



## Long Term Planning

### Domains of Knowledge within British Sign Language (BSL)

British Sign Language, like spoken languages, has various domains of knowledge that learners must master to become proficient communicators. These include:

1. Lexicon (Vocabulary):
  - BSL has its own set of signs, equivalent to words in spoken languages. These signs represent concepts, objects, actions, and ideas. Students must build a vocabulary of signs, starting with basic concepts and gradually progressing to more complex terms.
2. Grammar and Syntax:
  - BSL has a unique grammatical structure, which differs from English. Instead of relying on word order, BSL often uses facial expressions, body language, and spatial positioning to convey meaning. For instance, BSL typically uses a topic-comment structure, placing the subject at the beginning of a sentence, followed by details.
3. Non-Manual Features (NMFs):
  - Non-manual features, such as facial expressions, head tilts, and shoulder movements, play an essential role in BSL. They can indicate questions, emotions, or intensity, and modify the meaning of signs, similar to how intonation works in spoken language.
4. Spatial Awareness and Directionality:
  - BSL uses spatial awareness to indicate location, direction, and relationships between objects. Signs are made in relation to the signer's body and space. For example, directionality in BSL allows verbs to be directed towards the subject or object, meaning that the movement of a sign can indicate who is performing or receiving an action.
5. Finger Spelling (Manual Alphabet):
  - The manual alphabet is used in BSL to spell out names or words for which there are no established signs, such as proper nouns or technical terms. This aspect is integral to the language and often used alongside signed vocabulary.
6. Cultural Context:
  - Understanding Deaf culture is an important aspect of learning BSL. Deaf culture encompasses the values, social norms, history, and traditions of the Deaf community. Learners must develop cultural competence to communicate respectfully and effectively within the Deaf community.

## At What Age Should Children Learn to Finger Spell?

Children can be introduced to finger spelling from as early as 4–5 years old (Reception and Year 1). At this age, they are developing fine motor skills and beginning to learn letter recognition through the alphabet in their spoken language. Finger spelling helps reinforce these skills.

However, the mastery of finger spelling typically progresses as follows:

- **KS1 (4–7 years):** Introduction to the manual alphabet, focusing on finger spelling their own names, common letters, and simple words.
- **Lower KS2 (7–9 years):** More complex use of finger spelling, including spelling out longer or unfamiliar words.
- **Upper KS2 (9–11 years):** Fluency in finger spelling for proper nouns, technical terms, or spelling unfamiliar words, integrated with other signed vocabulary.

Introducing finger spelling early helps develop both literacy skills and the ability to bridge gaps when a specific sign is unknown. It also aligns with developmental milestones in fine motor control and language acquisition.

<b>Year Group</b>	<b>Autumn 1 (Deaf Awareness &amp; Inclusion)</b>	<b>Autumn 2</b>	<b>Spring 1</b>	<b>Spring 2</b>	<b>Summer 1</b>	<b>Summer 2 (Numbers &amp; Finger Spelling)</b>
<b>EYFS (Reception)</b>	Introduction to Deafness & simple signs (hello, thank you). Finger spell the first letter of their name.	<b>Feelings:</b> happy, sad, angry, tired	<b>Family:</b> mum, dad, brother, sister	<b>Animals:</b> cat, dog, bird, fish	<b>Weather:</b> sun, rain, cloudy, snow	Numbers 1–5; Finger spelling first name
<b>Year 1</b>	Reinforce Deaf awareness. Finger spell full names.	<b>In the Home:</b> bed, table, chair, kitchen	<b>Food:</b> apple, banana, milk, bread	<b>Animals:</b> lion, tiger, pig, sheep	<b>Phrases:</b> "how are you?", "good morning"	Numbers 1–10
<b>Year 2</b>	Focus on Deaf role models. Review & extend finger spelling (names, simple words).	<b>Family (Extended):</b> aunt, uncle, cousin	<b>Transport:</b> car, bus, bike, train	<b>Places:</b> school, park, shop	<b>Phrases:</b> "excuse me," "where is...?"	Numbers 1–20

<b>Year 3</b>	Understanding how Deaf people communicate. Strengthen finger spelling (common words).	<b>Hobbies:</b> drawing, swimming, dancing	<b>Food</b> (Extended): fruit, vegetables, juice	<b>Jobs:</b> teacher, doctor, fireman	<b>Weather</b> (Extended): windy, stormy	Numbers 1-30
<b>Year 4</b>	Learn about Deaf communication technologies. Finger spelling full sentences.	<b>Family</b> (Extended): extended family, family tree	<b>In the Home</b> (Extended): fridge, bed, window	<b>Transport</b> (Extended): motorcycle, truck	<b>Places</b> (Extended): hospital, zoo	Numbers 1-40
<b>Year 5</b>	Deaf history & evolution of sign languages. Finger spell proper nouns.	<b>Feelings</b> (Extended): excited, nervous, confused	<b>Jobs</b> (Extended): lawyer, engineer, artist	<b>Hobbies</b> (Extended): reading, painting	<b>Phrases</b> (Extended): "can you repeat that?"	Numbers 1-50
<b>Year 6</b>	Advanced Deaf awareness: advocacy, rights. Proficient finger spelling in conversation.	<b>In the Home</b> (Complex): cleaning, cooking	<b>Places</b> (Complex): museum, airport, stadium	<b>Transport</b> (Complex): ferry, shuttle	<b>Phrases</b> (Advanced): "can you show me?", "let's go together"	Numbers 1-100

### Key Notes:

- **Deaf Awareness & Inclusion** will be the focus for all year groups during **Autumn 1**.
- **Finger Spelling** is introduced in **EYFS** and developed progressively, with numbers also increasing in complexity each year.
- **Topic areas** build gradually on students' communication skills and match the National Curriculum expectations for their age and cognitive development.

This structured progression ensures all students develop a comprehensive understanding of BSL, while fostering inclusivity and respect for the Deaf community.