Bornstein, H., Saulnier, K, & Hamilton, L. (1983).
The comprehensive signed English dictionary.
Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet University Press.

Preface

This dictionary is our attempt to provide a comprehensive volume for users of Signed English. It contains more than 3,100 sign words and 14 grammatical markers which, together with the manual alphabet, should meet most of the language needs of students from preschool through their adolescent years and beyond.

Two smaller and more specialized reference works, *The Signed English Starter* and *The Signed English Schoolbook*, provide additional vocabulary. These books are organized topically and focus on the vocabulary needs of teachers and parents.

Although the majority of the signs in this book are taken from American Sign Language, we have again included signs from a variety of sources, e.g., the Gallaudet community, the various SEE systems, the National Technical Institute for the Deaf, and other postsecondary programs. In our judgment, borrowing has become so commonplace that it no longer makes much sense to attempt to trace the true origin of a sign.

We have reviewed every sign in our previous works and improved either the drawing and/or the word description wherever it seemed useful. Of the added signs, three kinds are noteworthy: (1) We have added more lively, contemporary vocabulary such as *jog, mainstream, microwave, olympic, Disneyland;* (2) we present a number of single signs for some common double verbs and simple phrases such as *stick out, give up, get along, in charge of, line up;* and (3) we have provided some frequently found sign synonyms. These synonyms will be designated as "alternate" signs within the text. We have also dropped some signs that have been little used by teachers and deaf adults and some others which now seem awkward to us.

Other changes should be mentioned. There are suggestions on how to invent name signs. The section on numbers has been expanded. Our treatment of modals has been simplified somewhat. We offer some important new suggestions on how to use Signed English with older children and students. Finally, we make some observations on manual systems in Appendix A which we believe will be of value to parents and teachers.

This work, of course, builds upon the efforts of all those who contributed to the previous volume, *The Signed English Dictionary: For Preschool and Elementary Levels.* The most prominent of these early contributors include Howard L. Roy, Willard Madsen, and Gilbert Eastman. The work of the following artists is incorporated throughout this volume: Linda C. Tom, Nancy L. Lundborg, Ann Silver, and Jack Fennell.

While all the members of the Signed English Project contributed to every phase of the work, it is possible to describe the principal contributions of each to this volume:

Karen Luczak Saulnier compiled the English vocabulary and aided in the selection of the specific signs.

Lillian B. Hamilton wrote the description of the signs and organized the sign presentation and index.

Elizabeth Wheeler served as consultant on vocabulary and sign presentation and prepared the name sign section.

Harry Bornstein wrote the introduction and Appendix A and is the principal system designer.

Ralph R. Miller, Sr. designed pages 29–423 and redrew a large proportion of the signs. Lisa Ann Feldman designed the cover and the remaining pages.

Rosemary Weller, Shirley Stein, and James M. Pickett developed "A Model for the Visual Representation of Speech."

Harry Bornstein

Introduction:
About Signed English

This introduction focuses on the initial learning of Signed English, so it uses the young deaf child as its referent. However, the content is meant to apply to any person of any age level who might benefit from the Signed English materials.

Signed English is a reasonable manual parallel to English. It is an educational tool meant to be used while you speak and thereby help you communicate with deaf children and normal hearing individuals who, for a variety of reasons, are experiencing difficulty in development of spoken language.

Learn to use Signed English with your child *as early as possible in his or her life*. By doing so, you will help the child develop better English. Improved English will not in and of itself result in improved speech, but it should offer a better foundation for a speech training program and/or a reading program.

Here is the basic reason for developing a manual parallel to speech: Deaf children must depend on what they *see* to understand what others say to them. They must somehow get more information than do hearing children from what can be seen in other people's behavior. What does each of us see when we speak with one another? We see movement of lips, changes in facial expression and eye movement, different body postures, and natural gestures.

American Sign Language

Can most deaf children get enough information from these signals to learn English well? The answer to this question is a clear and very well documented no. Most deaf children do not learn English well. Recent surveys of the educational achievement of older deaf children indicate that, on the average, they equal the reading performance of hearing fourth or fifth graders. Not all deaf students do that well. This has caused some teachers and parents to consider using one or another manual system with very young children. One possibility is the American Sign Language (ASL). There are four major problems with this possibility.

