

I. Handshape Characters and Diacritics

The following characters are used to notate Handshapes in SignFont:

A. Basic Handshape Characters


 The basic unmarked fist, corresponding to the fingerspelling letter "A".


 The basic flat hand, corresponding to the fingerspelling letter "B".


 The basic cupped hand, corresponding to the fingerspelling letter "C".


 The basic pointing hand, corresponding to the counting numeral "1".


 The fingerspelling letter "E".


 The index, middle, and ring fingers are extended parallel to the palmar mass, and spread apart from each other, corresponding to the counting numeral "9" and the fingerspelling letter "W".

 The thumb and the index finger are both extended straight, parallel to each other and perpendicular to the palmar mass, corresponding to the fingerspelling letter "G".


 The index and middle fingers are both extended straight, parallel to the palmar mass, and touching each other, corresponding to the fingerspelling letters "H" and "U".


 The pinky finger is extended straight, parallel to the palmar mass, corresponding to the fingerspelling letter "I".


 The pinky and index fingers are extended straight, parallel to the palmar mass, corresponding to "Irish H", commonly called "HORNS".


 The middle finger is extended straight, roughly perpendicular to the palmar mass, with the thumb-tip laid alongside the radial edge (as in this drawing), or touching the palmar edge, while the index finger is extended parallel to the palmar mass, corresponding to the fingerspelling letters "K"


and "P", respectively.


 This is the Middle Finger Handshape, for which no drawing was available at the time I was preparing this pamphlet. The middle finger is extended alone, parallel to the palmar mass.


 The index, middle, and ring fingers are extended in this handshape, and touching each other. In its basic form, this symbol represents a Handshape resembling that used in the Boy Scout salute, with all three significant fingers extended parallel to the palmar mass. In this illustration, the fingers are curled, as in the fingerspelling letter "M", which is literally III_{H} , but spelled III_1 in fingerspelled words.


 The index, middle, and ring, and pinky fingers are extended in this handshape, and spread away from each other, corresponding to the numeric Handshape "4".


 The thumb forms a loop with the joined index, middle, ring, and pinky fingers, corresponding to the fingerspelling letter "O".


 The thumb and the index, middle, and ring, and pinky fingers are extended in this handshape, and spread away from each other, corresponding to the numeric Handshape "5".

 A loop formed between the thumb and the middle finger, corresponding to the counting numeral "9" and the numeral "8".

 The index and middle fingers are extended parallel to the palmar mass, with the middle finger twisted over the index, corresponding to the fingerspelling letter "R".

 The basic unmarked fist, except that the thumb is laid over the ends of the other fingers, which are also curled at the distal joints, corresponding to the fingerspelling letter "S".

 Like the basic unmarked fist (A), except that the thumb is tucked up under the index finger and laid over the top of the middle finger, corresponding to the fingerspelling letter "T".

 The index and middle fingers are both extended straight, parallel to the palmar mass, and spread away from each other, corresponding to the fingerspelling letter "V".

B. Handshape Diacritics

In general, the diacritical markings have the following effects when used after Handshape characters:

/	The thumb is extended parallel to the palmar mass, as in the "10" Handshape ($\wedge/\$).
O	There is a loop, as in D (l_o) and F ($\vee<$), or "baby", as in baby-O (O_o) and baby-C (C_o).
ᳵ	The distal and medial joints of the fingers are bent, curling the fingers, as in curled-V (\vee_1).
ᳶ	The proximal joint (the great knuckles) are bent, rendering the handshape flat, as in bent-C (C_1).
᳷	The thumb is extended, and the significant fingers are curled, as in bent-L (l_1).
᳸	The thumb is extended, and the significant fingers are bent, as in bent-B-dot (Π_1).
L	The pinky finger is extended, as in "7" (\vee_L).
h	The thumb is laid alongside other fingers, as in one variety of "1" (l_h).
V	This symbol means that non-significant fingers take a position opposite their normal position. For example, in the Handshape "G" (\simeq), only the thumb and the index finger are significant; the non-significant fingers are curled into the fist. With this diacritic, the non-significant fingers are extended (though they may not take part in the formation of signs), to form an open-F Handshape (\simeq_V).
᳹	The thumb is laid over other fingers, as in fingerspelling "N" ($\Pi_{1\psi}$) and "M" ($\Pi_{1\psi}$), or tucked into the palm, as in fingerspelling "B" (Π_ψ).
⊥	The thumb is extended perpendicular to the palmar mass, as in open-8 (\wedge_\perp).

