



BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE – LEVEL 1

Level 1 Classes: British Sign Language is the sign language used in the UK. It is the preferred language of over 87,000 Deaf people in the UK for whom English may be a second or third language (Source BDA). It is estimated that currently there are over 11 million people within the UK who have some form of hearing loss, that is one in six of the population. Figures are estimated to rise to 15.6 million by 2035, one in five! It is also estimated that there are 900,000 people in the UK with severe or profound hearing loss (Source Action on Hearing Loss). As a result of this many of us will encounter individuals with a hearing impairment at some point in our lives.

The language makes use of space and involves movement of the hands, face, head and body language. Many thousands of people who are not Deaf use BSL, as hearing relatives of deaf people, sign language interpreters or as a result of other contact with the British Deaf community.

This BSL course is suitable for those with no prior knowledge of the language who would like to interact with family and friends and others with hearing difficulties. It covers conversational BSL, including Fingerspelling, questions, time, numbers, family, animals, weather, colours, transport, jobs and places within the community. At the end of the course students will be able to produce and understand basic signs used in everyday social interactions.

In this course we also focus on Deaf Awareness including a practical to experience a degree of hearing loss personally to give insight into some of the difficulties the Deaf face in everyday life. We examine Deaf Culture and etiquette and how that differs from hearing culture and the barriers this can raise. We also look at those who are hearing impaired but not BSL users and how we can meet their communication needs better.

This structure of this course allows students to have an overview of the Deaf community and the challenges they face which could not be covered in an exam course, however it is also an ideal springboard into taking the Signature Level 1 BSL Certificate at a later date. This is NOT a Signature Level 1 course.

Term duration 9 x weekly 2-hour 15-minute classes