

What is a classifier and how is it different from a handshape?"

Handshapes are one of the five fundamental building blocks or parameters of a sign: Handshape, movement, location, orientation, and nonmanual markers. Yes, yes, I know there are those who will point out that some signs have more than five parameters but notice I used the word "fundamental?" Those five parameters are the basic categories. The fact that you can divide "non-manual markers" or other parameters up into several smaller categories is jolly but there are still five main parameters. (Nonmanual markers include those aspects of body language that do not involve the hands such as shoulder movements, head tilts, and facial expressions.)

The handshape of a sign is literally the shape (or shapes) in which we form our hand during the production of a sign.

All signs have a handshape.

Now don't go arguing about how "shaking your head" can mean "no" or a body shift can mean "or."

I'm not talking about non-manual behaviors here -- I'm talking about signs. Is nodding your head "yes" a sign? No. It is a non-manual marker.

Classifiers are signs that use handshapes that are associated with specific categories (classes) of size, shape, or usage.

Over time certain handshapes have been used so often to show certain types of things, shapes, amounts, or sizes, that when you hold up or use one of those handshapes people (who know the language) automatically think of a particular category (or class) of:

Things (objects, people, animals, vehicles, etc.)

Shapes (including outlines, perimeters, surfaces, configurations, gradients, etc.)

Sizes (amount, largeness, smallness, relative size, volume, etc.)

Usage (movement paths, speed, interactions, etc.)

The commonly recognized handshapes that are typically used to show different classes of things, shapes, and sizes are called "classifiers."

The movement and placement of a classifier handshape can be used to convey information about the movement, type, size, shape, location or extent of the thing to which you are referring. (A referent is that which you are talking about or that to which you are referring.)












HANDSHAPE INVENTORY: ASL HANDSHAPES 1-40










NOTE: Several handshape variations are included in this section that do not appear on any of the Handshape Cards. They will be labeled A, B, and C.

<p>1</p> 	<p>A (GRADE) AFRICA ALCOHOLIC ARIZONA ARMY/SOLDIER ATTEMPT/TRY ATTITUDE</p>	<p>AUDIOLOGY BATH CAN CHANGE DANGEROUS/DANGER DUMB/STUPID HIDE</p>	<p>PATIENCE SECRET SORRY SUFFER WASH (BODY) WITH</p>
<p>2</p> 	<p>ACCIDENT ADVERTISE BASEBALL BICYCLE CAR COFFEE COUGH</p>	<p>EXAGGERATE EXERCISE HOLD ICE CREAM MAKE REVOLUTION/REVOLT SAFE/SAFETY</p>	<p>SATURDAY SHOES SOUTH SWEDEN WORK YEAR</p>
<p>3</p> 	<p>APPLE CALL-BY-PHONE CHARGE (FINED) DENTIST DOLL DREAM ELECTRICITY</p>	<p>FRIEND/PAL GIFT MUST NEED/NECESSARY ONION PUZZLED SEWING-MACHINE</p>	<p>SKI SUMMER TEASE TEXAS TIME WISE</p>
<p>4</p> 	<p>A.</p> 	<p>BRUSH-TEETH CHINA DEAF DIFFERENT DON'T CARE FALSE FALL-IN-LOVE</p> <p>FAR FIRST PLACE FOR HEARD HURT/PAIN INSULT LONELY</p>	<p>OWE NOSEY PAY QUARREL/ARGUE SAY/PRONOUNCE SIGNING WHERE</p>
<p>5</p> 	<p>BACON BELT BUILD BUTTER EGG FUN FUNNY</p>	<p>HOSPITAL HURRY KNIFE NAME NECK TIE PAINT (ARTISTIC) SCREW DRIVER</p>	<p>SIGNATURE SUGAR TAPE UNCLE UNIVERSITY USE</p>
<p>6</p> 	<p>CAREFUL CHEAT DOUBLE-DATE KEEP LOAN/BORROW LOOK MISUNDERSTAND</p>	<p>PREDICT/PROPHET PURPOSE (MEAN) READ SECOND-PLACE SMOKE (CIGARETTE) STUPID/DUMB SUPERVISE</p>	<p>SALT STUCK TWO-OF-US/YOU/THEM VERY VEGETABLE VOICE</p>
<p>7</p> 	<p>BLIND CHEWING GUM DOUBT HARD HAVING-THE-NERVE IRISH ORAL/SPEECH</p>	<p>POISON/SKELETON POTATO PROBLEM PROTESTANT STEAL STRICT</p>	<p>TICKET TITLE (QUOTE) TOUGH TOURNAMENT TRAVEL VAMPIRE</p>

