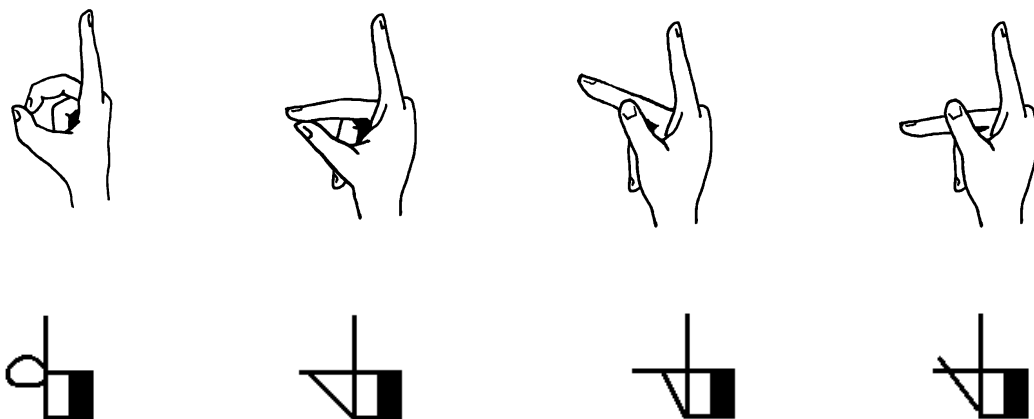
MIDDLE extended

RING extended

In these handshapes the thick finger line is used to show that multiple fingers are extended together:



In these handshapes some fingers are fully flexed, others bent or rounded, and still others are fully extended. Notice that since some of the fingers are fully flexed, the base shape is a square (rather than a rectangle, as in the handshapes above).

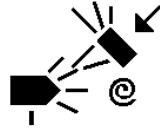




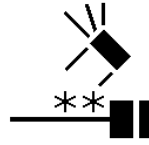
Examples:



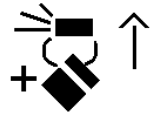
LUCK



RING



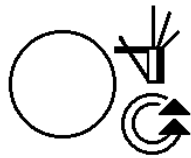
DOCTOR



GUIDE



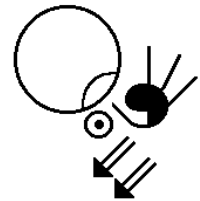
GRAVE



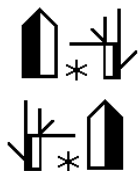
THEORY



PERCENT



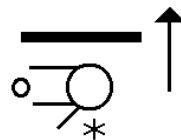
OLIVES



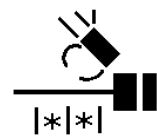
APRIL



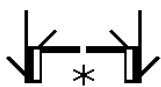
YES



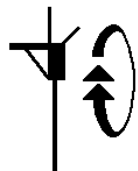
WHITE



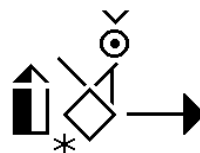
BRACELET



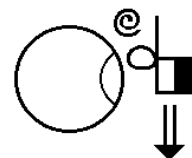
BED



LLAMA



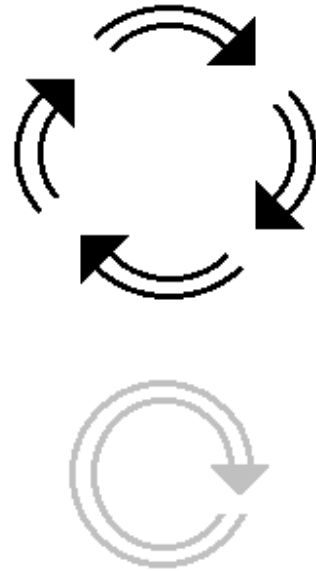
ESCAPE



SLEEP (LSM)

# Curved Movement

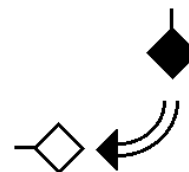
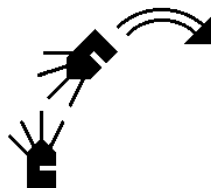
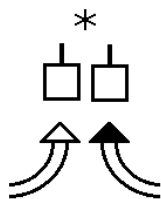
These are the arrows that represent curved movements that form partial circles, on the same three planes as before.



Plane 1 (x,y)  
Curved movement

This group of arrows represents parts of the circular movement on the same plane as that of washing the window (plane 1).

These arrows represent movement that curves one direction or the other, without letting the hand come closer to or move farther from the body.

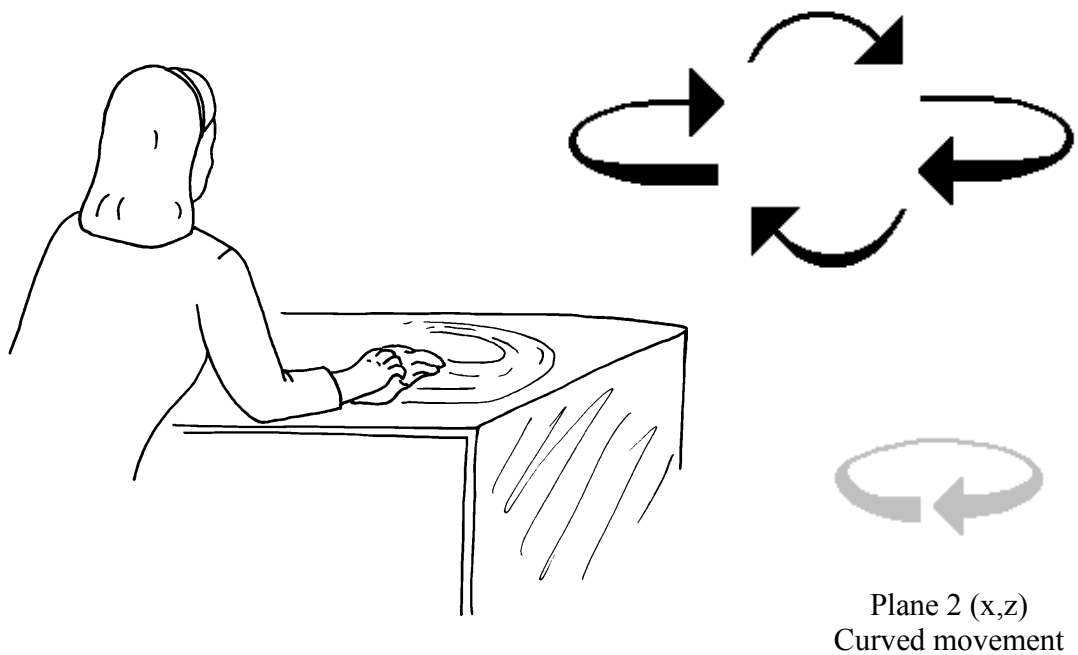


CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL

RAINBOW

TIRED

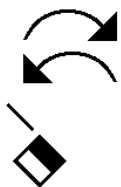
The SW program has 8 arrows that represent curved movement on this plane.



This group of arrows represents the parts of the same circular movement on the plane used for washing the table (plane 2).

These arrows represent curved movement that moves toward and away from the body.

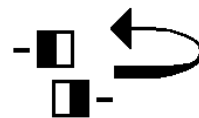
The arrow stem is **thicker** when the hand moves **closer** to the body and **thinner** when the hand moves **away** from the body.



YOU (plural)

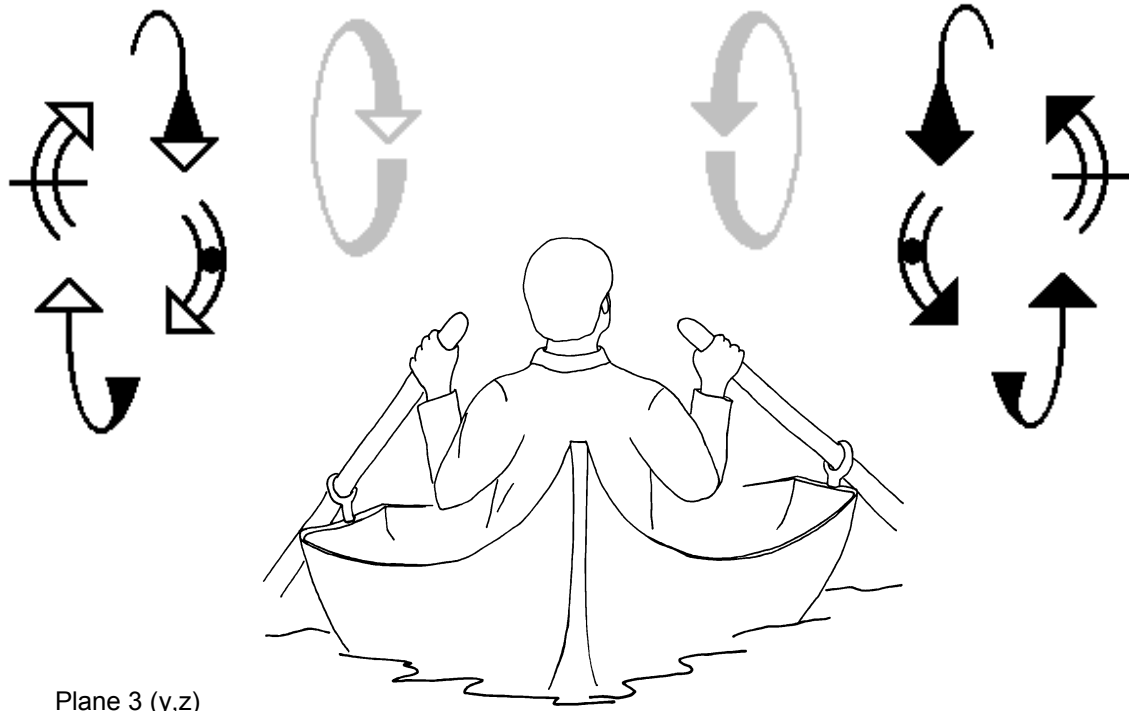


OPEN (the window)



PRIORITY

This group of arrows represents parts of the same circular movement as before, the movement used for rowing a boat (plane 3).



Plane 3 (y,z)  
Curved movement

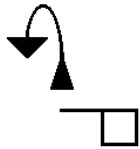
These arrows represent the same motion, but in the opposite direction:



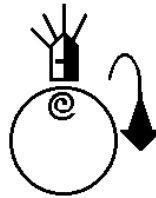


These two arrows represent movements that curve over the top of the circle. The first comes back toward the signer in an arc, and the second goes up and over in an arc away from the signer. Single-stemmed arrows, with wider sections nearer the signer, are used because the basic movement goes more back and forth than up and down.

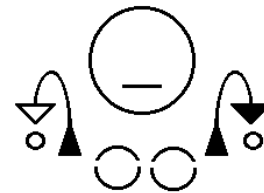
The arrow stem is thicker when the hand is closer to the body and thinner when it is farther away.



LATER



ROMAN SOLDIERS



TO TELL

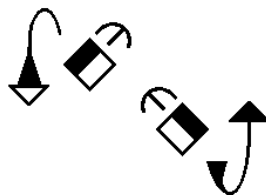


These two arrows represent movements that curve at the bottom part of the circle. The first represents a movement that comes closer as it curves under; the second curves down and under as it moves away from the signer. The basic movement is back and forth.

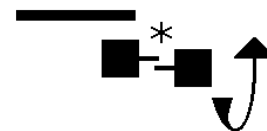
The arrow stem is thicker when the hand is closer to the body and thinner when the hand moves away from the body.



TO BE BORN



TO SELL

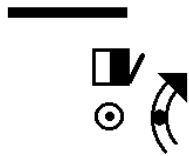


FROM THIS POINT ON

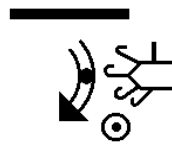


These two arrows represent up-and-down movement that curves toward the body. The basic movement is up and down, so the arrow used is double stemmed.

The black dot between the arrow stems means that the hand moves closer to the body during its trajectory and then moves away.



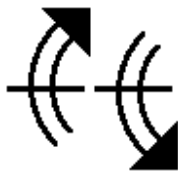
TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF



ALREADY

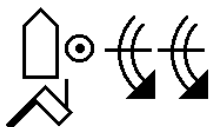


ABOVE

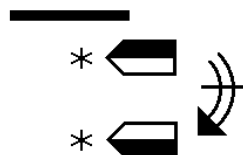


These two arrows represent up-and-down movement that curves toward the horizon. Double-stemmed arrows are used because the basic movement is up and down.

The line that crosses the arrows represents the horizon; it means that the hand moves farther away from the body as it moves up or down, then it comes closer again.



