Sign Language
## SIGN LANGUAGE

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GENERAL EDUCATION

SIGN LANGUAGE
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INTRODUCTION

RATIONALE

This course introduces students to Irish Sign Language and aims to develop their expressive and receptive communication skills. The course also develops awareness and appreciation of the Irish deaf community and its culture.
There are four modules in this course. Deaf students may take all four modules instead of the Gaeilge and Modern Language courses. The first two modules of this course may be taken as elective modules by all students. Modules must be covered in the sequence outlined below.

**NUMBER AND SEQUENCE OF MODULES**

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**DESCRIPTION OF MODULES**

**MODULE 1 MAKING CONTACT**
Students are introduced to Irish Sign Language. Basic signing vocabulary for greetings, numbers, days and months, money, shopping, eating and drinking is practised.

**MODULE 2 SOCIAL INTERACTION**
In this module signing skills and vocabulary are further developed. Among the topics covered are sport, leisure and travelling. The deaf community is also introduced and the rights of deaf people are discussed.

**MODULE 3 DEAF PEOPLE IN THE WORLD OF WORK**
The world of work, and the opportunities it offers for deaf people, are investigated. This module also aims to develop an awareness of the services that are available for deaf people and to enable deaf students to use them confidently.

**MODULE 4 DEAF PEOPLE IN THE WIDER WORLD**
This module is designed to develop students’ awareness of deaf culture and their understanding of linguistic aspects of Irish Sign Language. It also affords students an opportunity to reflect on issues in deaf education and on their experience of the Leaving Certificate Applied.
MODULE 1

MAKING CONTACT
Module 1:

MAKING CONTACT

PURPOSE

This module is designed to introduce students to Irish Sign Language (ISL). It aims to equip the students with basic communication skills in the language.

The module is suitable for all students to take as an elective module, and for deaf students as the first module in their Sign Language course.

PREREQUISITES

None.
The module aims to:

- develop the students’ basic ability to use Irish Sign Language (ISL) effectively for the purposes of practical communication

- introduce students to the world of deaf people where sign language is the common medium of communication and thus help raise their awareness of the general cultural, social and political dimensions involved

- provide a sense of achievement and intellectual stimulation.

UNITS

Unit 1: Introduction
Unit 2: Greetings
Unit 3: Numbers
Unit 4: Days and Months
Unit 5: Money and Shopping
Unit 6: Eating and Drinking
Unit 1: Introduction

The Student will be able to:

1. understand non-manual communication
2. identify general features of Irish Sign Language
3. use finger spelling
4. interpret common signs and symbols
5. describe some features of the history of Irish Sign Language.

Non-manual signals include facial expression, eye contact, head movements and body postures.

Provide visual representations (photos, drawings, video etc.) of non-manual signs. Encourage interaction among students using non-manual signs. Compare gestures used to accompany spoken language with ISL non-manual signs.
Unit 2: Greetings

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

The student will be able to:
1. greet in ISL using appropriate signs
2. introduce themselves and fingerspell names
3. identify people
4. identify places
5. create name signs for family members referring to ISL for models
6. demonstrate name signs.

**TEACHER GUIDELINES**

- Provide a list of vocabulary. Help the students’ receptive and expressive skills through role-play and asking questions. Materials such as map, flash cards, posters and photographs are helpful.
Unit 3: Numbers

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The student will be able to:
1. demonstrate numbers
2. ask questions about ages
3. sign to indicate numbers of family members
4. sign phone numbers
5. know the time in sign language
6. make calculations of time in sign language.

TEACHER GUIDELINES

- Again provide vocabulary.
- Games that enhance the students’ ability in signing and reading numbers should be used. Bingo games are an excellent example.
- Provide materials such as clock, phone book and charts.
Unit 4: Days and Dates

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

The student will be able to:
1. sign the days of the week
2. sign the twelve months
3. know the important dates on the calendar
4. name the festive occasions.

**TEACHER GUIDELINES**

- A calendar and cards for each occasion are useful to stimulate students’ interest and motivation.
Unit 5: Money and Shopping

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

The student will be able to:

1. sign the vocabulary for money
2. identify the signs relating to services
3. know the signs for different accounts
4. use money signs in everyday situations
5. interpret signs when discussing prices and expenses
6. ask questions about shopping
7. identify words relevant to quality and quantity
8. carry on a simple conversation about a shopping experience
9. outline the factors that contribute to easy or difficult shopping for deaf people.