 8	ART IDEA IDENTITY IDIOT IMAGINE/IMAGINATION INDEPENDENT INFERIOR	INSTITUTE INTEREST (MONEY) INTERNATIONAL INSURANCE ITALY JAPAN JEALOUS	LAST/FINAL SPAGHETTI STEEL STRING SUPPOSE/IF THIN	
 9	BACHELOR BEER BLUE BOARD (MEMBERS) BROWN BOSTON (CITY) BUSY	CLOSE DONKEY DOOR FULL-WITH-FOOD FLOOR OPEN OVER (ACROSS)	RELIEF SATISFY (SATISFIED) SHELVES STRAIGHT TROUBLE WINDOW	
 10	CURTAIN DRIP FENCE FOOTBALL FOUR OF US/YOU/THEM FOURTH PLACE IGNORE	INSANE INVENT JAIL LINE-UP PARADE PLAIDS RAINBOW	SCOTCH SCREEN STRIPE TALK/SPEAK WAR WRESTLING	
 11	BUTTON COOPERATE CURIOUS DARE DECIDE/DEFINITE FAMILY FEDERAL	FRENCH FOUND/PICK FOX IMPORTANT INDIAN INTERPRET INTERPRETER	JUDGE/COURT POSTPONE/DELAY SENTENCE SOON TEA VALUABLE/VALUE/WORTH VOTE	
 12	 A.	BIRD BOBBY PIN BULLET CREWCUT GRAMMAR GRADUATE GREECE	GREEN GROUP GUARANTEE GUILTY IGNORANT MOUSTACHE PRIEST	PRINT POINTS (CAR) QUEEN TURKEY TWEEZER TWENTY
 13	ALTOGETHER DECORATE (FIX) EXPENSIVE EXPERIENCE FLOWER FOOD GIVE	HOME JEWISH KISS LIGHT-OFF MEETING MORE MORMON	NUMBER PERCENT/PERCENTAGE SPRING (WEATHER) WEDDING WHITE WOLF	
 14	BECAUSE BEST BETTER CHALLENGE COMPETITION (COMPETE) DENY DROWN	ESTABLISH (BASED) GAME GASOLINE GIRL LIQUOR-BAR NOT NUTS (PEANUTS)	POLAND/POLISH SCIENCE SOCIALIZE SWEETHEARTS TOMMORROW YESTERDAY	
 15	COUNTRY COW DON'T-LIKE-VERY-MUCH DRINK (BEER) DUTCH ENGINEER LONGTIME	MEASURE (INCHES) NOW PARTY PHONE PIPE (SMOKE) PLAY SAME-OLD-THING	SILLY STAY TROPHY WHY WRONG YELLOW	












 <p>16</p>	<p>ALRIGHT BAD BECAUSE BETTER BEST BODY BOTHR</p>	<p>BOOK CUP ENJOY MUSIC OWE PAY PIG</p>	<p>PLEASE PROOF SCHOOL STOP THANK YOU WHY</p>
 <p>17</p>	<p>BINOCULARS CHARACTER CHOCOLATE CHURCH CLASS CERTIFICATE</p>	<p>COMMUNICATION CONSTITUTION CULTURE DRINK GENIUS HUNGRY/STARVE</p>	<p>LOOK FOR (SEARCH) PARAGRAPH POLICE PROTEST/COMPLAIN SUN TELESCOPE</p>
 <p>18</p>	<p>ACTION BALL COOKIE CRAZY CURLY-HAIR DISGUST</p>	<p>DIZZY FREEZE HEADPHONES MAD/ANGER MIX MONKEY</p>	<p>MONSTER PARACHUTE RAIN SANTA CLAUS WANT YELL/SCREAM</p>
 <p>19</p>	<p>BLANK MIND CONCERN CONTACT DEPRESS EARLY EMPTY EXCITE</p>	<p>HEART HONEYMOON LUCKY/FORTUNATE NUDE PEST PREFER SENSITIVE</p>	<p>SENTIMENTAL SICK SMART TAKE ADVANTAGE TASTE THRILL</p>
 <p>20</p>	<p>DEER DESPISE DRESS (CLOTHES) FARM FATHER FIFTH PLACE FINE</p>	<p>FINISH FIVE-OF-US/YOU/THEM FOREST FORMAL GRANDFATHER GRANDMOTHER MOTHER</p>	<p>MOVIE SAD SLOPPY TREE UPSET WAIT</p>
 <p>21</p>	 <p>A.</p>	<p>BOAT/SAILBOAT COMPARE EQUAL INVITE NIGHT</p>	<p>PROGRESS SEEMS (APPEAR) SWEET TOBACCO WELCOME</p>
 <p>22</p>	<p>ALTOGETHER CAMERA-SHOOTING EXPENSIVE JEWISH LIGHT-ON</p>	<p>MEETING SPRING (WEATHER) SUN BATHE WEDDING WHITE</p>	
 <p>23</p>	<p>KNOW NOTHING NEW ORLEANS (CITY) NONE/NOTHING OAKLAND (CITY) OFFICE</p>	<p>ORGANIZATION OPINION SHUT-OUT ZERO</p>	
















