

# 7 Symbol Categories

...Category Names & Descriptions...



# International SignWriting Alphabet (ISWA)

## 1 Category 1 Hands



### About Category 1

Handshapes from over 40 Sign Languages are placed in 10 groups based on the numbers 1-10 in American Sign Language. For example, all of the hands that have a single index finger extended, are located under Group 01: Index.

#### Category 1: Hands

- Group 01: Index
- Group 02: Index Middle
- Group 03: Index Middle Thumb
- Group 04: 4 Fingers
- Group 05: 5 Fingers
- Group 06: Baby Finger
- Group 07: Ring Finger
- Group 08: Middle Finger
- Group 09: Index Thumb
- Group 10: Thumb

## 2 Category 2 Movement



### About Category 2

Contact symbols, small finger movements, straight arrows, curved arrows and circles are placed into 10 groups based on planes: The Front Wall Plane includes movement that is “parallel to the front wall” and the Floor Plane includes movement that is “parallel to the floor”.

#### Category 2: Movement

- Group 11: Contact
- Group 12: Finger Movement
- Group 13: Straight Wall Plane
- Group 14: Straight Diagonal Plane
- Group 15: Straight Floor Plane
- Group 16: Curves Wall Plane
- Group 17: Curves Hit Wall Plane
- Group 18: Curves Hit Floor Plane
- Group 19: Curves Floor Plane
- Group 20: Circles

# International SignWriting Alphabet (ISWA)

## 3 Category 3 Face Head



### About Category 3

Starting from the top of the face and moving down, Groups 21-24 include detailed facial expressions and movement of parts of the face and neck. Group 25 includes head movement and views of the head.

#### Category 3: Faces & Head

Group 21: Brow, Eyes, Eyegaze

Group 22: Cheeks Ears Nose Breath

Group 23: Mouth Lips

Group 24: Tongue Teeth Chin Neck

Group 25: Head

## 4 Category 4 Body



### About Category 4

Torso movement, shoulders, hips, and the limbs are used in Sign Languages as a part of grammar, especially when describing conversations between people, called Role Shifting, or making spatial comparisons between items on the left and items on the right. The symbols of the body that are in Category 4 are important when writing sign language storytelling and poetry. All sign languages have some signs that point below the hips, or touch the torso, or hunch the shoulders, or touch the arms and wrists.

# International SignWriting Alphabet (ISWA)

## 5 Category 5 Dynamics & Timing



### About Category 5

Dynamics Symbols are used mostly with Movement Symbols and Punctuation Symbols, to give the “feeling” or “tempo” to movement. They also provide emphasis on a movement or expression, and combined with Punctuation Symbols become the equivalent to Exclamation Points. The Tension Symbol, combined with Contact Symbols, provides the feeling of “pressure”, and combined with facial expressions can place emphasis or added feeling to an expression. Timing symbols are used to show alternating or simultaneous movement.

## 6 Category 6 Punctuation



### About Category 6

Punctuation Symbols are used when writing complete sentences or documents in SignWriting. The Punctuation Symbols do not look like the symbols for punctuation in English, but they do have similar meanings. SignWriting punctuation symbols include a period, comma, colon, semi-colon, exclamation point and so forth.

