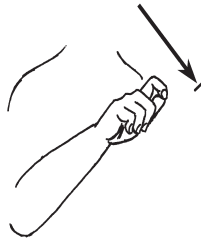


Space

Our eyes see things occupying and moving through space, and that's what Sign often shows. Sign is a visual language that imbeds space into its very structure. For example:

- Sign contours space to create shapes.
- Sign moves things through space. These are classifiers, which we'll discuss in the next chapter.
- A sign can be large or small, showing the relative size or intensity of something.
- The placement of a sign, and how it moves through space can affect its meaning.

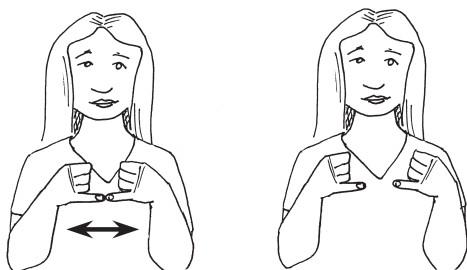
We'll begin with the contouring of space to create shapes. We'll illustrate this by following the mathematician's logic and begin with a *point*.



POINT

Imagine dotting an “i” with a pen. That’s a *point*. There’s not much to say about a mathematical point. It’s dimensionally zero, and nothing at all. It’s only an idea in the mathematician’s mind. To the user of Sign, it could be a few things. It could be a **DECIMAL POINT**, the **PERIOD** at the end of a sentence, the **PERIOD** at the end of an argument or just a **DOT**. It’s interesting, all that meaning from an infinitesimal nothing, and most of it has nothing to do with space.

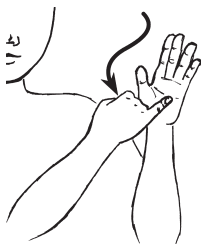
Connecting two points creates a line, the next step up in mathematical space. A line has one dimension, that of length.



LINE

As an official sign, this means *line* but it could represent anything resembling a line. It could be a **WIRE** or a **THREAD**. It needn't be straight or horizontal. The line in your story might be diagonal. It can also be drawn with one pinky. On first use, you may need to sign or fingerspell its meaning.

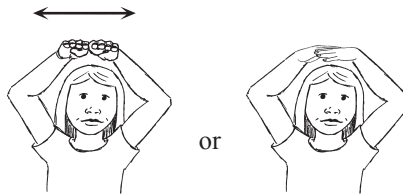
Squiggle the dominant pinky over the subordinate palm for *art*.



ART, DRAW, DRAWING

Speaking of art, we're not only in a mathematical realm. Signed shapes are also paintbrushes in an artistic sense. We create shapes and infuse them with the emotional and esthetic content of our story, the very essence of art.

Connecting three points, not all in a straight line, creates a two dimensional plane, the next step up in mathematical space. Its dimensions are length and width, and its unit is area, such as square feet. The flat palm is the basic *plane* in Sign.



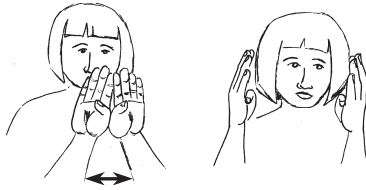
CEILING, PLANE

Here we use both flat palms, planes in themselves, moving away from each other to describe a larger plane. The illustration shows two possibilities. The left drawing moves the dominant hand, or both hands, to their respective sides. The right drawing moves the dominant hand forward, while the subordinate hand remains stationary. Other planes are signed by changing the orientation of the palms. **FLOOR** lowers the hands to the waist, palms facing down. **WALL** places the outward facing palms as though touching a wall, while the hands move either horizontally or vertically. **FENCE** changes the flat palms to the *4 – hand shape*, which represents the vertical slats of a fence. Remember, the object being described may first need to be defined.



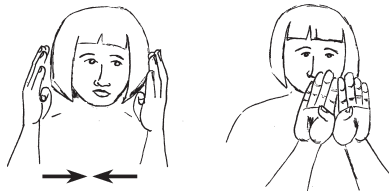
DOOR

The subordinate hand represents the doorjamb opposite the hinge. The open palm of the dominant hand represents a door opening and closing.



