BHARATHIDASAN UNIVERSITY
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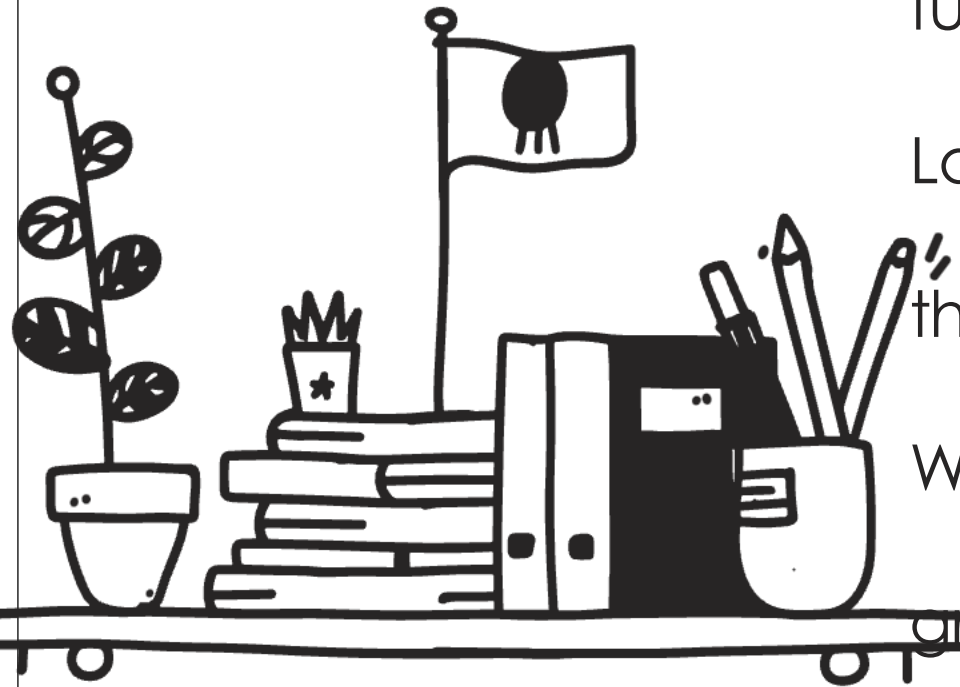| Programme Name	Bachelor of Computer Applications (BCA)
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Course title	Fundamentals of Sign Language
Unit	**II**
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Fundamentals of Indian Sign Language

This presentation will explore the fundamental aspects of Indian Sign Language, its relationship to English, and the importance of visual communication. We'll delve into basic vocabulary, grammar, and challenges, highlighting the benefits of bilingual proficiency in both spoken and signed languages.

What is Sign Language?

Sign language is a visual language, primarily used by the deaf community. It utilizes hand gestures, facial expressions, and body language to convey meaning.

It's not simply a set of symbols but a structured language with its own grammar, syntax, and vocabulary, differing across cultures and regions.

Importance of Sign Language

Inclusion

Sign language empowers the deaf community by providing a language of their own, fostering inclusion and communication.

Education

Sign language enables deaf individuals to access education, fostering academic achievement and personal growth.

Social Interaction

Sign language facilitates social interactions, creating a sense of community and belonging for deaf people.

Cultural Heritage

Sign language is a vital part of deaf culture, preserving traditions, history, and artistic expressions.

Indian Sign Language (ISL) is a visual language that uses hand shapes, facial expressions, gestures, and body language to communicate. It is primarily used by the Deaf community in India. Here are the basics:

1. Fingerspelling (Alphabet)

ISL has a manual alphabet where each letter of the English alphabet corresponds to a specific hand sign.

Fingerspelling is used for spelling out names, places, and new or unfamiliar words.

2. Numbers

ISL has unique hand signs for numbers, which are essential for communicating dates, quantities, and other numerical information.