C. Some common Handshapes spelled with a basic Handshape symbol and a diacritical mark include the following:

$\wedge/\$ The thumb is extend from the basic fist handshape, forming the numeral Handshape "10", and

the classifier for upright inanimate objects.

∧_o The thumb is laid into the crook of the curled index finger, forming, among other things, a classifier signifying a sturdy grasping in verbs of manual action.

∩_∕ The thumb is extend from the basic flat hand, forming a classifier for flat objects and planes (the thumb is not usually significant when this Handshape is used as a classifier).

∩_∩ The basic fist handshape is curled at the medial and distal joints of all the fingers, forming a classifier for convex and concave surfaces, depending on how the handshape is used.

C_o The thumb and index finger curl to form the shape of the letter C. This handshape functions as a classifier for small 2-dimensional round objects.

C_∩ This is like the handshape "C" (C), except that instead of being curled at the medial and distal joints, all the fingers are bent at the proximal joints (the great knuckles) and extended straight and perpendicular to the palmar mass. This handshape is often a classifier indicating, for example, that the subject of a verb is grasping a book, or that some substance forms a thin but extensive layer over an area.

∩_∕ This is a "1" with the thumb extended in the plane of the palmar mass, corresponding to the fingerspelling letter "L".

∩_o This is the fingerspelling letter "D", which is like the "O", except that the index finger is extended straight and parallel to the palmar mass (the index finger in this Handshape is not usually significant in ASL signs, except in ABC stories).

∩_∩ This handshape with the index finger extended from the fist and curled at the medial and distal joints corresponds to the fingerspelling letter "X", and is a common handshape found in many signs where there is absolutely no relation between the referent, and the letter X.

∩_∨ This is like the letter L (∩_∕), except that the index finger is curled at the medial and distal joints.

∩_∩ This is the pointing index finger, bent at the proximal joint; it is a phonetic alternate for ∩ selected when it is otherwise inconvenient to bring the tip of the index finger into the requisite contact with (or to point to) the PA.

∩_∩ This is like the basic pointing hand, except that the thumb is laid alongside the middle finger.

∩_∩ This handshape is a phonetically selected alternate of the basic index-finger (∩), used when the index finger curls to bring its tip into contact with the PA without necessarily moving the entire mass of the signing hand, as in TIME . ∩_∩∩_∩∩_∩∩_∩; occasionally it appears as a partially assimilated form of ∩ when the following handshape is ∩_∩, as in FROM ∩_∩∩_∩∩_∩∩_∩∩_∩.

∩_{o∩} This flattened form of "F" (∩_o) is used in all manner of signs as an instrument classifier, when something small is grasped.

∩_o This is a flat baby-O, used in combination with G ∩, in classifier signs indicating the grasping

of a small object, as in EYE-DROPPER $\supset\text{O}\downarrow\downarrow\supset\text{o}^\mu$.

$\parallel\downarrow$ This handshape, based on "U", with the index and middle fingers extended straight and touching each other, and along with the thumb perpendicular to the palmar mass, is used as a kind of movement classifier for roughly rectilinear objects capable of grasping, including a duck's bill, a clothespin, a paper clip, and so on.

$\parallel\uparrow\uparrow$ This is a fingerspelling "N", with the index and middle fingers extended touching each other, curled at all three joints, and with the thumb tucked under the 2 significant digits. Spelled $\parallel\uparrow$ in fingerspelled words.

$\vee\uparrow$ This is the curled-V classifier, with the index and middle fingers extended and spread apart from each other, curled at the medial and distal joints.

$\vee\uparrow$ This is angle-V, a phonetically selected alternate of V with significant tips, used to point the fingertips of the straight, spread index and middle fingers towards the PA without moving the entire palmar mass, as in LOOK-AT-EACH-OTHER $\vee\uparrow\text{O}\text{O}\times\downarrow$.