SLICED HAM



RICH (money)

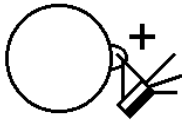
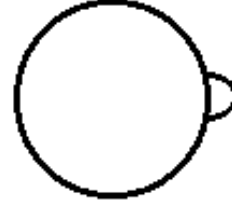


HIGHEST

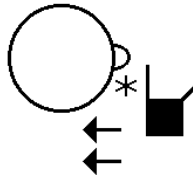
# The ear(s) and the hair

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When the hand touches or gets close to the ear, use this symbol.



WOMAN

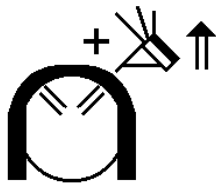


NOISE

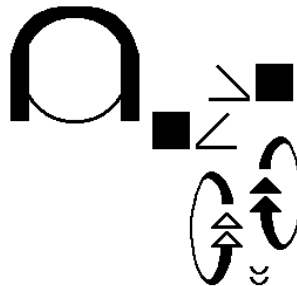


COCHLEAR IMPLANT

When the hand touches the hair or the sign focuses on the hair, use this symbol.



DETAILS



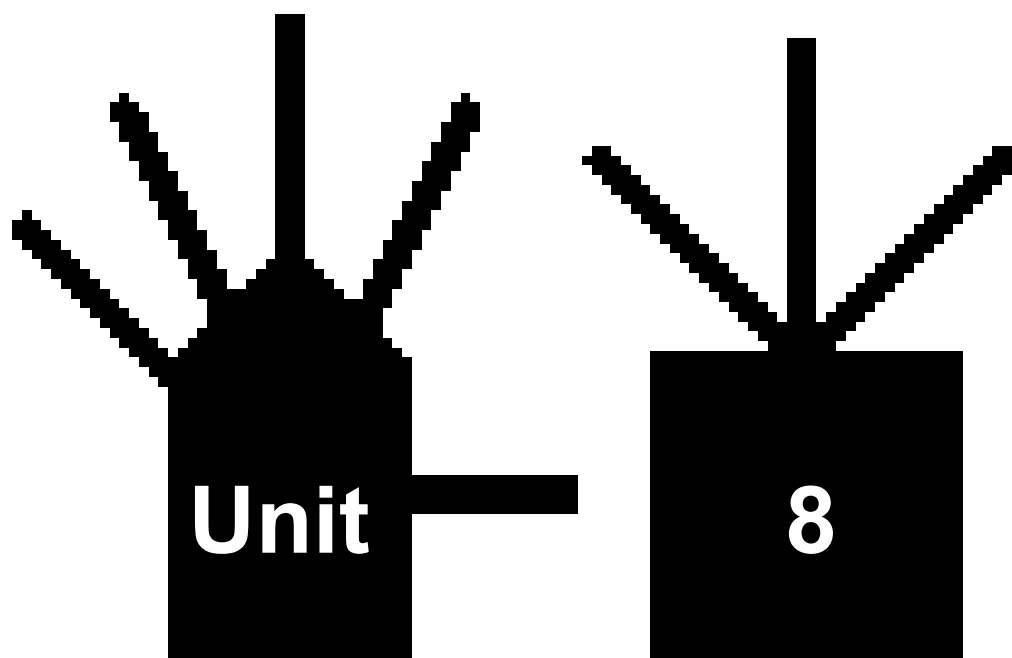
HAIR STYLIST



SHAMPOO







Contents:

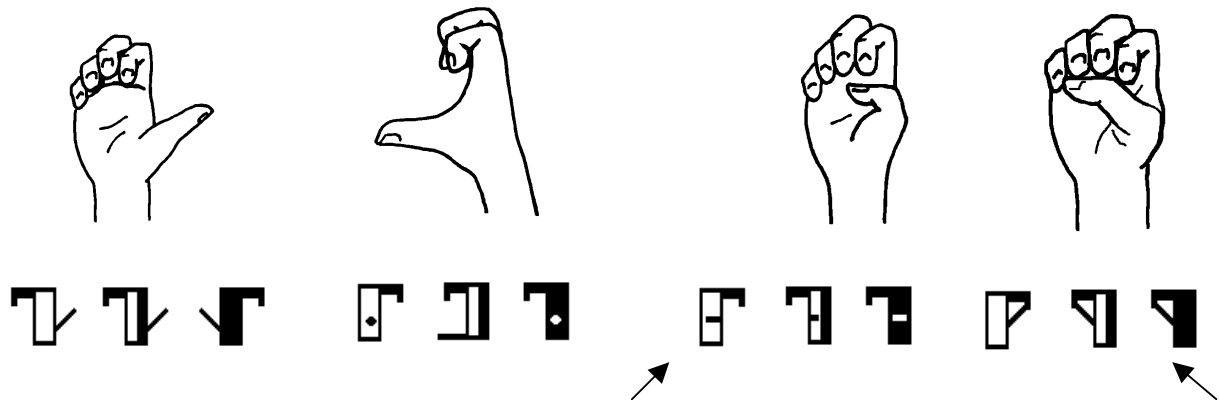
- Handshape anatomy: together and spread—C, E, and LSM
- Complex arcs
- Position symbols

# Handshape Anatomy: C, E and LSM handshapes

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Below are some handshapes that have not yet been introduced. The rotation of these handshapes follows the same principles as previous handshapes.

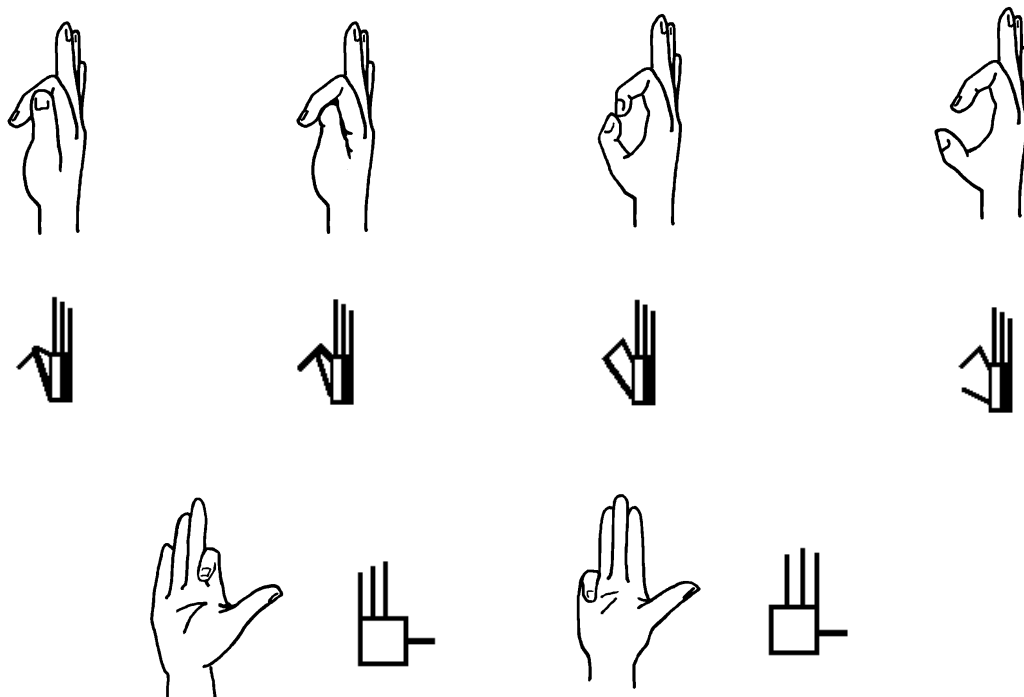


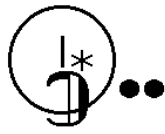


There is little difference between these two handshapes. In the handshape on the left, the fingers do not touch the thumb. On the right is the phonetic representation of ASL's letter "E", in which the fingers rest on the thumb.

Note: ASL users of SW use a different symbol to write "E."

Some signed languages (e.g., Spanish Sign Language, LSE) tend to spread the fingers, while other signed languages (e.g., Mexican Sign Language, LSM) tend to keep them together. Some of these handshapes are used in LSM:

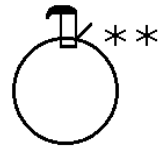




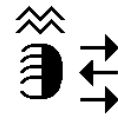
PIG



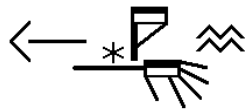
CONFEDERATION



SHEEP (LSC)



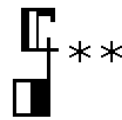
FINGERSPELL



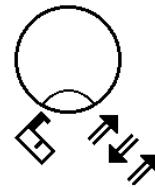
SQUID



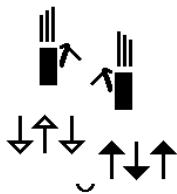
EUROPE



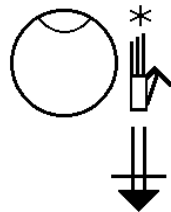
EXTREMADURA  
(a region of Spain)



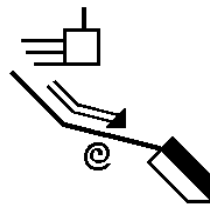
SCHOOL (LSM)



WORK  
(LSM)



TIME  
(old LSM)



FAMILY  
(LSM)



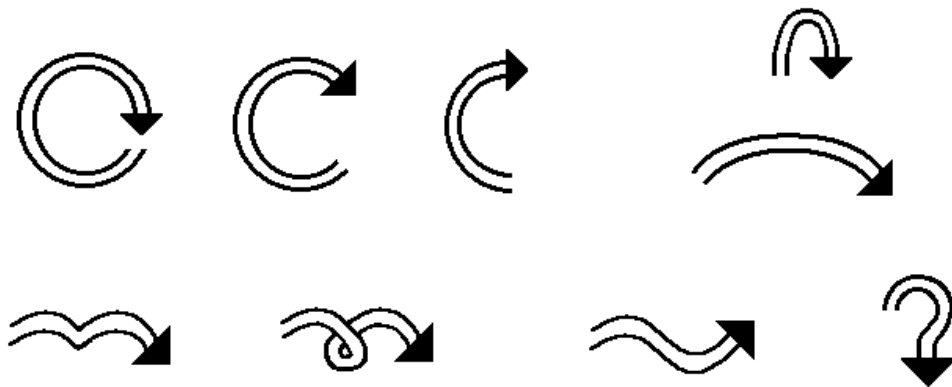
WEDNESDAY  
(LSM)

# Complex arcs

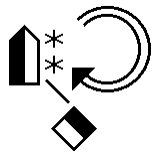
---

Any type of movement can be written, whether complex or simple. We have already seen a curve and a circle. The curves can be written as sweeping arcs or tight circles. Circles can be full circles,  $\frac{3}{4}$  circles,  $\frac{1}{2}$  circles, or  $\frac{1}{4}$  circles. Other movements include waves, repeated arcs, and spirals.

These movements are parallel to the front wall.



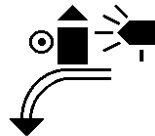
Examples:



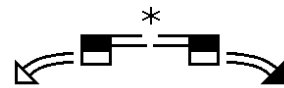
COMPLETE



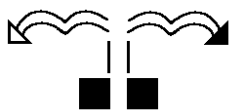
RIGHT NEXT TO



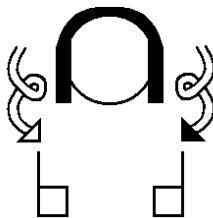
WATERFALL



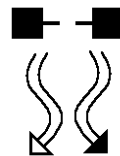
BRIDGE



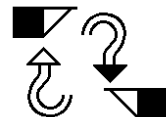
AQUEDUCT



CURLY HAIR

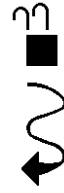
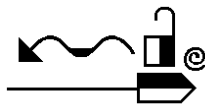
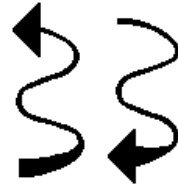


FORM



QUESTION

These are parallel to the floor:

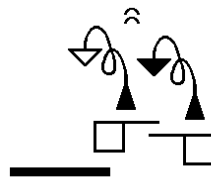
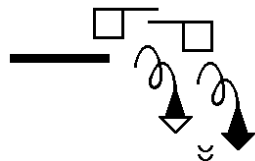


MOUSE

RIVER

SKID MARKS

These movements are parallel to the side wall:



POSTPONE

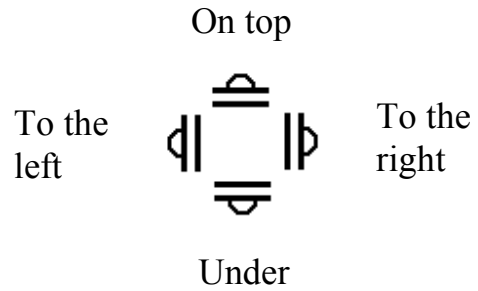
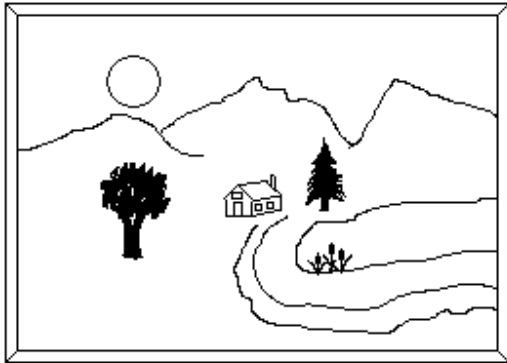
ANCESTORS

HEREDITARY

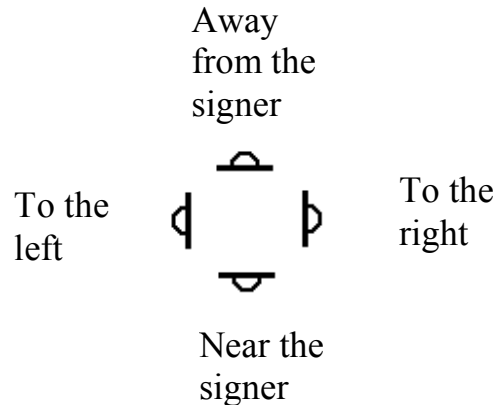
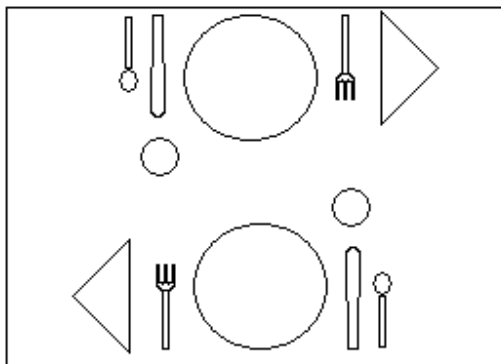
OCEAN

# Position symbols

Sometimes it is hard to know which hand is on top of or in front of the other. These symbols can be used to make this information explicit.



