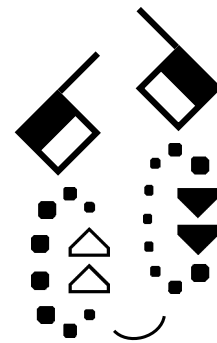
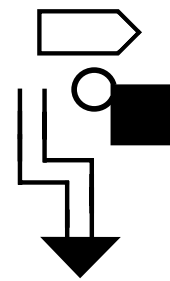


Introduction

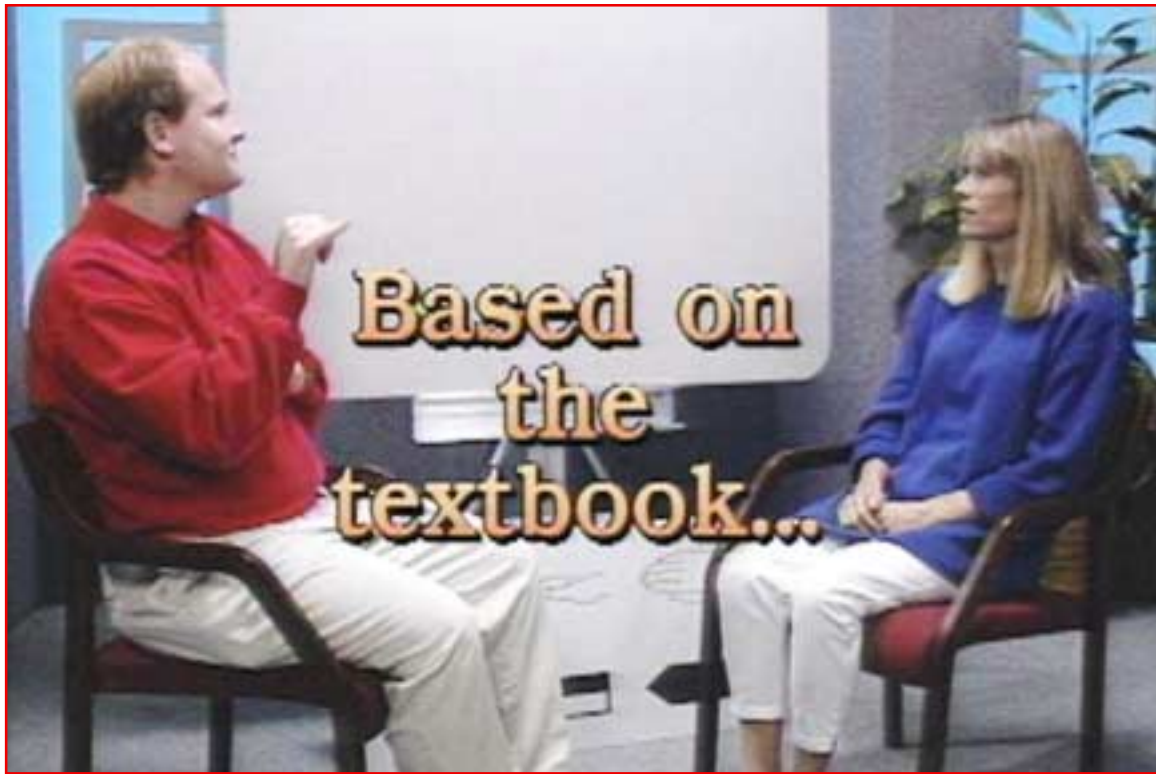
to



Sign



Writing®



About SignWriting®

SignWriting is opening new frontiers of communication for signers. This present generation of Deaf adults, who are learning to read and write signed languages for the first time, are setting the ground work for future generations.

SignWriting does not change American Sign Language (ASL). It is simply a set of visually designed symbols that records how people sign. SignWriting captures on paper the visual subtleties of any signed language in the world, because it records **body movement**.

I developed SignWriting out of respect and awe for the beauty and sophistication of all signed languages. I am not a linguist, but I have a tremendous love for learning languages. I will never cease in my fascination and utter amazement at the richness of ASL. Because I respect ASL, I want to write it and preserve it.