$\check{\vee}\uparrow$ This is a lenited form of the curled-V classifier above, selected phonetically when finger-tip contact is selected, as in IRISH $\check{\vee}\uparrow\text{O}\text{O}\text{O}\times$.

$\vee\downarrow$ This is the numeral handshape "3", which, like "V", has the index and middle fingers extended straight and spread apart from each other, with the addition of the straight thumb; all three digits are parallel to the plane of the palm.

$\vee\downarrow$ This is a curled 3, a phonetically selected alternate of curled V, used when the thumb is extended to anchor a V, allowing the index and middle fingers to curl unhindered, as in INSECT $\vee\text{O}\times\vee\downarrow^\mu$, and as a hybrid with C, as in THREE-HUNDRED $\vee\text{O}\downarrow\uparrow\vee\downarrow^\mu$.

$\text{h}\downarrow$ This is the fingerspelling letter "Y", as in YELLOW $\text{h}\downarrow\text{O}\zeta^\mu$, and also a thumb-augmented form of the small rod classifier h handshape, as in (tobacco) PIPE $\text{h}\downarrow\text{O}\times^\mu$.

$\text{U}\downarrow$ This is the I LOVE YOU handshape, formed by adding the thumb, extended parallel to the palmar plane, to the index and pinky fingers of the HORNS handshape U . It often functions as a classifier representing airplanes, as in FLY $\text{U}\downarrow\text{O}\text{J}\text{J}\text{J}\uparrow$.

$\text{U}\uparrow$ This is bent-HORNS, a phonetically selected alternate to HORNS U , used to bring the CR into proper alignment with the PA without moving the entire palmar mass, as in CHEAT $\text{U}\uparrow\text{O}\downarrow\text{O}\times\vee^\mu$.

$\text{O}\circ$ This is the baby-O, formed as a loop between the thumb and the index fingertip, with the non-significant fingers tucked into the fist. It appears in signs such as WRITE $\text{O}\circ\text{O}\text{O}\text{O}\times\text{J}^\mu$, with contact on the apex of the thumb-index finger loop.

$\text{O}\uparrow$ This is a flat-O, which is a tense alternate of OO , often appearing in signs where the apex of the thumb-fingertip loop in o functions as the CR, as in HOME, which may be signed as $\text{O}\text{O}\text{J}\times\text{J}\times$ with a regular O, or as $\text{O}\uparrow\text{O}\text{J}\times\text{J}\times$ with the flat-O. Sometimes it functions as a thumb-augmented form of b, as in MONEY $\text{O}\uparrow\text{O}\circ\text{O}\text{O}\times^\mu$, which may also be pronounced as $\text{O}\uparrow\text{O}\circ\text{O}\text{O}\times^\mu$, which is the

same sign with the thumb moved away from the fingertips.

✎₁ This is a claw, a tense version of the 5 numeral cum classifier ✎, which may or may not have the thumb curled as well. When it is important to note that the thumb is *not* curled, write $\bar{\wedge}_v$, indicating a curled 4 $\bar{\wedge}$ with the thumb extended.

$\check{\wedge}_1$ This curled-5 classifier is a lax variant of the claw ✎₁. It occurs in many sequences with S $\bar{\wedge}$, as in ALL-GONE $\check{\wedge}_1 \textcircled{\text{P}} \textcircled{\text{X}} \textcircled{\text{J}} \bar{\wedge}$.

✎₁ This is bent-5, a tense classifier handshape found in sequences with O₁, as in GO-OUT O₁ $\textcircled{\text{J}} \textcircled{\text{J}} \textcircled{\text{O}} \textcircled{\text{J}} \textcircled{\text{J}}$, and as a classifier for, among other things, radiation, as in SUNBATHE, O₁ $\textcircled{\text{J}} \textcircled{\text{J}} \textcircled{\text{J}} \textcircled{\text{J}} \textcircled{\text{J}}$.

