

American Sign Language Berlitz Phrase Book

by Janna M. Sweenie and David W. Boles

THE PITCH

Idea:

When our students want to learn American Sign Language, we can divide them into two, distinct, groups: 80% are fun lovers and the rest are serious students. The serious ASL student wants dry facts, harsh grading, and a defined purpose. The other, larger group, are more interested in learning ASL as an exploration of language and they want to have fun while learning some usage rules and the divination of cultural values.

American Sign Language Berlitz Phrase Book is written for the fun learner who prefers to have learning experiences wash over them instead of having idea points drilled into them for drowning.

We will use tons of simple phrases that can be mixed up, re-used, and made into other, all-new, phrases. We provide more than just dry vocabulary words like most other beginner ASL books. Our goal is to get the new learner up speed with a nimble quickness. Here's our back cover tease:

If you're looking for an American Sign Language Book with colors, numbers, the alphabet, food and drink -- this is not the ASL book for you! We don't use formal HandShapes or explicit FacialExpressions. We're more about about communication than teaching strict grammar. We take a whole body approach to working out ASL phrases because, like English, there are many ways to interpret and translate sentence meanings based on a single idea.

Using a true wit and a tried urban writing style -- plus hundreds of images -- we will teach over 75 basic phrases that can be spun into thousands of phrases, plus 21 emotions and 25 hand and arm positions. Nobody else teaches "arm angles" but us: <http://ArmAngle.com> -- and it is an important concept to master early in your ASL education.

Hook:

We want the reader to feel the freedom to have expressive fun! There are varying levels of literacy, and we will help each reader explore the language as their understanding of American Sign Language progresses and sharpens over time and the arc of the book. Chapter 7 is a particularly interesting look at simple ways to express complicated, and advanced, ASL concepts like characteristics, location and space-in-time.

Market:

Beginner books sell. There is no age limit for what we'll teach. There are hundreds of thousands of ASL students in the USA alone. If you can imitate images on a page, we can get you phrasing ASL in seconds. We'll use some slang and some idioms along with some serious teaching with frosting on top, and it will all be universal, clean and fun and accurate and right.

Platform:

We have over 50 years of combined teaching experience. We know that what works live in a classroom doesn't always translate to effective learning on the page. Our experience writing books and teaching online gives us a unique and basic and raw understanding of how to reach and teach people who are not in the same physical space. We touch them with humor, stories, jokes, puzzles and games.

We also operate several websites that will help promote *American Sign Language Berlitz Phrase Book* to millions of eyes a day. BolesBlogs.com is a 13-blog strong network of inter-connected blogs. HardcoreASL.com is our popular online learning portal. sosASL.com is our emergency American Sign Language reference for first responders and Janna's NYU.edu homepage is a great leaping off point for ASL information and links:
<http://www.nyu.edu/classes/sweenie/>

We recently purchased the ASLphrase.com domain name for an initial term of five years to help promote this book and to provide extended learning possibilities. <http://ASLphrase.com> currently re-directs to HardcoreASL.com, but when the book is in print, that domain name will direct users to the promotional homepage for *American Sign Language Berlitz Phrase Book* hosted on BolesBooks.com.

Authors:

Janna M. Sweenie was born Deaf in Council Bluffs, Iowa. She attended the Iowa School for the Deaf and graduated from CUNY-Lehman in New York City with a degree in Psychology. Her Master's degree in Deafness Rehabilitation is from New York University. Janna has directly worked with the Deaf Community as Director of Job Placement for the New York Society for the Deaf and currently as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor for the New York State Education Department. She has been teaching ASL Levels 1-4 at NYU for 20 years. The American Sign Language books she's co-written include, "Hand Jive" and "Picture Yourself Signing American Sign Language." Janna teaches and tutors ASL online at HardcoreASL.com and she stars at sosASL.com.

David W. Boles was born in Nebraska and graduated from Columbia University in the City of New York with a Master of Fine Arts degree. He is the author of seven books, including "Hand Jive" and "Picture Yourself Signing American Sign Language." David also operates the 13-blog strong BolesBlogs.com Network and, along with his wife Janna, operates HardcoreASL.com and sosASL.com.