Imagine a picture frame (above). Imagine placing an object on the top of the frame. The symbols on the right, with two lines (like a picture frame) and a bump, are sort of like placing your hand (the bump) on a picture frame (the two lines) that's hanging on the wall in front of you.



Now imagine a table; you're looking down on it (above left). Imagine touching the edge of the table with your hand. The symbols on the right, with single lines (like the edge of the table) and a bump, are sort of like placing your hand (the bump) on the side of the table (the line).

The lines represent the surface that the dominant hand contacts, whether it's the non-dominant hand, the forearm, etc. The "bump" represents the dominant hand and shows its relationship to the non-dominant hand or

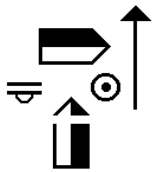
surface of contact. Don't be confused about whether the hand is upright or parallel to the floor; these symbols simply show whether the hand is above or below a surface (first set), or in front of or behind a surface (second set).

If the hand symbols overlap, the position symbols are helpful; they let us show explicitly which hand is on top of or behind the other.

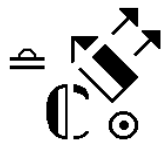
If two hands touch, and one is located to the right and the other to the left, position symbols are usually not necessary.

On each plane, the symbols we use most are the ones at the top and bottom of each set.

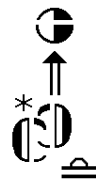
Look at these examples:



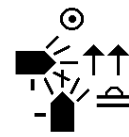
TO ENTER



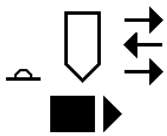
BEER



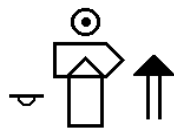
BOTTLE



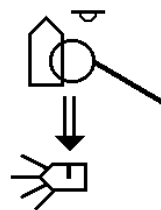
MATHEMATICS (LSC)



STREET



MORNING

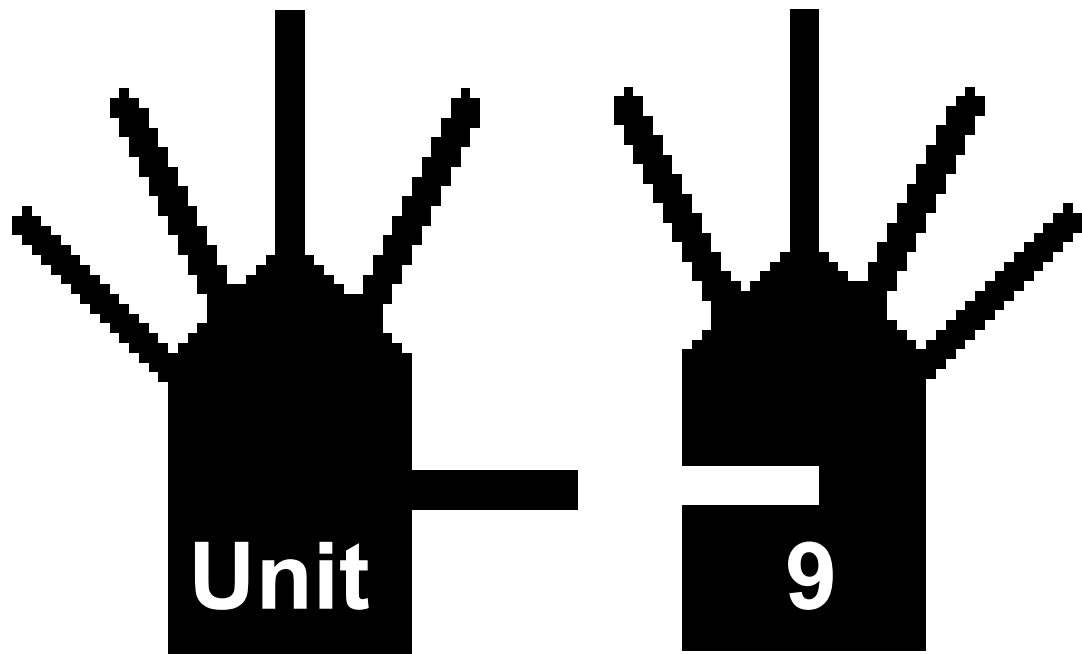


LIST



KISS (greeting)





Contents:

- Handshape anatomy: under, over, crossed and stacked
- Arm twists
- Serial movements

# Handshape Anatomy: under, over, crossed and stacked

Some handshapes are articulated with the thumb tucked inside or with the fingers draped over the thumb. In some handshapes, the fingers are crossed or stacked on top of each other. Most of these handshapes are relatively rare in signed languages, and we will not try to represent every possibility, nor can we show examples of each.

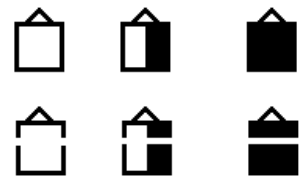
The first example below is a very common handshape and is often referred to as the “key” handshape. The index finger curls around the tip of the upright thumb. The second handshape below shows the thumb sticking up between the index and middle fingers (ASL “T”). The third handshape shows the thumb pushing the middle finger up.



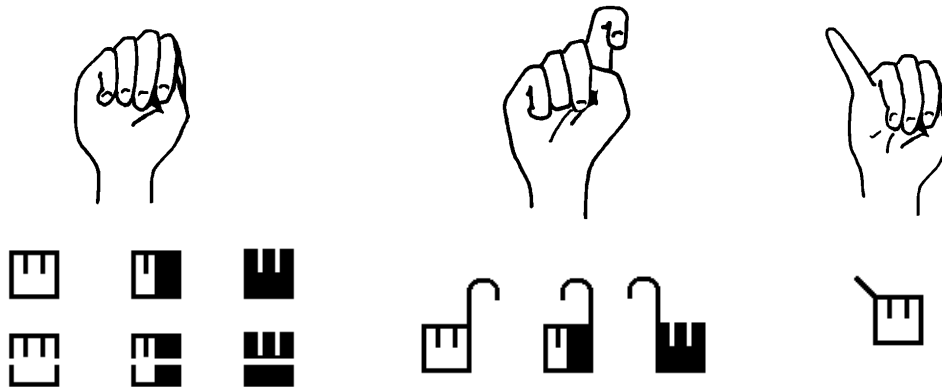
The symbols below are used in SignWriting/Sign Puddle for the “key” handshape:



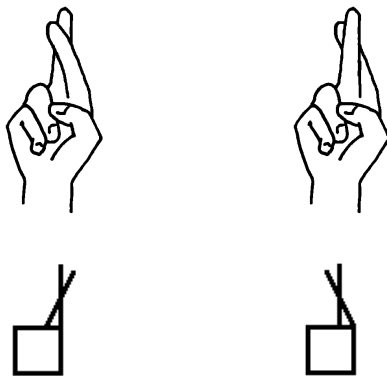
If the knuckle of the middle finger is raised slightly (without the thumb pushing it up from underneath, as shown above at right), it is written like this:



In these examples, the thumb is tucked inside the closed hand:



Fingers can also be crossed.

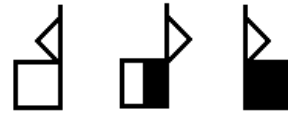


Note: In ASL’s letter “R”, the index finger leans toward the ulnar side of the hand, and the middle finger crosses over it. These two fingers can also be crossed in the opposite direction. When documenting the *phonetic detail* of a language, it is important to specify which finger is crossed over the other. We specify this by writing the **finger that goes underneath as a straight line** starting from its normal position when extended, and writing the **finger that crosses over it at a slight angle**.

Since most languages are not going to make a meaning difference based on which finger is on top, a more generic symbol can be used. This symbol draws attention to the fact that the fingers are crossed but does not specify which finger is on top:



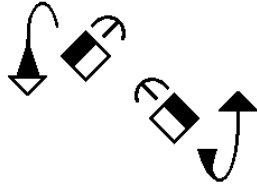
There are several “stacked” handshapes that occur in some sign languages. Again, notice which finger is stacked on top of the other.



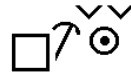
Examples:



OMELET  
(LSC)



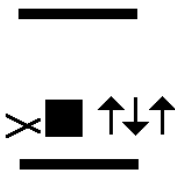
TO SELL



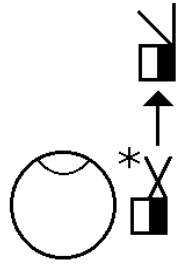
MONEY



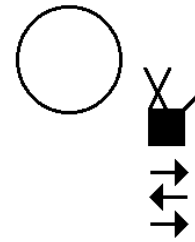
LITTLE BY LITTLE



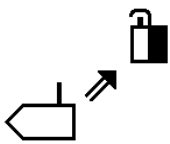
STOMACH GROWLING



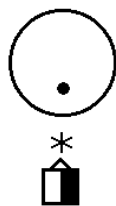
REPENT (LSC)



RICH (LSM)



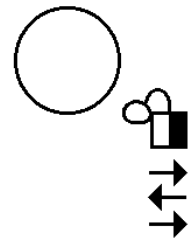
13 (LGP)



BISHOP



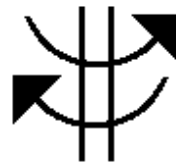
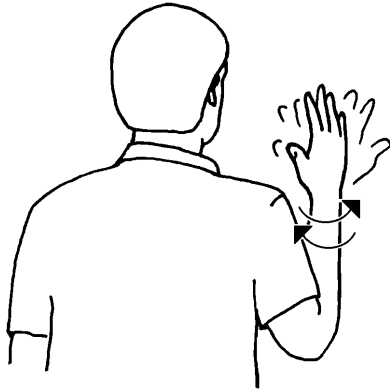
SNAIL



8<sup>th</sup> (LGP)

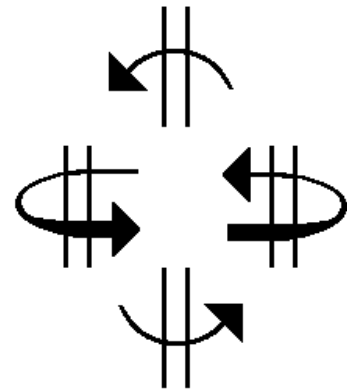
# Arm twists

When the forearm is in an upright (vertical) position, or parallel to the wall, and twists, this is the arrow used to write that kind of twist.

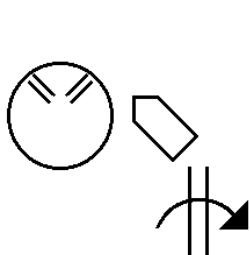


The two parallel lines mean that the forearm is in a vertical position, just like double-stemmed arrows show movement on the vertical plane, or parallel to the front wall, or up and down.

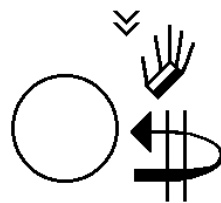
The single-stemmed curved arrow means that the hand's rotation is parallel to the floor. Any of the four parts of the circle can be written.



