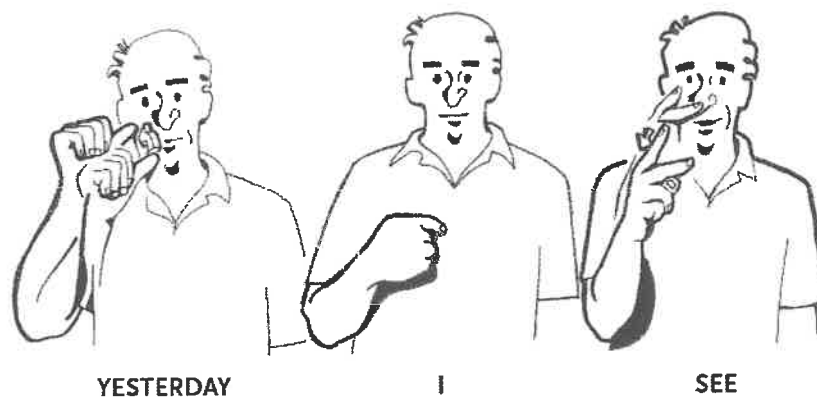


In order to sign the equivalent of "I saw you," it is necessary to use a time indicator. One may use signs that will place the event in a specific time, such as "yesterday," "last night," or "this morning."

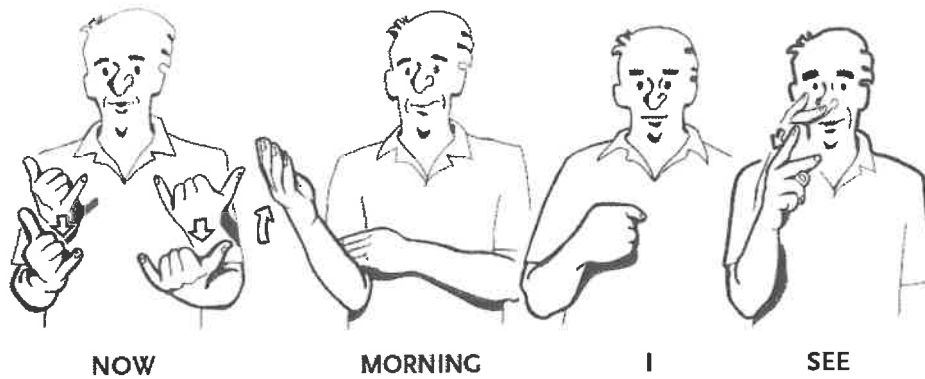
Yesterday, I saw.



Last night, I saw.

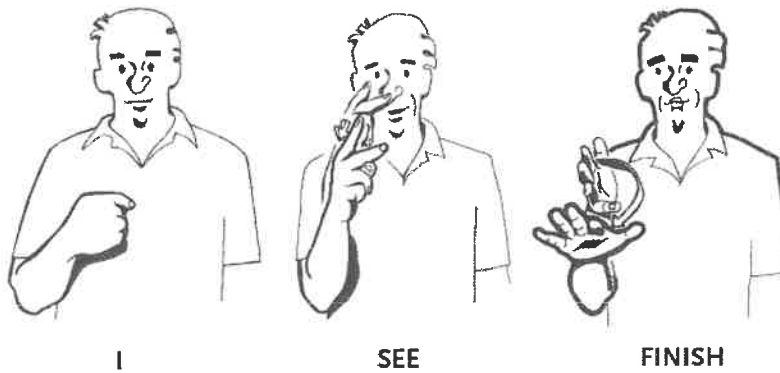


This morning, I saw.



One may also use the **FINISH** sign to indicate no specific time, simply the past:

I saw.



The PAST sign may be used instead of the FINISH sign, which conveys slightly more information.

I saw him/her/it before already.