- Only about 3 percent of the children in programs for the hearing impaired have two deaf parents, not all of whom use ASL. From 2 to 5 percent of the children have one hearing-impaired parent.* Research has shown that those homes with one hearing-impaired parent are least likely to use signs (Trybus and Jensema, 1978). Therefore, American Sign Language is *not* the language of the home nor of the neighborhood for 97 percent or more of deaf children in programs for the hearing impaired.

*The percentage of children in homes with one hearing-impaired parent varied from 2 to 5 percent depending upon the phraseology used in the question. When the word *deaf* was used, 2 percent responded yes; when *hearing impaired* was used, 5 percent responded yes. The latter figure probably includes hard-of-hearing as well as deaf individuals (Karchmer, M., personal communication, 1981).

- It is not possible to speak English and sign ASL simultaneously. Consequently, speech development and aided listening skills are necessarily limited when ASL is used.
- American Sign Language has no orthographic or print counterpart. Therefore, ASL is not encountered in a child's usual visual environment; for example, it is not found on display signs in stores, in advertising, on television, on road signs, or in books.
- For a variety of cultural reasons, North Americans do not readily take to the learning of second languages. Thus, it is unlikely that English-speaking parents would want their children, hearing-impaired or not, to learn a different language, especially when that learning might be dependent on the parents' own prior learning of ASL.

Because of these problems, some other people consider using a manual system parallel to speech. Signed English is by far the simplest of several manual systems in current use, and it is still far from simple to learn and to use. A brief discussion of various manual systems is given in Appendix A. More technical discussions can be found in journals which deal with sign language and the education of the deaf. As far as you are concerned, however, none of this other material is needed for you to use Signed English well. All you need is included in this section of the book.

Basic Vocabulary List

Signed English uses two kinds of gestures or signs: sign words and sign markers. Each sign word in this book stands for a separate entry in a standard English dictionary. The basic vocabulary list of more than 3,100 words was assembled from published lists of children's spoken language and from parent and teacher "language logs" of vocabulary used in the homes and classrooms of deaf children. Some of the vocabulary entries are specifically applicable to children, e.g., *fairy tale, Popeye, Walt Disney.* However, the majority of the sign words—e.g., *home, think, eat*—are considered basic to all communication situations.

The number and variety of signs in this book should meet a considerable portion of the linguistic needs of students and adults of diverse language abilities. We have also prepared a large number of teaching aids, some of which contain a few words not included in this dictionary. You do not need to worry about this because every teaching aid contains all the information you need to use it effectively.

The sign words are signed in the same order as words appear in an English sentence. Sign words are presented in this book in singular, nonpast form. Sign markers are added to these basic signs when you want to show, for example, that you are talking about more than one thing or that something has happened in the past. We recommend that you use 14 sign markers. All but one of these markers are signed after the sign word.

In Signed English you use either a sign word alone or a sign word and one sign marker to represent a given English word. When this does not represent the word you have in mind, use the manual alphabet and spell the word (see beginning of next section).

Please note that all drawings and descriptions in this book are for right-handed people. Left-handed people should simply reverse all references to right and left.

Although we have designed the *Signed English* series to be as simple as possible, we would like to note again that it is not easy to learn or to use. If you find there are parts of our system you are not able to use, then feel free to do without those parts or elements. Basically, we want Signed English to be a tool for your use. Some of you will learn to use it very well, some reasonably well, and some only in a very limited way. We think that your child can profit even from limited use. Of course, the more proficient you are, the more likely it is that your child will develop better language.

The Nature of Signed English

Before we describe Signed English in more detail let us introduce the manual alphabet which is shown on pages 14 and 15. As you can see, there is a manual representation of every letter in the English alphabet. There are two reasons why you should learn the alphabet. First, you can use the manual alphabet to spell any English word for which we do not have a sign; if you continue using Signed English with an older child, you will surely have a greater need to use the manual alphabet. Second, a great many sign words include a manual letter as a basic part of the sign. Many of the sign markers are simply manual letters. If you know the manual alphabet, it will be easier for you to form and to read the signs. Manual letters are also used in our word descriptions of the signs pictured in this book.

