



Level 1 British Sign Language Workbook.

First of all I would like to say welcome to **Level 1 British Sign Language** within the Learn British Sign Language The EASY Way! Series. I hope you will find it a rewarding journey.

As discussed in the DVD British Sign Language is a visual – gestural language recognised in its own right with a different grammatical structure compared with spoken English.

Overview of British Sign Language

British Sign Language or BSL for short is the name of the sign language which is used in England and the United Kingdom. It is the first language of approximately 150,000 deaf people in the British Isles. There are also many thousands of people who are not deaf who use BSL such as employers of Deaf people, relatives/friends and interpreters.

British Sign Language is a visual-gestural language without a conventional written form which has its own grammar utilising facial expressions (non manual features), hand shapes and upper body movements to convey meaning. BSL is a spatial and visual language and a lot of beginners think it is similar to mime (which it is not). The important thing to remember is that the grammar used in BSL is completely different to that used in everyday English.

Even though Britain and the USA speak English as the first language of their respective countries, British Sign Language is different to American Sign Language, also known as ASL. Again it is also the same difference with BSL and Irish Sign Language (ISL) and Northern Ireland Sign Language (NISL). This fact demonstrates that even though these countries have English as the first language the sign language used varies from country to country.

Just as in the English language, British Sign Language also has regional dialects. As an example, some signs used in the Northern parts of England may be different in the South of the country and vice versa. Within some regions you will also find 'local signs' that can be classed as slang. And just like local slang in any town or city, new phrases and words come in and out of fashion or just evolve over time.

British Sign Language users successfully campaigned the government of the United Kingdom and made BSL into an officially recognized British Language back in March 2003. British Sign Language is now recognized on the same level as other languages of the United Kingdom such as Scottish, Welsh and Gaelic.

Acquisition of Sign Language

Most Deaf children are not born into families where BSL is the first language of parents and siblings. This is because approximately 90% of deaf children are born to hearing parents, approximately 5% have one hearing and one deaf parent and only around 5 % are born into a family where both parents are deaf.

Most children of Deaf parents will acquire BSL naturally within the context of the family. This applies to both deaf and hearing children. However, the extent to which the hearing children develop and maintain competence in BSL varies considerably according to individual circumstances, experiences and attitudes. Once the hearing child begins to develop English this may influence the manner and extent of BSL usage. However it would be unusual for hearing children of Deaf parents not to make some use of BSL.

Deaf children who are born into hearing families will not usually acquire BSL or indeed English at the normal age of acquisition. Hearing parents have usually had little or no contact with the Deaf Community before the birth of their deaf child. Professionals such as medical consultants, teachers of deaf children, psychologists and audiologists have typically counselled parents to aim primarily at the development of spoken language skills in their deaf children.

Sign systems are sometimes developed within a single family. For instance, when hearing parents with no sign language skills have a deaf child, an informal system of signs will naturally develop, unless repressed by the parents. The term for these mini-languages is home sign (sometimes homesign or kitchen sign). Home sign arises due to the absence of any other way to communicate. Within the span of a single lifetime and without the support or feedback of a community, the child is forced to invent signals to facilitate the meeting of his or her communication needs. Although this kind of system is grossly inadequate for the intellectual development of a child and it comes nowhere near meeting the standards linguists use to describe a complete language, it is a common occurrence. No type of Home Sign is recognized as an official language.

Recently the more widespread recognition of the existence of the Deaf community and an increasing understanding of the nature of BSL has brought about some changes in both professional and family attitudes. A number of professionals now attempt to facilitate early access to sign language and some parents now actively seek to learn BSL and to provide an environment in which their children can develop signing competence.