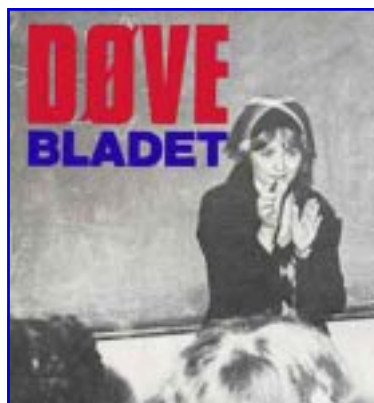
Obviously I have not done this enormous task alone. SignWriting has been developed through a collaboration. I am most grateful for all of our Deaf staff members who have helped me improve SignWriting and shape its destiny. SignWriting is a living, ever-expanding writing system that is changing for the better, as more Deaf people become involved.

This manual, **About SignWriting**, is a brief summary of basic SignWriting symbols. Please feel free to contact us anytime for information on other SignWriting publications. We would love to hear from you!

With all good wishes -



Valerie Sutton
Inventor, SignWriting



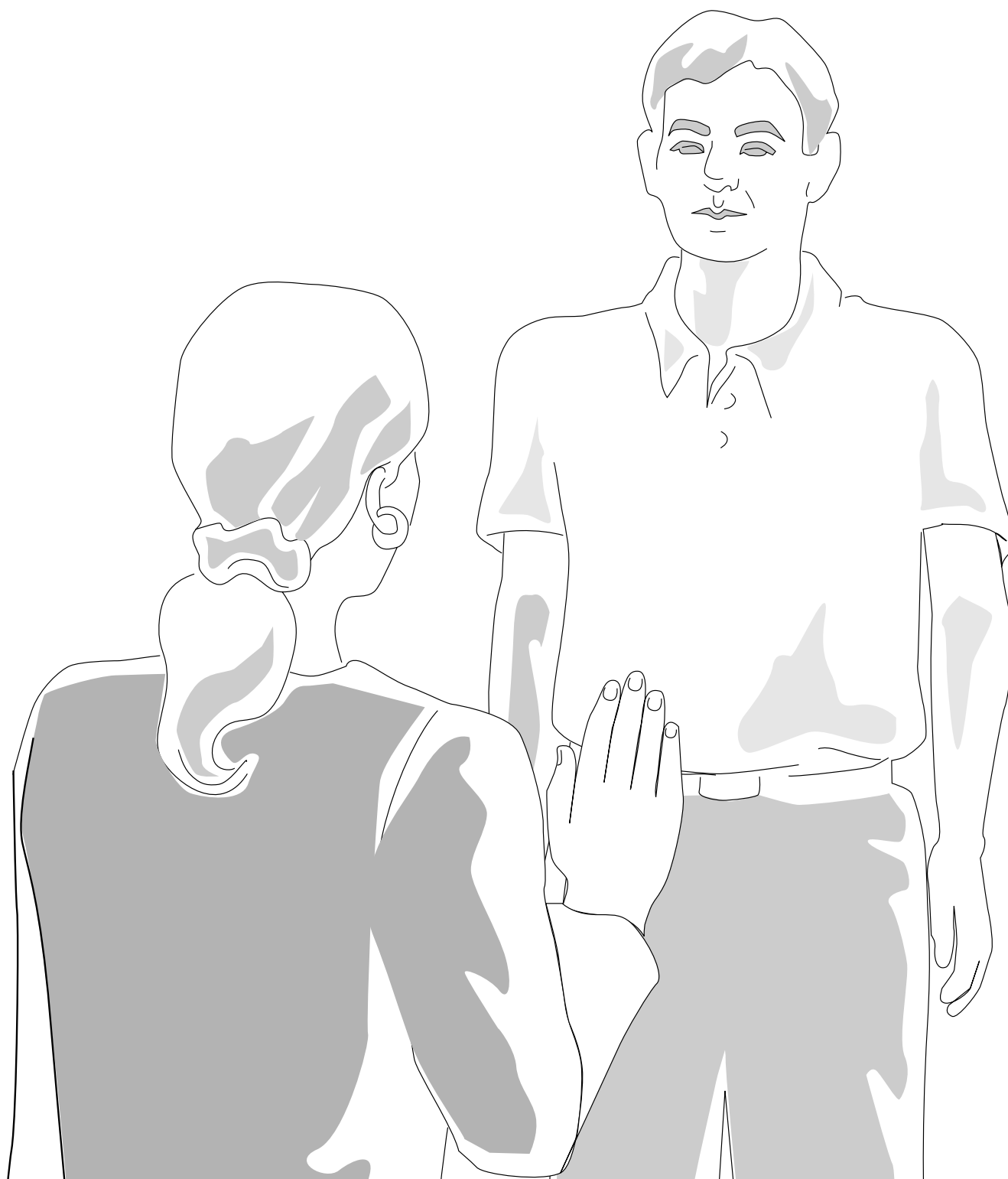
Left: Cover
of Døve
Bladet
Magazine,
May 1982.