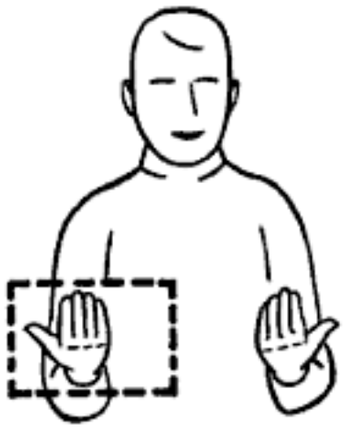
Because you can reproduce any English word by spelling it, you may wonder why signs are necessary. These are the reasons: Spelling is slow. For a very young child, it is relatively difficult to form and to read letters. It is a strain on both children and adults to attend to such fine signals for very long. Second, and perhaps most important, asking a child to read the manual alphabet is skipping a step in the usual order of things. Hearing children know English before they learn to read. If you fingerspell to an 18-month-old deaf child, you force that child to recognize letters and learn language at the same time. We do not know how many children can do this.

Most of the signs in Signed English are taken from American Sign Language. But these signs are now used in the same order as English words and with the same meaning. We use ASL signs where possible because it should make it somewhat easier for the child to communicate with people who use that language. American Sign Language is different from English, so do not be surprised if you have difficulty communicating with those deaf adults who depend exclusively on ASL.

Sign Markers

At this point we want to describe in more detail the second kind of sign used in Signed English, the sign marker. It is used to represent certain very basic and common English word form changes, usually inflections and endings, which change the meaning of the word.

When we say that you use a sign word and a sign marker to change a word such as *look* to *looked*, exactly what do we mean? First, of course, you must form the sign word for *look* as shown in the body of this text. Second, as



smoothly and as quickly as possible, you form the regular past sign marker described below and pictured on page 13. Additional time and effort are required to form this second gesture. How can you minimize the extra time and effort? Consider the diagram illustrated to the left. It shows the approximate position assumed by the hands when a signer pauses. It is reasonable to suppose, therefore, that the typical signer can execute his or her next sign with least effort from this position. Consequently, all of the frequently used sign markers are formed by the right hand in the area bounded by the rectangle. These sign markers are all newly developed. Those sign markers which are formed outside this area are used much less frequently in speech and, interestingly enough, are those which have been adopted from American Sign Language. These are the comparative, the superlative, the agent, and the opposite prefix. We will now discuss each of the 14 sign markers more specifically.

Nouns and Verbs

The most important words in an English sentence are usually the nouns and the verbs. A noun can stand for one (singular) or more (plural) things. Most often a noun is made plural by adding an *s*—*bear* becomes *bears, house* becomes *houses*. As can be seen in the sign marker chart on page 13, Signed English uses a manual alphabet S for this purpose. We call this the regular plural marker. When you want to show this kind of plural, you first form the sign word and then form the sign marker S. Now there are many other ways that nouns can be changed into plurals; for example, *child* becomes *children, foot* becomes *feet, mouse* becomes *mice,* etc. The sign marker for all of these ways of showing plural is simply repetition of the sign itself. We call this the irregular plural marker.

Verbs are words that express an action, the existence of something, or the occurrence of an event. We distinguish between things that happen in the past and those which do not happen in the past. The manual alphabet D stands for the most frequent past ending, *ed*. It is formed after the sign word. There are many other ways that a verb is changed into a past form; for example, *see* becomes *saw, hear* becomes *heard, blow* becomes *blew.* There is a special verb marker which represents all of these irregular past forms. It is an open B handshape, with palm left and tips out, swept from the center of the body to the right side.

There is a third class of actions which take place in the past, prior to some specified or implied time. In English, the past participle conveys this meaning. Examples include *gone, broken, eaten*. The participle sign marker is represented by the manual letter N.

Aside from the past and nonpast distinction, verbs have two other very common endings: *ing* and *s*. Thus *work* becomes *working* or *works, play* becomes *playing* or *plays*. A native speaker of English knows when these forms are used, without needing to think about it. When using Signed English, the signer adds a manual alphabet I, which he or she swings to the right for *ing,* and the manual alphabet S for *s*. All one need learn is to associate the hand signal with one's normal use of these endings.