 <p>24</p>	<p>EAST ELEMENTARY EMERGENCY EMOTION ENERGY</p>	<p>ENGAGE (ENGAGEMENT) EVALUATE EVOLUTION EUROPE EXPERIMENT</p>
 <p>25</p>	<p>TAN TEAM TEMPLE THEORY TOILET/BATHROOM</p>	<p>TORONTO (CITY) TRADITION TRENTON (CITY) TRY TUCSON (CITY)</p>
 <p>26</p>	<p>CHANGE EXACT LITTLE BIT PEN/PENCIL</p>	<p>PICK-ON REVENGE STING-BY-BEE WRITE</p>
 <p>27</p>	<p>ARTICLE COLLAR COMMUNIST (SOVIET) COOKIE DRINK (ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE)</p>	<p>EYE-GLASSES MOON PLATE POLICE/SHERIFF</p>
 <p>28</p>	 <p>A.</p>	<p>BORROW CLAP-ON-EARRINGS CLOTHESPIN DUCK</p> <p>INVEST MOOCH NO</p>
 <p>29</p>	<p>CHOOSE (PICK) DELICIOUS GRAVY GREASE INTERESTING</p>	<p>LIKE MEAT SMOOTH STICKY STORY</p>
 <p>30</p>	<p>HANDS OFF HATE KICKOFF LIGHT (LUMINOUS)</p>	<p>MELON MOSQUITO TERRIBLE TERRIFIC</p>
 <p>31</p>	 <p>A.</p>	<p>BULL CAMPING CIGARETTE FIELD GOALS KID</p> <p>MOCK SARCASTIC (IRONIC) SNOB (SOPHISTICATE) WHISKEY WHISTLE</p>
 <p>32</p>	<p>AIR FORCE (ARMYPLANE) AIRPLANE-CRASH AIRPLANE/FLY/AIRPORT AIRPLANE-LAND</p>	<p>AIRPLANE-TAKE OFF ETCETERA I-LOVE-YOU</p>




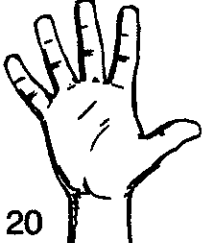
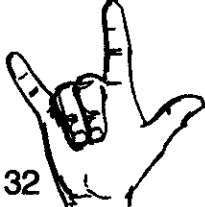



<p>33</p> 	<p>WASHINGTON (STATE) WATER WEATHER WEDNESDAY WEST</p> <p>WINE WINTER WORLD WORRY WORSHIP</p>		
<p>34</p> 	<p>BUG DIGNIFIED GARAGE LISTEN-TO LOUSY</p> <p>ROOSTER THIRD PLACE THREE OF US/YOU/THEM TRIPLE-DATE THROW</p>		
<p>35</p> 	<p>BUG CHAMPION DEVIL</p> <p>MISCHIEVOUS LISTEN-TO RECHARGE-BATTERY (CAR)</p>		
<p>36</p> 	<p>BIG-HEADED BRACES (TEETH) FAST INTERESTING RUN</p> <p>SPEEDING SPRAY WATCH (TO LOOK) WHO</p>		
<p>37</p> 	<p>DRILL (TOOL) FAST GUN LATER LAZY</p> <p>LIBRARY LICENSE RUN SHOT (MEDICAL) SHOOT</p>		
<p>38</p> 	<p>A.</p> 	<p>DEMOCRAT DETECTIVE DETROIT (CITY) DIAMOND DISNEYLAND</p> <p>DIVORCE DOCTOR DORMITORY DUTY MINNEAPOLIS (CITY)</p>	
<p>39</p> 	<p>FAIL KILL KING PINK PARTY PEOPLE PERFECT</p> <p>PERSON PHILADELPHIA (CITY) PLACE POLITIC PRINCIPAL PURPLE SECRETARY</p>		<p>SKUNK SMOKE (CIGARETTE)</p>
<p>40</p> 	<p>CIGAR READY REASON RELIGION REPUBLICAN</p> <p>RESPECT RESPONSIBLE RESTAURANT ROCKET ROLE</p>		