**TEACHER GUIDELINES**

- Play money, role-play shopping, actual receipts are useful resources.
- Encourage discussion about services provided by banks with a list of relevant words and phrases.
- Alphabet cards should be given to students to learn finger spelling.
Unit 6: Eating and Drinking

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The student will be able to:
1. sign the necessary vocabulary in each food category
2. sign the vocabulary for drinks
3. demonstrate signs when asking questions
4. list eating places
5. demonstrate common phrases used in a restaurant or pub
6. explain how deaf people go about ordering food/drink.

TEACHER GUIDELINES

▶ Provide vocabulary.
▶ Posters of food and drink are excellent materials. This encourages discussion and students can enhance their own receptive and expressive skills.
▶ Encourage role-play such as ordering a meal.
▶ The teacher and students discuss how deaf people communicate with a waiter/waitress and with shop assistants.
RESOURCES

*Sign On* – National Association for the Deaf (Student material)

*The Irish Sign Language* – by Stanislaus J Foran (Student material)

*Alphabet cards* – National Association for the Deaf (Student material)

*The Irish Deaf Community* – by Patrick Matthews  
(Background & Student material)

Video of A.B.C. 1,2,3 Irish Deaf Video Project

CD-Rom Sign Away N.A.D.

I.S.L. Dictionary
I have designed a name sign for myself using IT and Visual Art

I interviewed some people using a short questionnaire, asking their name, address, family members and ages in sign language (Video is used)

I role-played a scene in a restaurant ordering a meal (Video is used)

I organised a Bingo game with a group of students.
SIGN LANGUAGE

MODULE 2

SOCIAL INTERACTION
Module 2:

SOCIAL INTERACTION

PURPOSE

This module is designed to improve the student’s interaction with deaf people. It also provides opportunities for the student to gain an understanding of the deaf community.

This module is suitable for all students to take as a second elective module, following module one: Making Contact, or for deaf students as the second module in the full Sign Language course.

PREREQUISITES

Module 1: Making Contact
This module aims to:

- develop signing skills

- facilitate the development of the vocabulary needed when making contact with deaf people in different situations

- introduce the deaf community.

**UNITS**

Unit 1: The Deaf Community

Unit 2: Sports

Unit 3: Leisure

Unit 4: Travelling

Unit 5: Deaf Rights
Unit 1: The Deaf Community

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

The student will be able to:

1. demonstrate a general understanding of the deaf community in Ireland

2. sign the vocabulary relevant to this topic

3. recognise the role of deaf clubs

4. recognise common phrases pertaining to membership of communities and committees

5. identify the main characteristics which define the deaf community

6. recognise that the deaf community is made up of different groups.

**TEACHER GUIDELINES**

- Begin by eliciting from the students what they already know/perceive about the deaf community. The teacher can then provide information about the different groups within the community.

- Give an overview of the main characteristics of the deaf community.

- Give a list of the deaf clubs of Ireland. Ask the students for an account of any experience/contact they have had with deaf clubs.

- Students could visit a deaf club.

- The teacher provides information about relevant social groups.

- Discuss general comparisons between the deaf community and other communities as discussed in Social Education.
Unit 2: Sports

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

The student will be able to:

1. sign the vocabulary pertaining to sports and general sporting activities
2. ask and respond to questions about sports and associated activities
3. demonstrate a knowledge of common phrases when referring to football for example
4. have a general knowledge of deaf people’s involvement in sports
5. have a general understanding of the Irish Deaf Sports Association and its work.
6. know about the World Games for the Deaf.

**TEACHER GUIDELINES**

- Always try to begin with students’ interest/experience. Focus on developing vocabulary for this, and then broaden the topic.
- Provide a list of vocabulary. Help the students’ receptive and expressive skills with questions and simple conversations.
Unit 3: Leisure

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

The student will be able to:

1. recognise and use signs relating to leisure pursuits
2. ask and respond to questions about leisure and leisure activities in Sign Language
3. know and understanding the support technology used by deaf people to access the leisure media, especially television
4. identify television programmes of special relevance to the deaf community.

### TEACHER GUIDELINES

- Materials such as magazines, RTE Guide, newspapers, are certain to stimulate students in their signing skills.
- Encourage discussion about travelling, leisure activities and sports.
- Help students to organise a survey. Before doing this ask students to review the research skills they have learnt in Social Education and in English and Communication. Help them to apply these to the design of this survey.
Unit 4: Travelling

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

The Student will be able to:

1. sign the necessary vocabulary for different forms of travel and transport
2. ask and respond to questions about travelling and accommodation
3. carry on a simple conversation about travelling experiences
4. identify places and countries in sign
5. role-play a dialogue with people when booking accommodation.