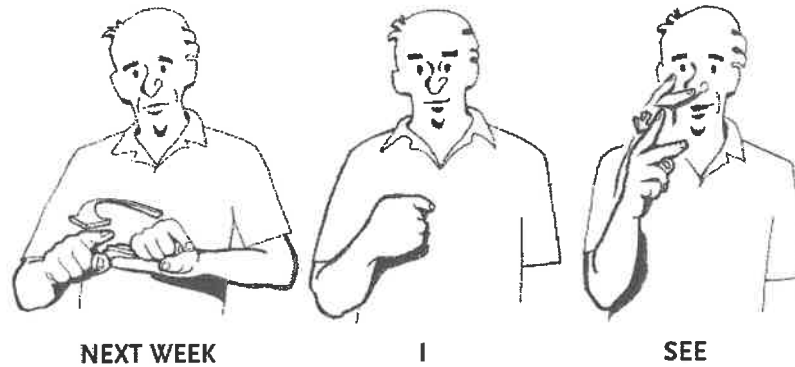
**I****SEE****PAST**

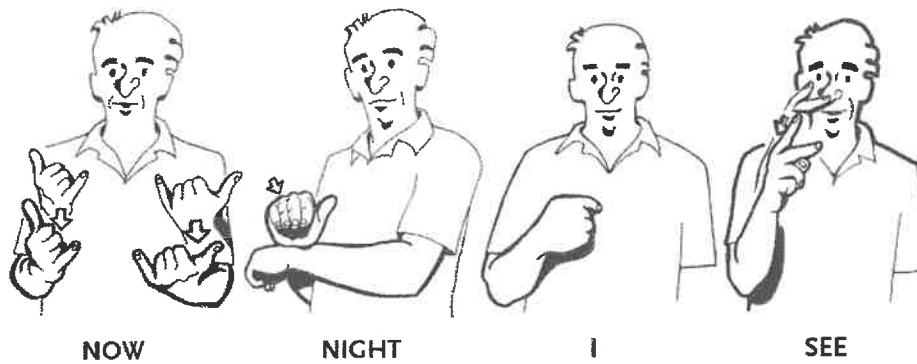
The use of a time indicator also applies to the future tense.

Tomorrow, I will see.

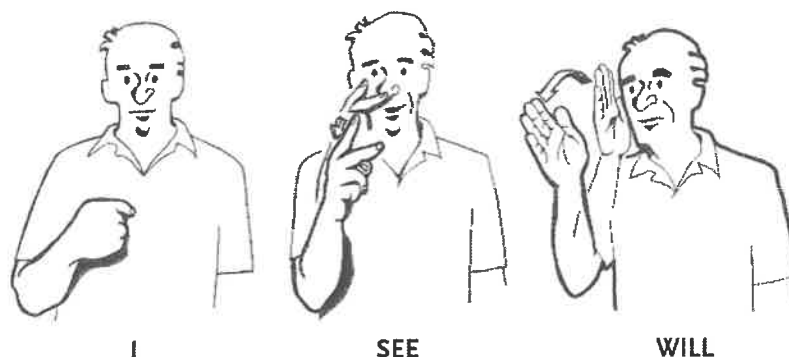
**TOMORROW****I****SEE**

Next week, I will see.

**Tonight, I will see.**



The previous phrases illustrate placing the event in a specific future time. For a nonspecific future time, use the WILL sign.

I will see.

Notice that nonspecific time indicators such as **FINISH** and **WILL** usually follow the verb; however, they may come before the verb as well. Specific time indicators, on the other hand, always come at the beginning of a statement.

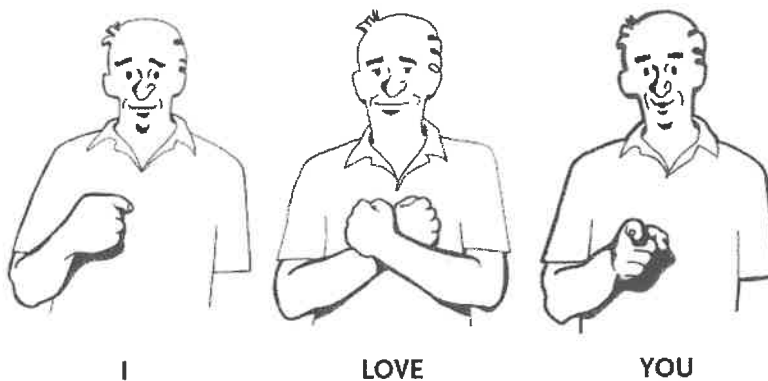
Context is used a great deal in ASL when establishing or determining tense. For instance, the signer may tell the watcher about an incident that occurred some time in the past or that will occur in the future. The signer will first establish the time of the incident by using a time indicator sign; then the signer will never repeat the time indicator sign or use any additional ones. The watcher knows that all the events described by the signer occur in the time frame established at the beginning of the statement by the time indicator sign used.