$\bar{\wedge}_v$ This is like the handshape "D" ($\bar{\wedge}_o$), except that the ring and pinky fingers are curled and tucked into the palm. It functions as a (usually) dialectal variant of $\bar{\wedge}_o$. Note that it is written as a variant of the numeric handshape 8 $\bar{\wedge}$, with non-significant fingers tucked into the fist (v).

$\bar{\wedge}_v$ This is the open-8 handshape shared by many signs related to feelings, emotions, and the like, as in FEEL $\bar{\wedge}_v \textcircled{\text{D}} \textcircled{\text{X}} \textcircled{\text{X}} \textcircled{\text{J}} \textcircled{\text{J}}$.

$\bar{\wedge}_o$ This is a tightened 8 handshape, with the thumb holding the middle finger, ready to spring open, as in HATE $\bar{\wedge}_o \textcircled{\text{D}} \textcircled{\text{J}} \textcircled{\text{X}} \textcircled{\text{J}} \textcircled{\text{J}}$. Phonemically, this is written as $\bar{\wedge}$ in sequences where $\bar{\wedge}_v$ and ✎ follow.

II. Contacting Regions

The following illustrations show the phonemic-level Contacting Region (CR) inventory in SignFont. They have been designed to be easy to determine geometrically, rather than functionally, so that the "tip end" of any handshape, written with $\textcircled{\text{O}}$, is always the part of the handshape that extends the farthest along the line of the metacarpals, and the "palm side" of any handshape, written with $\textcircled{\text{D}}$, is whatever one encounters on the ventral side of the hand, whether the fingers are straight or not.

"Phonotactic" constraints in ASL usually disambiguate troublesome combinations of HS and CR, such as the "ulnar edge of 1," written as $\bar{\wedge} \textcircled{\text{D}}$ phonemically. It happens that some movements are possible with contact on the ulnar edge of the fist portion of the "1", while other movements are only possible with contact on the ulnar edge of the extended index finger. Simple approach to contact in the case of the cluster "ulnar edge of 1 contacts radial edge of 1" is ambiguous, however, and so in the Glossaries here phonetic contacting regions have been used in all ambiguous cases. A table of CR spellings follows the illustrations of the phonemic-level CR characters in SignFont.

The following table lists phonetic-level Contacting Region spellings.

Basic Symbol	Phonetic Symbol	Brief Description
$\textcircled{\text{D}}$		The palm side of the hand, extending from the heel to the proximal joints of the fingers.

	Ⓣ /	This is the base of the thumb on the palm side.
	Ⓣ _o	This is the well in the center of the palm.
	Ⓣ ₁	This is the fleshy ridge overlying the proximal joints of the fingers.
	Ⓣ _L	This is the ulnar edge of the palm side of the hand.
	Ⓣ _v	This is the portion of the ulnar edge of the palm side of the hand closest to the wrist.
	Ⓣ _⊥	This is the portion of the radial edge of the palm side of the hand closest to the wrist.
⊖		Back side of the hand.
	⊖ /	Back of the forearm.
	⊖ _o	Back of the fingers.
	⊖ ₁	Back of the wrist.
Ⓟ		The palm side of the fingers.
	Ⓟ /	The pad of the thumb.
	Ⓟ _o	The pad of the index fingertip.
	Ⓟ ₁	The pad of the middle finger.
	Ⓟ ₁	The pad of the ring finger.
	Ⓟ _L	The pad of the pinky.
	Ⓟ _⊥	The pads of all the fingers collectively.
Ⓠ		The heel of the hand.
	Ⓠ /	Ventral side of the forearm.
	Ⓠ _o	Radial end of the heel of the hand.
	Ⓠ ₁	Ventral side of the wrist.
	Ⓠ _L	Ulnar end of the heel of the hand.
Ⓡ		Radial edge of the hand.
	Ⓡ /	Radial edge of the extended finger(s).
	Ⓡ _o	Radial edge of the most-radial extended finger's tip.
	Ⓡ ₁	Radial edge of the proximal phalanx of the thumb.
	Ⓡ _⊥	Radial edge of the wrist.