**TEACHER GUIDELINES**

- Materials such as travelling brochures, maps, postcards and photographs are useful.
Unit 5: Deaf Rights

The student will be able to:

1. recognise some of the difficulties deaf people may face in their everyday lives

2. explain the rights of deaf people and link this to their learning about Human Rights generally

3. outline factors which may help deaf people

4. recognise and use signs relevant to a discussion on Human Rights

5. compare the rights of the deaf with other social groups.

Teacher Guidelines:

- Organise a brainstorm/discussion of the students’ perceptions of the difficulties faced. This could be a good topic for a visitor exercise with a deaf person. The class should have considered and discussed the topic first and have questions prepared. Provide necessary information about barriers deaf people face in everyday situations.

- Encourage the students to link issues relating deaf rights to Human Rights (which is a key theme of the Contemporary Issues modules in Social Education and may also have been addressed in Religious Education).

- Students might be asked to brainstorm or to work in groups to suggest a list of rights for deaf people. The teacher will need some background information on Equality Legislation.

- The teacher could provide information on factors which can make life easier for deaf people.

- The teacher provides vocabulary to enable the students to carry on discussions about this topic.
RESOURCES

The Irish Deaf Community by Patrick Matthews (background)

When the Mind Hears: A History of the Deaf by H. Lane
(Student & teacher)

Deaf Sport by David A Stewart (background)

Deaf People and the Community by J.G. Kyle (Background)


MAGAZINES FOR STUDENTS
Contact: Dublin Deaf Community,
40 Lower Drumcondra Road, Dublin 9.

Irish Deaf Journal – Irish Deaf Society,
30 Blessington Street, Dublin 7.

Link – National Association for the Deaf –
35 North Fredrick St., Dublin 1

Information about Deaf Sports – Irish Deaf Sports Association,
40 Lwr Drumcondra Road, Dublin 9

VIDEOS ABOUT DEAF RELATED ISSUES
I have visited a deaf club and signed an account of my visit

I videotaped/role-played a scene of giving directions in sign language

As a group we have researched the problems deaf people usually encounter in everyday situations.

I have presented a review of a television programme for deaf people.
MODULE 3

DEAF PEOPLE IN THE WORLD OF WORK
Module 3:

Deaf People in the World of Work

**Purpose**

This module is designed to enable students, using Irish Sign Language, to become more aware of the relationship between deaf people and the world of work. The focus of this module is on developing a broader understanding of services available to deaf people. It also sets out to raise student awareness of the various types of communication that exist in the deaf community. This module is part of the full Sign Language course for deaf students and is not an elective module.

**Prerequisites**

Modules 1 and 2.
This module aims to:

- build on and extend signing vocabulary
- develop awareness of the services which are available for deaf people
- prepare students to deal confidently with services
- develop awareness of the different groups of deaf people in Irish society
- help students to identify the different communication modes which deaf people use.

**UNITS**

Unit 1: People and their occupations
Unit 2: Banks/Post Offices/Building Societies
Unit 3: Interpreters
Unit 4: Technology for the Deaf
Unit 5: Deafness and Communication
Unit 1: People and their occupations

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

The student will be able to:

1. recognise and use sign terms for a range of occupations
2. describe the work involved in some common occupations
3. investigate how deaf people would cope in different occupations
4. research on the presence of deaf workers in specific occupations
5. investigate if deaf workers have equal opportunities in employment.

**TEACHER GUIDELINES**

- Provide relevant sign vocabulary for this topic.
- Provide information about different occupations.
- Encourage and guide students with their investigation on where deaf people are working.
- Organise a visit to a workplace for the students or invite a deaf worker to talk to the students.
- Encourage discussion, analysis and evaluation regarding deaf people and their work.
Unit 2: Banks/Post Office/Building Societies

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The student will be able to:

1. recognise and use sign vocabulary pertaining to banks, post offices, building societies and credit unions
2. role-play situations using these services e.g. opening an account
3. show awareness of the difficulties that may arise when deaf people wish to avail of services such as making lodgements, withdrawals and loan applications
4. indicate how deaf people can deal with these difficulties as they arise.

