

Giving up Smoking

Signed by Tom Johnston

Introduction:

We know that not everyone signs in the same way, and that for some students, encounters with idiosyncratic ways of signing can be a challenge. However, as a learner, it is important to view the rich variety of styles and dialects as an exciting part of the learning process.

Activity aims:

This activity will help you develop some coping strategies for dealing with unknown language, correctly identify language features and then apply them to a different context.

Level:

Intermediate

Time needed:

Approx 2-3 hours

Pre-task activity:

1) In groups or on your own, write down all the associated vocabulary that you might expect to see within the topic 'Giving up smoking'. (e.g. Nicotine patch)

Tip: This activity is very useful as it will help you prepare for what you are about to see. It can also help you to recognise new signs or fingerspelling.

2) Watch through the BSL clip a few times and write down the gist of the story. Don't worry if you don't get all the information first, second or even third time as the activity will give you extra clues about the meaning.

Language Awareness Activities

1

a) The signer takes on several different characters in this piece. Find four clues to indicate that the signer has changed into the Doctor's role (referred to as roleshift).

i.

ii.

iii.

iv.

v.

b) Using the roleshift techniques that you have identified above, can you create your own short BSL conversation between a doctor and a patient either based on your own experience or perhaps your favourite medical tv show?



Tip: Sometimes learners move their body too much when showing a BSL conversation between two people, when all that is needed is some subtle shoulder movement and eye gaze. If this is something that you do, sign your conversation with your back against a wall and try to keep your shoulders touching it.

2

a) The signer uses a generational sign for 'Nurse' (1.03). Can you think of any reason why this is the older sign for nurse?

b) Many generational signs are driven by changes in social values and technology. Can you think of signed examples for the following terms and describe them in your own words below? If not, ask your tutor or friends at the Deaf Club.



	Old sign(s)	New sign(s)
Phone		
Train		
Washing machine		
Deaf (and dumb)*		
Black (skin colour)		

*The old sign for deaf and dumb is often considered offensive to the modern Deaf community.

c) When you next go the Deaf Club or your BSL class, have a think about when the signs you are using may have entered the language. Are they exclusive to the younger generation (facebook, twitter, texting) or are they only used by the older members of the community (courting, coalman, video tape).

3

The signer often relies on fingerspelling to convey concepts that may or may not have a sign. The table below has done the hard part and written out the fingerspelling for you. Your job is to look for the clues that the signer signs before or after the word that enables you to fill in the gaps and put the word in context.

Tip: Fingerspelling can be very stressful for learners (and tutors!) as the spelling may be very fast and not always accurate. Instead of looking for each letter, look for contextual clues that may help you predict what is about to appear.

Time	Contextual clues	Fingerspelling*
0.23		D.R.L.E.E.
0.45		L.E.G.M.
0.54		A.D.A.Y.
1.13		S.O.O.T.
1.27		O.F.D.I.S.E. (of disease)
1.30		N.I.C.O.T.I.N.A
2.11		A.T.A.L.L.
2.49		B.A.N.A.N.A.

*Fingerspelling is often glossed using capital letters separated by full stops

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a) Using the table below, sign the following expressions of time in column 4a.



b) When you have done that, find examples of each phrase in the video clip and note down the exact time they were used. List them in the relevant row under 4b.

4a. How would you sign the following?	4b.Examples you have found within the signer's language (include exact time on clip)
A while ago	
(have been coughing) for a while	
1 hour later	
Between the 3rd and the 4th day	
Over the last 30 years	
After 4 months	

Did you see any other examples of adverbs of time?

a) Write down in your own words what you understand the following terms to mean and give examples of how they are used in BSL.

Negation -

Affirmation -

b) Check your answers using the glossary and amend where necessary.

c) Next, list some BSL examples that you can see within the video clip.

Affirmation:

- i.
- ii.
- iii.
- iv.

Negation:

- i.
- ii.
- iii.
- iv.

d) Have you noticed any patterns repeated in the above examples? Consider how you might turn these observations into general rules that would help a BSL student learn how to use negation/affirmation when constructing a sentence. Look at the example below and create two more.

- i. Use a headshake (negation) or head nod at the end of the sentence
- ii.
- iii.

When you are happy with your rules, check your answers and move to the next task.

e) Sign the following sentences using one of the rules/structures that you have identified above and add your own reason or excuse!

- i. I didn't go to the cinema last night because I.....
- ii. I did visit my friend's house last weekend because.....
- iii. My brother didn't get the job because.....
- iv. I didn't like the holiday campsite because.....
- v. I never watch TV in the mornings because
- vi. I forgot to pay my electricity bill because



f) Using the sentences above, can you change the negation into an affirmation structure (and vice versa) and then sign the sentences again?



6

Well done – you've nearly completed the worksheet. Your final learning activity is to take a moment to think back over the tasks you have attempted and the language you have seen. Jot down what you have learned, or any areas where your understanding has deepened (e.g. new signs, new linguistic terms, BSL grammatical features etc.)