What is meant by the term 'Deaf' and Deaf Culture

The word deaf is used differently in different contexts, and there is some controversy over its meaning and implications. In scientific and medical terms, deafness generally refers to a physical condition characterized by lack of sensitivity to sound. Notated as *deaf* with a lowercase *d*, this refers to the audiological experience of someone who is partially or wholly lacking hearing. In legal terms, deafness is defined by degree of hearing loss. These degrees include profound or total deafness (90 dB - 120 dB or more of hearing loss), severe (60 dB - 90 dB), moderate (30 dB - 60 dB), and mild deafness (10 dB - 30 dB of hearing loss). Both severe and moderate deafness can

be referred to as partial deafness or as hard of hearing, while mild deafness is usually called hard of hearing.

Within the Deaf community, the term "Deaf" is often capitalized when written, and it refers to a tight-knit cultural group of people whose primary language is signed, and who practice social and cultural norms which are distinct from those of the surrounding hearing community. This community does not automatically include all those who are clinically or legally deaf, nor does it exclude every hearing person. According to Baker and Padden, it includes any person or persons who "identifies him/herself as a member of the Deaf community, and other members accept that person as a part of the community." Most deaf people, at least in developed countries, have some knowledge of the dominant language of their country. This may include the ability to lip read, to speak, or to read and write. Having some knowledge of both the dominant language and sign language is called bimodal bilingualism.

Given a thriving Deaf Culture, controversy arises because those in the hearing community tend to think of deafness as a disability or social problem to be treated. From the other point of view, "treatments" are unneeded: a person who lives in the deaf community experiences every nuance of happiness, fulfilment, and emotional, spiritual, vocational, and intellectual edification that is possible within the hearing community. Given access to the Deaf community and identity, deafness is often not seen as a disability but as a positive attribute.

To many who are deaf, the label is one of identity, not audiological status. It is seen by them as akin to an ethnic division. It describes shared experiences in the world, not only those directly related to sight and sound (the increased awareness of one over the other) but also the cultural experiences that often inevitably follow from that. The term deaf then, used by many of those who are within the category, has little to do with an ability or inability to hear. Because of all this, and many other sociological forces, you will find some who identify themselves as deaf with much more ability to hear than many who self-identify as hearing or hard of hearing. In print, you can sometimes ascertain that the word is being used to reference the cultural identification because many people now capitalize the word when using it as a cultural label.

People who are part of Deaf culture typically use a sign language (such as British Sign Language) as their primary language and often emphatically see themselves as not disabled, but rather as members of a cultural or language minority. Members of this group use Deaf as a label of cultural identity much more than as an expression of hearing status. Hearing or hard of hearing people may also be considered culturally Deaf if they participate in Deaf culture and share Deaf cultural values; this is sometimes referred to as 'attitudinal deafness'. For example, children of deaf adults (CODAs) with normal hearing ability may consider themselves, and be considered, culturally Deaf or as members of the deaf community. In Deaf culture, a child of Deaf adult (or simply CODA) is a hearing person who was raised by a Deaf parent or guardian. Many CODAs have dual identity between Deaf and hearing cultures. A similar term KODA (Kids Of Deaf Adults), is sometimes used to refer to CODAs under the age of 18.

Because the children are hearing, but raised in a visual signing environment, they may face difficulty with social and cultural norms that differ from the norms within their deaf community, especially when attending hearing school. In some cases, CODAs may need speech therapy due to limited exposure to spoken language. Generally though, CODAs are exposed to spoken language models through

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extended family members, neighbours, and television. Though they are raised in a Deaf home, CODAs do not go through the same experiences as their parents, such as going to a deaf school. As such, many feel that they don't fully fit in with either the deaf world or the hearing world.

Components of British Sign Language

As explained above British Sign Language is a visual-gestural language which utilises various components to make it complete. Let's have a look at some of its features.

Finger spelling

The manual alphabet is used in sign languages, mostly for proper names and technical or specialised vocabulary. The use of fingerspelling was once taken as evidence that sign languages are simplified versions of oral languages, but in fact it is merely one tool among many. Fingerspelling is often used when there is no sign available or if the person does not remember the sign. Most manual alphabets use a unique hand sign to represent individual letters, distinguished by handshape and palm orientation, and sometimes movement, location and mouth patterns. The handshapes are often based on stylised representations of the shapes of the letters as they are written, but may be arbitrary signs, or a combination of iconic and arbitrary signs.