TEACHER GUIDELINES

▶ Give signs for vocabulary pertaining to banks, post offices, building societies and credit unions.
▶ Explain the role of each institution.
▶ Guide the students in role-playing using these services.
▶ Introduce common phrases and terminology associated with these services.
▶ Encourage the students to find out if these institutions employ deaf people.
▶ Discussions are encouraged and the teacher provides appropriate language.
▶ Encouragement is given to identify attitudes that are common in the workplace.
▶ Materials such as leaflets from banks, post offices and building societies are useful to stimulate discussions in the classroom.
Unit 3: Interpreters

The students will be able to:

1. understand the role of an interpreter
2. understand the role of the deaf person using interpreter services
3. outline the different contexts in which interpreters work
4. list some of the responsibilities of the interpreter (e.g. confidentiality)
5. explain the stages involved in training to become an interpreter.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

TEACHER GUIDELINES

► Inform students about the interpreter and the role the interpreter plays.
► An interpreter should be invited to talk to the class.
► Give information about the Interpreters’ Association.
► Explain the different situations that may require an interpreter such as union meetings, job interviews, meetings for loan application etc.
► Correct procedures for booking and using an interpreter are explained.
► Give one or two case studies of deaf experiences where no interpreters were available.
► Encourage discussion about interpreter services.
Unit 4: Interviews

The student will be able to:

1. apply the information and skills with regard to interviews acquired in other courses (e.g. Vocational Preparation and Guidance/English and Communication) in an Irish Sign Language context

2. role-play an interview

3. evaluate his/her performance in the interview

4. identify the particular rights and responsibilities of deaf people regarding interviews.

Teacher Guidelines:

- Explain and reinforce the understanding of the procedures of an interview (check with the Vocational Preparation teacher/guidance counsellor).

- Give guidance in role-playing a simulated interview (vocabulary in sign language is given to the student).

- Help the students to recognise their rights and responsibilities in this area.

- Revise the procedures for booking and using an interpreter in formal situations.
Unit 5: Technology for the deaf

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The student will be able to:

1. recognise and evaluate some of the main technical aids used by deaf people
2. understand the function of each technical aid
3. role-play making an order for a technical aid
4. apply for the appropriate grant aid for a technical aid for deaf workers/students.

TEACHER GUIDELINES

▶ Give ISL terms for relevant technological products.
▶ Invite an expert to demonstrate how technological aids work and to explain the function of each aid.
▶ Using demonstration and discussion help the student to evaluate if these aids are beneficial to deaf people.
▶ Events such as a display of technological aids used by deaf people can be held in the school to stimulate role-play, discussion and analysis.
Unit 6: Deafness and Communication

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

The student will be able to:

1. identify different communication modes used by deaf people
2. examine the main characteristics of particular communication modes e.g. sign language, oralism
3. apply previous learning on good communication skills to interaction between deaf and hearing people.

**TEACHER GUIDELINES**

- Explain the various types of deafness and their causes.
- Show that there are various deaf groups in any deaf community. Explain the different communication modes they use.
- Encourage the students to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of sign language and oralism/lip-reading at work.
RESOURCES

*Deafness* by J. Martin Ballantyne (Student material)

*Deafness: The facts* by A. Freeland (Student Material)

*Constructing Deafness* by S. Gregory & G.M. Hartly (Student Material)

*Being Deaf: The Experience of Deafness* – The Open University (Student Material)

*Movers and Shakers* by Cathryn Carrol & Susan M. Mather (Student Material)

*Laughter in Lessons* by Bernard Bragg (Background and extra reading)

*Good Vibrations: My Autobiography* by E. Glennie (Background & Extra reading)

*Sign Language Interpreting* by Sharon Solou Neumann (Student Material)

*Interpreting: An Introduction* by Nancy Frisberg (Student Material)

*Everyone here spoke Sign Language* by Nora Groce (Extra Reading)

*Mother Father Deaf: Living Between Sound & Silence* by Paul Preston (Background)
I have visited a workplace of my choice and signed report on my visit to the class

I role-played an interview in sign language

We invited an interpreter to the class and asked him/her questions about the job of interpreting

As a group we took part in a debate on a chosen deaf-related issue

OR

As part of a group, I presented a report/display on technology used by deaf people.
MODULE 4

DEAF PEOPLE IN THE WIDER WORLD
Module 4:

Deaf People in the Wider World

Purpose

This module is designed to enable the students to explore the experience of deaf people in the wider world and to improve their communicative skills in Irish Sign Language.

It introduces students to the idea of translating from one language to another and the skills that are required to do this.