There are three other important ways that English word changes are represented by sign markers. A noun has a possessive form *'s* which can be seen

in *boy's house, girl's toy,* etc. This ending is represented by the possessive marker which is a manual alphabet S, twisted inward. Some nouns and verbs acquire a *y* ending when used as adjectives: *cloud* becomes *cloudy, sleep* becomes *sleepy,* etc. The manual alphabet Y is the sign marker for this ending. Finally, words can become adverbs by the addition of *ly* as in *quickly* and *happily,* etc. The sign marker for this ending is a simultaneous combination of the manual alphabet letters L and Y moving down.

So far we have described ten markers. They are the basic aspects of English structure which are represented in Signed English. If you are a hearing person, you already know this structure and use it without thinking about it.

Four Additional Markers

There are four other markers on the sign marker chart which parallel frequent word form changes in English. These are the comparative *er* and the superlative *est,* as in *taller* and *tallest,* and the agent (person or thing) as in *worker, sailor, librarian, mixer,* and *mower.* The fourth marker, the "opposite-of" marker, is a prefix and is the only marker formed before or ahead of the sign word. It represents the prefixes *in, un, im* as used in words such as *incapable, unhappy, impatient.* The opposite-of marker is formed by placing a right, A-shape hand, with palm left and thumb extended, under the chin and then moving it out. These last markers are taken directly from ASL and are commonly found in everyday language.

It should be obvious that these 14 sign markers will not permit you to parallel all of the changes in English word form. Why stop with so few markers? There are two important reasons: First, language used with and by small children often does not use most of the other changes in word form. Second, since each sign marker must be used in combination with a sign word, a large number of markers become a heavy learning burden and could make Signed English very cumbersome. To avoid this, users of Signed English are urged, with one exception, not to add more than one marker to a sign word at any one time.

There are a few more things to say about these markers which may make them easier for you to learn. It is usually easier to recognize something than it is to recall it from memory. So we will continue to show all 14 markers in our teaching aids. You may be able to recognize them even if you can't remember them when you try to communicate. For those who have difficulty learning to use all 14 markers, we suggest a reduced set of seven: the irregular past marker for *both* regular and irregular past tense verbs; the irregular plural for *both* regular and irregular plural nouns; the *-ing* verb form; the third person singular *s;* the adverbial *ly;* the adjectival *y;* and the possessive 's.

In those situations, where seven markers still appear to be too many, we would suggest that four markers be used: the possessive 's, the irregular past for both regular and irregular past tense verbs, the irregular plural for both regular and irregular plural nouns, and the *ing* verb form. We think that reduced systems are useful with adults who appear not likely to be facile with a gesture language. But the most important use for reduced systems is clearly with children who have profound language learning problems, such as the profoundly retarded, some autistic children, and some children with cerebral palsy. Most often, no markers are used with such children.

How to Use Signed English

As surprising as it may seem, we are still learning about how Signed English is best used with deaf students. Consequently, we have several suggestions to assist you in dealing with a child who should be fully capable of learning English. Signed English serves best as a model of the English language for young children. The sentence patterns you use with such children, while complete, are still relatively simple, and your speech rate is slower than you would use with adults. As the child gets into the upper elementary grades and beyond, you will use a larger vocabulary, somewhat more complex sentences, and may speak somewhat more rapidly.

Because signs take longer to form than words to speak, you may find it a burden to continue to use the full marker system under these circumstances. Fortunately, the meaning of some markers can be inferred from the rest of a sentence even when they are missing. We suggest that you consider deleting these sign markers *after* you have determined *without the slightest doubt* that the child knows them. A child can demonstrate this knowledge on the hands, on the lips, by speech, or in writing and reading. The markers that are the most likely candidates first to be deleted are the plurals and the third-person singular. The adjectival, the adverbial, and the participial are also readily inferred. You can also further simplify your signing burden somewhat by using some of the signs which represent common and useful double verbs. However, you must be careful to see to it that, at some early stage in the child's education, he or she is specifically taught that these signs represent two or more words rather than single words.