Verb Directionality

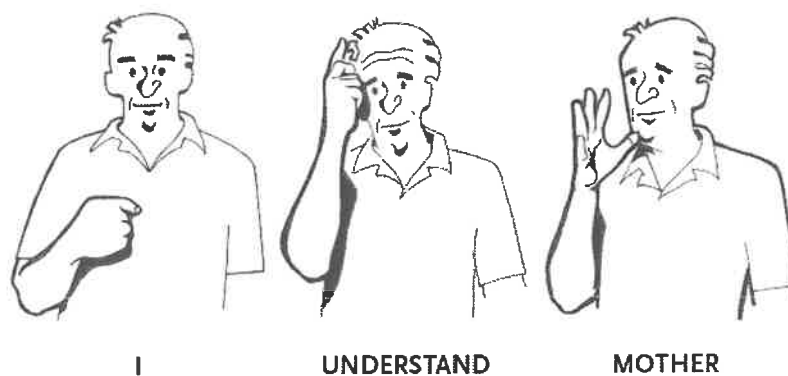
Verbs in ASL fall into three categories: nondirectional verbs, one-directional verbs, and multi-directional verbs. Movement in verb signs may express who is performing an action (the subject) and to whom the action is directed (the direct object). This quality of movement is called verb directionality.

The nondirectional verbs do not express either subject or direct object; therefore, these two things (subject and direct object nouns and pronouns) must be supplied.

I love you.



I understand mother.



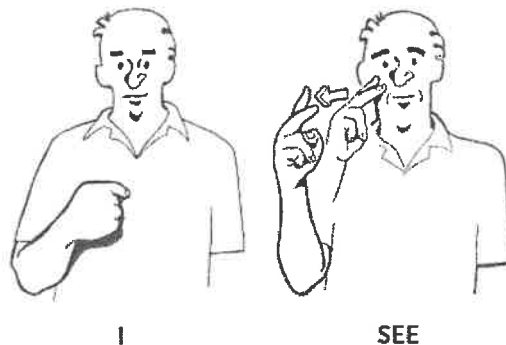
She wants a car.



The verbs LOVE, UNDERSTAND, and WANT in these sentences do obviously have movement in them, but that movement does not express either subject or direct object; that is, the movement has no directionality. Subject and direct object signs must be supplied.

One-directional verb signs express direct object but not subject, as in these sentences:

I see him/her/it.



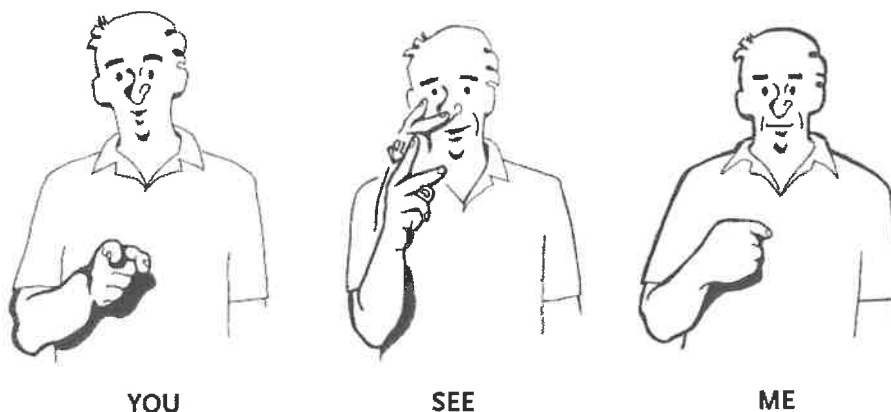
You tell him/her.