The speed and clarity of fingerspelling also varies between different signing communities. Generally speaking you tend to find that older Deaf people use more fingerspelling than younger deaf people which is often connected to their educational upbringing.

When persons fluent in sign language read fingerspelling, they do not usually look at the signer's hand(s), but maintain eye contact and look at the face of the signer as is normal for sign language. People who are learning fingerspelling often find it impossible to understand it using just their peripheral vision and must look directly at the hand of someone who is fingerspelling. Please get used to looking directly at the persons face and lip pattern and you will gradually find it easier to understand.

Normally one of the first lessons that students learn is the fingerspelling alphabet.

Spatial grammar and simultaneity

Sign languages exploit the unique features of the visual medium. Oral language is linear. Only one sound can be made or received at a time. Sign language, on the other hand, is visual; hence a whole scene can be taken in at once. Information can be loaded into several channels and expressed simultaneously. As an illustration, in English one could utter the phrase, "I drove here". To add information about the drive, one would have to make a longer phrase or even add a second, such as, "I drove here along a winding road," or "I drove here. It was a nice drive." However, in British Sign Language, information about the shape of the road or the pleasing nature of the drive can be conveyed simultaneously with the verb 'drive' by inflecting the motion of the hand, or by taking advantage of non-manual signals such as body posture and facial expression, at the same time that the verb 'drive' is being signed.

Therefore, whereas in English the phrase "I drove here and it was very pleasant" is longer than "I drove here", in British Sign Language the two may be the same length.

Placement

Placement is used in relation to the placing or establishing of signs in space. The signer locates or places particular referents within the signing space in different types of relationship with the signer and with the other referents. Once a signer has set up the 'placement' of a particular sign- i.e. 'the house is over there' by signing the word 'house' and 'putting it in a space in front of you' - i.e. 'placing it' then the signer can use his eye gaze and directional verbs to make reference to this particular sign.

Don't worry if this sounds complicated! It will become a lot clearer as you start to learn British Sign Language and put what you see and learn into practise.

Non manual features

Non manual features are actions produced by any part of the body other than the hands. They include actions of the eyes, mouth, cheeks, face, head, shoulders and torso.

Non manual features have different types of function within the structure of the language and are an extremely important aspect of BSL.

Handshapes

There are numerous handshapes that are individually categorised in BSL. Groups of handshapes are known as Classifiers which incorporate specific detail of the referent by the handshape itself.

A few examples of different classifiers can be described as:

Handling/grasping - you can use different handshapes that show you how you physically hold, or use something. For example sewing with a needle, or doing the ironing. These are described as iconic signs as they often 'look' how you actually perform something.

Flat surfaces- You can have a different handshape that will indicate if something has a flat surface such as 'floor' 'door' or 'wall'.

People and vehicles- This group of classifiers have a function that is similar to the use of pronouns in English. For example different handshapes can indicate if you are looking up at something, if one person is involved in an action or many people. There are also various handshapes that indicate if you are talking about a vehicle or other mode of transport.

Signing structure

All languages use different kinds of sentence structure, but usually one type is seen as most common. In English this is the SVO sentence (subject-verb-object) for example in the sentence'

'Sophie bought a car'.

(Sophie is the subject) (Bought is the verb) (Car is the object)

Another type of sentence structure is called Topic Comment Structure. This type of structure is not commonly used in English although it is sometimes...however in BSL it is used so often that people tend to describe BSL as a Topic Comment Structure. It works by giving the topic first, the signer then is able to focus and give more detail on the comment that follows.