ASL CLASSIFIER HANDSHAPES INVENTORY

NOTE: The words listed in this section are of nouns that can be represented by these classifier handshapes. Handshape variations will also be included in this section labeled A, B, and C.

 <p>14</p>	<p><u>ABSTRACT</u></p> <p>BOTTLES BUILDING FIGURINE HOUSE LAMP</p> <p>DRAWER STATUE TOWNHOUSE TROPHY VASE</p>		
 <p>2</p>	<p><u>INSTRUMENT</u></p> <p>BABY CARRIAGE BARBELLS BASEBALL BAT</p> <p>BROOM CAR DRAWER</p> <p>HAMMER MOTORCYCLE OAR STICK SHIFT</p>		
 <p>13</p>	<p><u>INSTRUMENT</u></p> <p>BEDSPREAD BIB CLOTH COAT HAT</p> <p>NAPKIN PAPER SHEET TABLE CLOTH TOWEL</p>		
 <p>43</p>	 <p>A.</p>	<p><u>SASS</u></p> <p>THICKNESS-OF-</p> <p>— book — paper stack — carpet — sandwich — dust — steak — magazine</p> <p><u>INSTRUMENT</u></p> <p>PLACEMENT-OF-</p> <p>— book — magazine — paper — sandwich</p>	
 <p>22</p>	 <p>A.</p>	 <p>B.</p>	<p><u>SASS</u></p> <p>CAMERA SHOOTING LIGHT (FLASH, CEILING) SUCTION CUP SUNBEAM (OSTERIZER) WATER</p>
 <p>18</p>	 <p>A.</p>	 <p>B.</p>	<p><u>SASS</u></p> <p>BOULDER LUMP HAYSTACK SOFTBALL HOUSE</p> <p>A. (2 HANDS) BASKETBALL B. GOLF BALL, SMALL PLACE, TOBACCO CHEEK BASEBALL, DOOR KNOB, MID SIZE</p>

 <p>17</p>	 <p>A.</p>	<p><u>INSTRUMENT/SASS</u></p> <p>BOTTLE PIPE A. COLUMN CAR-BODY RAFT GARBAGE COLUMN TUBE CUP</p>											
 <p>27</p>	 <p>A.</p>	<p><u>SASS</u></p> <p>BELT BUCKLE MOON A. CLOCK BUTTON (CAMPAIGN) POT HOLES PLATE HEEL (HEIGHT) SAUCER LIQUID (AMOUNT) UFO</p>											
 <p>26</p>	<p><u>INSTRUMENT</u></p> <p>APPLY EYE SHADE WRITING WITH PENCIL APPLY LIPSTICK STING HOLE PUNCHING</p>												
 <p>41</p>	<p><u>INSTRUMENT</u></p> <p>HANDLING-OF-</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>— fishing pole</td> <td>— hose</td> <td>— match</td> </tr> <tr> <td>— flag</td> <td>— light switch</td> <td>— paintbrush</td> </tr> <tr> <td>— hammer</td> <td>— lollipop</td> <td>— TV dial</td> </tr> </table>			— fishing pole	— hose	— match	— flag	— light switch	— paintbrush	— hammer	— lollipop	— TV dial	
— fishing pole	— hose	— match											
— flag	— light switch	— paintbrush											
— hammer	— lollipop	— TV dial											
 <p>12</p>	 <p>A.</p>	 <p>B.</p>	<p><u>SASS</u></p> <p>BOARD A. BUMPER STICKER EYE BROWS CHECK FRAME B. CLIP MOUSTACHE EYE BROWS RULER POINTS (CAR) STEAK TOOTHPICK TWEezer</p>										
 <p>42</p>	 <p>A.</p>	<p><u>INSTRUMENT</u></p> <p>HANDLING-OF-</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>— coins</td> <td>— paper</td> <td>— tissue</td> </tr> <tr> <td>— diapers</td> <td>— pencil</td> <td>— thread</td> </tr> <tr> <td>— leaf</td> <td>— string</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>			— coins	— paper	— tissue	— diapers	— pencil	— thread	— leaf	— string	
— coins	— paper	— tissue											
— diapers	— pencil	— thread											
— leaf	— string												
 <p>11</p>	 <p>A.</p>	 <p>B.</p>	 <p>C.</p>	<p><u>SASS</u></p> <p>COIN A. BUTTONS EYES KEY HOLE HOLE PEBBLES HOSE B. GLASSES PIPE HANDCUFFS STICK PIPE TUBE STICK WATCH TUBE C. BRACELET HANDCUFFS GOGGLES THICK STICK</p>									