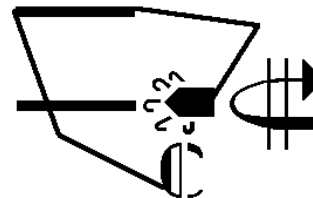
These are the four basic types of this kind of arrow, and each can be used for either hand. To write the wrist rotation, choose the arrow that best describes the movement that your hand makes.



GET OUT!

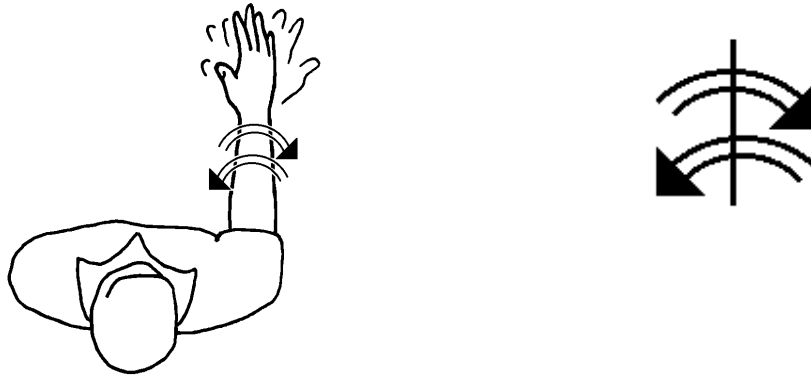


SKY



CLOSE A JAR

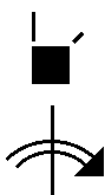
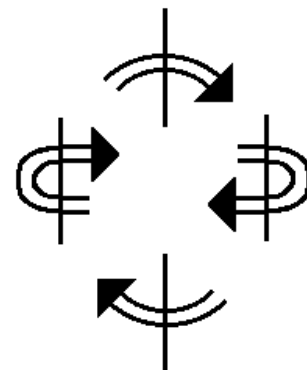
When the forearm is in a horizontal position, or parallel to the floor, and points forward and rotates, this arrow is used to write the movement.



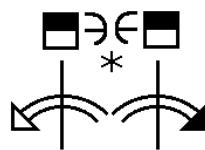
The single line means that the forearm is parallel to the floor, for the same reasons that a single-stemmed arrow represents movement that is parallel to the floor.

The double-stemmed curved arrows mean that the hand rotates on the wall plane.

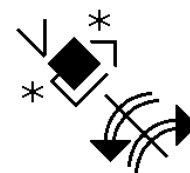
These are the four basic forms of this type of arrow. To write the movement, use the arrow that best represents the rotation of the forearm.



DOUBLE

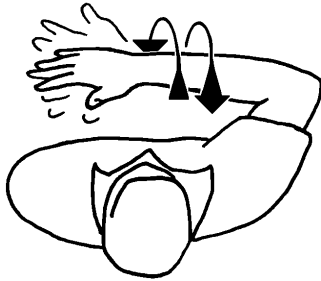


TO BREAK



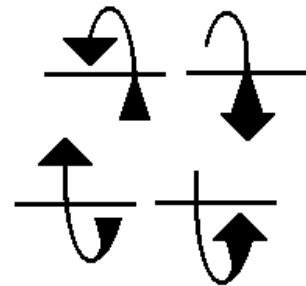
INSOMNIA

When the forearm is in a horizontal position, or parallel to the floor, crossing the body, this arrow is used to represent the movement.

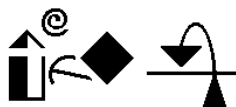


The horizontal line means that the forearm is parallel to the floor, in the same way that a single-stemmed arrow represents a movement parallel to the floor.

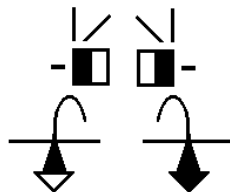
The movement goes up and over, or down and under, just like the arrows that represent the top and bottom parts of a circle.



These are the four basic forms of this kind of arrow. To write this movement, use the arrow that best represents the movement of the forearm.



TO CLOSE (with key)



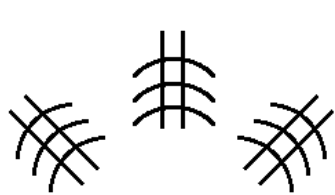
TO SIT DOWN



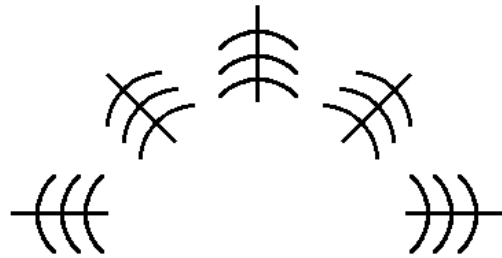
ID CARD



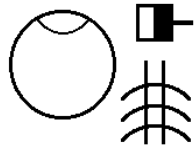
When you shake your forearm, as if you were shaking water from your hands, you use these symbols depending on the orientation of the forearm:



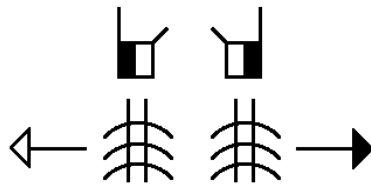
Trilled movements with the forearm parallel to the front wall



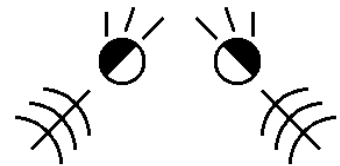
Trilled movements with the forearm parallel to the floor



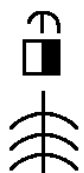
MAN



FOREST



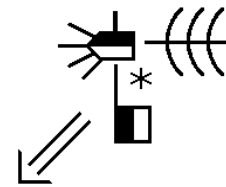
NORMAL



KEY

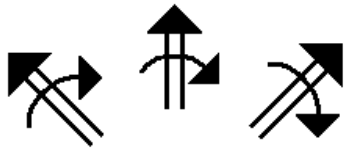


CONTACT WITH MANY PEOPLE

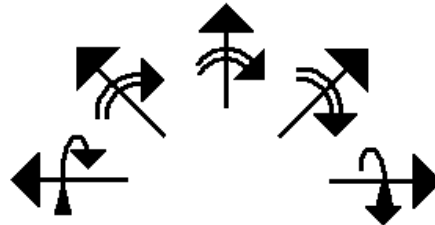


HELICOPTER

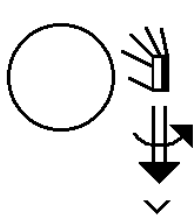
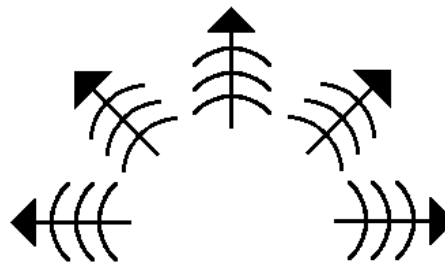
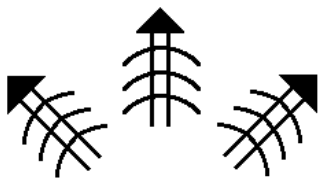
These arrows represent a straight movement with a simultaneous forearm twist, either as a single twist (first two groups) or a trilled movement (a rapid shaking motion) (second two groups).



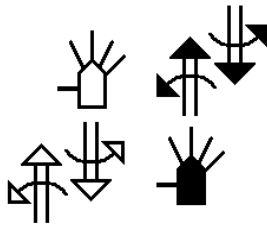
On the plane parallel to the front wall



On the plane parallel to the floor



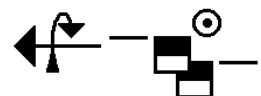
PALESTINIAN



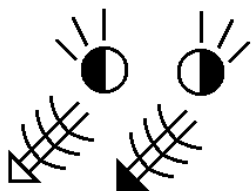
FIRE



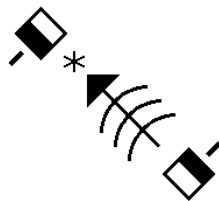
SWORD



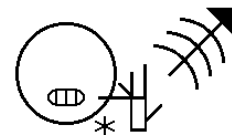
ANGRY



SNOW



RUN TO CATCH UP



GLASS

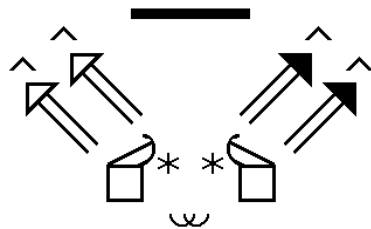
# Serial movements

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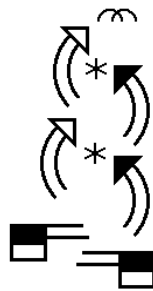
When you want to write a movement in which **one hand moves and then the other**, this symbol is used. It means that one hand completes its action before the other starts to move.



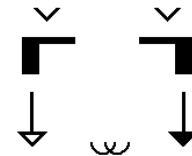
This symbol is related to the ties that represent simultaneous movements and alternating movements that we have already learned.



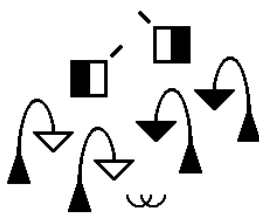
TO SPEND MONEY



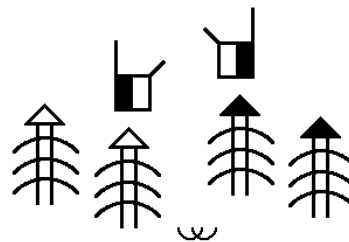
TO BUILD



TO CALL A MEETING

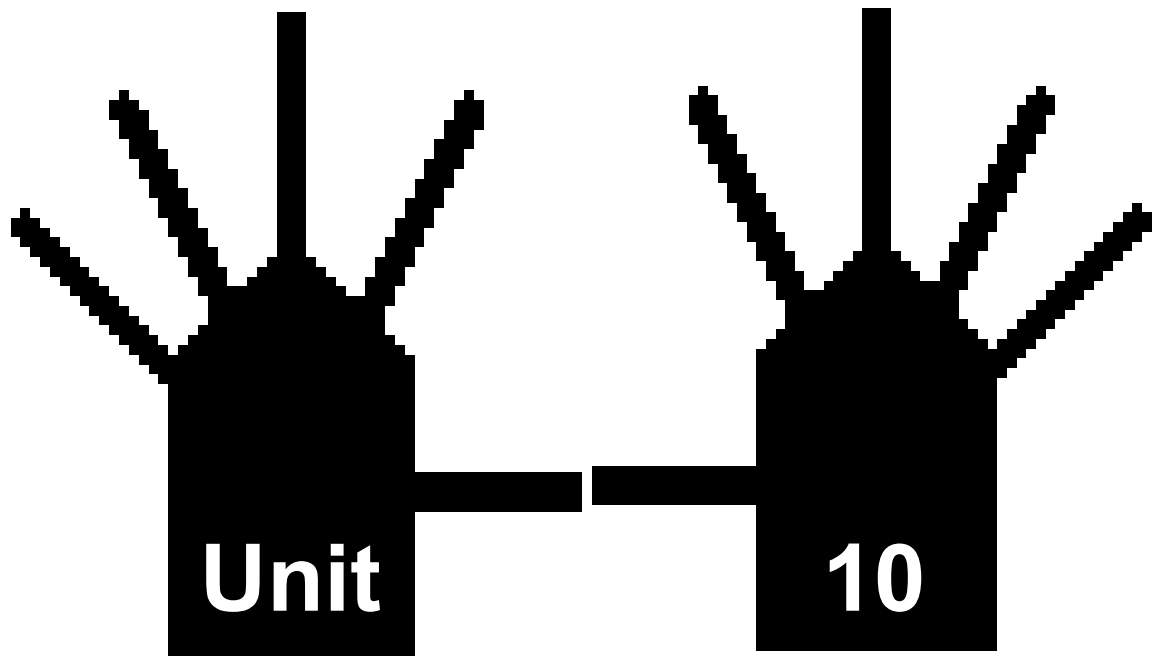


TO WALK



PLANTS SPRINGING UP





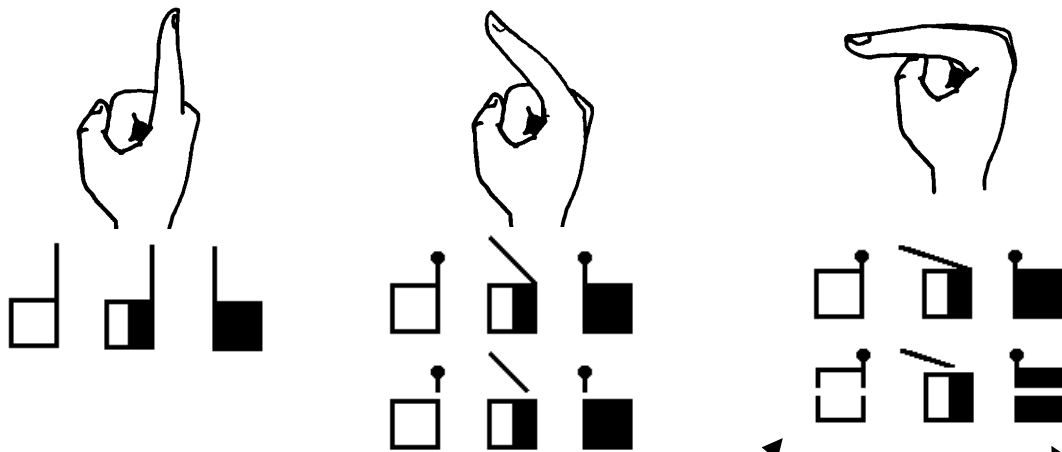
Contents:

- Handshape anatomy: degrees of bending
- Side view and top-down view of the body
- Wrist movements

# Handshape anatomy: degree of bending

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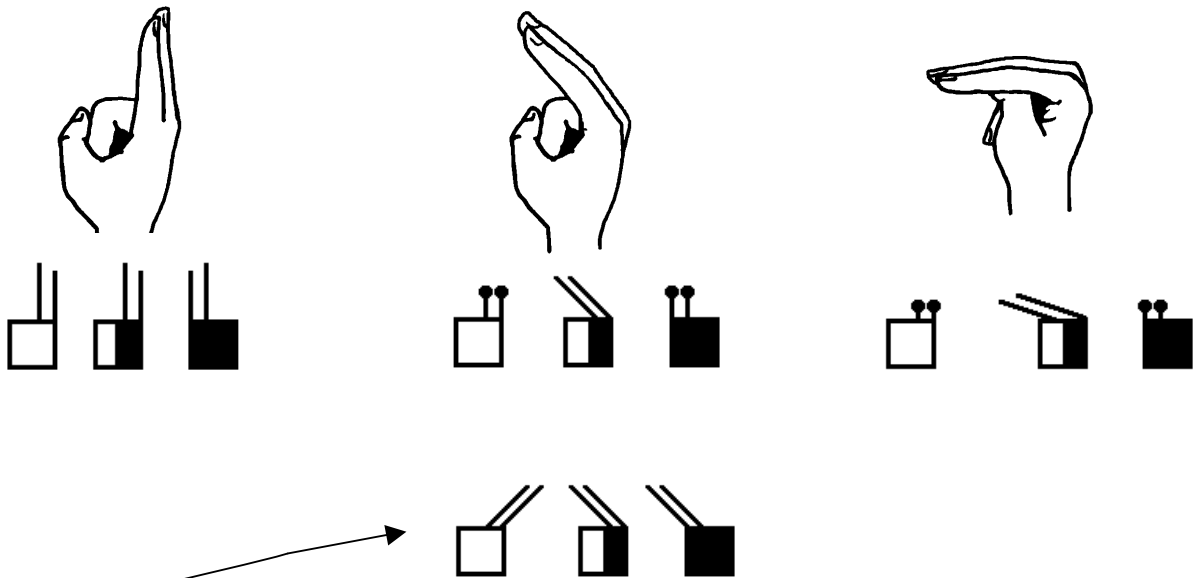
Most of the time it is sufficient to specify that the fingers are either fully extended or bent at a 90-degree angle. It is rarely important to write in-between degrees of bending. However, there are ways to write these subtle differences.



It can be hard to tell these two sets of symbols apart. However, no sign language (that we know of) makes this 3-way phonological distinction.

Notice that the gap is in the base on the top-down view of these handshapes. If we were to put the gap between the hand and finger symbols, it would look like a flex/squeeze symbol and a fist. “Cutting the base” helps avoid that confusion.

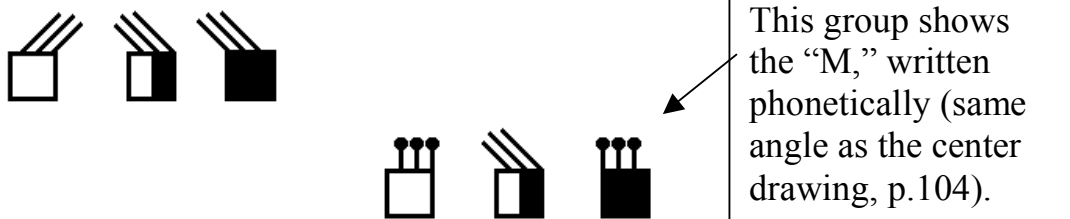
Below are the symbols for the index and middle fingers bent at the same angles as the three handshapes on page 104:



The “ball fingers” are hard to read and write quickly, so in a practical orthography it is better to use a set of symbols like the ones shown here. These are the symbols used in SignPuddle to write the ASL letter N (which is actually signed more like the symbol at the right above).

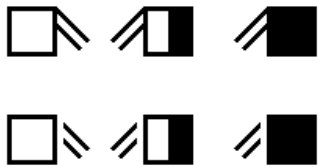
When writing phonetically, we need to be able to write small differences between handshapes, so it is important to know how to differentiate several degrees of bending. When choosing the symbol set for an orthography, most of this phonetic detail is ignored, and only a few easy-to-write and easy-to-read symbols are used.

When writing the ASL letter M, in which the index, middle and ring fingers are bent over the thumb, these symbols are used (in SignPuddle):



This group shows the “M,” written phonetically (same angle as the center drawing, p.104).

These handshapes  
 (sometimes used for  
 ASL letters N and M)  
 are represented by these  
 symbols in SignWriter.



Sometimes it may be necessary to specify that two selected fingers are bent at different angles.



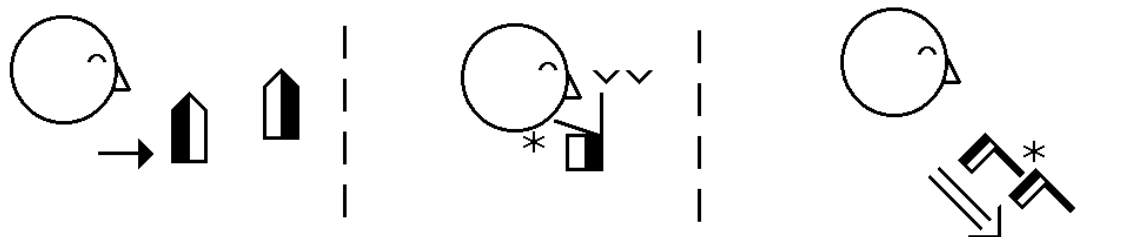
Index is extended and  
 middle is bent.  
 Middle is extended and  
 index is bent.





## Side view and top-down view of the body

Most of the handshapes we have introduced in this unit (10) are most iconic and easiest to write from a side view. Normally we write the body from the signer's own perspective. However, occasionally there are signs that are hard to read from that perspective. An alternative perspective allows us to see the sign from the side. In these cases it is necessary to write a **side-view head** (with nose and eye) and a **dashed line representing the wall in front of the signer**. This is usually avoided in day-to-day writing as it can cause confusion regarding the direction of arrows.

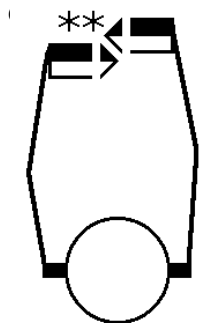


PRESENCE  
(right hand moves forward)

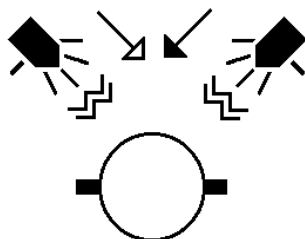
the city of SANTANDER

OBEY (LSM)  
(both hands move down and away from the body)

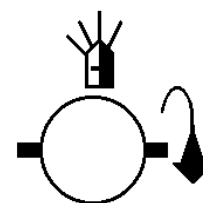
Sometimes a **view of the body from above** is helpful in seeing how far the hands are from the body, movements toward the body, and signs that pass over the top of the head, written by showing the head and shoulders from above. This view can be used anytime that it makes the sign clearer since it does not cause confusion with the direction of the arrows like the side view



DOOR (far away)

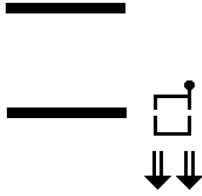


CROWD COMING

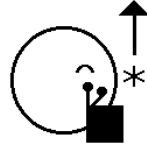


ROMANS

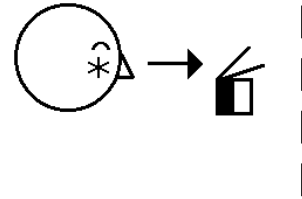
More examples:



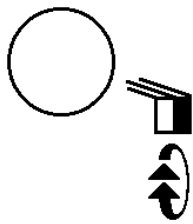
SHORT PERSON



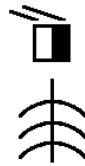
TO SEE



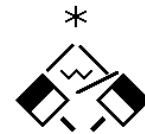
This is the same sign as the previous sign for TO SEE but from the side view. Notice that the index and middle fingers are spread.



MARCH (LSM)



NAME (LSM)



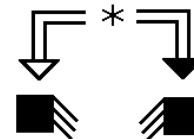
50 (old LSE)



NORTH (ASL)



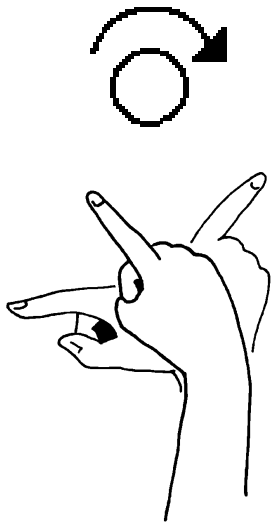
MATHEMATICS (ASL)



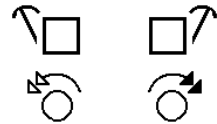
MUSEUM (ASL)

# Wrist movements

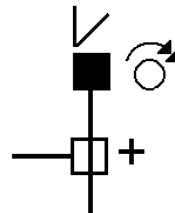
Some circular movements start from the wrist. In the examples below, the forearm stays in one position and the hand rotates in a circle. These are the arrows used for this movement on the three planes.



Notice that the circle used for writing this movement is completely round, and the arrowheads show the direction of the rotation.



PUBLICITY



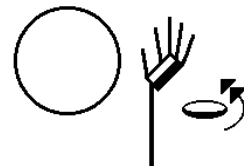
TO LOOK AROUND

Plane 1(x,y)

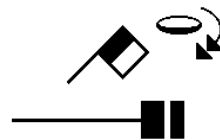
Wrist rotation parallel to the wall in front of the signer



Notice that this circle is flattened on the floor plane, and the thick part of the circle is closest to the signer. The arrowheads show the direction of the rotation.



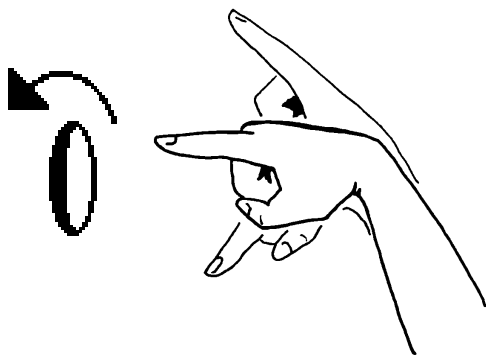
AMBULANCE



MANY HOURS

Plane 2 (x,z)

Wrist rotation parallel to the floor

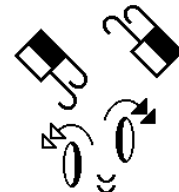


Plane 3 (y,z)  
Wrist rotation parallel to the side wall (turning backward)

Notice that this circle is flattened against the side wall plane. The thick part of the circle is closest to the signer, but it can be on either side of the circle. The arrow heads show the direction of the rotation.

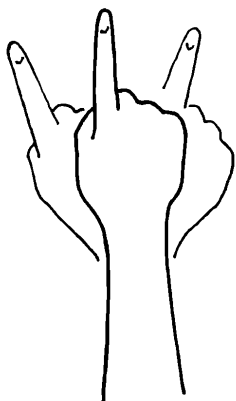


EVERYDAY  
(turning forward)

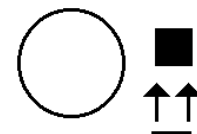


RENOVATE  
(turning forward)

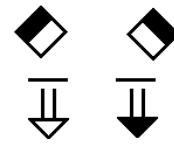
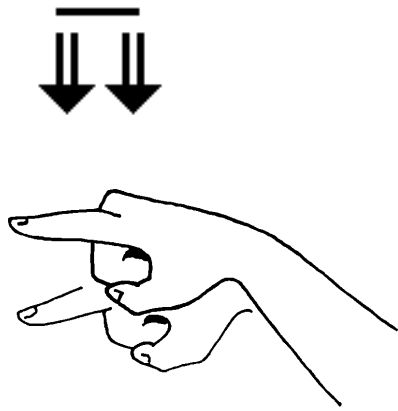
When the forearm stays in one position and the hand moves back and forth or up and down from the wrist, we write the movement with a “wrist bar,” a short line that represents the wrist. The arrows show the directions that the hands moves, and the wrist bar simply shows that the movement arrows apply only to the hand (and not to the arm).



