PLACEMENT

All signs start within an area known as the signing window. This extends from the top of the head to the waist and from just beyond each shoulder. The placement of the sign can be used to add meaning, and sometimes moves outside the window. For example, signs relating to the ground or floor or low down on a person (e.g. "socks") would be signed at waist level or at the bottom of the signing window. Signs relating to the sky or ceiling would be signed at the height or at the top of the signing window.

All of the illustrations in all of the SIGNALONG manuals are performed by a right-handed signer. Because we know that there are left and right-handed signers we refer to the "working hand" and "supporting hand" – REMEMBER YOU NEED TO BE CONSISTENT, this avoids confusion and gives a point of focus to the person you are signing to.
PARTS OF THE HAND

- Index (1st)
- Middle (2nd)
- Ring (3rd)
- Little (4th)
- Blade
- Palm knuckles
- Wrist
- Thumb
- Palm
- Blade
- Heel
# SIGNALONG LETTER SHAPES – based on BSL

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The last six shapes are based on the RIGHT handshape of British two-handed fingerspelling, but could also apply to the left hand. All shapes can be further clarified, e.g. working hand slightly bent, or loosely cupped etc. If a finger is described as extended it is generally understood that the rest of the hand is closed.
ADDITIONAL HANDSHAPES

“Y” HAND
INDEX HAND
THUMB HAND
LITTLE FINGER HAND

OPEN PINCHED HAND
CLOSED PINCHED HAND
PARALLEL BENT HAND
PARALLEL FLAT HAND

“L” HAND
TUCKED HAND
**ORIENTATION**

Orientation is a combination of **PALMS FACING** and **HANDS POINTING**.

**PALMS FACING**

There are SIX directions that the palms can face, these are palms facing:

- **IN** - face the opposite side of the signing window
- **OUT** - face their own side of the signing window
- **UP** - face the top of the signing window or ceiling
- **DOWN** - face the bottom of the signing window or floor
- **FORWARD** - face ahead of the signer
- **BACK** - face towards behind the signer

Remember, this is where the PALM is facing, and is irrespective of the handshape, if in doubt check using a flat hand before forming the handshape for the sign.
ORIENTATION

HANDS POINTING

There are SIX directions that the hands can point, these are hands pointing:

• **IN** - points to the opposite side of the signing window
• **OUT** - points to their own side of the signing window
• **UP** - points to the top of the signing window or ceiling
• **DOWN** - points to the bottom of the signing window or floor
• **FORWARD** - points to ahead of the signer
• **BACK** - points to towards behind the signer

Remember, this is where the HAND is pointing (from the wrist or heel of the hand to the palm knuckles), NOT THE FINGERS, and is irrespective of the handshape, if in doubt check using a flat hand before forming the handshape for the sign.

![Pointing In](image1)
![Pointing Out](image2)
![Pointing Up](image3)
![Pointing Down](image4)
![Pointing Forward](image5)
![Pointing Back](image6)

DIAGONALS

Sometimes an orientation falls between two planes and is described as a diagonal, with a “/” denoting the plane it lies between.
MOVEMENT

Once the handshape and orientation has been described, the sign can sometimes move. Movement can take place in the same six directions as the palms face and hands point.
A formation is when two hands, not necessarily in the same shape or orientation, move as though fixed together.
GUIDE TO MOVEMENT SYMBOLS

- Basic arrow to show direction of movement
- Hand moves backwards and forwards
- Broken movement
- Movement in one direction and then the other
- Repeated movement
- Hands move apart
- Sign ends with stress
- Hands or fingers open and then close
- Open shape closes
- Closed shape opens
- Contact on point drawn
- Small repeated movements