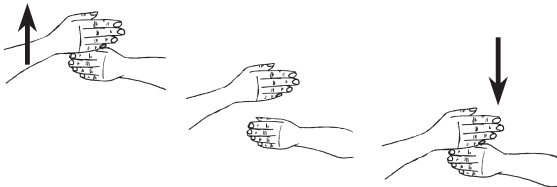
OPEN THE DOOR, OPEN

This is a picture of a door opening. It also means *open* in general. It could be a business or a water pipe that's *open*.



CLOSE THE DOOR, CLOSE, SHUT

This is a picture of a door closing. It could also mean anything that's *closed* or *shut*. Place the sign at the forehead when referring to a **CLOSED MINDED** person.



WINDOW

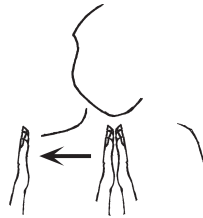
The logic for *window* is similar to that of *door*. The flat palms represent upper and lower windows, the upper window opening and closing. **CLOSE THE WINDOW** uses the last two

drawings of the illustration. **OPEN THE WINDOW** uses the first two drawings. This is the sign for window, but maybe the window under discussion slides horizontally. The sign should copy reality.

Note that *close the window* could be a statement or a question, depending on the facial expression. Also, the window doesn't have to close all the way. Maybe you want your window open halfway. The context influences the sign's movement.

The *flat palm* itself could be a window. To place many windows along a wall, sign *wall*, and then *window*. Use the flat palm to represent the windows, and slap those windows on the wall. Use both hands if you have lots of *windows*. Or maybe it's the *fliers* you posted all over the city. A simple flat palm can describe many things.

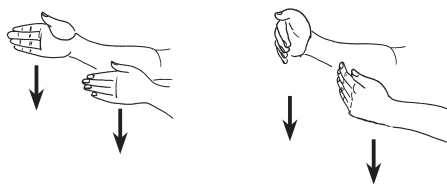
Connecting four points, not all on the same plane, creates a three dimensional volume, our last stop in mathematical space. The dimensions of a volume are length, width and depth, and its unit is cubic, such as cubic feet. Sign has two ways of representing a volume. One is to extrude the planes of the flat palms.



PLANE EXTRUSION

It could represent **BOOKS ON A SHELF**, a **STACK OF PAPERS** or a stack of anything. Use the subordinate hand as the base or end of the stack, and move the dominant hand accordingly. The orientation and movement depend on the thing being described. The meaning of the flat palms may first need to be defined for the shape to make sense. On the other hand, the context of the conversation might make it obvious.

The other way Sign describes a volume is to form its outer surfaces.



BOX, CARTON, CRATE, PACKAGE

The illustration shows the sides being drawn first, and then the front and back. The arrows show the palms describing the height of the box. This is for a box of specific height. Don't bring the hands down if the height doesn't matter.

There are other ways to describe a box. The illustration may be read left to right, or right to left. Another way is to show the top and bottom first, followed by the sides. A box may be any size. Use the index fingers to shape the sides if it's really small. Let the box guide you.

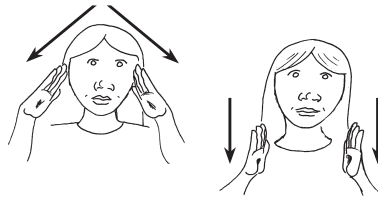
ROOM and **OFFICE** are signed like *box*, except they use the *R* and *O* – *hand shapes* respectively. Neither *room* nor *office* bring the hands down. *Room* and *office* originate from *box*, which is their shape. It's interesting how languages develop.



BOOK

The palms represent the front and back covers. **OPEN THE BOOK** shows the covers opening. **CLOSE THE BOOK** shows the covers closing.

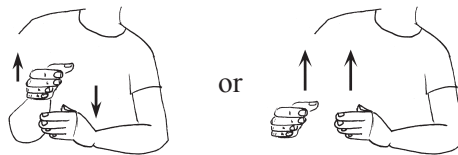
The concept of *book* can be used in different ways. **TURNING THE PAGES** of a book can be mimed. The *V – hand shape* of *look* on page 104 can **READ** the page represented by the subordinate palm. The fingertips of the *V – hand shape* can look up and down the page or side to side.



HOUSE

The palms and movement represent the roof and sides of a house.