⓪		Ulnar edge of the hand.
	⓪/	Ulnar edge of the extended finger(s).
	⓪ ₀	Ulnar edge of the most-ulnar extended finger's tip.
	⓪ _⊥	Ulnar edge of the wrist.
⓪		Distal end of the signing hand ("tip end").
	⓪/	Tip of the thumb.
	⓪ ₀	Tip of the index finger.
	⓪ ₁	Tip of the middle finger.
	⓪ ₁	Tip of the ring finger.
	⓪ _L	Tip of the pinky finger.
	⓪ _v	Fingernail(s) of extended finger(s).
Ⓚ		Elbow end of the signing hand; the elbow dorsal side of the elbow.
	Ⓚ/	Underside of the upper arm, nearest the armpit.
	Ⓚ ₁	Ventral side (crook) of the elbow.
	Ⓚ ₁	Underside of the upper arm, nearest the elbow.
	Ⓚ _v	Outer side of the upper arm, nearest the elbow.
	Ⓚ _⊥	Outer side of the upper arm, nearest the shoulder.
⊕		The space within which a handshape grasps or holds a PA, usually between the thumb and the digit(s) it opposes.
	⊕ ₀	Within the lumen created by a thumb-loop, as approached from the radial edge, especially of O, C, and F.
	⊕ _v	Within the lumen created by a thumb-loop, as approached from the ulnar edge, especially of O and C.
Ⓞ		Between adjacent fingers.
	Ⓞ/	Between the thumb and the index finger.
	Ⓞ ₀	At the end of a digital interstice closest to the great knuckles.
	Ⓞ ₁	Between the index finger and the middle finger.
	Ⓞ ₁	Between the middle finger and the ring finger.
	Ⓞ _L	Between the ring finger and the pinky.
	Ⓞ _⊥	At the end of a digital interstice closest to the fingertips.

III. Locations.

The following illustrations show the phonemic locations used in the 1987 version of SignFont, and how the diacritics ˘ (at the distance of the neutral signing space) and ˘ (at the distance of the second-person pronominal locus) are added to specify two degrees of separation from the area closest to the frontal surface of the signer's body.

The inventory promulgated in the 1987 *SignFont Architect Handbook* reflect the view that in ASL, except where a sign refers to an actual body part, there is little use for fine distinctions about the face. It has grown apparent to me that much more differentiation on the frontal surface of the whole body from crown to thighs should be expressed, both in reducing some of the cognitive dissidence that arises from spelling visual signs relative to the *nose* (for Heaven's sake!), and in facilitating purely phonetic-level work.

To this end, a table of phonetic-level bodily locations, many of which are used felicitously in the Glossaries, follows the illustrations.

Note that it still appear true that at removes from the frontal surface of the body, a 4-level differentiation of articulatory height appears to be workable (top of head, mouth, chest, lap), though the 5 levels afforded by the basic Location set are available.

The following table contains phonetic-level Location spellings.

Basic Location	Fine Location	Brief Description
J		Ipsilateral Temple.
	J _L	Top of head above the ipsilateral temple.
	J _⊥	Ipsilateral brow.
	J _n	Just to the ipsilateral side of the ipsilateral temple.
	J _o	Up to 6" above the ipsilateral temple.
∩		Forehead.
	∩ _L	Top of the head above the forehead.
	∩ _o	Up to 6" above the center of the forehead.
l		Contralateral Temple.
	l _L	Top of the head above the contralateral temple.
	l _⊥	Contralateral brow.
	l _n	Just to the contralateral side of the contralateral temple.

	\downarrow_0	Up to 6" above the contralateral temple.
J		Ipsilateral Ear.
	\downarrow_0	Ipsilateral eye.
Δ		Nose.
	Δ_L	Ipsilateral side of the nose.
	Δ_0	Bottom of the nose.
	Δ_{\perp}	Contralateral side of the nose.
t		Contralateral ear.
	t_0	Contralateral eye.
J		Ipsilateral cheek.
	J_L	Ipsilateral corner of the mouth.
	J_{\perp}	Ipsilateral side under the chin.
	J_n	To the ipsilateral side of the ipsilateral cheek.
\subset		The front of the chin and the mouth.
	\subset_L	The upper lip.
	\subset_n	The teeth.
	\subset_U	The lower lip.
	\subset_T	The tongue.
	\subset_{\perp}	Central under the chin.
l		Contralateral cheek.
	l_L	Contralateral corner of the mouth.
	l_{\perp}	Contralateral side under the chin.
	l_n	To the contralateral side of the contralateral cheek.
J		Ipsilateral shoulder.
	J_{\perp}	Ipsilateral side of the neck.
	J_L	Top of the ipsilateral shoulder.
	J_U	Ipsilateral front of the ribcage (breast).
	J_0	Ipsilateral armpit.