So using the sentence above as explained in the English SVO structure in BSL the phrase would be signed:

'Car...(you would point to it after signing it) who bought?....Sophie'

Different sign systems often used in schools

Signed English (SE)

This is a system that is often used in schools to teach deaf children the grammatical aspects of English, such as using word endings and plurals etc. For example for the word 'walking' (the sign for 'walk' would be used and then the ending of that particular word would be fingerspelt.) Past tenses would also be shown along with other features. This is not a language in its own right it is just a tool for teaching English.

Sign Supported English (SSE)

Sign Supported English is similar to the above system, although it doesn't fingerspell or fully represent the endings of words, 'ing', 'ed' etc. BSL signs are used but follow the format and structure of English. For example if the phrase " I went shopping today and it was busy" was signed in SSE then the signs that were used would follow the same structure as the sentence. However if this was signed in BSL then the order of the signs would be slightly different and would most likely follow this format: " me shopping today...busy" this would be accompanied by the appropriate facial expressions etc to show that it was busy.

The balance of BSL signs to English varies greatly depending on the signer's knowledge of the two languages. A single sign is often differentiated into a number of English words by clearly mouthing the word. Thus in order to comprehend SSE well, one needs good lipreading (speechreading) skills, as well as a good knowledge of English grammar.

Paget Gorman Sign System

The Paget Gorman Sign System was originated in Britain by Sir Richard Paget in the 1930s and developed further by Lady Grace Paget and Dr Pierre Gorman to be used with children with speech or communication difficulties, such as deaf children. It is a grammatical sign system which reflects normal patterns of English. The system uses 37 basic signs and 21 standard hand postures, which can be combined to represent a large vocabulary of English words, including word endings and verb tenses. The signs do not correspond to natural signs of the Deaf community. The system was widespread in Deaf schools in the UK from the 1960s to the 1980s, but since the

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emergence of British Sign Language and the BSL-based Signed English in deaf education, its use is now largely restricted to the field of speech and language disorder.

Makaton

This is a system of communication that uses a vocabulary of "key word" manual signs and gestures to support speech, as well as graphic symbols to support the written word. It is used by and with people who have communication, language or learning difficulties. This includes people with articulation problems (for example, people with cerebral palsy), people with cognitive impairments which might be associated with conditions such as autism or Down syndrome, and their families, colleagues and carers. It can be used to help the development of speech and language in children, or by adults as a means of functional communication for every day use.

Communication using Makaton involves speaking (when possible) while concurrently signing key words. The sign vocabulary is taken from the local deaf sign language (with some additional 'natural gestures'), beginning with a 'core' list of important words. However, the grammar generally follows the spoken language rather than the sign language. Makaton does make limited use of the spatial grammatical features of directionality and placement of signs. As Makaton is used in over 40 countries world wide, Makaton Keyword Signing varies from country to country.

Makaton was developed in the early 1970s in the UK for communication with residents of a large hospital who were both deaf and intellectually disabled. The name is a blend of the names of the three people who devised it: Margaret Walker, Kathy Johnston and Tony Cornforth.

Makaton is run by the MVDP (Makaton Vocabulary Development Project) which controls the copyright to Makaton and depends on the associated income for its funding. This restricts the use of Makaton pictograms to licensed educational programs and home use.

Other, simpler forms of manual communication have also been developed. They are neither natural languages nor even a code that can fully render one. They communicate with a very limited set of signals about an even smaller set of topics and have been developed for situations where speech is not practical or permitted, or secrecy is desired.

Sign Language Etiquette

When you are communicating with Deaf and Hard of Hearing people there are various communication strategies that need to be remembered. The most important thing to be aware of is that for communication to flow naturally and smoothly a signer needs space for making his own signs and he needs to be able to see other signers from the waist upwards to get the full visual message. Bearing this in mind signers tend to stand or sit further apart than speakers of spoken languages do. A benefit of this of course is that signed communications can carry on at a distance or other situations that is impossible for speech!

It must be remembered that communication can be affected by 'visual noise' such as dim lights, glare, dazzle, bold wall patterns and anything in the physical visual

background that may be distracting....this is the same as trying to have a spoken conversation where there is a loud motorbike going past, or if you are in a group of people and everyone is talking at the same time.

