The American Sign Language Handshapes

A

Open A

B

Open B

Bent B

C

D

E

F

Open F

G

H

I

K

L

Bent L

M

N

Open N

O

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2 Question Words

**will, shall, would**

Handshape: Open B  
Orientation: palm left  
Location: near head  
Movement: move hand forward while tipping fingers forward

**what-to-do, what**

Handshape: G > Baby O  
Orientation: palm up  
Location: neutral space  
Movement: bring index finger and thumb together twice  
Nonmanual signal: body leans forward, head tilts right, “puzzled” expression

**who, whom**

Handshape: L > Bent L  
Orientation: palm left  
Location: thumb on chin  
Movement: bend index finger down twice

**query, ask, inquire, question (v.), quiz**

Handshape: X > 1  
Orientation: palm out  
Location: neutral space  
Movement: use index finger to draw a question mark, changing to 1 handshape

**why**

Handshape: L-I  
Orientation: palm in  
Location: near forehead  
Movement: bend middle two fingers down and up several times  
Nonmanual signal: body leans forward; head tilts right; “curious” expression

**where**

Handshape: 1  
Orientation: palm out  
Location: neutral space  
Movement: shake hand side to side  
Nonmanual signal: body leans forward; head tilts right; “questioning” frown
People

**aunt**

Handshape: A  
Orientation: palm out  
Location: right cheek  
Movement: move thumb down cheek in two short movements  
Note: Movement may be circular.

**herself, himself, itself**

Handshape: Open A  
Orientation: palm left  
Location: neutral space  
Movement: double bounce toward referent  
Nonmanual signal: eyes on the person to whom you are speaking

**yourself**

Handshape: Open A  
Orientation: palm left  
Location: neutral space  
Movement: double bounce toward referent  
Nonmanual signal: eyes on referent

**yourselves**

Handshape: Open A  
Orientation: palm left  
Location: neutral space  
Movement: arc thumb from left to right in front of chest  
Nonmanual signal: eyes on people to whom you are speaking

**themselves**

Handshape: Open A  
Orientation: palm left  
Location: neutral space  
Movement: arc thumb right to left toward referents  
Nonmanual signal: eyes on person to whom you are speaking

**girl**

Handshape: Open A  
Orientation: palm left  
Location: thumb on cheek  
Movement: brush thumb forward on cheek twice
daily, common, everyday, ordinary, usual

Handshape: Open A  
Orientation: palm left  
Location: right cheek  
Movement: brush knuckles down cheek twice

yesterday

Handshape: Open A  
Orientation: palm out  
Location: near mouth  
Movement: arc thumb back to touch cheek  
Nonmanual signal: right shoulder lifts up; head tilts right; “cz” mouth movement

tomorrow

Handshape: Open A  
Orientation: palm left  
Location: right cheek  
Movement: twist wrist forward  
Nonmanual signal: right shoulder lifts up; head tilts right; “cz” mouth movement

a few days ago

Handshape: Open A > 3  
Orientation: palm down  
Location: thumb on cheek  
Movement: flip hand back while changing to 3 handshape

never

Handshape: B  
Orientation: palm left  
Location: in front of face  
Movement: move hand down with large wavy motion  
Nonmanual signal: head shakes “no”

late, tardy

Handshape: Open B  
Orientation: palm down  
Location: neutral space  
Movement: swing fingers back
15 Colors

**blue**

Handshape: B  
Orientation: palm left  
Location: neutral space  
Movement: twist wrist back and forth twice

**brown**

Handshape: B  
Orientation: palm out  
Location: cheek  
Movement: slide index finger down cheek

**orange**

Handshape: C > S  
Orientation: palm left  
Location: near mouth  
Movement: open and close fist twice

**green**

Handshape: G  
Orientation: palm up  
Location: neutral space  
Movement: twist hand up and down several times