When languages are in contact with one another, they often “borrow” words from one other as a matter of convenience. One way that ASL has borrowed from English is through the use of FINGERSPELLED LOAN SIGNS (also referred to in THE STRUCTURE OF FINGERSPELLING teleconference as “LEXICALIZED FINGERSPELLING”).

These borrowing begin by being commonly fingerspelled words (usually short words). If a fingerspelled word is used frequently, it may evolve into a sign; in the process it often “loses” some letter handshapes (vowels being most commonly omitted), adds standard sign language “phonological parameters (e.g. movement, location and palm orientation, or facial expression) and sometimes takes on a specialized meaning. The symbol (#) is commonly used in transcribing a

FINGERSPELLED LOAN SIGNS:

Below are some commonly used FINGERSPELLED LOAN SIGNS. As you learn more, write them down for reference and share them with others. Please remember there is always variation possible. Stay flexible.

*NOTE: FINGERSPELLED LOAN SIGNS/ LEXICALIZED FINGERSPELLING are commonly marked with a # and then have capital letters to represent the letters used.*

**1. With some three (or four)-letter English words, the first and last letter handshapes are kept and the middle one is deleted/blended out/omitted.**

Examples:

toy #TY

but #BT

fix #FX

yes #YS

bus #BS

car #CR

ball #BL tt

y #TY

hurt #HT

**2. With some four of five letter English words, one or more middle letters are deleted.**

Examples:

hurt #HT

what #W(H)T

bank #BK

bank=BNK

club #CLB / #CB

busy #BSY

park #PRK

camp #CMP

fresh #FRSH

sissy #SISY

would #WOLD / #WLD

when #W(H)N

**3. Other differences occur in terms of:**

**A. Location of sign**

Examples:

soon #SN (chin)

**B. Change in palm orientation**

Examples:

job #JB (palm orientation ends inward)

gas #GS (palm orientation ends outward)

toy #TY (palm orientation ends inward)

dog #DG (palm orientation inside)

so #SO (palm orientation upward - meaning “so what?”)

**C. Movement of sign**

Examples:

early #ERLY (circular)

all #AL (sweep)

easy #ESY (downward)

busy #BSY (downward)

**D. Manipulation in space (directional verbs)**

Examples:

back #BCK ask #AK

no #NO

off #OF

knock out #KO

**E. Two handed, often with specific movement**

Examples do (with circular movement “chores, activities, hobbies”or “busy”) do (with WH question facial expression & repeated “What to do?”)

wow variations

ha

no good #NG (couldn’t do, can’t accomplish)

**F. Commonly used two letter English words**

Examples:

if

go

or

oh

of

so

do

ha

tv

**G . Different Meaning**

Example:

(e)x #X (formerly lived, formerly connected to)

cool #COL (meaning level headed)

sure #SRE (“say sure”)

Other Loan Signs:

APT

WD

VP

WHAT

WILL

EARLY

OWN

JULY

Months of the year

Jan

Feb

March

April

May

June

July

Aug

Sept

Oct

Nov

Dec