There are rules and etiquette for smooth communication and conversation that needs to be followed with sign language the same as spoken languages. So first of all let's focus on actually getting the attention of a Deaf person to begin communicating with them.

Getting attention

To start communicating with a deaf person it is necessary to get their attention. This can be done in various ways. If the deaf person is quite close to you and is looking away, you can gently tap him on his shoulder or arm (if you tap anywhere else then this is considered rude). If he is further away you can wave your hand. Another possibility is to make a vibration that will go through to reach that person- for example banging your fist on a table. The first 2 options are quite common- i.e. a wave of the hand or of an object to get the visual attention. This is usual for individual people.

In a group it is slightly different. It could be a possibility to get the attention of a bystander with the methods above to relay your tap to the person you want to get the attention of. This could in effect result in a domino effect and have a whole chain of people tapping each other in order to get the attention of the desired person.

With larger groups another possibility is to flick the lights on and off which would then attract the attention of the whole group- which is useful obviously for announcements of some kind to the large group.

Some ways of getting attention are not considered polite. For example you may see children trying to get the attention of their Deaf parents by trying to turn their heads by tugging at their chin. This form of attracting attention is not acceptable - unless the deaf people concerned are in the middle of an argument and NEED the attention!

Talking of incorrect methods.....this also applies if people flick the lights on and off purely to get the attention of only 1 individual.....this must be for a group.

Once the person has been contacted by a tap or a wave and it is evident that communication is desired then the person receiving the signed message is expected to keep eye contact until a natural break occurs. It is normal for the signer and the recipient to be engaged in signed conversation and at least for one of them to be nodding (the equivalent in the spoken language of saying 'oh oh ok alright etc) Normal phatic communication as described earlier is classed as being engaged in a conversation throughout indicating that they are taking note of this signed conversation.

Both signed language and spoken language still follow the same rules of etiquette and turn taking but obviously in a slightly different way. For example in signed languages it is customary practice to 'catch' the signers' attention when wanting to make a contribution/interrupt or take your turn by just raising your hands ready to sign. If the person who was originally signing is happy for you to take your turn then his hands will drop down...allowing you to contribute.

The receiver can interrupt the sender by looking away or by waving for attention. He may also catch the sender's eye by shaking his head or using a sign to indicate disagreement.....this is similar to the spoken language.

The sender shows that he has finished by dropping his hands from the signing space and looking at the receiver.

Technology and Equipment Used by Deaf People

There are various aids and equipment that are both used by Deaf and Hard of Hearing people throughout the UK. A well known provider of such equipment is from The Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID). For more information then please go to www.rnid.org.uk. Sometimes social services provide this equipment free of charge on a loan basis.

Let's look at some types of equipment that is used.

Listening Devices

With regards to television, radio and conversation people often make the mistake of thinking if you can make the sound louder then everything will be much clearer and immediately accessible to deaf people.

Bearing in mind the groups of Deaf and Hard of Hearing people that we discussed earlier in this book it is not surprising that they would most likely use different equipment to suit their needs.

What does listening equipment do?

Listening equipment makes sound louder or 'amplifies' it. It is usually available with accessories including headphones, stetoclip headsets, a neckloop or an ear hook, making it useful in a range of situations at home or at work. Listening equipment can help you hear:

- conversations at home or in your car
- on your phone or mobile phone
- at meetings and lectures
- the TV or the stereo.

Listening equipment can be used whether or not a hearing aid is worn. The type of listening equipment and the accessory that is chosen will depend on the level of the hearing loss.