NO



KNOCK ON THE DOOR



AGREEMENT

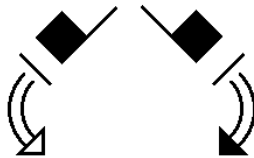


YES (LSC)

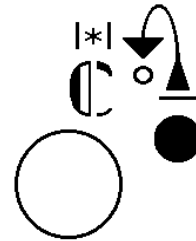
Any movement that is **primarily a wrist or hand movement** can be expressed by writing the **wrist bar** symbol **with the appropriate arrow**.



the letter Z

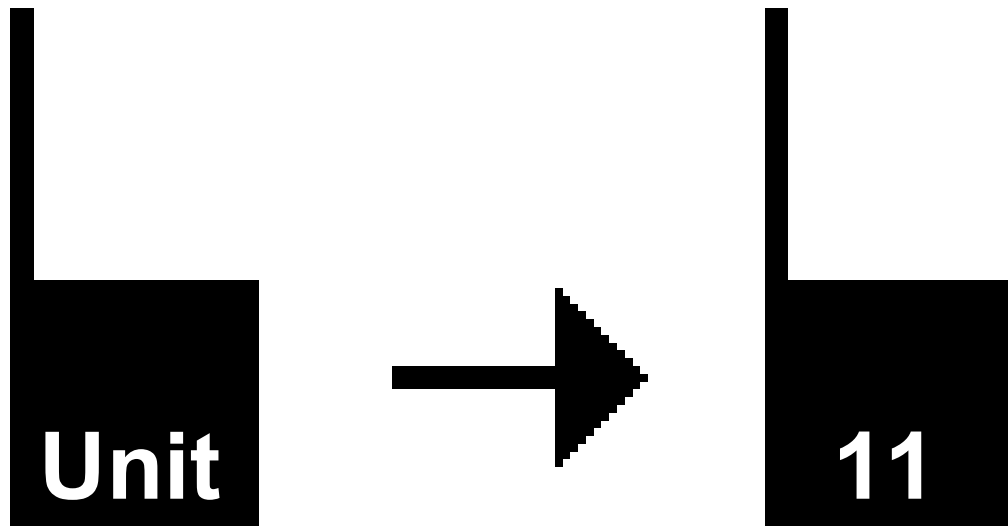


PARENTHESIS



2-PT SHOT IN BASKETBALL





Contents:

- Introduction to non-manual elements
- Eyebrows
- Punctuation: phrase marking, questions and quotes
- Head and body movement
- Dynamic symbols and classifiers

# An introduction to non-manual elements

---

These next two units will focus on a wide variety of facial expressions and head and body movements. Most of these elements occur at the phrase level rather than at the individual sign level. For example, a negative head shake will often cover all the signs in a phrase and not just occur during the actual sign meaning NO or NOT.

The non-manual elements can change the meaning of a sign. For example, the sign TO-WALK can be altered to mean different things based on the facial expression or body posture:

- Walking leisurely
- Walking determinedly toward a goal
- Walking while angry
- Walking while tired
- Walking in my sleep
- A sad and mournful walk

The speed or tenseness of the sign can also change the meaning and is often combined with facial expression and body movement:

- Walking quickly
- Walking slowly
- Walking dreamily
- Big person walking
- Small person walking

It would be impossible to include all the possible facial expressions, but we hope to give you the most common ones, as well as cover a wide range of non-manual articulators.



# Eyebrows

---

In many languages eyebrows play a crucial role in questions and in determining the subject of the clause. Eyebrows can either be raised (topic) or lowered (content question) as well as tensed (a worried or hopeful expression). Compare the illustrations below. The first face is neutral and therefore there is no need to write the eyebrow position.



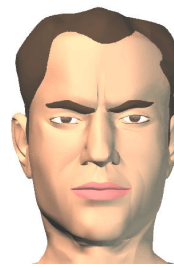
Neutral  
position



Raised



Hopeful



Lowered

# Punctuation

---

Before we continue with more facial expressions, here are a few more punctuation markers that are very useful with these non-manual elements. These two symbols have already been introduced:

**Period**  
(end of sentence)

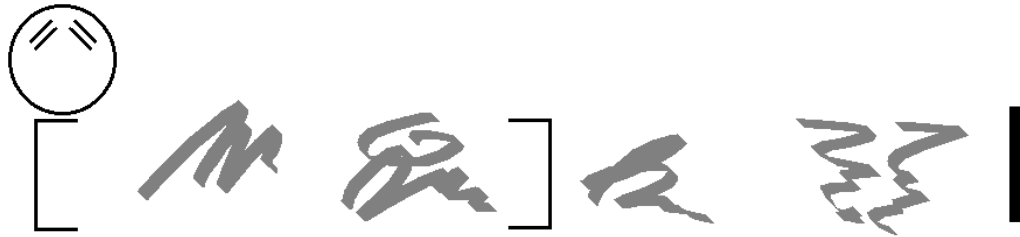


**Comma**  
(end of phrase)



When the eyebrows (or other non-manual elements) cover a whole phrase, it is cumbersome to include the facial expression on each sign in the phrase. To avoid this, there are several options:

**Option 1: Brackets**



Raised eyebrows over the first few signs of a sentence.



Lowered eyebrows over the whole sentence.

**Option 2: phrase bar** above phrase (this option is not available with some computer programs, nor will it work with writing vertically in Sign Puddle).



Hopeful expression over two sentences

## Question marks

---

Questions are enclosed between the symbols as shown below. If a facial expression is necessary to determine the type of question, it can be added above the initial question mark. Although many spoken language writing systems do not put a question mark at the beginning of a question, we have found it useful in signed languages: the question word often comes at the end of the phrase, yet the questioning facial expression starts at the beginning of the phrase. The first “question mark” signals the need to start using the correct facial expression.



Sometimes it is better to leave the question facial expression on the question word and let the question mark at the beginning signal the reader that a question is coming.



# Colon and quotation marks

---

There are several other punctuation marks that are useful when writing texts.

The **colon** is used to precede a list of items.

Some use it to precede a quotation.

In each case the punctuation stands for a specific change in non-manual elements; this can include body shift, change of eye gaze, a different facial expression, etc. At the outset of documenting an unstudied language, the researcher will probably want to write the details of these non-manual elements; at other times, however, using a specific form of punctuation can be a helpful shortcut.



Quotation marks are also useful shortcuts that represent all the complex non-manual elements that accompany a change in speaker, including body shift and change of direction of eye gaze. At this time there is not universal agreement about which symbols should be used to represent a quote. Below are three possible ways.



# Head movements

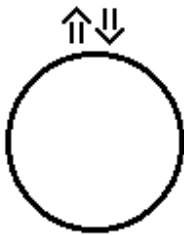
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You can write head movements that go up and down (like when you say YES) and movements that turn from side to side (like when you say NO).

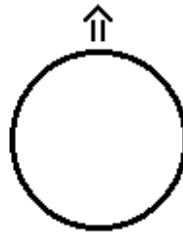
When you nod your head (YES), the movement is written with little up-and-down double-stemmed arrows above the circle that represents the head.

When you tip your head up to look at the stars, the movement is written with one double-stemmed arrow that points upward. When you tip your head down to look at the floor, the movement is written with one double-stemmed arrow that points downward.

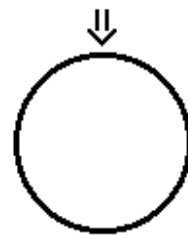
When you shake your head (NO), the movement is written with little double-stemmed arrows that point from left to right. If you turn your head to look to one side or the other, write that movement with one double-stemmed arrow that shows the direction you're facing.



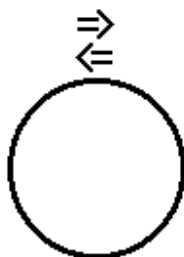
**the head nods  
up and down**



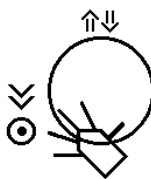
**to look at the  
stars**



**to look at the  
floor**



**the head turn  
back and forth**

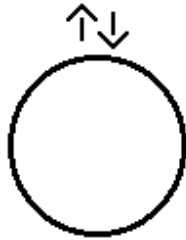


**YES, I KNOW (HIM)**

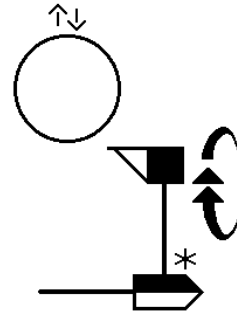


**I CAN'T**

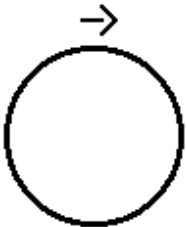
When the head moves forward, backward, or toward one side or the other, the movement is written with small single-stemmed arrows above the circle that represents the head.



**the head moves forward and backward**



**OSTRICH**



**the head moves to the side**

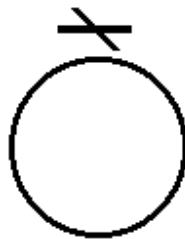


**PEEK AROUND THE CORNER**

When the head tilts to the side, making the nose follow a diagonal line instead of a vertical line, these symbols are written above the head. Imagine that you are drawing a (diagonal) line through the nose and crossing the shoulder bar.



**head tilted to the right**

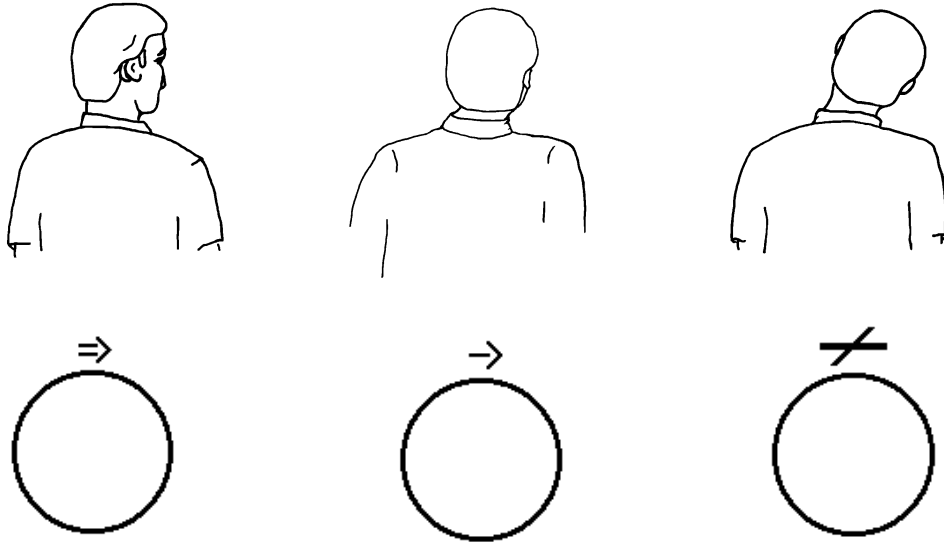


**head tilted to the left**



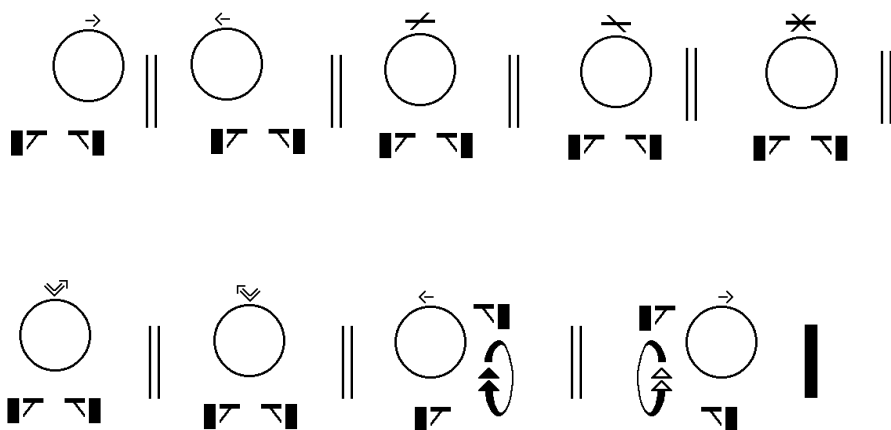
**TO SLEEP**

Notice the difference between these three types of head movements:



Negative and affirmative phrases are often accompanied by a head shake or nod that covers the whole phrase. In these cases the bracketing symbols, introduced earlier in this unit, are very useful.

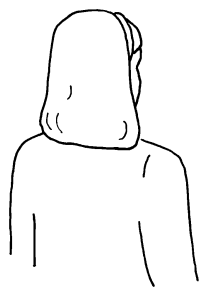
The following is part of a story about a cat who is playing with his reflection in the mirror. Here each sign has a different head movement.