It also gives students the opportunity to reflect on the Leaving Certificate Applied programme with a particular focus on ISL.

Prerequisites

Modules 1: Making Contact

Module 2: Social Interaction

Module 3: Deaf People in the World of Work
This module aims to:

- increase students’ awareness of the linguistic aspects of Irish Sign Language
- develop students’ awareness of deaf culture
- facilitate students’ understanding of the function and importance of sign language
- broaden students’ understanding of translation from sign language into spoken/written language and vice versa
- deepen students’ understanding of important issues in deaf education
- increase students’ competence in discussion, analysis and evaluation of deaf related issues.

Unit 1: Irish Sign Language
Unit 2: Deaf Culture
Unit 3: Philosophy of Deaf Education
Unit 4: Reflections
Unit 1: Irish Sign Language

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

The student will be able to:

1. identify the main features and characteristics of Irish Sign Language
2. compare and contrast the signing of older people with the signing of younger people
3. carry out simple translation exercises from ISL into English and vice versa.

**TEACHER GUIDELINES**

- Provide information about significant features of Irish Sign Language. Provide a variety of examples to illustrate these.
- Show videos of deaf people in signing conversations. Ask students to identify major features and characteristics. Guide students in their efforts and compare and contrast signing characteristics.
- Assist the students in doing translating exercises. Videotapes can be used.
- Strive to improve the students’ expressive and receptive skills.
Unit 2: Deaf Culture

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

The student will be able to:

1. arrive at a basic understanding of deaf culture
2. demonstrate some awareness of literature, drama and visual art pertaining to deaf people
3. name some deaf people who were famous in various fields.

**TEACHER GUIDELINES**

- Help students list some characteristics of Irish culture.
- Provide information about deaf culture. Encourage students to find for themselves what determines deaf culture. (Examples are deaf gatherings, the language itself, deaf stories, theatre and media.)
- Guide discussion on discrimination. Help students to explore attitudes and feelings associated with acceptance/rejection.
Unit 3: Philosophy of Deaf Education

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

- The student will be able to:
  1. explain the difference between special and mainstream education for deaf students
  2. compare the position of a deaf student in a special school with that of a student in a mainstream school
  3. demonstrate awareness of the issues and opportunities for deaf students at third level and in PLC courses/colleges.

**TEACHER GUIDELINES**

- Give information about special schools.
- Help the student to understand the difference between special and mainstream schools.
- Invite a deaf student from a mainstream school to share his/her experience with the special school students and vice versa.
- Help students to explore what it is like to be a deaf student in a mainstream school. Questionnaires can be used.
- The teacher should encourage discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of attending different kinds of schools.
- Encourage the students to invite a third level deaf student to share his/her experiences.
- Help students to list the problems that may confront deaf students in schools and colleges.
Unit 4: Reflections

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Student will be able to:
1. reflect on the two year Leaving Certificate Applied Programme
2. describe the benefits of learning
3. evaluate the Sign Language course
4. review the course and list possible ideas to improve it
5. outline an action plan for oneself for the next year.

**TEACHER GUIDELINES**

- Go over the two-year course with the students and ask them questions on how they coped with the course.
- Encourage the students to reflect and outline the advantages of the programme.
- Ask the students to mention the disadvantages or problems they encountered during the programme.
- Facilitate development of an action plan where the student looks to the future.
RESOURCES

*Deaf People in Hearing Worlds* – The Open University (Student materials)

*Issues in Deafness* – The Open University (Student Material)

*Constructing Deafness* – The Open University (Background)

*From Silence to Speech* by Griffey Nicolas O.P. (Student Material)

*Children of Silence* by K. Robinson (Student Material)

*Language for Ben. A Child’s Right to Sign* by L. Fletcher (Background)

*The Hearing Impaired Child and the Family* by M. Nolan & I.G. Tucker (Background)

*The Mask of Benevolence: Disabling the Deaf Community*  
bym H. Lane (Student Material)

*The Deaf Way* by C. Erting & R. Johnstons (Editors). (Student Material)

*Disability Legislation and Deaf Workers* by George Montgomery  
(Background)
KEY ASSIGNMENTS

MODULE 4: DEAF PEOPLE IN THE WIDER WORLD

I did a translation exercise from English into Irish Sign Language, or vice versa

I prepared a chronology about the life of a famous deaf person

I interviewed an older deaf person about her/his experience of education

I designed a poster/collage presenting some aspect of deaf culture.