A basic model has a box containing an amplifier, a built-in microphone to pick up sound, and a dial or push button volume control to make sound louder or quieter. More advanced models have some additional features:

- Automatic Gain Control (AGC). This feature automatically reduces the amplification on very loud sounds
- A tone control. This lets you change treble tones that can help make speech clearer. Some may also have a switch that can reduce low frequency (bass tone) background sounds

- a socket to plug in an extension microphone - this lets you listen to conversation, the TV, radio or stereo system from across the other side of the room.
- Connection leads that plugs directly into your TV (scart socket) or stereo system. This usually gives better sound quality than an extension microphone
- a 'T' switch to listen to a loop system

There are various accessories available for listening equipment and what is chosen is dependent on the level of the hearing loss and whether or not a hearing aid is worn.

Over-the-ear and in-the-ear headphones, and stetoclip headsets

Most listening equipment comes with over-the-ear, in-the-ear (button style) headphones or stetoclip headsets.

In-the-ear headphones stop sound from leaking out too much, which means that other people around you cannot hear what you are listening to. They may be louder than over-the-ear headphones because they fit into the ear.

Over-the-ear and in-the-ear headphones are suitable for people with normal hearing but you may also find them useful if you have a mild to moderate hearing loss.

Stetoclip headsets are similar to headphones but tend to produce a louder sound, so you may find them useful if you have a moderate hearing loss. The frequency range of stetoclip headsets is not usually as wide as over-the-ear or in-the-ear headphones so their sound quality is not as good. You should take extra care when you use them because they are very loud.

Neckloops

If you wear a hearing aid, a neckloop may suit you better than headphones. A neckloop consists of a loop of wire that goes round your neck. It plugs into the headphone socket on most listening equipment.

You need to switch your hearing aid to the 'T' position to pick up sound via the loop.

You can plug in a neckloop into the headphone socket on your personal stereo, stereo system or your TV. You may need an extension lead when using a neck loop with a TV.

The signal from a neckloop is always in mono sound - you cannot get stereo sound. Mono means that you hear the same sound in both your left and right sides when you listen through headphones or loudspeakers. Stereo means that the left and right sides carry different but related sounds.

Ear hooks

An ear hook works in a similar way to a neckloop but it hooks over your ear next to your hearing aid. To pick up the sound signal from the ear hook, switch your hearing aid to the 'T' position. You can use an ear hook on either your left or right ear, depending on which side you use your hearing aid.

You can also get a 'dual version' ear hook, for both ears. You can use these to listen to your personal stereo if you use hearing aids in both ears.

Silent' headphones - headphones with a magnetic signal

If you prefer not to use neckloops or ear hooks, you may find a pair of 'silent' headphones useful. They look like headphones but produce a magnetic signal like a neckloop or earloop so you'll need to switch your hearing aid to 'T' to use them.

You can get different versions of 'silent' headphones. Some have sound on one side and a magnetic signal on the other while others have a magnetic output on both sides for stereo listening.

Silent headphones can be used with most personal stereos and you can also use them with your TV and stereo equipment if you have an extension lead.

Noise cancelling headphones

These will suit you if you have mild to moderate hearing loss and you do not wear a hearing aid. Noise cancelling headphones reduce background noise, helping you to focus on the sound you are trying to listen to. They can be useful in very noisy environments, such as on an aeroplane.

Standard headphones

Some standard headphones naturally produce a magnetic signal that your hearing aid may be able to pick up when it is switched to 'T'. You may find that you need to turn up the volume control on your equipment and/or your hearing aid to get a loud enough sound. People around you may be able to hear the sounds coming out from the headphones and this may annoy them if you turn the volume up very high.

Cordless listening equipment

You may find cordless listening equipment useful if you do not like wearing equipment with wires, or you want to be able to move around a room easily.

You can use cordless listening equipment in a range of situations; for example at home, during conversations, or when watching your TV.

Cordless infrared headphones

You can get these from high street stores but they are not specifically designed for deaf people. However, they can be useful if you have a mild to moderate hearing loss.

Cordless infrared headphones have two parts - an infrared transmitter and cordless infrared headphones.

The infrared transmitter plugs into the scart or phono socket on your TV or stereo system and you wear the cordless headphones.