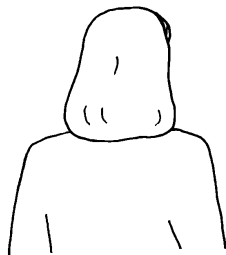
# Shoulder and trunk movement

---

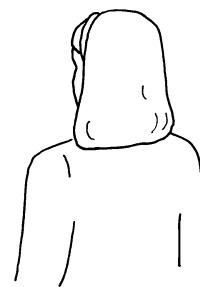
When writing a text, sometimes we need to write what the shoulders are doing. If the shoulders are turned toward one side or the other, we position the shoulder bars to represent body turns to one side or the other.



**turned to the  
right**



**straight**



**turned to the  
left**

When the movement itself is an important part of the sign, we write the shoulder bar, turned to the side, with an arrow that shows the direction of the movement.

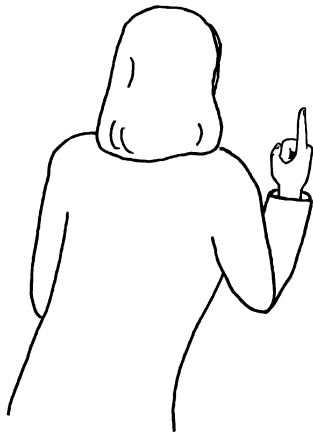


The top-down view of the shoulders can also be used to show the body turned one direction or another.





When the body tilts from the hips toward one side, forward, or backward, the movement is written with these small symbols: short lines with a small ball on top, located on each side of the shoulder bar. The small ball represents the head, and the symbol is tilted as if it were a single-stemmed arrow according to the direction the body tilts.



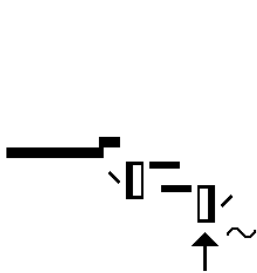
Body tilting forward and to the right

As with any non-manual element, the direction and tilting of the body can be used with the bracket construction to show that a portion of the text is signed with the signer's body facing or tilting one direction or another. Below is the punctuation for a text where a signer might relate a conversation between two people. In the first sentence the signer tilts his body to the right and rotates his shoulders to face the left. The second phrase does the opposite.

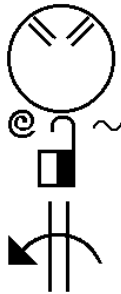


# Tenseness in signing

When writing a sign that is produced with the muscles more tense than normal, use this symbol:



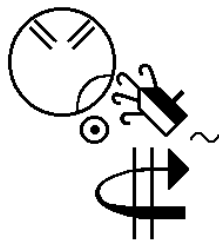
REALLY CLOSE



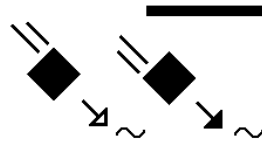
TO HATE



TO THINK HARD



STRANGE



TO HUNT



ANGRY

# The tense symbol to write a classifier

To write a classifier, we use the symbol that is used to make a sign tense. When used as an indicator for a classifier, it tells us that the hand is held in space to represent another object. The classifier symbol goes under or next to the hand that is stationary.

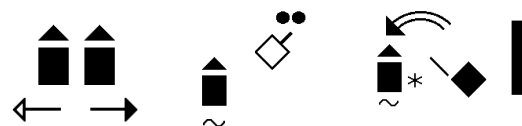


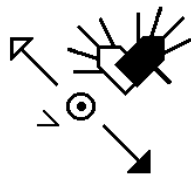
TABLE PEN PUT-ON-TABLE

# Other dynamic symbols: fast, slow and relaxed

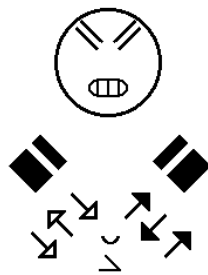
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In addition to writing the tenseness of a movement, we can also show that a sign (or phrase) is fast, slow, or relaxed.

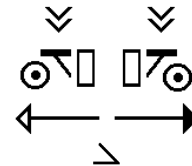
This symbol is used to show that a sign is pronounced rapidly or more emphatically than normal.



FAST

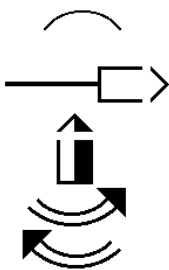
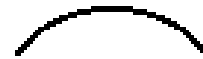


RUN QUICKLY



DISAPPEAR

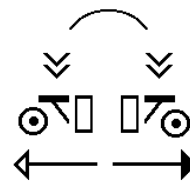
This symbol is used to show that a sign is pronounced more slowly than normal.  
This symbol is placed above the entire sign.



POETRY

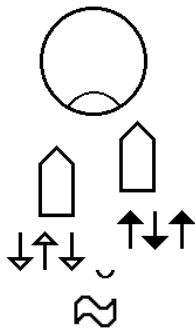


TO BE BORED



DISSOLVE

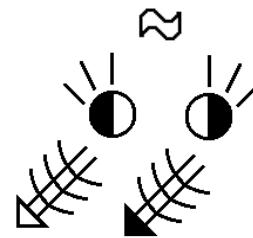
A sign or a phrase that is signed in a **relaxed** way would use this symbol. This is somewhat different from the slow symbol. Relaxed is a smoothing of the movement features as well as a slight relaxing of the handshape.



CASUAL CONVERSATION



TO STROLL ALONG

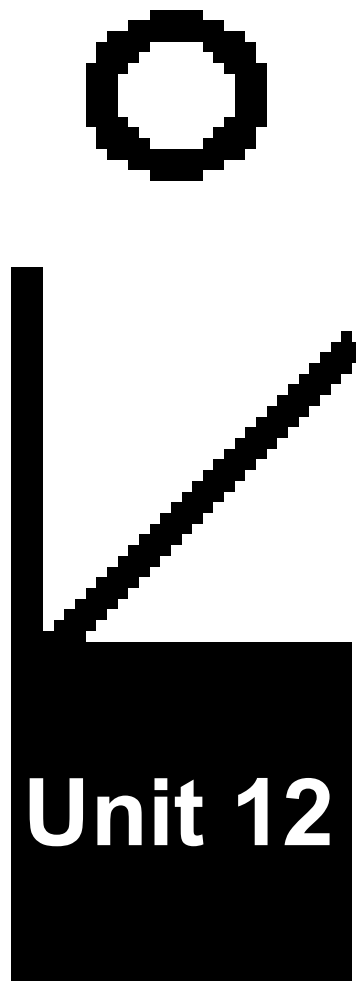


LIGHT SNOWFALL

As with all non-manual elements, these dynamic features can be applied to a whole phrase or sentence using the brackets as discussed above.



Example of punctuation for a sentence signed faster than normal.



Contents:

- Eyes: aperture and eye gaze
- Nose
- Mouth: jaw, lips, teeth, cheeks and tongue
- Air flow

# Eyes

---

We already learned the symbols used to represent the eyes when the hand is near or touches the eyes. When the eyes do something specific, these symbols can be used:



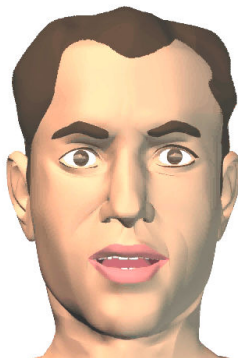
**eyes open**



**closed**



**squinted**



**wide open**



**half open**



**half closed**

Sometimes it is important to specify that the eyes are closing or opening. We use the same kind of symbol for the eyes that we use for closing and opening the base joint of the hand. We write it either over or under the eye symbol. If the focus is the fluttering of the eyelashes, the movement symbol can be placed under the eyelash symbol.



close both eyes (blink)



close one eye (wink)

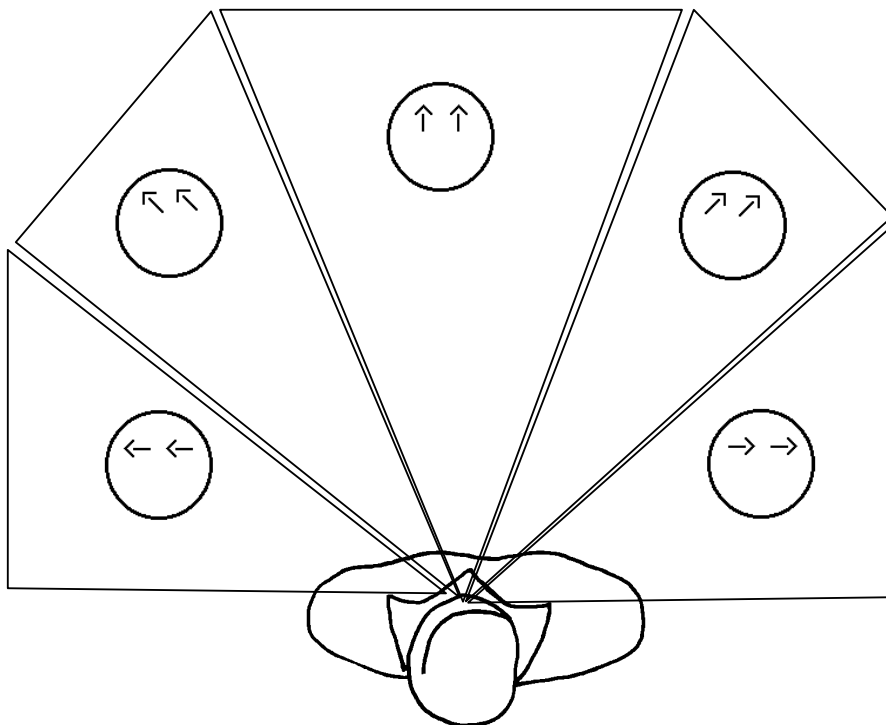


flutter eyelashes

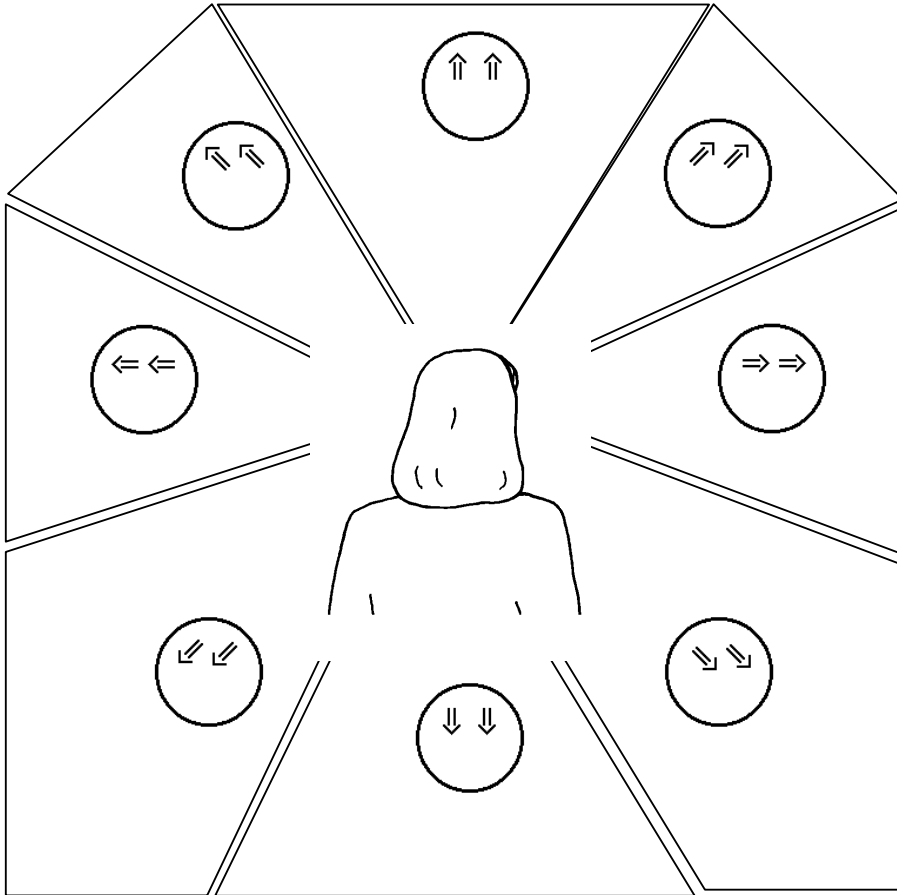
## Eye Gaze

---

Sometimes it can be important to write the direction the eyes are looking. We represent the eye gaze with two kinds of arrows: single stemmed and double stemmed. This illustration shows single-stemmed arrows, which tell us that the eyes are looking straight forward, toward the right or toward the left.