**YOU****TELL****She follows him/her/it.**

**HE/SHE/IT****FOLLOW**

One-directional verbs move toward the direct object; thus, a noun or pronoun is not required. The exception to this rule occurs when the signer is the direct object. For example, “You see me” must be signed:

You see me.



The direct object here is the signer (“me”), and since the movement of the SEE sign does not move toward the direct object, then the direct object must be signed. Notice also that the SEE sign does indeed move slightly to the right of the sight line, not directly toward the watcher.

The movement of multi-directional signs expresses both subject and direct object. The sign moves from the subject toward the direct object; thus, neither the subject nor direct object is signed.

I help you.

**HELP**

In the following illustration, the body is faced to your left to give you a better view of how the sign is made, but the sign itself goes along the sight line from the signer to the watcher.

He helps me.

**HELP****He helps her.**

**HELP**

The movement from a space normally implies that whoever occupies that space is the subject. The movement toward a space normally implies that whoever occupies that space is the direct object.

To Be or Not to Be

Many sentences in English require some form of the “to be” verb. Examples of such sentences include “I am fine,” “You are tired,” “Where is Joe?” and “They were not here.” There is no “to be” verb in ASL. The above examples are signed, “I FINE,” “YOU TIRED,” “WHERE JOE?” and “THEY NOT HERE.” Statements such as “It is raining,” “The flower is growing,” and “The train is late” are signed:

It is raining.



RAIN

The flower is growing.



FLOWER



GROW

The train is late.



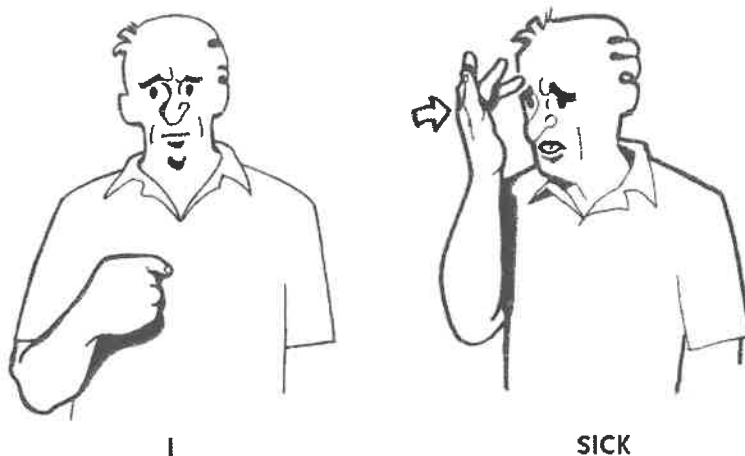
TRAIN



LATE

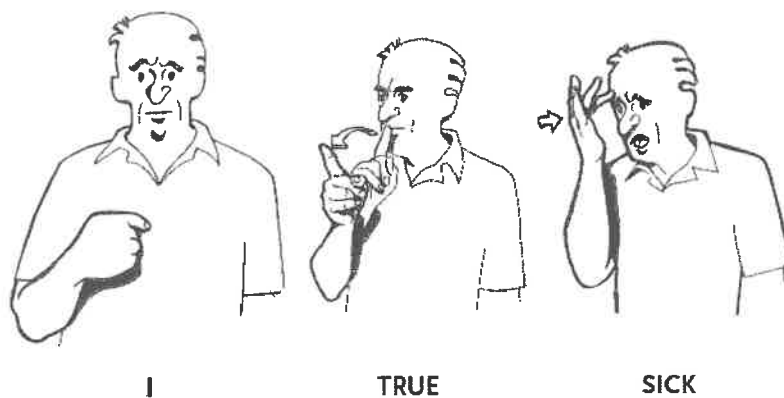
When the signer wishes to stress or emphasize statements, then the TRUE sign is used. The following statement means simply that "I am sick":

I am sick.



The following statement means that "I am really sick," or "I am very sick":

I am really sick.



Do not confuse the use of the TRUE sign as a sign of stress and emphasis with a form of the “to be” verb in English.

The TRUE sign also means *true, truly, real, really, sure, surely, certainly, indeed, and actually*. When used alone with a questioning expression, the TRUE sign means “Is that so?” or “Are you sure?”

