

In BSL, it is important to give a signer your full attention. While attentiveness is important in any language, the visual nature of BSL makes direct visual focus particularly vital. New signers might concentrate on handshapes and movements; however, native signers typically focus on the mouth area and perceive hand movements in their peripheral vision. Directing your eye gaze towards a signer demonstrates respect and good etiquette in BSL.

## Greetings

The sign for HELLO is a simple wave. Some signers may give a thumbs up as an informal greeting instead meaning ALRIGHT.



The sign for GOOD is a thumbs up, which then can be followed by MORNING, AFTERNOON or EVENING as a greeting.





For formal or professional settings, you may wish to sign WELCOME. With flat hands, flick your fingers upwards twice.



A polite introduction to a conversation includes asking someone how they are. Remember to look inquisitive when asking questions.





*Nice to meet you* is signed NICE MEET YOU; the word *to* is not required.



Some English sentences can be translated in BSL using only one sign. To sign I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU IN AGES, form an O with your index finger and thumb on both hands then place them above your dominant side's shoulder. Bring both hands forwards while puffing out your lips. Some signs in BSL use the lip pattern of the English word, however many signs have specific lip patterns like this one. Facial expressions help to enhance the meaning of the sign. If you puff your lips out a lot and open your eyes really wide, this would mean it's been a *very long time* since you saw the person.

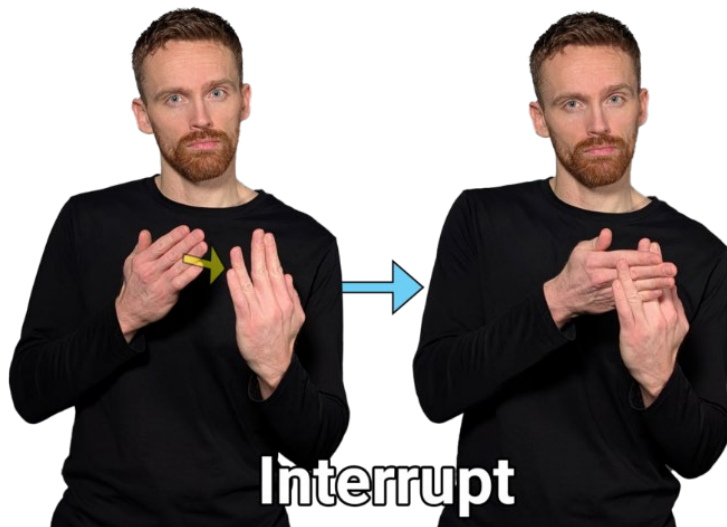


## Manners

The signs for PLEASE and THANK YOU in BSL have the same sign. Mouth the word as you sign it and the lip pattern can help to distinguish the signs. This sign is a general expression of gratitude; similarly in Swedish the word *tack* can be interpreted as please or thank you. Where a sign has multiple meanings, this can be confusing for learners but remember BSL is a different language than English so not everything is translated word-for-sign.



When signing SORRY you should look apologetic. *Sorry to interrupt* is signed SORRY then INTERRUPT (*to* is not needed).



## Farewells



*See you later* is signed SEE YOU (one sign), two fingers near your eyes and then point both forwards. Your two fingers represent your eyes, so try to keep your fingers level at the end of the movement. LATER is signed with your index finger extended and two small movements to the side, demonstrated below. You could also sign HOPE SEE YOU AGAIN with the signs HOPE and AGAIN demonstrated right and below.





**Exercise:** Sign a greeting, introduce yourself, ask someone for their name and then sign a farewell. If you have a partner or small group, try to mimic a conversation responding at the appropriate points.

### Key points to remember

1. Maintain focus on the signer when communicating in BSL, but you may find it useful to focus on their mouth area and view signs in your periphery.
2. Choose a formal or informal greeting depending on the situation.
3. BSL isn't a direct translation of English and some words may have the same hand movements, for example PLEASE and THANK YOU are signed using the same sign but have a different lip pattern. The sign represents an expression of gratitude.