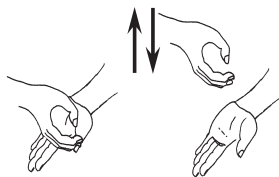
Not all volumes have flat sides. For example:



CYLINDER, PIPE, BAT, AXLE

The left drawing shows the *C – hand shapes* moving away from each other, but the subordinate hand can remain still. The palms may face each other or face the same direction. The right drawing shows someone holding a pipe, and moving both *C – hand shapes* in tandem. Make a narrow cylinder by using the “*O*” of the *F – hand shape* to define its size. Again, the palms could face the same or opposing directions.

Some cylinders have capped ends, which is shown with the flat subordinate palm.



**CUP, GLASS, BOTTLE, MUG,
BEAKER, GOBLET**

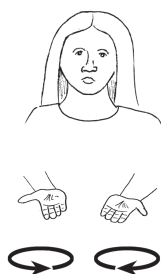


BALL, SPHERE, GLOBE

That does it for the math part. Now is a good time to make the distinction between signs and shapes. A sign is arbitrary in its construction, but invariant in its meaning. **Bad** could have been signed any number of arbitrary ways. The meaning of **bad** arises not by how it looks, but from common agreement and convention. The arbitrary construction of **bad** always means bad.

A shape, on the other hand, is a picture, and not arbitrary in its construction. The shape must resemble what's being described. A shape is a linguistic chameleon that matches its construction and meaning to the contextual environment.

What follows are signs, rather than shapes. These signs translate into English words, rather than mathematical shapes. Although they don't contour space in a visual sense, many of them have spatial qualities that make them easy to remember. Notice the spatial logic of these signs.



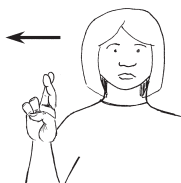
HERE

We can also *point* to mean here. *Pointing* doesn't translate into any particular English word, but we all know its meaning. It means whatever we're pointing at. It could mean *here* or *there*, or anything that's in this or that place.

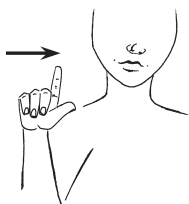
Sign is a visual language where we set up space, place things in that space and then refer to those things by *pointing*. When adding something new to the conversation, be it tangible or intangible, sign it and then *point*. This places it in space. Thereafter, merely point to it without using the sign. *Pointing* is a powerful tool.

As a cultural note, *pointing* in Sign is an act of communication. Pointing in hearing culture is an act of rudeness.

NORTH, SOUTH, EAST and **WEST** are signed by moving the first letter of each word. *South* moves the *S – hand shape* down. *North* moves the *N – hand shape* up. *East* moves the *E – hand shape* to the side. *West* moves the *W – hand shape* to the side.

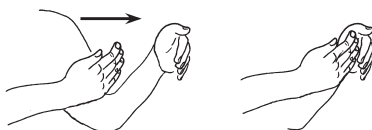


RIGHT



LEFT

Notice that the signer's left is on your right. She's not a mirror image of you, but rather a person signing to you. If an illustration is unclear as to right or left, rotate the page and face the same direction as the person in the illustration. Maybe flip the book, and view the illustration from behind and above.



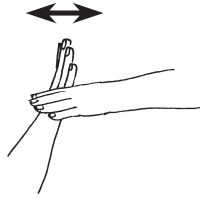
NEAR, CLOSE

It's something moving nearer to something else. There are varying degrees of closeness, which are shown by how close the dominant hand comes to the subordinate hand. The facial expression for *very small* also emphasizes closeness.



FAR, DISTANCE, DISTANT, REMOTE

Increasing the distance the dominant hand travels and slowing its speed indicates a *very* far distance. Adding the facial expression for *very big* also emphasize distance.



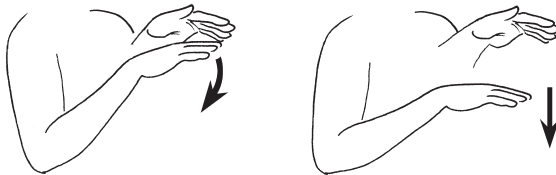
BETWEEN

It can be signed without the subordinate hand. Emphasize one side or the other to show an off center tendency. This is the dial of a scale. We'll see more scales later.