3. Basic Vocabulary

Some commonly used words and phrases in ISL include:
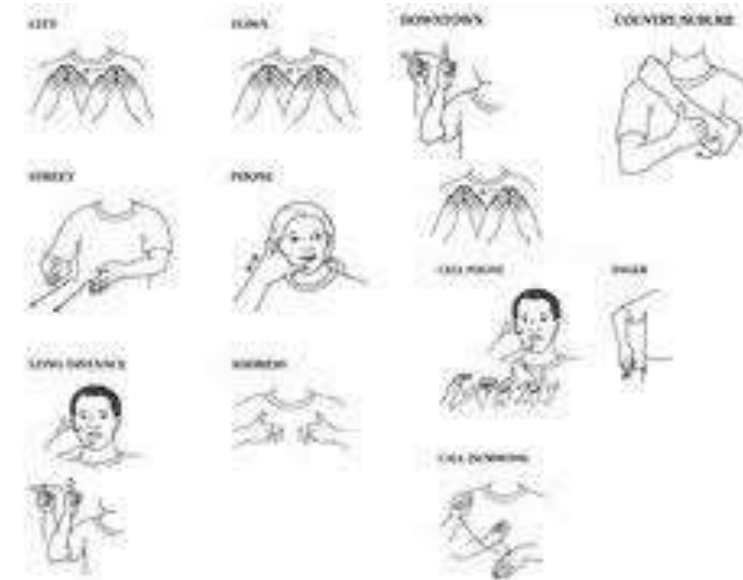
Hello: Wave your hand.

Thank you: Place your fingertips on your lips and move your hand outward.

Yes: Nod your fist.

No: Pinch your thumb and index finger together while shaking your head.

Sorry: Rub your chest in a circular motion.

Please: Move your open hand in a circular motion over your chest.

4. Grammar and Syntax
 ISL does not follow the word order of spoken languages like Hindi or English. It has its own grammar, often following a subject object verb (SOV) structure.
 Facial expressions and body movements are crucial for conveying emotions and grammatical aspects like questions or negation.
 5. NonManual Signs
 Facial expressions and head movements play a significant role in ISL.
   For questions, raise your eyebrows (for yes/no questions) or furrow them (for whquestions like "what" or "why").
   Nodding or shaking your head indicates affirmation or negation.
 6. Greetings and Common Phrases
 Learn simple phrases such as:
   "How are you?"
   "My name is [name]" (use fingerspelling for the name).
   "I am fine."
   "What is your name?"

English vs. Indian Sign Language

English

An auditory language, primarily based on spoken words.

Indian Sign Language

A visual language, relying on hand gestures, facial expressions, and body language.

Basic Sign Language Vocabulary

Family

Words like mother, father, brother, sister, etc. are often signed with gestures representing their roles.

Food

Sign language often mimics the shape or action of the food being described, like signing "apple" by making a circular motion.

Animals

Many animals have distinct signs, often replicating their sounds or movements, like "bird" being signed with a fluttering motion.

Numbers
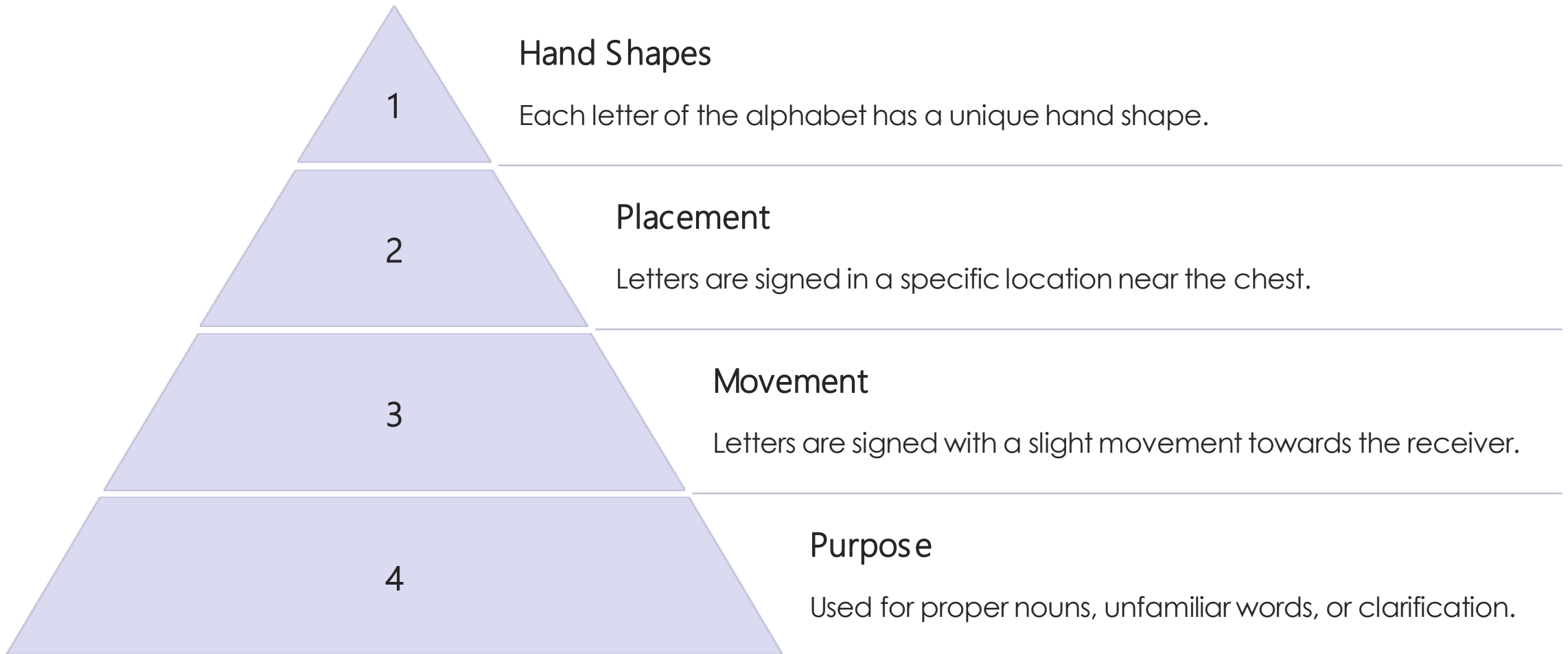
Numbers 1-5 have distinct hand shapes, while higher numbers are often formed by signing the tens digit first.

