

INFO SHEET - ASL

Why you should study ASL

Here at Carleton we have a strong ASL program. You can take courses at all levels, 1st to 4th year. They aren't translation or interpretation programs. That's something different. But the courses will teach you how to use ASL to communicate with members of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities.

As a language, ASL focuses heavily on expressing ideas and on seeing these ideas understood by others. As a result, our classes incorporate lots of practice and intensive feedback.

Instructors are a mix of both Deaf and Hearing and each brings to their teaching a passion for the language and for sharing this passion with their students.

ASL proficiency may be particularly useful on certain career paths: social work, speech pathology, audiology, medical, and/or special education teaching to name a few.

However, like learning any language, the process itself can also be deeply rewarding. This is uniquely true of ASL as it teaches you to communicate not verbally as most of us are accustomed to, but rather through the movement of our bodies, gestures, and facial expressions.

About the Language



That's how you finger-spell "Carleton" in American Sign Language. But as you'll discover, ASL is a language much more rich and diverse than simply a series of hand shapes.

Signed languages have been around for centuries and today researchers suggest that there are approximately 300 varieties worldwide.

As the name suggests, American Sign Language (ASL) is the sign language used by members of the Deaf and Hard of-Hearing communities in the United States and Canada.

The language consists of both (a) visual representations created through the movement of hands, body, and arms to present ideas, and (b) facial expressions to give inflection, tone and grammatical signals. For example:



Work



Working hard



Are you working?

These movements and expressions, in turn, fit together in a systematic way that can be explained logically using clear linguistic principles and systematically developed concepts of how to convey meaning visually.

But ASL is more than a system for communication. It also serves a powerful cultural function for members of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities, providing a sense of belonging, connection, and shared experiences.

carleton.ca/slals/languages/