

What you will need

- Device with access to the internet
- 'Hello my name is' spreadsheet
- Copies of the fingerspelling alphabets (optional)
- Access to a printer (optional)

Before you begin

- Use the safety checklist to help you plan and risk assess your activity. Don't forget to make sure all young people and adults involved in the activity know how to take part safely.
- Make sure you'll have enough Leaders for each Patrol to have one. You may need some parents and carers to help out if you're short on Leaders.
- Download (and print out, if needed) enough copies of the right handed and left handed fingerspelling alphabets, and 'Hello, my name is' sheets that everyone can see them.
- One copy between two or three people is usually fine. You could laminate the sheet to make it easy to clean.

Learn a phrase

1. Everyone should sit in a circle with copies of the Auslan fingerspelling alphabet.
2. The whole Patrol should practice their alphabet together – the person leading the game can show everyone how to make a letter, and then the Patrol can copy.
3. Once the Patrol has practised the alphabet together, everyone should take a few moments on their own to practise fingerspelling their name.
4. Everyone should get back in the circle, and practise signing 'Hello, my name is'.
5. Everyone should put the two parts of the phrase together. Now, they can introduce themselves, and understand someone else telling them their name.



Facts about sign language

What is sign language

Sign language is a visual means of communication. It's used by some people who are D/deaf, or who have hearing impairments – but it is also used by people with a range of learning and communication difficulties, people developing their language and literacy skills, and people looking after young children. Evidence suggests that gestures develop earlier than speech, so some people teach young children signs to help them communicate before they can talk.

Types of sign language

Auslan is Australian Sign Language, the language of the Australian Deaf Community. Auslan is a distinct language, with its own grammar and syntax. Many people assume Auslan is simply English on the hands, however, it has its own lexicon and structure, conveying meaning through the use of distinctive handshapes, movements, facial expressions and the use of space. Many people think Auslan is exclusively for Deaf people, but this is not true. Auslan is used by hearing and hard-of-hearing people as another way to communicate with their Deaf friends, colleagues and family members. Learning Auslan is fun, engaging and easy.

Are there different types of sign language?

Auslan is, as the name suggests, Australian Sign Language. Our language evolved from British Sign Language and shares similarities also with New Zealand, in the same way spoken languages often have borrowed words or influences from other countries. There are also many indigenous sign languages, spoken by people who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders.

Practise your phrase with a game

1. Everyone should move around to mix up. (They could run, skip, or dance.)
2. When the Leader makes the sign for 'sign', everyone should get into a pair with the closest person to them.
3. The pairs should take it in turns to introduce themselves.
4. Keep playing until everyone is confident introducing themselves, and understanding a word someone else is fingerspelling.



Safety

All activities must be safely managed. You must complete a thorough risk assessment and take appropriate steps to reduce risk. Use the safety checklist to help you plan and risk assess your activity. Always get approval for the activity, and have suitable supervision.

Reflection

This activity helped you to develop your communication skills.

- Is it important to be able to communicate in a variety of ways?
- Can you remember who might use fingerspelling or sign language?
- Do you think fingerspelling is a useful skill?
- Was it easy to understand when people were using signs or fingerspelling?
- When else might sign language be useful? How is sign language different to other ways of communicating?
- This activity also helped you to learn to respect others, regardless of their background. What do you think it feels like to speak a language not many other people understand?
- Do you think it makes life more difficult when people don't speak the language you use?
- What could your Group do to change this – do you think it's important to try to learn some basic words and phrases? How might that change things for people who use sign language?