

# Initializing, Number Incorporation, The Signer & 4 Elements of a sign

**4 Elements of a sign:** Every sign in ASL has 4 distinct elements. They are equally important. Changing any one element will change the sign entirely.

- **Handshape:** the shape of the hands.
- **Location:** the location of the sign.
- **Movement:** what kind of movement is associated with the sign.
- **Orientation:** which way the palm is facing.

EXAMPLE:

**MOTHER**

**Handshape:** dominant hand: #5  
**Location:** thumb on chin  
**Movement:** none  
**Orientation:** palm towards the non-dominant side



Initializing

An initialized sign is one in which the handshape is the first (initial) letter of the English word. This is useful when using a sign with multiple meanings.

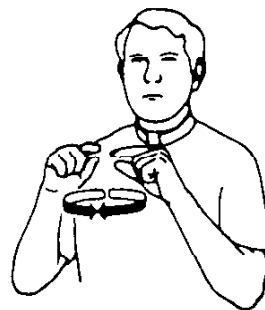
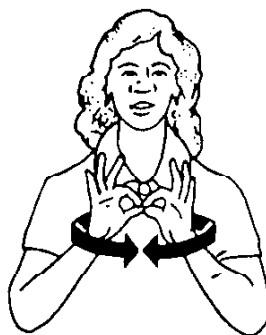
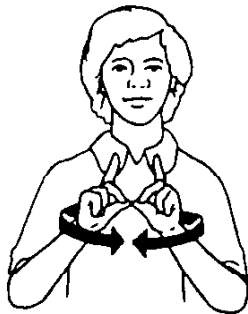
EXAMPLE:

"D" = department

"F" = family

"G" = group

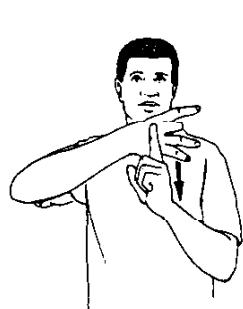
"C" = class



\* MUCH of Signed English uses initialized signs. However, this does not mean that those signs are acceptable in ASL. Some signs have been adopted as standard to be initialized in ASL while others are strictly initialized only in Signed English. There are also those signs which are optional to initialize.

**Number incorporation:** numbers can be incorporated into many signs to by modifying the sign with that number.

**EXAMPLES:**



8 months



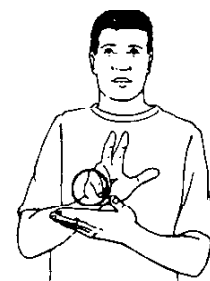
2 hours



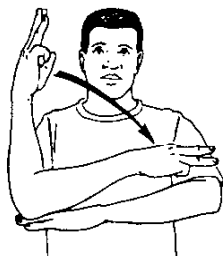
4 ~~years~~  
days



4 years



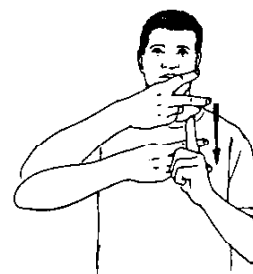
3 hours



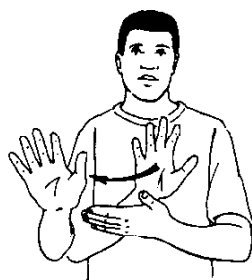
6 days



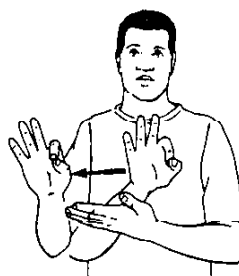
7 hours



2 months



5 weeks



9 weeks

\* Repeating a number incorporated sign would cause the sign to mean a time period which repeats.

**REPEATED SIGN EXAMPLES:**

2 weeks (repeated) = every two weeks or biweekly

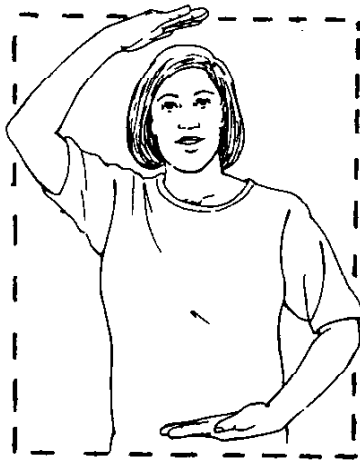
4 months (repeated) = every four months

3 days (repeated) = every three days

## The Signer

**The Signing Space:** The area in front of a signer where almost all signs are executed.

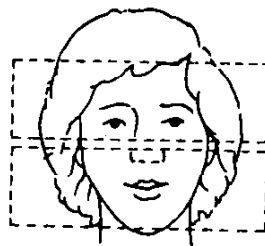
**The Sight Line:** an invisible line where things may **not** be referenced to. Only signs such as you, me, etc should be signed on the sight line.



The Signing Space



The Sight Line



Male

Female

### Gender Areas

*The location of a sign can indicate the gender of the thing being signed, with "male" signs occurring on the upper face, and "female" on the lower.*