



Every April, we recognize American Sign Language (ASL) month. It's a time to celebrate the history, culture, and importance of ASL within the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community. ASL is not just a series of gestures – it is a full, complex language with its own grammar and regional dialects. For millions of people in the United States and Canada, ASL is a primary means of communication and a deep expression of identity and culture.

ASL is used by more than 500,000 people in the U.S. It emerged naturally within Deaf communities, and its beginnings trace back to early 19th-century America. Far from being a translation of English, ASL is an independent language with unique structures and expressions.

American Sign Language fosters accessibility and human connection. It allows people to communicate across boundaries of sound, ensuring that Deaf individuals have equal access to education, employment, healthcare, and daily interactions.

April was chosen as ASL month in honor of Thomas Hopkins Galludet, who co-founded the first school for the Deaf in the U.S. in 1817. This aided in the spread of ASL throughout Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities. His birthday is April 10, and his legacy continues to inspire advocacy and awareness even today.

Ways to celebrate ASL Month:

- Learn basic ASL signs like the alphabet, greetings, or phrases.
- Attend ASL performances or virtual events to experience the beauty of the language in storytelling, music, and poetry.
- Support Deaf creators and businesses by sharing or purchasing their work.