	J _n	Just to the ipsilateral side of the ipsilateral shoulder.
∅		Sternum, center of chest.
	∅ _⊥	Larynx, front of throat.
	∅ _L	Hollow of the neck, top of sternum.
	∅ _V	Bottom of the sternum.
↳		Contralateral shoulder.
	↳ _⊥	Contralateral side of the neck.
	↳ _L	Top of the Contralateral shoulder.
	↳ _V	Contralateral front of the ribcage (breast).
	↳ _o	Contralateral armpit.
	↳ _n	Just to the contralateral side of the contralateral shoulder.
∩		Ipsilateral side of the abdomen.
	∩ _V	Ipsilateral bottom of the ribcage.
	∩ _o	Ipsilateral groin area.
	∩ _⊥	Ipsilateral thigh.
	∩ _L	Ipsilateral hip.
	∩ _v	Ipsilateral outer thigh.
	∩ _n	To the ipsilateral side of the ipsilateral side/hip.
∩		Middle of the abdomen.
	∩ _V	Solar plexus, below the sternum.
	∩ _o	Middle groin area.
ℓ		Contralateral side of the abdomen.
	ℓ _V	Contralateral bottom of the ribcage.
	ℓ _o	Contralateral groin area.
	ℓ _⊥	Contralateral thigh.
	ℓ _L	Contralateral hip.
	ℓ _v	Contralateral outer thigh.

	e_1	Contralateral inner thigh.
	e_n	To the contralateral side of the contralateral side/hip.

IV. Movements.

Movement symbols are more or less as they were in the 1987 version of SignFont, with the following basic meanings: Deviations from the 1987 symbols will be noted.

Symbol(s)	Movement part represented
<	Move toward the ipsilateral side.
>	Move away from the ipsilateral side.
∩	Move back and forth laterally.
∧	Move upwards.
∨	Move downwards.
↷	Move toward the body.
↶	Move away from the body.
Ⓞ	Circular path movement.
↵	Twist the wrist inward (pronation).
↶	Twist the wrist outward (supination).
↷⊙	Nod the wrist with the palm leading. [New digraph]
↷⊖	Nod the wrist with the back of the hand leading. [New digraph]
↷⊙	Wave the wrist toward the radial side. [New digraph]
↷⊙	Wave the wrist toward the ulnar side. [New digraph]
≈	Wiggle the fingers. The general rule in ASL is for compact hands to wiggle the fingers together, and for spread hands to wiggle the fingers sequentially or randomly.
≈ ₁	Simultaneous wiggling. [New digraph]
≈ _U	Sequential or random wiggling. [New digraph]
×	Touch. This may be touch at the beginning or end of a path, or syllabic hold in contact in a static stem.
× ₁	Contact on the proximal side of a vertical surface, which may only be a base hand held farther from the signer's body than the active hand. [New digraph]

