



NZSL FACTS

Sign names

One aspect of Deaf culture is the use of unique, personal "sign names" as a way to identify someone without fully spelling out their name using sign language. Sign names are frequently used, for example, in introductions. You would introduce yourself by fingerspelling your name first then sign name.

Sign names are given to you from the Deaf community. You can't pick your own sign name. Sign names have two functions - to identify someone, and to show that they have a "membership" in the Deaf community.

But not everyone part of the Deaf community has a sign name - even if they grew up in the community their whole life! This commonly happens with CODAs (Child/ren of Deaf Adults).

If you have a bubbly temperament, your name sign may be something like "Giggle" or "Sunshine." Your name sign may show an interest or job, like "Dance" or "Writer," or it may be a physical characteristic feature, like "Curly hair" or "Beard."



It can sometimes take a while for Deaf people to decide on a sign name for someone. They need to consider their habits and mannerisms before being able to give one.

A person's sign name is usually drawn from:

- a personality trait, such as having a huge smile (BEAM)
- their appearance, such as wearing a lot of earrings (EARRINGS)
- a name (Angela might become ANGEL)
- their hobby or job (for example, CAMERA)
- first letter of their first name, e.g. James could be just signed "J"

So, you have a sign name?
Congratulations on a wonderful gift from the Deaf community!



SOURCES

Name Signs in the Deaf Community
[verywellhealth.com](https://www.verywellhealth.com)

Sign name
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sign_name

What's your Sign Name?
bbc.co.uk/ouch/features/sign_names.shtml

What's your sign name?
deafumbrella.com