As the child grows older and displays a greater and surer command of English, you will become more concerned with simply communicating with him or her and less concerned with being a language model. Under these circumstances, you can delete some sign words as well as sign markers. The sign words that are usually deleted are articles and some of the prepositions, because they frequently do not convey important meaning. As noted earlier, we have also used single signs for some double verbs. When you delete words like these, you must make three judgments. First, the deleted word is not an important part of the message. Second, the redundancy inherent in English, which so often aids understanding, is firmly within the competence of the child so that he/she understands the message in spite of the deletion. And, third, the child no longer needs exposure to a complete manual mode.

Still another technique is available with adolescents. You can substitute ASL constructions rather than use a sign for each word in a phrase. Again, it is important that the child or adolescent know the meaning of the full phrase so that his or her speech, reading, and writing will not suffer.

These suggestions are easier to make than to implement. We urge you to be very careful in your judgments of competence, because, while comfort in signing is most desirable, it is not the basic reason for using a manual English system. Finally, please note that the reasons for deleting and substituting are quite different from that given earlier for using reduced marker systems. You delete and/or substitute *after* mastery for the sake of comfort. You use a reduced marker system, from seven to zero markers, when you have good reason to believe that (a) mastery is not likely to be achieved by the child, as is the case with some profoundly retarded and autistic children; and/or (b) the adult learner will not be facile with a complete set of markers, as is the case with some poorly educated parents.

Some Exceptions

While exceptions almost always complicate a system, there are a number of signs which are so well-established or so colorful that we thought it appropriate to make some exceptions to the following basic rules.

One sign for each English word: There are a number of phrases, proper nouns, and compounds, of two or more words, in this dictionary which are represented by a single sign word. These exceptions are, for the most part, idiographic, unambiguous ASL signs. Some examples are: *after a while, of course, Santa Claus, United States, Band-Aid, french fries, hot dog, ice cream, ice skate, jack-in-the-box, jack-o'-lantern, merry-go-round. Ping-Pong, rolling pin, tightrope walker, walkie-talkie,* and *yo-yo.*

One sign word for a separate English dictionary entry: There are two or more signs for a number of single English dictionary entries such as *back, blind, brush, fall, glass, right, watch.* The various signs represent different meanings of the same English word. For example, the noun *fall* and the verb *fall* are etymologically related; however, the common and well-established signs for these words are too ideographic to be used interchangeably. Thus the two words will be represented by two different sign entries.

Do not confuse the above exceptions to the "one sign for one English word" rule with the sign synonyms (alternates) also found in the Signed English dictionary. Sign synonyms or alternates are not locked into any specific meaning of a word. They simply offer the signer a choice of signs to use for an English word, regardless of the meaning that word imparts.

One sign word plus only one sign marker: Because use of the agent marker does not preclude a noun form further assuming a plural or possessive form, we permit the use of two sign markers in this one instance; for example, *work* + agent + plural, or *speak* + agent + possessive.

How to Learn Signed English

We recommend that you learn Signed English by using the teaching aids, especially the story books and posters that have been developed for the system. Each of these teaching aids is completely self-contained. Everything you need is in the teaching aid itself. The sign markers are used as they should be, without any reference to grammar or to the explanations given in this introduction. You do not need to learn grammar to use Signed English. With practice you will begin to use the markers in the right way without thinking about grammar. Also, you should use the teaching aids to learn the vocabulary of Signed English. Virtually all of the vocabulary in this book will be in those teaching aids. Learn by reading the stories to your child. This can be not only a delightful experience for both of you but also a more pleasant way to learn this artificial language than by trying to memorize lists of loosely connected words.

On page v you will find the titles of the teaching aids so far produced in the *Signed English* series. These have been organized into three different language levels. Level I material exposes the child to basic vocabulary, phrases, and simple sentences that relate to the child's daily experiences and activities. Level II material concentrates on the description of high interest-level topics and activities. Level III material covers those classic fairy tales which contain more complicated plots and more sophisticated vocabulary. It also deals with linguistic and conceptual material of a more

advanced nature. In addition to varied language level, the subject matter of each of these aids has been developed to serve needs beyond those related to language development.