Words Versus Signs

A word stands for a concept or an idea. If someone says “tree,” you understand immediately because you have in your mind the concept of tree. The same applies to signs. If the signer signs TREE, the watcher understands it immediately without having to think the word *tree*. In other words, a sign stands for an idea or concept; it does not stand for a word.

When you form statements in ASL, do not try to find a sign for every word in the English statement. Languages do not work that way. (For example, in English one says, “I am hungry,” but in Spanish and French one says, “I have hunger.” In ASL one says, “I hunger.”) First get clearly in mind the ideas you want to communicate, forget the words, and then find the appropriate signs to express the ideas.

Making Statements

Language is made up of utterances or statements. In spoken languages the statements consist of words, but in ASL the statements consist of signs and fingerspelling. There are two kinds of statements, those that ask questions and those that do not ask questions. Let’s look at how these statements are formed in ASL.

Statements That Ask Questions

1. **Yes/No Questions.** These are such questions as, “Are you hungry?” and “Do you want to go to the movies?” This type of question

is usually accompanied by the types of head tilts shown on pages 27 and 28 and by raised eyebrows as shown on page 25. The eyebrows are not *always* raised, but generally they are.

Are you hungry?



HUNGER



YOU

Do you want to go to the movies?



MOVIE



GO TO



WANT

2. Wh- Sign Questions. These are the questions that use *who*, *what*, *why*, *where*, *when*, *which*, and *how*, and they require more than a yes/no answer. These questions are also accompanied by one of the head tilts shown on pages 27 and 28 and by lowered eyebrows as shown on page 24. Again, the eyebrows may not always be lowered, but generally they are.



WHO



WHAT SHRUG



WHAT



WHY

**WHERE****WHEN****WHICH****HOW**

The *wh-* sign may come at the beginning or at the end of a question, or it may appear in both places. If you wish to emphasize a question, place it at the end.

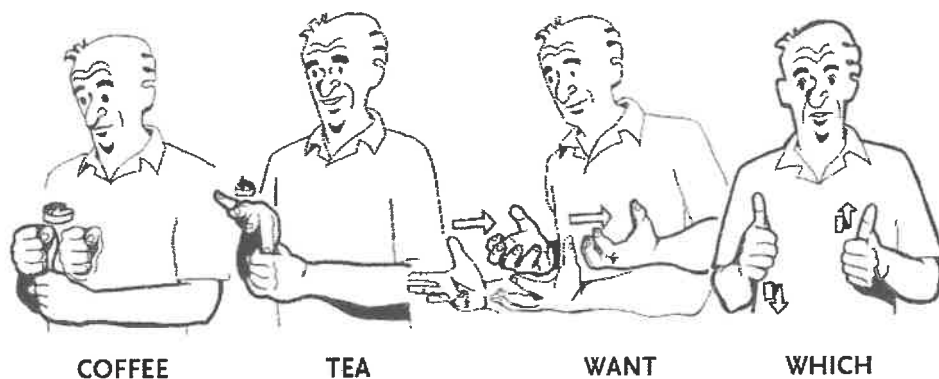
Why didn't you eat last night? (Example A)

**PAST****NIGHT****YOU****EAT****NOT****WHY**

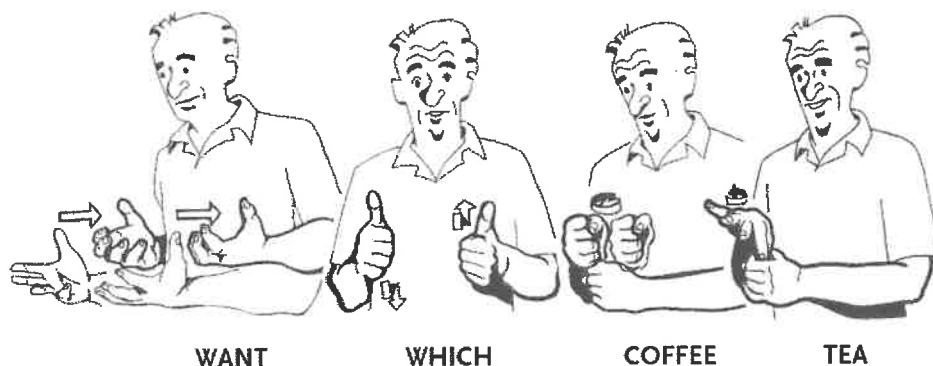
Why didn't you eat last night? (Example B)

