



American Sign Language Council's Own Patch Program

American Sign Language

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Within our culture and community, lives a second culture that very few are familiar with and that is the community of the Deaf. To live in our society that relies primarily on hearing to navigate, the world can become a difficult place to live. To compensate, they use their own language – American Sign Language (ASL) – that is purely visual and has its own unique sentence structure apart from English.

This patch program has been designed to educate the participants on the language itself, but also the culture and community that comes along with being Deaf or hard of hearing.

To earn this patch, please complete the following number of items from each section:

	The Basics	Communication	Deaf Culture	Applications
Daisy	2	1	1	1
Brownie	2	1	1	1
Junior	3	2	2	2
Cadette	3	2	2	2
Senior	4	3	3	3
Ambassador	4	3	3	3

The Basics

- Learn the alphabet (Required)
 - Watch this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a5BD8SjhPSg>
 - Or, take this quiz: https://www.sporcle.com/games/jayrodss7/signlanguage_alphabet
 - By the end, you should be able to sign the whole alphabet on your own!

- Learn the numbers 1-10 (Required)
 - Watch this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0LIV0miyxR8>
 - By the end, you should be able to sign numbers 1-10 on your own!

- A Visual Language 101
 - While there are specific signs for many words, ASL also requires body movement and facial expressions to indicate the feelings and emotions of what the signer means to say.
 - Watch the following story about a snowman:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QVXnRuRI1KA>
 - Discuss:

- Even though you cannot understand exactly what is being said, can you still understand the story?
 - What specific moments in the story were clear to you?
- Pick 10 words you would like to know how to sign and learn them
 - By Googling “Signing Savvy (*insert word here*)” you will be able to learn new words to sign.
 - Make sure you choose words that have visual signs and are not spelled.

Bridging the Communication Gap

- What would you do if you had a Deaf Girl Scout sister? How would you accommodate her?
 - Put yourself in her shoes. Wear noise canceling earphones or some earplugs to block out some of your surroundings. What would it be like to navigate a world where you cannot hear someone come up behind you, you cannot hear even the muffled murmurings of your teachers instructions, or music in the background.
 - Brainstorm and discuss ways that you can make troop meetings understandable by someone who cannot hear your or your leader’s words.
- Gallaudet University
 - Gallaudet University is located in Washington DC and is home to the world’s only fully immersive ASL Interpreting program. Here, Deaf students can gain an education in their own language and be surrounded by their signing peers. Many graduates of the University speak fondly of their college years and how important the experience was to them.
 - Take a tour of Gallaudet <https://www.youvisit.com/tour/gallaudet>
- What does it take to become an ASL Interpreter?
 - ASL Interpreters have the difficult task of making tone in their speech be seen in the way they move their body or their facial expression.
 - Meet an interpreter here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u2wNNf5uRwQ>
- Living in a hearing world
 - Watch this video about what it is like to live as Deaf in a hearing world when interactions are primarily spoken.
 - **This video covers deep topics and is recommended for Cadettes and above.** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7yXHsbkkUNw>

Deaf Culture and History

- Deaf Communities

- The Deaf have created their own network of communities that exists unknowingly to the rest of the hearing world. They hold meetings and do fun activities together in order to spend time with others who also use sign language as their main form of communication.
 - Do some research. Can you find Deaf communities in your area?
 - What are some of the activities that they do?
 - Many communities are welcoming to hearing members who are wanting to learn ASL. Would you be interested in attending?

➤ Name Signs

- A part of being in the Deaf community is being given your own name sign. It can be tiresome to spell out a name every time you mention someone in conversation, so the Deaf have created their own shorthand to reference someone. Typically, a word is picked that defines that person's behavior or a physical characteristic and is modified to use their initials. (an example would be the sign "theatre" signed with a "K" instead of the usual "A")
 - While name signs can only be assigned by someone who is Deaf, do some research on words that describe you. What might your name sign be if one were to be given to you?

➤ Deaf Humor

- Since the Deaf operate within a community (the hearing) that uses an entirely different language, many communication mishaps happen. As a result, the Deaf have created many different jokes revolving around that particular conflict.
 - Watch this video about a joke on communication error. Please note that the signs for DIFFERENT, BUT, and GATE OPEN are the same.
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=asx0Xxvh-TE>

➤ Martha's Vineyard & Home Sign

- In Chilmark (a small town on Martha's Vineyard), from the years 1640 to the late 1800's, sign language became the common language. At the time, 1 in 25 residents on the island were Deaf, which compares to 1 in 5,700 in the rest of the world. These were the years before American Sign Language was created and so the residents created their own language called Martha's Vineyard Sign Language (MVSL). Unlike the rest of the world, even the hearing residents knew and used the language. The entire town could communicate and nobody was excluded from conversation due to hearing ability.
- Discuss:
 - What do you need to create a language?
 - What rules are needed?
- Create your own written language!
 - How is it different from English? Are there any similarities?
 - Test it out and see if it works!

Applications

- Spell your name
 - By using the ASL alphabet, learn how to sign your name.
 - Can you teach someone how to sign theirs?

- Plan a dinner party
 - Plan a dinner party that is completely silent. You and your guests can only use ASL to communicate.
 - Be sure to plan ahead and learn any signs you think you might need.

- Interpreting Music
 - Learn who Amber Galloway Gallego is and watch one of her music videos.
 - Re-watch our chosen video without audio
 - Discuss:
 - How does her signing represent the music? Can you see the music?
 - What would the music look like without her added interpretation?

- Girl Scout Law and Promise
 - Learn how to sign the Girl Scout Law and Promise.
 - Share with your troop!