

Developing Literacy in Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing (DHH) Learners through Indian Sign Language (ISL)

Strategies, Tips, and Best Practices

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Language as the Foundation

Tip 1: Establish ISL as the First Language (L1)

- *Consistent exposure from early stage*
- *ISL for all instructions and discussions*

Tip 2: Teach Conceptual Understanding Before Vocabulary

- *Visual concept introduction in ISL first*
- *Example: 'Past' taught via storytelling in ISL*

Developing Reading Skills

Tip 3: Use Bilingual-Bicultural (Bi-Bi) Approach

- *Present texts in English and ISL*
- *Include ISL interpretation videos*

Tip 4: Emphasize Visual Reading Strategies

- *Teach visual cues: images, headings, organizers*
- *Preview texts through ISL signing*

Developing Reading Skills

Tip 5: Build Reading Comprehension Through ISL Discussions

- *Discuss texts in ISL before/after reading*
- *Use prediction, questioning, summarizing in ISL*

Building Writing Skills

Tip 6: Brainstorm in ISL First

- *ISL storytelling/discussion before writing*
- *Use video recordings for pre-writing*

Tip 7: Use Sentence Frames and Story Maps

- *Templates like 'First... Then... Finally...'*
- *Visual organizers for structure planning*

Building Writing Skills

Tip 8: Translate Signed Stories into Written English

- *Teach translation from ISL to English*
- *Map ISL expressions to English grammar*

Multisensory & Visual Approaches

Tip 9: Incorporate Visual Phonics (Adapted for ISL)

- *Handshapes, mouth movements, visuals for phonics*

Tip 10: Use Fingerspelling Strategically

- *Teach fingerspelling for names, sight words*
- *Practice expressive and receptive forms*

Technology & Digital Storytelling

Tip 11: Create Digital Stories in ISL and English

- *Students make ISL videos + write in English*
- *Use PowerPoint, video editors, apps*

Tip 12: Encourage Multimedia Writing Projects

- *Mix pictures, captions, ISL videos*
- *Writing for posters, blogs, presentations*

Cultural & Identity-Affirming Practices

Tip 13: Integrate Deaf Role Models and Stories

- *Real-life videos/stories of Deaf adults*

Tip 14: Use Culturally Relevant Materials

- *Stories that reflect student culture*
- *Share family/community narratives*

Assessment & Feedback

Tip 15: Assess in Both ISL and English

- *Evaluate comprehension in ISL first*
- *Track ideas, vocabulary, grammar*

Tip 16: Provide Visual and Video Feedback

- *ISL video or screen-recorded feedback*
- *Supports clarity and student learning*

Thank You

Supporting Literacy Through ISL