

## Grammar Guidance – HOLME

Phonologically, Auslan has 5 parameters (**HOLME**):

- **Handshape** – refers to the shape of the hand used in the sign. Two signs with very different meanings can be very similar except for a slight difference in the hand shape. E.g. 'beach' and 'sheep', or 'work' and 'talk'. There are 38 major handshapes with 28 variants which brings it to a total of 66.
- **Orientation** – is the direction of the palm and fingers and where they face. Possibilities include the palms and fingers oriented left, right, up, down, towards, or away from the person signing. E.g. 'weigh' and 'balance', or 'paper' and 'drug', or 'in' and 'under'.
- **Location** – is the location of the sign in relation to the body or space surrounding the signer. E.g. 'sister' and 'dinner', or 'yellow' and 'white', or 'mum' and 'dog'. Interestingly, signs are often connected to the body area that they pertain to e.g. Head (think, remember, know), Stomach (frustrated, angry), and Heart (generous, romance).
- **Movement** – refers to the movement and direction the sign takes. Some signs move the hand away from the body, in a circle or spiral, in an arc, or squiggle across the signing space. E.g. 'brother' and 'paper', or 'fun' and 'water'. Movements may also differ in:
  - size- big (macro) or small (micro), e.g. 'big' or 'little';
  - orientation of the hands, e.g. 'changed-my-mind', or 'presentation';
  - the number of movements: the sign may have one movement at the beginning and repeated movements at the end, e.g. 'hearing' or 'memorial'; or it may be repeated once or several times, e.g. 'after' [lunch] = one movement, and [see you] 'after' = repeated movements, or 'later' [on] = one movement, and 'later' [as in after] = repeated movements; and in noun-verb pairs, movement shows which sign is the noun and which sign is the verb, e.g. the noun 'key' uses repeated movements and the related verb 'lock' uses one movement. Another example is the noun 'window' has repeated movements and the related verb 'open-window' has one movement;
  - movement in the fingers, e.g. 'salt', 'two-more', 'worm';
  - intensity – the movement can change the meaning of a sign, e.g. 'rain' and 'downpour'. This would also include the use of non-manual features, stress and speed.
- **Expression** – non-manual features such as facial expression and movements of the head, shoulders and body, e.g. 'cheat' and 'sly', or 'plain' and 'sad'. Facial expressions can also be used as a grammatical marker, e.g. questions vs statements. Expressional changes may include:
  - Eye gaze, direction and how you move your eyes, e.g. 'far' (narrowed eyes), 'soon' (eyes widen). Other examples are 'look' and 'stare';
  - Lip patterns, e.g. 'just-recently' (grimacing), 'lost' (pouting), 'revenge' (pursing), 'surprised' (gaping), 'oh-I-see' (rounding the lips), 'phew' (blowing out air), 'exaggerate' (poking out the tongue); and,
  - Mouth movements: signs that uses specific mouth movements, e.g. 'strange' (buh-buh), 'finish' (fsh), 'outstanding' (pah).

