

1 Check the meaning of the words in the box and match them with pictures 1–6.

chest ear face finger hand head



2 3.37 Read and listen to the first part of the text. Why do some people use sign language? What is the name for people who can't hear?

Speaking with your hands

British Sign Language (BSL) is the sign language used by many deaf people in the United Kingdom. BSL is an officially recognised language and is the first or preferred language of 125,000 deaf adults in the UK and about 20,000 children. It is a non-written language for people who can't hear other people speak. People who can hear and who communicate with deaf people also use it.

3 3.38 Read the second part of the text and match headings a–d with sections 1–4. Listen and check.

a Movement b Hand shapes
c Non-manual features d Placement

BSL is only one of about 300 sign languages in use in the world today. There isn't a sign for every word in the equivalent spoken language. Instead, one sign made with the hands can sometimes mean a single word, and at other times can communicate a complete phrase.

Sign languages haven't got the same grammatical structures as the other word-based languages we learn in school. Often, the order of signs that make a phrase or question is different from the order of the spoken-word language. For example, 'Where are you from?' in English is signed as 'From where you?'

Everyone who uses and understands sign language, however, uses the same basic principles of communication:

- 1 – how the hands are used. The hands are the most important parts of the body when using sign language.
- 2 – how and where people put their hands on the head, face or body.
- 3 – moving your hands up or down, from right to left, or in a circle.
- 4 – the head, face and body can show the difference, for example, between a statement and a question, or between a positive and a negative.

4 Read both parts of the text again and write **true** or **false**. Correct the false sentences.

- 1 Only deaf people use sign language.
- 2 There are about 300 different versions of sign language all over the world.
- 3 Every word in a spoken language has an equivalent sign.
- 4 Sign language uses the same grammar as its equivalent spoken language.

5 Match the descriptions of signs 1–5 with pictures A–E.

- 1 The primary index finger touches the chest.
- 2 The closed primary hand makes a circle on the chest.
- 3 The index and middle fingers of the primary hand touch the ear.
- 4 The primary hand is on the secondary hand, with short shaking up and down.
- 5 Both hands are flat, with the primary hand on the secondary hand. The hands make a single movement downwards in front of the body.



6 **USE IT!** Work in pairs. Cover the pictures in exercise 5. Use BSL to communicate the words to your partner. Then research online how to communicate these words with BSL:

quiet
love
where?
good
sandwich