

# British Sign Language (BSL): an Introduction

## What is BSL?

BSL stands for BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE

It is the language of the Deaf community. It is a very important part of Deaf culture

**18 March, 2003, the UK Government formally recognised British Sign Language (BSL) as a language in its own right.**

In England Deaf people use BSL. Other countries have their own sign languages: Greek / USA, Ireland, French etc.

Within the British Isles there are several 'regional variations' of sign language: different ways of expressing the same word by location: much like accents in spoken languages

BSL uses both hands to create gestures and signs, It is possible to convey complex meanings by incorporating facial expressions and body language along with the signs.

Fingerspelling is sometimes not regarded as part of BSL but , is used to spell proper nouns: for examples names of places and people (although sign names or shortcuts are often used for individuals, usually linked to their hobby or a personality / physical trait to save time fingerspelling every time the person is referred to).

There are many books / videos and online resources to support learning of BSL and some local collages / adult education centres will run courses teaching the various levels (Level 1 – Level 6).

The best way to learn BSL is to get involved in the local Deaf community, through social meetings / clubs.

## Online resources:

Online tools and resources: <https://www.british-sign.co.uk/>

*BSL SIGN BANK:* <http://bslsignbank.ucl.ac.uk/>

*Fingerspelling:* <http://bslsignbank.ucl.ac.uk/spell/twohanded.html>

*Quiz:* <http://bslsignbank.ucl.ac.uk/quiz/>?

Find a BSL course:

[http://www.ndcs.org.uk/family\\_support/communication/sign\\_language/learn\\_bsl.html](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/family_support/communication/sign_language/learn_bsl.html)

*Qualifications:* <http://www.signature.org.uk/british-sign-lanquaage>

## Mobile App:

“Sign BSL”