Fingerspelling in Sign Language

1 — **Hand Shapes**

Each letter of the alphabet has a unique hand shape.

2 — **Placement**

Letters are signed in a specific location near the chest.

3 — **Movement**

Letters are signed with a slight movement towards the receiver.

4 — **Purpose**

Used for proper nouns, unfamiliar words, or clarification.

Nonmanual Markers in Sign Language

1

Facial Expressions

Expresses emotions, questions, or grammatical structures.

2

Body Language

Adds emphasis, reinforces meaning, and indicates verb tense.

3

Head Movements

Conveys negation, agreement, or emphasis on specific aspects.

4

Eye Gaze

Directs attention, clarifies meaning, and establishes connection.

Sign Language Grammar and Syntax

Word Order

Sign language often uses a different word order than English, with verbs coming before nouns in some cases.

1

Sign Space

Sign language utilizes space to convey relationships, locations, and directionality.
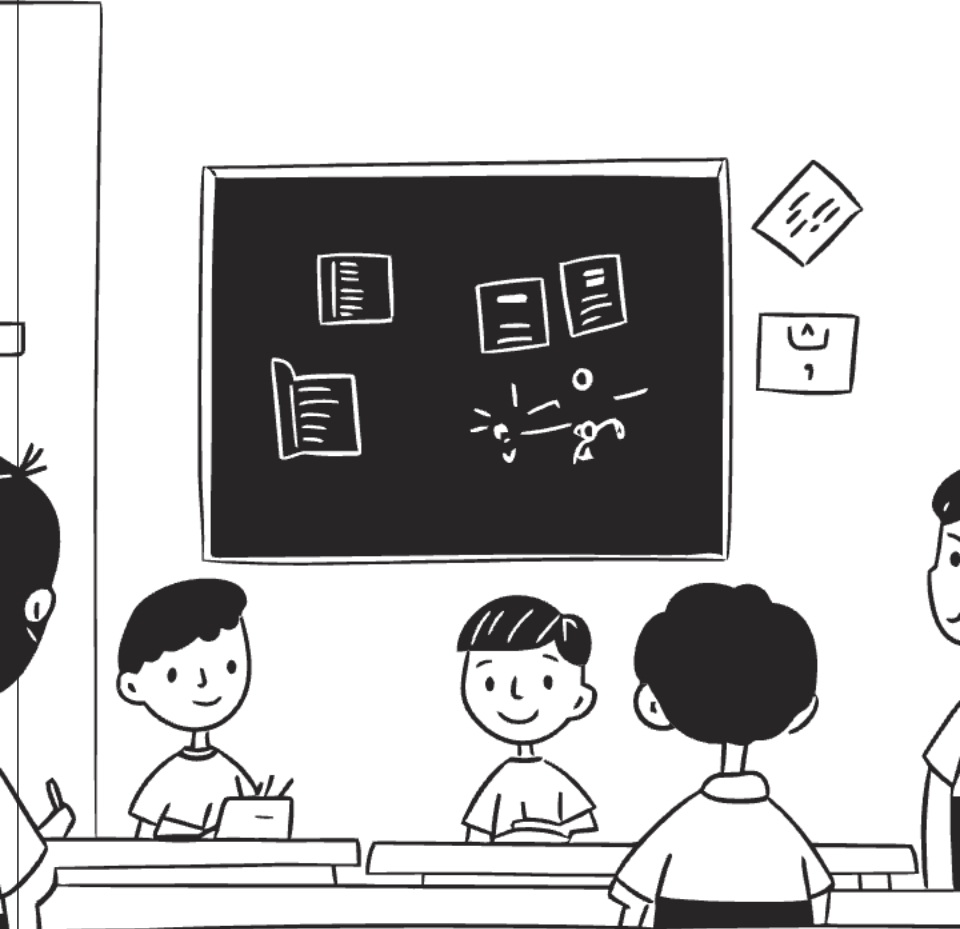
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2