Most cordless infrared headphones have a volume control and are powered with rechargeable batteries. This can make the headphones quite bulky and heavy to wear.

You have to use the headphones in the same room as the transmitter because infrared signals cannot go through walls.

Cordless FM headphones

You can also get cordless FM (Frequency Modulation) headphones from high street stores but they are not designed specifically for deaf people. However, like cordless infrared headphones, they can be useful if you have a mild to moderate hearing loss.

Cordless FM headphones look and work like infrared cordless headphones, but instead of using infrared signals between the transmitter and headphone they use radio signals. The main advantage of cordless FM headphones is that they can pick up the signal from the transmitter anywhere in the home - and depending on the range, even in the garden.

The next device that is used by deaf and hard of hearing people is the minicom or also described as a text phone.

Minicom/Textphone

A textphone is telephone device that has a keyboard and a display screen. You type what you want to say rather than speaking into a mouthpiece. You can use a textphone instead of a voice telephone if you are deaf or if you have problems with your speech.

In the UK, companies often use the word 'Minicom' rather than textphone. In fact, Minicom is a widely used brand of textphone.

When using a textphone to call another textphone user, simply type your message using the keyboard and the other person can read what you have written on their display screen. Whatever the person on the end of the line is typing back to you will come up on your screen.

People use abbreviations when making a textphone call so it is useful to learn these:

GA 'Go Ahead'. This is used after the end of each piece of conversation. It tells the other person that you have finished and that it is their turn to type a reply.

BIBI 'Bye Bye'. This is usually followed by SK.

SK 'Stop Keying'. This tells the other person that it is the end of your conversation and you want to end the call.

When you get a text reply on your screen you need to type your response, followed by GA. Your message shows on the other person's textphone and their reply then appears on your screen. The conversation carries on until one of you types SK and ends the call. You will pick up other useful short forms the more you use a textphone.

If you're using a textphone to call a voicephone user, you will not be able to connect to them directly. When they pick up the telephone, they will simply hear a pre-recorded message such as 'Hearing impaired caller, please use a textphone' or they will just get silence. You need to call them using a 'relay service'. At the moment, the only national text relay service in the UK is RNID Typetalk. It is operated by the BT service BT TextDirect.

How does RNID Typetalk work?

If you have a textphone and want to contact someone with a telephone, just add a BT TextDirect prefix to the full national, international or mobile number you are calling. Then one of RNID Typetalk's Relay Assistants will join the call to relay text-to-voice and voice-to-text calls.

Use the following codes:

- Textphone users calling telephone users – dial **18001**
- Telephone users calling textphone users – dial **18002**
- If you need emergency services – police, fire, ambulance, coastguard or mountain rescue services – dial **18000** and you will be connected directly. You do not need to dial 999.

If you are a textphone user calling another textphone user and you do not want a Typetalk Relay Assistant to relay your call, put **180015** in front of the number you are dialling. Even if you connect with a hearing person, a Typetalk Relay Assistant will not join your call. If applicable, you will still receive a rebate on the text part of the call. BT TextDirect also provides network messages in text or voice to let you know if the number you are calling is ringing, busy, or wrong.

Alerting Devices

There are various 'alerting' devices which enable the deaf or hard of hearing person to be 'alerted' to certain sounds within their own home. For example if the alarm clock goes off, the baby in the cot is crying, someone is at the door, or indeed if there was a fire.

Examples of alerting devices would be alarm clocks, baby monitors, doorbells, multi alerting systems, and smoke alarms.

The Royal National Institute for the Deaf is a good source of information for alerting devices. Some social services departments also provide this equipment.

Deaf Organisations.

This section will discuss briefly about a few Deaf Organisations that are established with a link to them directly for additional information.

The [British Deaf Association](#) is the largest Deaf organisation in the UK that is run by Deaf people. They represent the Sign Language community, which is united by shared experiences, history and, most importantly, by British Sign Language (BSL).