THE OUTLINE

Chapter 1: Phrases in Deaf Culture

ASL

PSE (Pidgin Signed English)

SEE (Signing Exact English)

Mime

Home Signs

Sim-Com and Beyond (Simultaneous Communication/Total Communication)

Puzzles, Crosswords and Putting it All Together

Gestures

Chapter 2: Hands Jiving and Arms Angling

Pancake (Flat B)

Punch (S)

Peace (V)

Devil Horns (Hanging)

Twin Hooks (Squirrel)

Yo (Y)

Monster Hands (C-Fingerspread)

Loser (L)

Buh-Bye (Curved B)

Pinkie (I)
Peeking Through the Keyhole (P)
Alone (1)
Middle Salute (25)
Holding Thumbs (A)
The Pole (C)
Hugging 2 (U)
Hoping (R)
A-Okay (F)
Little Bit (Bird)
Tired and Alone (Bent-1)
Lata (Bent-B)
Spikes (4)
Broken Finger (X)
Growing Tree (Arm Up)
Chopped (Arm Sideways)

Chapter 3: To Pucker or Not to Pucker

Surprised
Dead
Angry
Happy
Sad
Mean
Head Cocking
Tight Lipped (M)
So What
Tonguing Teeth
Blowing Breeze
Pickle Pucker
Wet Smooch (Pucker with Mouth Open)
Bite Me (Up Teeth on Low Lip)
Singing Dog (Smile with Mouth Open)
Sly Cat (Smile with Mouth Closed)
Giraffe Look (Neck stretched forward)
Moon Head (Look Up)
Worried
Caffeinated (Head Rolling)
French Smoocher (Tongue Out)

Chapter 4: From Here to There and Back

Where is the bus stop?
I can't find the subway!
I'm tired of riding my bike.
Let's start a carpool.
Go fly a kite!
My kids love their Heelies.
We could skip to the market.
I stepped in gum at the train station.
Airplanes make me airsick.
I love a balloon ride during the dawn.
I heard a helicopter overhead and hid under my bed.

Chapter 5: Run, Jump and Tackle

How can I get tickets for the Superbowl?
I have tennis elbow, football knee, and baseball eye.
My brother kicked the soccer ball over the house.
Is Bocce a sport or just a ball?
I love aiming a rifle at a man-sized target.
Throwing horseshoes relieves stress.
I play pool every Thursday.
I'm a professional swimmer; Michael Phelps has nothing on me!
Basketball is a hard game for short people.
I used an axe in a wood chopping contest.
I ran so far, it felt like I raced to the moon.

Chapter 6: Blood and Homes

Hiya Big Daddy!
That's my baby mama and baby daddy.
Aunts, uncles and nieces love to picnic.
My brother and sister suck at puzzles.
My dad tells unfunny jokes.
Mother is laundry machine.
Grandma makes good dumplings.
I'm so hungry I could eat a racehorse!
My old buddy Billy is beating me in badminton.
Our new pal Susan is looking for a boyfriend.
Your psycho friend Peter needs a housemate and a haircut.

Chapter 7: See It, Shape It, Sign It

Folks -- big nose, fat belly, skinny legs, chicken face, bad, nerdy, genius, etc.
Here and There -- here, there, that-way, over yonder, etc.
Stuff -- that, this, size, volume, depth, reach, etc.

Making Phrases from Folks/Here/Stuff:

That man, with a big nose, has huge shoes.
Old chicken face wants to pluck his feathers with a rusty razor blade.
Over there, a bald guy was placing chess.
A genius visited us here in class today.
We spied the fat man around the corner buying a big soda.
A huge waterfall up there splashed us on the legs down here.
Superman flew up, up and away!
I woke up, got out of bed, dragged a cup of coffee to my head.
I sense I see a smell; but I can't taste it or feel it.
She has a heart as huge as the horizon that mean men crush.

Chapter 8: Comms Connections

The Video Relay service works great without interpreters.
Can you send video via SMS?
I have over 4,999 Facebook friends and I don't want one more!
My Internet connection is 20MB down but only 1 up!
Your cellphone doesn't work in Queens?
Shoot me some email love instead.
What do you think of Google mail? Any good?
My phone doesn't vibrate hard enough to feel it shaking.
Do you write a blog?
I design websites: CSS and graphics!

Chapter 9: Shoot and Catch Phrases

Howzit hangin', brah?

That's what she said.

Wassup?

Do you know what time it is?

The idea came to me out of the clear blue sky.

Fo' shizzle, my nizzle.

24/7/365

La Vida Loca

Hardcore

Hit a lick

Whoopty Whoop

Hoopty

Chapter 10: Artsy, Craftsy and La-boring

I'm an actor -- on stage and off!

I love to sculpt nudes in clay.

Oil paint lasts longer than watercolor.

You'll see me on the silver screen some day!

I wrote a poem in the sun this morning.

I'm singin' in the rain!

My grandfather was a blacksmith. He loves horses but not hooves.

Don't make me angry; I crochet and my needles are sharp!

My scrapbook has drawings, photographs and memories I don't want to remember.

I build houses and bridges for a living.

He's a line cook in a restaurant and he smells like french fries.