\bar{X}_L	Contact on the top of a horizontal surface. [New digraph]
\bar{X}_O	Contact on the ipsilateral side of a sagittal surface. [New digraph]
\bar{X}_γ	Contact on the distal side of a vertical surface, whether a part of the signer's body, or the inactive hand when the active hand is farther from the body. [New digraph]
\bar{X}_\perp	Contact on the bottom of a horizontal surface, which is usually a base hand, or the bottom of the nose or the bottom of the chin. [New digraph]
\bar{X}_V	Contact on the contralateral side of a sagittal surface. [New digraph]
$\bar{X}_/$	Contact at an angle. [New digraph]
\bar{X}	Contact that is maintained while the hand performs some other movement.
\bar{X}_γ	Continuous contact on the proximal side of a vertical surface, which may only be a base hand held farther from the signer's body than the active hand. [New digraph]
\bar{X}_L	Continuous contact on the top of a horizontal surface. [New digraph]
\bar{X}_O	Continuous contact on the ipsilateral side of a sagittal surface. [New digraph]
\bar{X}_γ	Continuous contact on the distal side of a vertical surface, whether a part of the signer's body, or the inactive hand when the active hand is farther from the body. [New digraph]
\bar{X}_\perp	Continuous contact on the bottom of a horizontal surface, which is usually a base hand, or the bottom of the nose or the bottom of the chin. [New digraph]
\bar{X}_V	Continuous contact on the contralateral side of a sagittal surface. [New digraph]
$\bar{X}_/$	Continuous contact at an angle. [New digraph]
ı	Pause. This may be an initial or final hold, or a syllabic hold in a static stem.
ı γ	Virtual contact on the proximal side of an imaginary vertical surface. [New digraph]
ı L	Virtual contact on the top of an imaginary horizontal surface. [New digraph]
ı O	Virtual contact on the ipsilateral side of an imaginary sagittal surface. [New digraph]
ı γ	Virtual contact on the distal side of an imaginary vertical surface, whether a part of the signer's body, or the inactive hand when the active hand is farther from the body. [New digraph]
ı \perp	Virtual contact on the bottom of an imaginary horizontal surface, which is usually a base hand, or the bottom of the nose or the bottom of the chin. [New digraph]
ı V	Virtual contact on the contralateral side of an imaginary sagittal surface. [New digraph]

\bar{i}	Virtual continuous contact: movement along an imaginary surface. [New symbol]
$\bar{i}\uparrow$	Virtual sliding contact on the proximal side of an imaginary vertical surface. [New digraph]
$\bar{i}L$	Virtual sliding contact on the top of an imaginary horizontal surface. [New digraph]
$\bar{i}O$	Virtual sliding contact on the ipsilateral side of an imaginary sagittal surface. [New digraph]
$\bar{i}\downarrow$	Virtual sliding contact on the distal side of an imaginary vertical surface, whether a part of the signer's body, or the inactive hand when the active hand is farther from the body. [New digraph]
$\bar{i}\perp$	Virtual sliding contact on the bottom of an imaginary horizontal surface, which is usually a base hand, or the bottom of the nose or the bottom of the chin. [New digraph]
$\bar{i}V$	Virtual sliding contact on the contralateral side of an imaginary sagittal surface. [New digraph]
=	Simultaneous identical movement by both hands.
~	Alternating (phase-shifted) identical movement by both hands.
≠	Simultaneous movement by both hands, performed in retrograde fashion by the non-dominant hand.
u	Sequential Repetition, one form of reduplication in ASL.
uO	Interrupted, or incremental repetition, in which the movement of a sign is performed in small pieces. Note that in a non-tense stem, reduplication will shorten movement. [New digraph]
7	Slow emphasis, which is usually super-tense (opposing muscle groups play against each other) rather than very lax.
77	Fast emphasis, which often brings increased speed and size of movement.

The following combinatorial rules will serve to set the order of symbols in a SignFont spelling.

1. The "static" configurations assumed by both hands at the beginning of the sign are written in the order

$$H_d C_d [[H_n] C_n] L_d [L_n]$$

H Handshape (dominant or non-dominant)
d Diacritical marking(s)
C Contacting Region (dominant or non-dominant)
L Location (dominant or non-dominant)

2. If the dominant and non-dominant HC are identical, only one copy of the beginning HC is written. Likewise if the

dominant and non-dominant LOC are identical, only one copy of the beginning LOC is written.

3. If a 2-handed sign has a 1-handed variant, the spelling of the 2-handed sign is identical to that of the 1-handed sign, with the exception of (a) the possible addition of a non-dominant LOC if it differs from the dominant LOC, and (b) the appropriate copying symbol--simultaneous identical (=), phase-shifted identical (~), or simultaneous retrograde (≠).

4. There is conventionally no dominant LOC symbol when the sign begins or is made entirely in the neutral space before the signer's body (⊙₁).