The stories in the *Signed English* series deal with some aspects of our heritage that should be familiar to all children. While these stories were designed to be read to children, they are also useful as scripts for skits and plays.

The poetry and song books in the series offer both parent and child an opportunity to practice signing parallel to spoken English rhythm. This language rhythm is important to English and often precedes specific vocabulary acquisition.

The *Signed English* beginning books are small and sturdy enough to be given to the smallest child. With beginning books, the child can look at, point to, and describe important parts of his or her environment. Other beginning books contain slightly more advanced language and describe behavior and things more important to toddlers.

The growing up books in the series are efficient tools for acquainting the child with the larger world. Apart from *Tommy's Day*—which should be the first book used by parents, because it provides the family with the language needed for a typical day—most of the growing up books depict experiences important to the child. It is usually helpful to the child if he or she can be exposed to these experiences through the medium of these books before the actual experiences take place. The child need not fully understand the contents of a book to profit from that exposure. A book such as *We're Going to the Doctor* not only describes the many things that happen during a check-up, but it also presents the vocabulary to talk about such a visit so that the child will have no fear of the instruments and procedures. This should make the child feel more comfortable and secure on a first visit to the doctor's office. In short, the carefully developed descriptions in the growing up books are designed to increase a child's understanding of and ability to cope with his or her environment. These, in turn, should aid personal adjustment and enhance language behavior.

The *Signed English* posters are designed to be used as decorations for home and classroom. The manual alphabet poster is particularly flexible in this regard. The letters are often cut out and rearranged in a variety of decorative patterns pleasing to the child and parent.

In addition to this dictionary, several references and companion volumes are available in the *Signed English* series.

The Sign Drawings

We would like to comment on the drawings of the sign words and markers in the dictionary and other teaching aids. There are two principal problems in drawing signs. First, there is the problem of sequence. We use arrows to show the movement of the hands and/or the fingers. When a sign requires two different hand positions, the starting position is shown by means of dashed lines. The final position is drawn with solid lines.

The second problem, showing movement through three dimensions, is difficult to solve by means of drawing alone. We have found that a verbal description is often helpful in the interpretation of some signs. This leads to what is perhaps the primary purpose of this book. It is a reference book. We suggest that you refer to the pictures and word descriptions in this book when the drawings in the teaching aids are not clear or if you just wish to browse while looking up a word. Otherwise depend on the teaching aids to learn the signs.

If you know the manual alphabet, it will help you to recognize and form the sign words. It will also help you to understand the word descriptions of a sign. In addition, the numbers one to ten and several other handshapes are also part of many signs. If you are familiar with all of these handshapes, it will help you to read the word descriptions. They are shown in the Key to Word Descriptions.

Unlike this dictionary, where signs are shown in isolation, the teaching aids depict the signs of English in complete English syntax. This means that both sign words and sign markers are presented together on the page. In these drawings, the marker is shown on the signer's right (your left) because that is where a right-handed signer would usually make it. It is drawn this way because the sign and the sign marker represent a single English word. English print, on the other hand, goes from left to right. This "mirror image" or reversal may confuse you at first, but with some practice it should cause little trouble. For some words, you may find it helpful to turn the book upside-down and align your hands with those of the singer. Those teaching aids which were prepared later in the program and all of those that have been reprinted include the numbers (1) and (2) to indicate the order in which the signs should be executed.

Sign and Rule Changes

During the last four years, we have felt obliged to change some signs and to make some exceptions to our rules. This section will detail the changes and the reasons for those changes.

There are about a dozen very important English words for which we were able to devise only rather clumsy signs in the past. They are *could, would, should,* their contractions, and the contraction forms of the verb *do.* After repeated efforts we have succeeded in developing what we believe are simple and easy-to-make signs for these words. For the above contractions, we simply add the appropriate markers to one or another contracted forms. The contraction subsystem is outlined and illustrated on pages 22–24. *Could, would,* and *should* are now shown in the text as repeated movements of *can, will,* and *must.*

Some sign words have been changed either because they are aesthetically objectionable to some deaf adults, were too easily confused with other existing signs, and/or were not as clear as alternative signs. These changes will be incorporated into the teaching aids as each is reprinted. We recognize that changing signs is a nuisance and an inconvenience, but we felt that continuing to use clumsy and unattractive signs would prove harmful in the long run. While we anticipate fewer changes in the future, we would like to note that a language-like tool such as Signed English will change through usage in ways that we cannot predict. It is both pointless and useless to resist such change.