The BDA wants to see a society where Sign Language users have the same rights, responsibilities, opportunities and quality of life as everyone else. BSL was
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recognised as an official British language on 18th March 2003, but it still does not have any legal protection. This means that Deaf Sign Language users do not have full access to vital information and services, including education, health and employment. The BDA are fighting to see an end to this.

So, the BDA is campaigning for the legislation of BSL. They are also working to gain the right for all Deaf children to receive bilingual education, using BSL and English, and the right to quality and choice in education.

The BDA want to see an end to discrimination against Sign Language users, both Deaf and hearing.

The [British Deaf History Society](#) is an organisation which as the name suggests researches into Deaf History and Influential Deaf Individuals. They hold regular events throughout the UK and have various resources available.

[Signature](#)

Signature (previously known as Council for the Advancement of Communication with Deaf People CACDP) is a UK recognised awarding body and registered charity whose aim is to improve communication between deaf and hearing people. Signature offers a portfolio of qualifications in sign language and other forms of communication with deaf and deafblind people, including qualifications in:

British Sign Language (BSL), Irish Sign Language (ISL), Deaf and Deafblind Awareness, Communication Tactics with Deaf and Deafblind People, Lipspeaking Notetaking, and Interpreting (BSL/English).

All of Signature's qualifications are accredited by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and appear on the National Qualifications Framework. Courses leading to Signature qualifications are provided at over 850 colleges and other centres around the UK.

Signature also works alongside the [NRCPD](#) (The National Registers of Communication Professionals working with Deaf and Deafblind People) who are the UK registration body for professional British Sign Language Interpreters*, Lipspeakers, Deafblind Interpreters (Manual) and Speech to Text Reporters. An online directory is available for service providers who require a Language Service Professional (LSP).

*excluding Scotland

[UK Deaf Sport](#) aims to enable Deaf people to benefit from, excel at and fulfil their potential through sport.

UK Deaf Sport influences positive changes and opportunities in sports culture, policy and procedure by brokering partnerships with key decision makers and sports councils and national governing body of sports.

UK Deaf Sport is the recognised National Governing Body for Deaf Sport in the UK and currently receives funding from UK Sport. UKDS are also affiliated to ICSD and EDSO.

[Hearing Dogs for Deaf People](#) was launched at the world famous Crufts Dog Show in 1982. Since then they have continued to train dogs to alert deaf people to specific sounds, whether in the home, workplace or public buildings.

To date they have placed more than 1,300 hearing dogs throughout England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Channel Islands.

The [Royal National Institute for the Deaf](#) offer a range of services for deaf and hard of hearing people and provide information and support on all aspects of deafness, hearing loss and tinnitus. As a membership charity, RNID aim to achieve a radically better quality of life for deaf and hard of hearing people. Their work involves campaigning and lobbying, providing services, training, products and equipment, and undertaking medical and technical research. RNID work throughout the UK.

[Type Talk](#) is an organisation that facilitates making calls through TextDirect textphone users enabling them to have automatic access to the Tynetalk Relay Service, the new TextDirect Relay service for people with communication difficulties.

There are an estimated 450,000 deaf, hard of hearing, speech-impaired and deafblind people in the UK that cannot use a standard telephone. For them textphone communications provides a vital lifeline along with TextDirect and Tynetalk.

Along with access to Tynetalk TextDirect converts ringing and busy tone into text messages, which are displayed on the textphone display and allows the telephone companies to provide a text rebate.

If you use a textphone you can make a call through TextDirect by dialling prefix 18001 before the telephone number you want. TextDirect is available from most UK telephone networks.

TextDirect is provided by BT, Tynetalk is managed by the RNID and both are supported by the UK Telephone Industry.

That's the end of this Level 1 British Sign Language workbook and I hope that you have enjoyed your sign language journey so far.

For the next level in British Sign Language please take a look at www.learnsignlanguage.co.uk Level 2 British Sign Language.