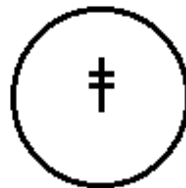
Here we see the double-stemmed eye-gaze arrows, which show that the eyes look up, down, to the side and diagonally.



## Nose

---

The only systematic use of the nose as a linguistic significant non-manual element is the “nose scrunch” or “nose wrinkle”. It is often accompanied by lowering the eyebrows or raising the upper lip.





# Mouth

---

SignWriting has many symbols for mouth movements. They can be used to write mouth patterns associated with lip reading (and have been used for this in Germany). Also, with the addition of diacritics not introduced here, SW can also be used to write non-visible tongue positions.

These are some of the more common mouth shapes:



smile



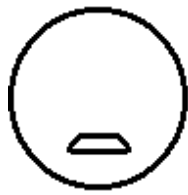
big smile



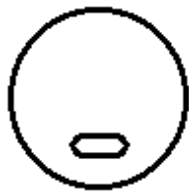
frown



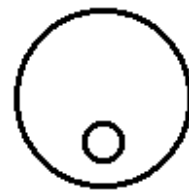
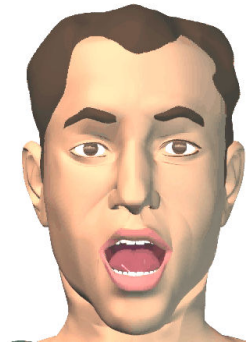
big frown



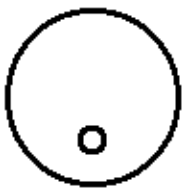
lips spread (“ee”)



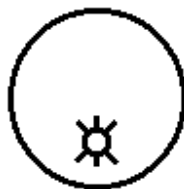
open mouth (“ah”)



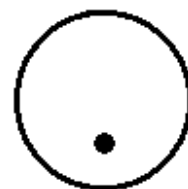
wide open mouth



rounded mouth (“oh”)

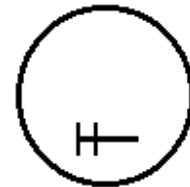


rounded mouth,  
lips extended (“u”)



lips rounded and extended,  
mouth closed (kiss)

Remember, the illustrations are from the observer's perspective, but the SW symbols are from the signer's perspective. This means that if the left side of the mouth on the illustration is raised, the right side of the SW symbol is raised.



one side of mouth raised

one side raised with teeth

biting side of mouth



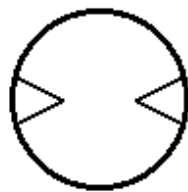
lips in

bottom lip over top

top lip over bottom



cheeks inflated

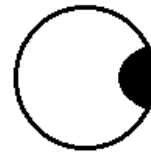


cheeks sucked in



cheeks tensed

Inflating one cheek only would be written like this:



teeth



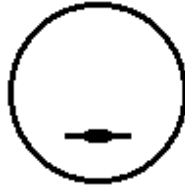
teeth biting upper lower lip ("f")



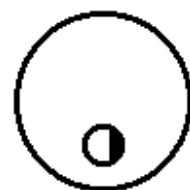
teeth biting upper lip



teeth touching the tongue



tongue between tight lips



tongue to the side with open mouth



tongue out and up

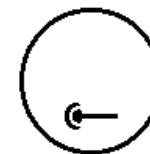


tongue out and down



tongue pushing out lip

Any of these tongue symbols can be rotated as needed:





Small arrows beside the chin symbol indicate a movement of the jaw.



tongue in cheek



jaw to the side



forward



down

Sometimes the tongue or lips can trill during a sign. For these signs we use the same kind of movement symbol as for the opening and closing of the fingers (base joint) but placed directly above or beside the part of the mouth that is moving. The “biting” movement uses the “strike” symbol.



tongue  
up-and-down



tongue  
side-to-side



bottom lip moving (pouting)



mouth moving (bababa)



biting

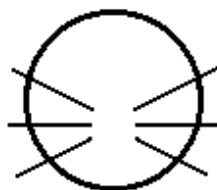
# Air flow

---

If we want to represent either blowing air or sucking it in, we use the following symbols.



blow with the mouth



suck in air  
through the mouth



suck in air  
through the nose

Regular breathing is not usually marked; however, there are symbols that do mean inhale and exhale.



inhale



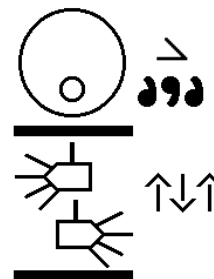
exhale

If it is necessary to represent breathing, this symbol can be used.



to breathe

When combined with a dynamic symbol, the breathing can be fast, slow, labored, or relaxed.







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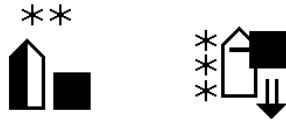
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## **Appendix: Partial List of Symbols** **141-146**

# Appendix: Partial List of Symbols



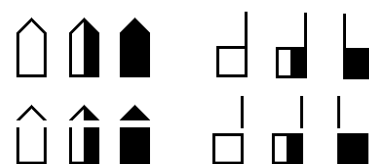
## Contents:

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- Movement arrows
- Other symbols
- Punctuation marks

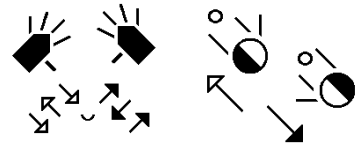
# Handshapes




The six orientations for the handshapes:



# Movement arrows



parallel to the front wall

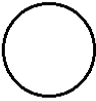
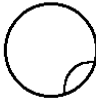

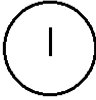

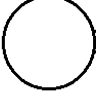





parallel to floor

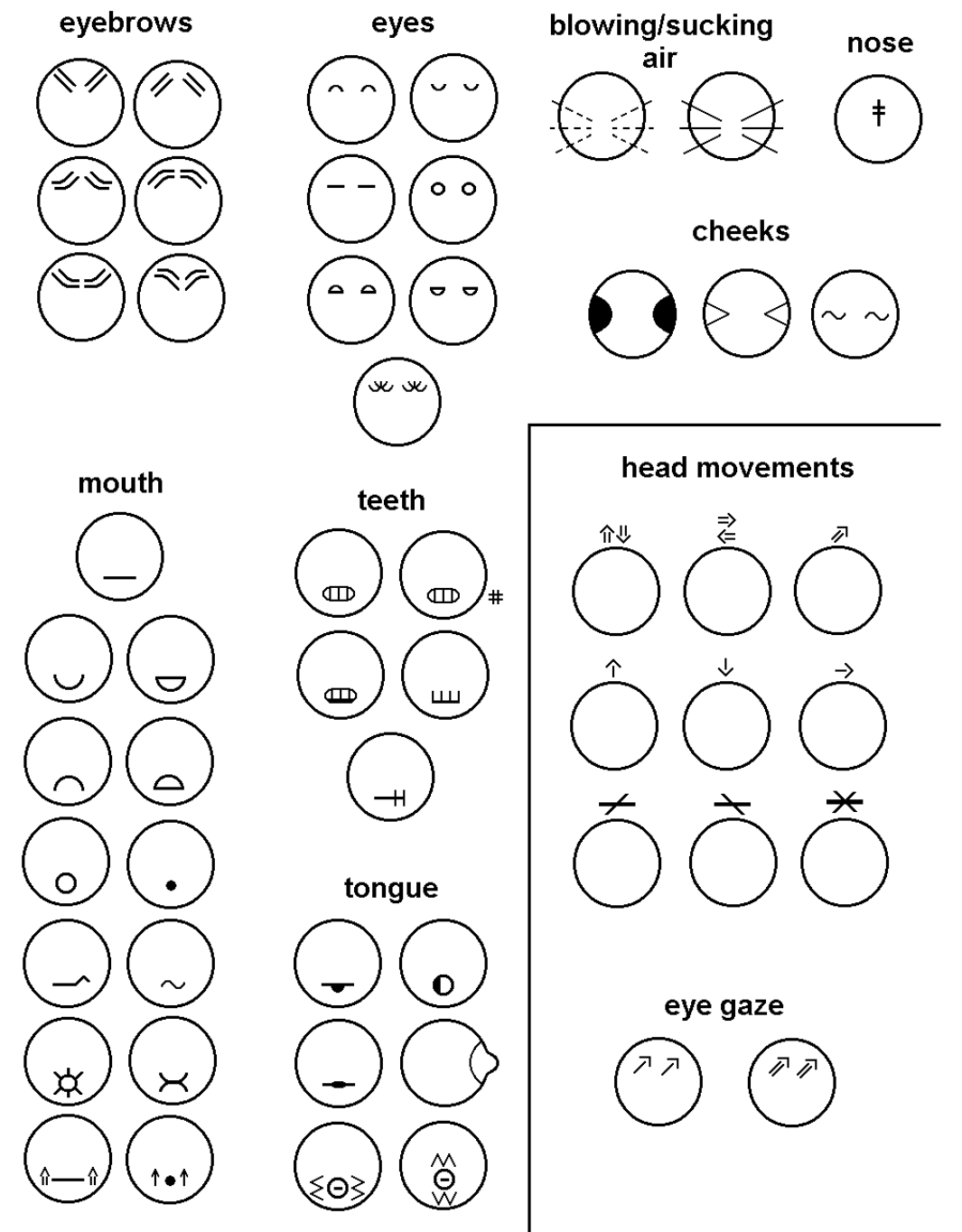
parallel to the side wall


Partial List of Symbols

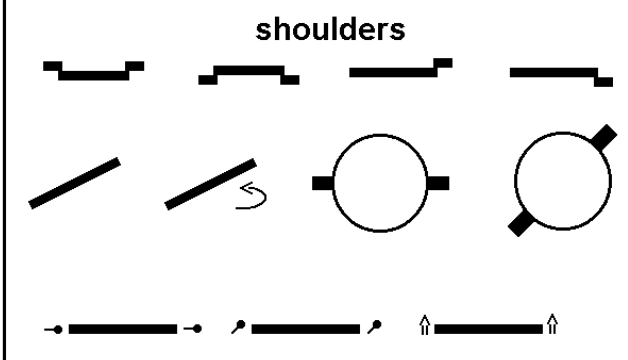
# Other symbols



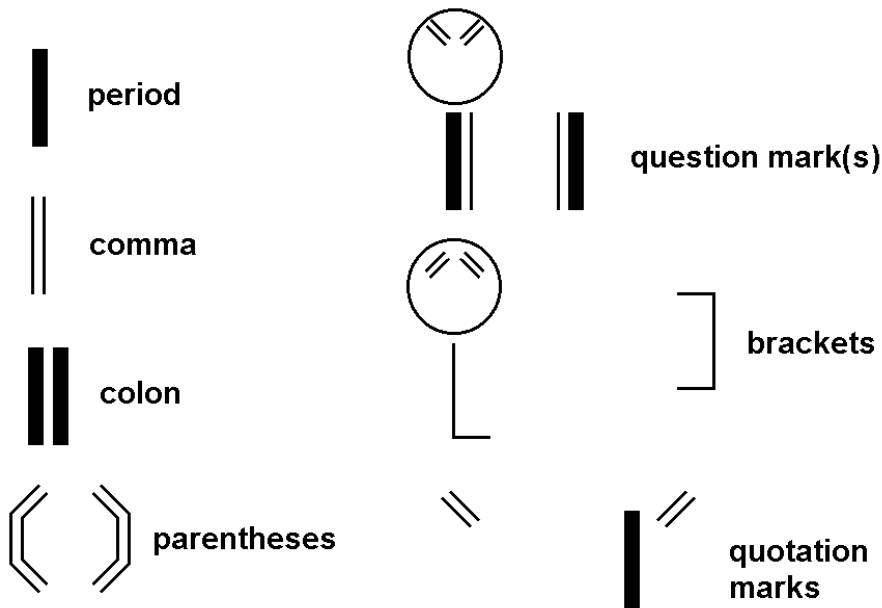
* touch		head
⊙ brush		part of the face
@ rub		eyes
# strike		nose
+ grab		mouth
*  in-between		ear
● squeezing the fingers closed		neck
○ flicking the fingers open		hair
∨ closing fingers from knuckles		back of the head
^ opening fingers from knuckles		shoulders and hips
∩ opening and closing fingers from knuckles		
∩ alternating opening and closing fingers from knuckles		
∩ alternately closing fingers once		
∩ alternately opening fingers once		
∩ simultaneous movement of hands		
∩ alternating movement of hands		
∩ one hand moves, then the other		
↑ right hand moves		
↖ left hand moves		
↗ both hands move as one unit		



- ~ tense/classifier
- ≈ relaxed
- > fast
- ⤿ slow
- ⤿ smooth



# Punctuation marks



When the hand is turned so the fingers point toward the side, we can write the handshape with either of two symbols, from the two points of view. They represent the same configuration and orientation. Use the one that seems more logical or easier to read; sometimes that is determined by the position of the other hand.

