

Deaf Communication

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First Day City: Burbank, California

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Manufacturing Process: Stamp Venturers, Inc.

Colors: Yellow, magenta, blue, and black

Image Area: 1.075 × 1.075 inches or
27.31 × 27.31 millimeters

Format: Pane of 20

Plate Numbers: Four digits preceded by S

Marginal Markings: ©U.S. Postal Service 1992
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A triumph of human ingenuity, sign language replaces communication by sound with communication by sight, to the benefit of those unable to hear.

Several methods for communicating through signs have been developed. One is the manual alphabet—26 hand positions representing letters of the alphabet, some of them exactly mimicking the letters' appearance in block capitals. The letters are used in "finger spelling" words and sentences.

Finger spelling, however, is a lengthy and tiresome process for conversation. In recent years, American Sign Language (ASL) has won increasing acceptance. ASL circumvents spelling out words letter by letter; instead it substitutes signs (combinations of letters or gestures) that convey ideas faster and non-phonetically.

The two stamps in the American Sign Language issue show the sign for "I love you," combining the three letters "I," "L," and "Y" using an extended thumb, index finger, and little finger, with the palm of the hand directed toward the person addressed.