**PAST****NIGHT****WHY****YOU****EAT****NOT**

Which do you want, coffee or tea? (Example A)



Which do you want, coffee or tea? (Example B)

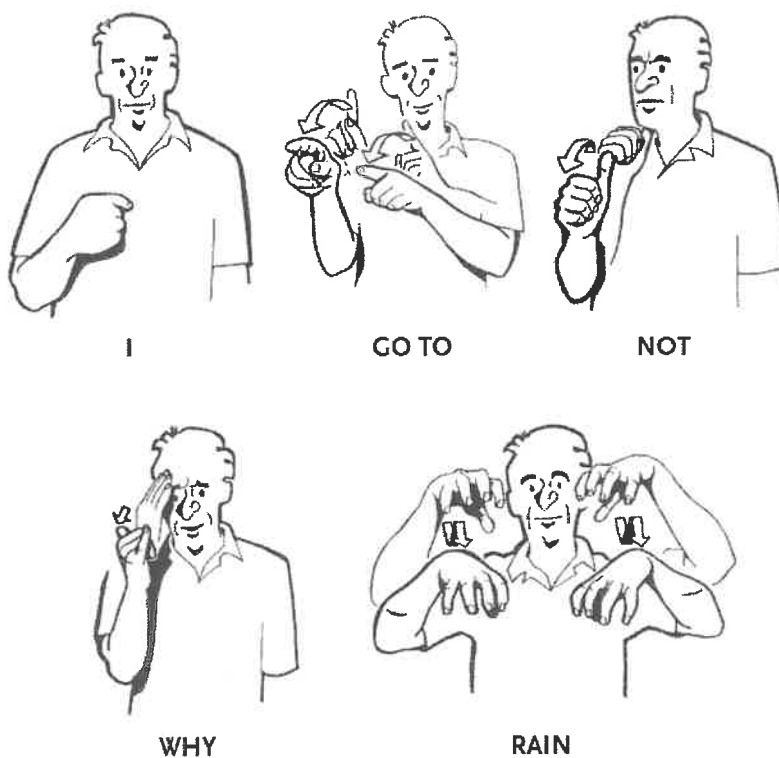


Naturally the signer makes a questioning facial expression when using these *wh*-sign questions.

Do not use a *wh*-sign in statements that do not ask questions. In English, for example, we may make such statements as, "When I say 'frog,' jump!" or "Where there is smoke there is fire." In these statements the *wh*-word does not ask a question; therefore, *wh*-signs are not used. A different way of making the statement is used.

3. Rhetorical Questions (RHQ). This type of question does not require an answer. For example, "What's in a name?" and "You know why he won't go? I'll tell you why." In English, an RHQ is usually used to set off or emphasize a point, but in ASL it is used much more frequently.

I didn't go because it rained.



I flew./I went by airplane.**I****GO TO****HOW****AIRPLANE**

4. Negative Questions. These are questions such as “Don’t you understand?” or “Why didn’t you tell me?” Ask them the same way you would a yes/no or a *wh*-sign question, but put in some form of negation. Usually you just shake your head as you ask the question, but you may add a sign of negation as well.

Why didn't you tell me?