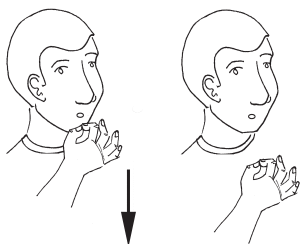
ABOVE, OVER

The two arrows show two different possibilities of movement. The first is *above* with a flip of the wrist. The second is *above* with the whole arm moving.



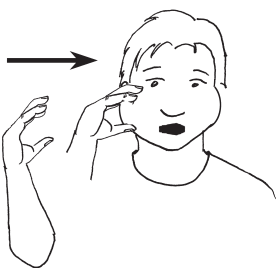
BELOW, UNDER, BENEATH

Notice the spatial logic for *above* and *below*, one hand above or below the other.



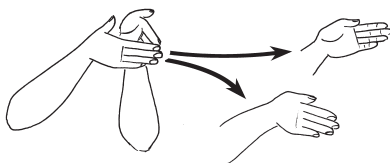
THIN, SLIM, SLENDER, SKINNY

Notice the pierced lips.



THICK

Notice the bulging cheeks.



WIDE, BROAD, IN GENERAL, GENERIC

Sign **NARROW** by moving the hands forward from wide to narrow.



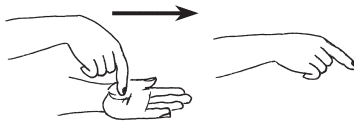
BIG, LARGE, HUGE, IMMENSE, ENORMOUS, MASSIVE, GIGANTIC, MAMMOTH



SMALL, TINY, A LITTLE BIT

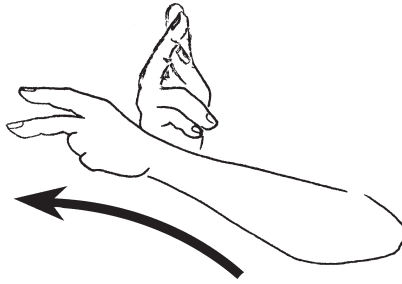
There are many ways to indicate smallness. The illustration shows the thumb and index finger close to each other. ***Small*** can also be signed by placing the ***palms of both hands close to each other***. It depends on what it is that's small.

The direction a sign moves can effect its meaning. We'll see more of this throughout the book.



PAY, COMPENSATE, REIMBURSE

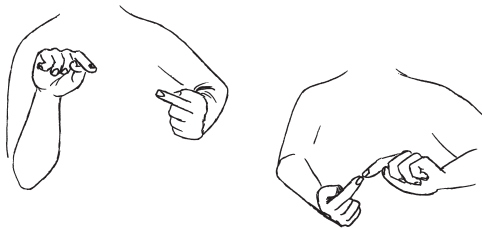
The index finger moves from the payer to the payee, following the money. The index finger moves away from the signer when the payer and payee have not been placed in space.



LEND, LOAN, BORROW

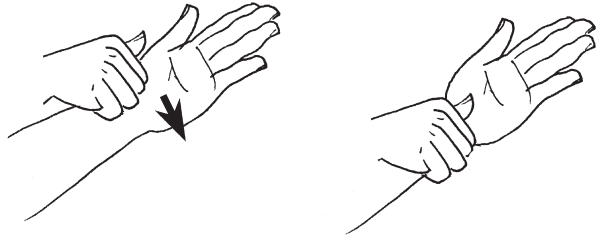
This is two *K-hand shapes* that move from the lender to the borrower, following the thing being loaned. Anyone can loan something to anyone else by moving the sign in the proper direction. When the borrower and lender are nonspecific, or the parties have not been placed in space, *borrow* moves toward the signer and *lend* moves away from the signer.

Where a sign is placed can affect its meaning.



HURT, SORE, ACHE, INJURE, INJURY, WOUND, HARM

This sign could mean **EARACHE, TOOTHACHE, HEAD-ACHE** or any kind of ache. Just place the sign where it hurts.



CUT, OPERATE, OPERATION, SURGERY

Generically, the dominant thumb moves over the subordinate palm. For a specific surgery, move the dominant thumb over the area that receives the surgery without using the subordinate palm.