 <p>34</p>	<p><u>ABSTRACT</u></p> <p>BICYCLE SHIP BUS SUBMARINE CAR THREE PERSON MOTORCYCLE TRUCK</p>		
 <p>10</p>	 <p>A.</p>	<p><u>ABSTRACT/SASS</u></p> <p>FENCE GATE LINE OF PEOPLE LIST (CREDIT LISTING) NET PEOPLE STANDING PEOPLE LOOKING PHONE WIRES PLAIDS RUNNING WATER</p>	<p>(TAP, NOSE, TEARS, SPIT, DROOLING, BLOOD) SCREEN STRIPES</p> <p>A. CHEST HAIR GRASS (WITHERED) HAIR (BURNT) LEG HAIR MOUSTACHE PEOPLE SITTING</p>
 <p>20</p>	<p><u>ABSTRACT</u></p> <p>FIVE PEOPLE STAMPEDE TRAFFIC TREE</p>		
 <p>32</p>	<p><u>ABSTRACT</u></p> <p>AIRPLANE</p>		
 <p>15</p>	<p><u>SASS/ABSTRACT</u></p> <p>FAT PERSON PIPE HORNS TELEPHONE</p>		
 <p>8</p>	<p><u>SASS</u></p> <p>EYE BROW PHONE CORD HEARING AID CORD WIRE LINE WIRE RIM GLASSES NECKLACE</p>		
 <p>9</p>	<p><u>SASS</u></p> <p>BED CAR BOARD DESK BOOK FILE FOLDER BUNK BED MIRROR PAPER PICTURE</p> <p>SHELF SLIDING DOOR TABLE VIDEO-TAPE CASSETTE WINDOW WALL</p>		

 <p>40</p>	<p><u>SASS</u></p> <p>BRAIDS DNA CIGAR ROCKET CURLERS ROPE</p>		
 <p>5</p>	<p><u>SASS</u></p> <p>BAND AID PERSON (LYING) BASE BOARDS RULER BOARD STAMP DIVING BOARD TAPE</p>		
 <p>7</p>	<p><u>ABSTRACT</u></p> <p>BIRD GIRL BOY MAN CAT MONKEY DOG WOMAN FROG</p>		
 <p>6</p>	 <p>A.</p>	<p><u>ABSTRACT/SASS</u></p> <p>ANIMALS PERSON DOG PHONE WIRE DNA TRACK HORSE TWO PERSON</p>	
 <p>4</p>	 <p>A.</p>	 <p>B.</p>	<p><u>ABSTRACT/SASS</u></p> <p>ANTENNA A. OLD PERSON BROOM STICK B. <u>PRIMITIVE-MOVEMENT OF</u> FLAG POLE ANIMALS (DOG, BIRD, CAT) MASCARA MOVEMENT OF CAR, PERSON PLANE, MOTORCYCLE POLE <u>SASS-BASEBALL BAT</u> TOOTHBRUSH CIGARETTE PENCIL</p>
 <p>3</p>	<p><u>SASS</u></p> <p>BIRD'S BEAK (PARROT) CAPTAIN HOOK'S HAND COAT HANGER FISH HOOK HEARING AID HOOK MEDICINE, DEODORANT, FOOT SPRAY SCORPION'S TAIL TAIL</p>		

THE AMERICAN MANUAL ALPHABET 44-50

NOTE: For the proper grouping of this set, refer to card 51 for the handshape card numbers.