Sign Variations

While on the topic of changing signs, there are certain other features of signing that are worth noting. Experienced signers do not always form a sign in the same way. For example, the first ten numbers and many of the signs for the days of the week are formed either with palm in or palm out. Often the movement is dependent upon the sign made just prior to that for the number or day. Normally, a signer will make the smallest possible number of wrist twists because this is easier and less awkward.

Direction of the movement of a sign varies in importance. For example, when you use the sign for *pull, turn,* or *push,* the direction in which you pull, turn, or push may or may not be important. As you become more adept in using Signed English, you will attend more and more to those features of a sign which add to meaning or to fluid movement. To simplify your task of learning these signs, however, we have tried to show each sign being formed in exactly the same way each time it appears in our teaching aids. Occasionally, our artists, all of whom are deaf, unconsciously draw a sign in a manner which reflects the aesthetics of the sign rather than our patterns. We sometimes fail to catch these deviations.

There is considerable age, regional, and socioeconomic variation in signs used throughout the United States. Consequently, you and your children will sometimes encounter different signs for some of the words in this dictionary. We suggest that you use them just as you might use two English words that have the same meaning, e.g. *small* and *little*. Debates about which sign is the "right" sign usually stem from differences in taste and past experience but, as in any language, correctness rests upon usage.

As for changes in sign markers, we began our work using 14 sign markers, reduced the number to 12, and returned to 14. Thirteen of the original 14 remain the same. The new 14th marker, the participle, is an important, although relatively infrequent, verb form change. The *ful* marker was dropped because of low frequency of use.

Final Words

We hope that we have given you enough information to learn and to use Signed English. It is not an easy way to communicate if you have used speech all your life. But we think it will be an effective way for your deaf child to develop English and progress into reading for further language growth and pleasure. We also think that a child's speech and speechreading ability will be enhanced by a better knowledge of the English language. If for any reason a manual signal system such as Signed English proves ineffective or irksome, you can always stop using it. But remember, the critical years of a child's life spent with little or no language can never be recovered.

Good Luck!

Sign Markers

Signed English uses two kinds of gestures or signs: sign words and sign markers. Each sign word stands for one English word from a basic vocabulary of more than 3,100 words used by and with children and adolescents. These are words such as *mother, balloon, tickle, pony,* etc. These sign words should be signed in the same order as words are used in an English sentence.

The sign markers should be used when you wish to change the meaning of some words in a sentence. This includes such things as changes in verb, number, possession, degree, etc. We recommend that you use the 14 sign markers pictured here.

All but one of these markers are signed after the sign word. The marker which stands for "opposite of" is the only marker that is signed before the sign word.

In Signed English you use either a sign word alone or a sign word and *one* sign marker to represent a given English word. When this does not adequately represent the word you have in mind, use the manual alphabet and spell the entire word.

If you use these markers properly, you will provide a better and more complete model of English.

regular past verbs: -ed
talk*ed*, want*ed*, learn*ed*

regular plural nouns: s
bear*s*, house*s*

3rd person singular: -s
walk*s*, eat*s*, sing*s*

irregular past verbs:
(sweep RH open B, tips out, to the right) s*aw*, h*eard*, bl*ew*