Inflection

Sign language uses facial expressions, body language, and hand movements to indicate verb tense and agreement.

Challenges in Learning Sign Language

1

Visual Memory

Requires strong visual memory to recall signs and their meanings.
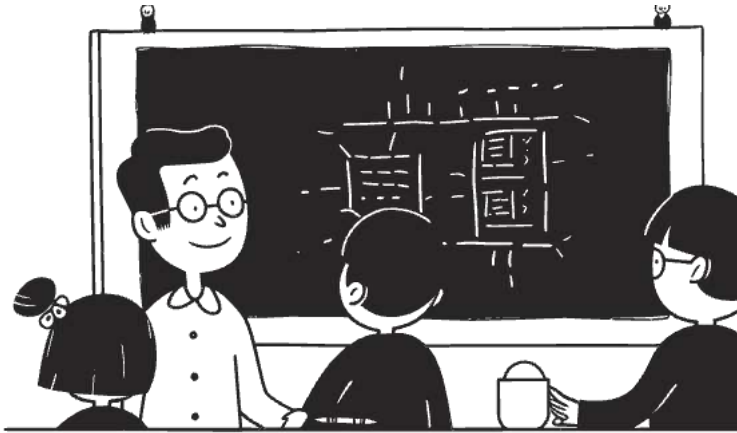
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Cultural Differences

Sign languages vary across cultures, requiring specific learning materials and immersion.

3

Practice and Exposure

Constant practice and interaction with deaf individuals are essential for

Benefits of Bilingual Proficiency

Some resources and ways to learn Indian Sign Language (ISL):

1. Online Resources and Videos

   YouTube Channels: Many channels provide free ISL tutorials.

   Check out ISH (Indian Sign Language Hub) or Deaf Enabled Foundation's ISL videos.

   ISLRTC Videos: The Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC) publishes instructional videos on ISL basics and advanced concepts.

2. ISL Dictionaries

   Download ISL dictionaries to learn hand signs for specific words.

   ISLRTC Dictionary: A comprehensive online ISL dictionary with video examples.

   Apps like SignAble and DeafBible have ISL vocabulary.

3. Courses and Workshops

   ISLRTC: Offers certified courses and workshops on ISL for beginners and professionals.

   Ali Yavar Jung National Institute of Speech and Hearing Disabilities (AYJNISHD): Provides regular ISL training programs.

   Local Deaf Associations: Reach out to Deaf associations in your city for interactive learning sessions.

Some resources and ways to learn Indian Sign Language (ISL):

4. Practice Tools

   ISL Flashcards: Create flashcards with pictures of hand signs and their meanings.

   Sign Language Games: Apps like "ASL Sign Lang Games" (though designed for ASL) can help practice fingerspelling and basic signs.

5. Join the Deaf Community

   Attend meetups, events, and cultural programs organized by Deaf associations.

   Volunteering in Deaf schools or NGOs can also enhance your practice.

6. Mobile Applications

   Sign Learn ISL: Features videos of ISL signs for easy learning.

   Indian Sign Language App: A beginnerfriendly app with basic vocabulary.