# International SignWriting Alphabet (ISWA)

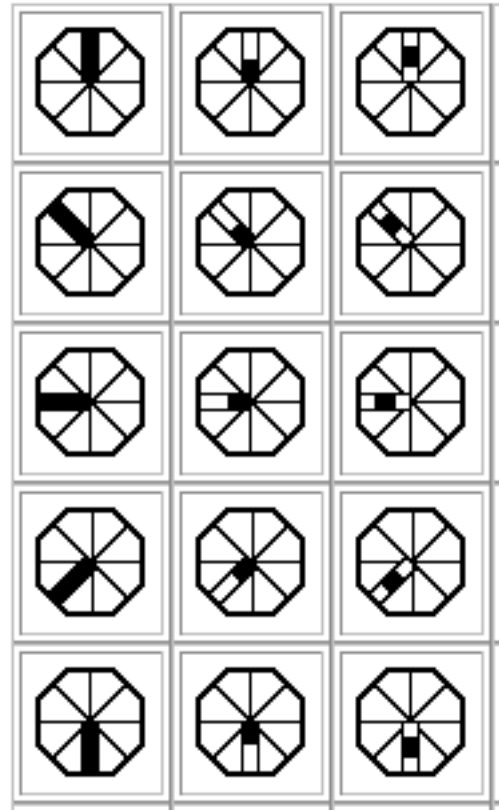
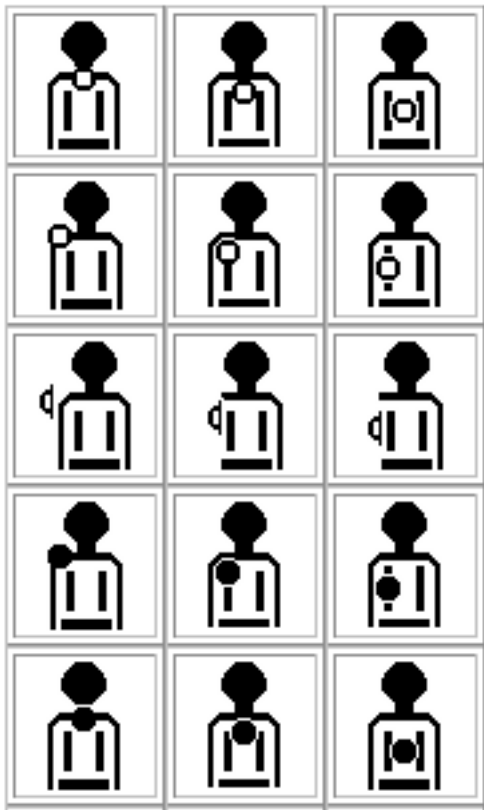
## 7 Category 7 Advanced Sorting



### About Category 7

The symbols in Category 7 are detailed Location Markers that are not used when writing signs on a daily basis. Location is written and read in SignWriting **WITHOUT** these symbols.

The symbols in Category 7 are only used in computer software to assist in giving further details for sorting large sign language dictionaries that are sorted by SignWriting symbols. Sometimes signs that are slightly different, may have similar SignSpelling data, and the symbols in Category 7 can help decide which sign should come first and which should come second, in the dictionary.



# International SignWriting Alphabet (ISWA)

Category 1: Hands  
Category 2: Movement  
Category 3: Face Head  
Category 4: Body  
Category 5: Dynamics  
Category 6: Punctuation  
Category 7: Advanced Sorting

## **Category 1: Hands**

Group 01: Index  
Group 02: Index Middle  
Group 03: Index Middle Thumb  
Group 04: 4 Fingers  
Group 05: 5 Fingers  
Group 06: Baby Finger  
Group 07: Ring Finger  
Group 08: Middle Finger  
Group 09: Index Thumb  
Group 10: Thumb

## **Category 2: Movement**

Group 11: Contact  
Group 12: Finger Movement  
Group 13: Straight Wall Plane  
Group 14: Straight Diagonal Plane  
Group 15: Straight Floor Plane  
Group 16: Curves Wall Plane  
Group 17: Curves Hit Wall Plane  
Group 18: Curves Hit Floor Plane  
Group 19: Curves Floor Plane  
Group 20: Circles

## **Category 3: Faces & Head**

Group 21: Brow, Eyes, Eyegaze  
Group 22: Cheeks Ears Nose Breath  
Group 23: Mouth Lips  
Group 24: Tongue Teeth Chin Neck  
Group 25: Head

## **Category 4: Body**

Group 26: Shoulders Hips Torso  
Group 27: Limbs

## **Category 5: Dynamics**

Group 28: Dynamics & Timing

## **Category 6: Punctuation**

Group 29: Punctuation

## **Category 7: Advanced Sorting**

Group 30: Location for Sorting