

What is fingerspelling?

Fingerspelling is a way of spelling words using hand movements and is a part of learning sign language. Each letter of the alphabet has a different sign. British Sign Language (BSL) uses a two-handed version, whereas others, such as American Sign Language (ASL) use only one.



Why should we learn it?

It would be wonderful if all children were taught to fingerspell. Firstly, it can be picked up very quickly and is great fun! Everyone loves the idea of secret codes and this is like learning a code. The vowels, for example, are indicated by pointing to each finger in turn, starting with the thumb – a, e, i, o, u.

Secondly, it is a new and different way to learn the alphabet and practise spelling. Children will have better understanding of the fact that words are made up of vowels and consonants.

Last, but not least, children will be able to communicate in a small way with a deaf or hearing impaired person and would better appreciate the communication difficulties they face.

Fingerspelling is only a part of learning sign language, but getting children to try it might encourage them to want to know more.

Questions:

1. What is fingerspelling?

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2. What does the acronym BSL stand for?

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3. Name the 5 vowels in the English language.

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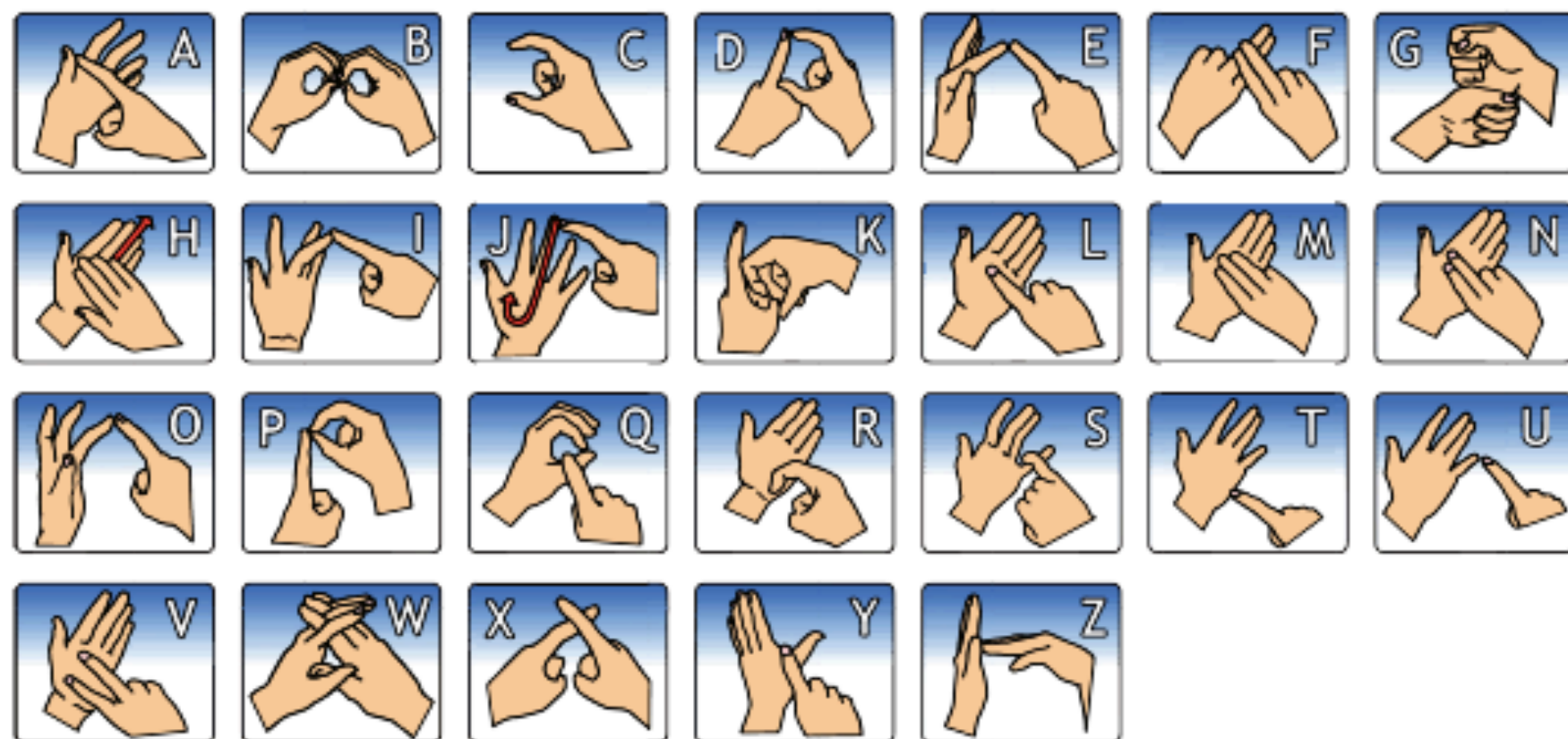
4. What are the final 5 consonants in the alphabet?

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5. Look carefully at the fingerspelling alphabet opposite. First, practise signing your name then try other words and perhaps a whole sentence.



BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE - FINGERSPELLING



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