mice

irregular plural nouns:
(sign the word twice)
children, sheep, mice

possessive: -'s
cat's, daddy's, chair's

verb form: -ing
climb*ing*, play*ing*, run*ning*

adjective: -y
sleep*y*, sunn*y*, cloud*y*

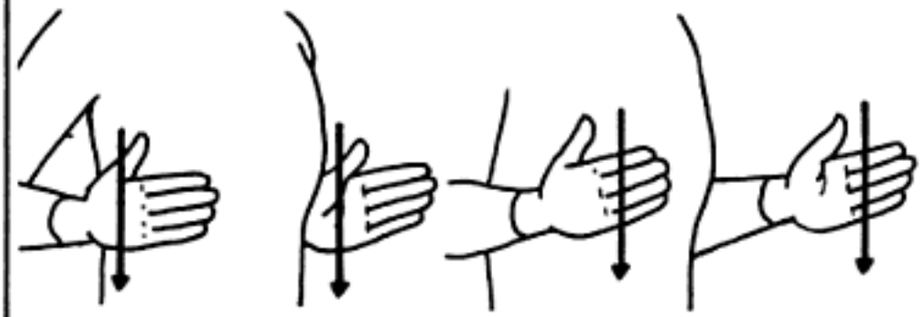
adverb: -ly
beautiful*ly*, happi*ly*, nice*ly*

participle:
f*allen*, g*one*, gr*own*

comparative: -er
small*er*, fast*er*, long*er*

superlative: -est
small*est*, fast*est*, long*est*

opposite of: un-, im-, in-, etc.
(made before the sign word, as a prefix)
*un*happy, *im*patient, *in*considerate



agent (person):
(sign made near the body)
teach*er*, act*or*, art*ist*

agent (thing):
(sign made away from the body) wash*er*, dry*er*, plant*er*

Numerical

Numerical:
Sign addresses, telephone numbers, and years as they are spoken.

Use abbreviated form when fingerspelling Street (St.), Road (Rd.), Avenue (Ave.), and Boulevard (Blvd.).

2 4 6 L O C U S T S T

19 79 RD AVE BLVD

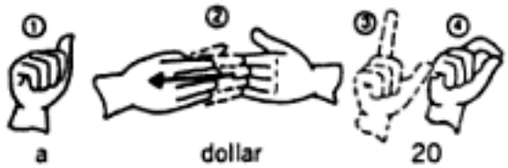
5-4-9-1-2-3-9

Money

one-thirty-five

Money:
Sign money as it is spoken.

This approach to signing money is somewhat different from that used in ASL because Signed English parallels speech.



a dollar 20

a dollar twenty

fifty cents

Contractions

The Basic Rule

haven't

I'm

A simple and widely-used technique is followed in forming most contractions. As shown above, you first execute the sign word, then the right hand forms the appropriate manual letter and quickly twists it *inward*. The table below gives all the contraction parallels.

English Spelling:	'd	'll	'm	n't	're	've	's
Manual Letter:	D	L	M	N	R	V	S

The Modals *Would, Could,* and *Should*

would

could

should

Signing the negative contractions of these words follows the basic rule. A right N is twisted inward after forming the base sign to produce *wouldn't, couldn't,* and *shouldn't.*

wouldn't

couldn't

shouldn't

Exceptions to the Rule

can't won't don't

There are three well-established exceptions to the rule for forming contractions: the words *can't, won't,* and *don't.* These are unique signs taken from the American Sign Language. They are *not* combinations of a base sign and marker.

The Verb *Do*

do does did

If the contraction rule were followed for these verbs, then *doesn't* would be represented by do + third person singular marker + n't. This violates the "one sign plus one marker" rule (and also demonstrates how clumsy unlimited combinations of sign markers can be).

Contractions (continued)

don't

doesn't

didn't

Initialize the ASL sign for *don't* to form the contractions *doesn't* and *didn't*.

Compounds

somewhere

everything

haystack

English contains a large number of compound words—words composed of two or more words—such as *somewhere, everything,* and *haystack.* About 150 compounds in this dictionary combine two sign words exactly like the combined English words. To save space, they are not shown as separate entries in the text but are listed in the index.

today

breakfast

gentleman

A number of English words, usually compounds, are represented by American Sign Language compounds that differ in order and kind from those found in the comparable English words. Three examples are given above: now + day represents *today;* eat + morning represents *breakfast;* man + fine represents *gentleman.* These signs and others of this group appear as separate entries in the text.

Compounds (continued)

sometimes

downstairs

toothbrush

Approximately 100 other English compounds in this dictionary are represented either by simple traditional or simple new signs, that is, signs which cannot be broken down into two other sign words. This type of sign usually suggests the meaning of the compound English word more directly, more graphically, and/or more traditionally than a combination of English sign words.