5. Left-handed and right-handed signers write exactly the same. To demarcate a stretch of signing where the signer has switched hands temporarily, begin the stretch with a modified body shift symbol:

☐ₒ Switch to non-dominant hand active

☐ₒ Switch back to dominant hand active

6. When the hands touch or approach each other, write both CRs, even if the CRs are the same, as in WITH ∧⊙⊙×=.

7. The "I before E" rules: The Order of Movement Symbols.

a. The symbols for continuous contact (×̄) and continuous virtual contact (ī) come before all other movement symbols with which they are associated, as in PLEASE ∏⊙×̄⊙.

b. Local movements are written before path movements, and they are performed simultaneously with the path movements, as in FOR |σJX(⊙), unless separated by a hold (|).

c. When the HC or LOC in a sign changes, the new HC or LOC comes before a final touch or hold, as in JOT-DOWN 0₁⊙∏⊙×∏X or GENTLEMAN ✕⊙∏X∧0₁∏X.

d. If both the HC and the LOC change, the new HC comes before the new LOC, as in LEARN ✕σ∏⊙X∧0₁∏X.

8. Movement diacritics come after the part of the movement they modify.

a. All or only part of the movement may be repeated, as in FEEL ∧/⊙×X∧∞ or SNAKE √σ=×⊙∞⊙.

b. All or only part of the movement may be in opposite directions, as in INSTEAD √⊙⊙⊙∨⊙≠ or DIE ∏⊙∇≠<=.

9. The symbols >× and <∇ are never followed by copy symbols, as in MEET |⊙⊙>× and DIFFERENT |⊙⊙×<∇.

COMPLEX MOVEMENTS














1. Arcing movement is written as a sequence of orthogonal path movements, as in INVITE ΠτϙVϙ.
2. Sequences of path movement segments intended as such are separated by a hold symbol (:). Compare the movements in PLACE VϙϙXϙϙ>X and SQUARE |σσXϙ:ϙ:ϙ>X.
3. Movements with touch may be simple or complex. The following sequences describe various kinds of touch-incorporation in ASL movements. U/

Symbols	Description	Example Signs	SignFont Spellings
X		MY STAND WITH	ΠϙϙX VσΠϙX ΛϙϙX=
X#	Repeated Touch	SICK POLICE FATHER	Λ/ϙ^ϙX=# CϙϙX# Xϙ^ϙX#
X	Path to Touch	SPECIFIC THINK-OF	σσϙX σ^ϙX
X	Touch, then Path	CENT BEFORE	σ^ϙϙ ΠϙτϙXϙ
X X	Two-touch	HOME DEAF WE	0τϙXϙX σJXϙX σϙX>X
XXX	Path while touching	BLACK PLEASE	ϙ^ϙX< ΠϙϙXϙ
X	Grazing touch	HAPPY PAPER COUNT	ΠϙϙX^# ΠϙϙX># VσϙΠϙXϙ

IV. Non-Manual Markers

The following table describes the 1987 SignFont inventory of non-manual markers. For the most part, scope is not indicated, and the symbols are written before the sign in which their corresponding behavior begins.

Symbol	Use
⌚	Begins a question. The question ends with a "." This marker is used for both YES/NO and WH questions.
⌚ _L	WH question (lowered chin). [New digraph]
⌚ _τ	YES/NO question (raised chin). [New digraph]
⌚	Negation, usually shaking the head.

	Exclamation or assertion, usually nodding the head.
	The topic marker, raised eyebrows without raised chin.
	Adverbial "just" or "close by". One side of the mouth is pulled back, and often the head leans in that direction as well.
	The tongue protrudes slightly in this adverb "carelessly" or "out of control".
	This is a pout, meaning everything is going normally.
	This is an emphatic "very" marker, used to stress the size, shape, or quality of something. It does not correspond to one particular expression.
	Turn toward the dominant side.
	Tilt the head toward the dominant side.
	Turn toward the non-dominant side.
	Tilt the head toward the non-dominant side.
	Look up.
	Look down.
	Tilt back.

[Click here to view a *small* summary of ASL inflectional morphology.](#)

[Click here to go back to the SignFont Home Page.](#)