YOU



TELL



ME



NOT

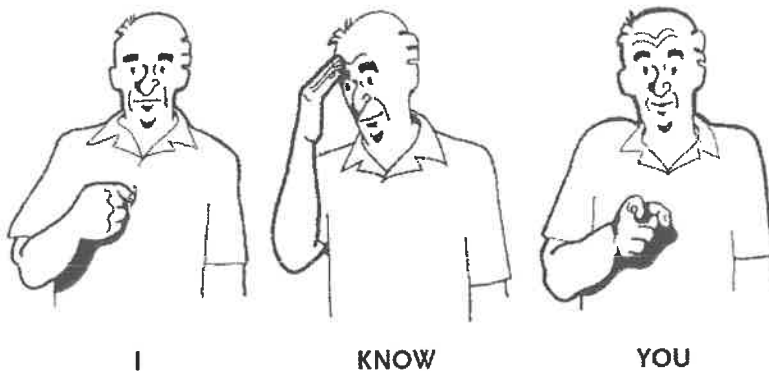


WHY

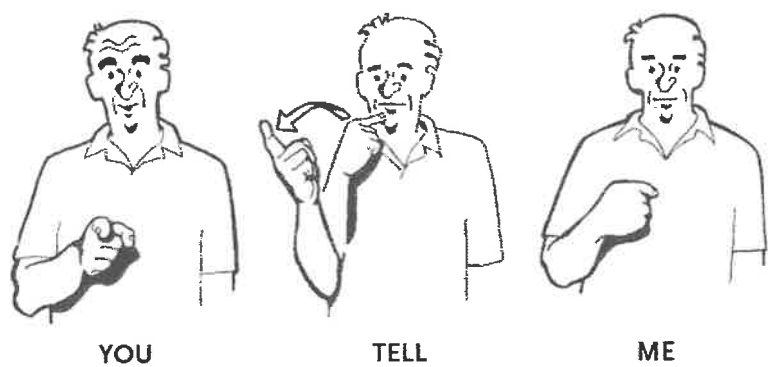
Statements That Do Not Ask Questions

1. Simple Statements. These are called “simple” because they are signed exactly the way they are spoken in English. Some examples are “I know you,” “You tell me,” “He loves you,” “She likes movies.” They have what is called the subject-verb-object arrangement.

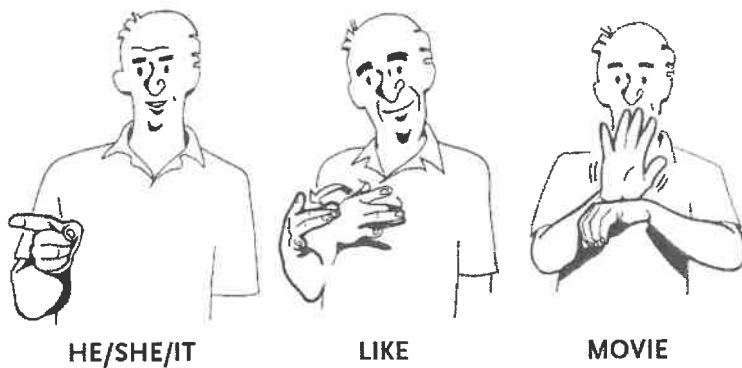
I know you.



You tell me.

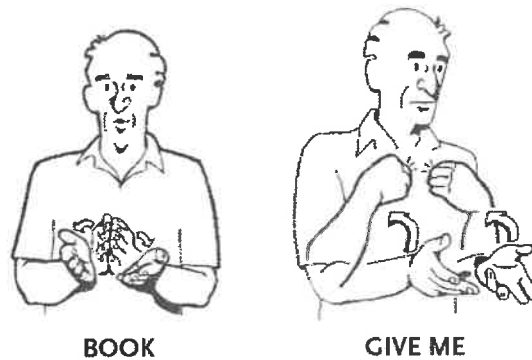


She likes movies.



2. Complex Statements. These are called “complex” because they involve two objects and are *not* signed exactly the way they are spoken in English. In the statement “You give me the book,” the subject is “you,” the first object is “me,” and the second object is “book.”

You give me the book.



More explanation about how to make these complex statements is given in the next section, “Stringing the Signs Together.”

3. Commands or Requests. The command tells someone to do something. Some examples are “Shut the door!” “Get out of here!” “Keep off the grass!” Generally speaking the signs are made vigorously and are accompanied by a frown (lowered eyebrows).

The request differs from the command only in that it is followed by the sign PLEASE and there is no frown. Some examples are “Bring me a cup of coffee, please,” “Turn off the lights, please.”

4. Exclamatory Statements. These statements express a strong reaction to something. Some examples are “What!” (surprise), “Ouch!” (pain), “Yahoo!” (elation), “Far out!” (admiration). As in English, these statements usually consist of only one sign in ASL.