Valerie
Sutton
teaching
SignWriting
in Denmark.



Receptive Viewpoint

When someone is facing you, signing to you, you view the signs as an observer. The signer's right side is your left side. This is called the "Receptive Viewpoint".



Expressive Viewpoint

When you are signing to someone else, you see signs from your own point of view.
This is called the "Expressive Viewpoint".



The Expressive Viewpoint

You read and write signs as if you are looking at your own hands, from your own perspective.



Palm of Hand

When you see the palm of your own hand while you are signing, the symbol for the hand will be white, or hollow.

The palm of the hand is always written with a white, or hollow symbol.



Side of Hand

When you see the side of your own hand while you are signing, the symbol for the hand will be one-half black, and one-half white.

The white part of the symbol shows where the palm of the hand faces. The dark part represents the back of the hand.



Back of Hand

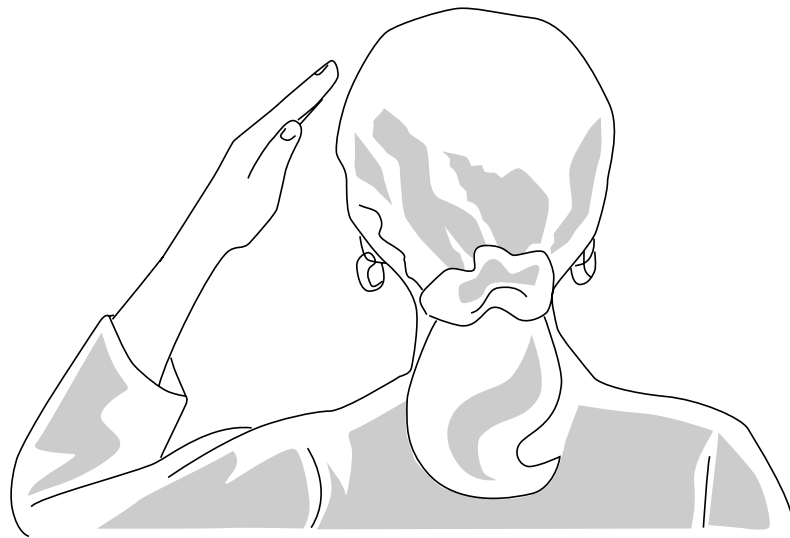
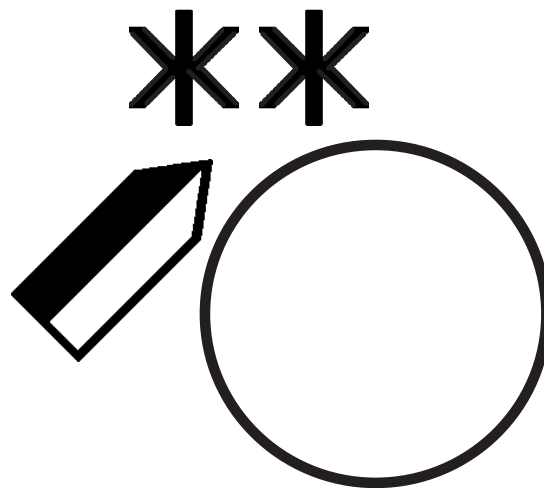
When you see the back of your own hand while you are signing, the symbol for the hand will be black, or filled-in.

The back of the hand is always written with a black, filled-in symbol.



Left Side of Head

The head is written with a circle, viewed from the back.
When the left hand is near the left side of the head,
the symbol for the hand is placed to the left:



know

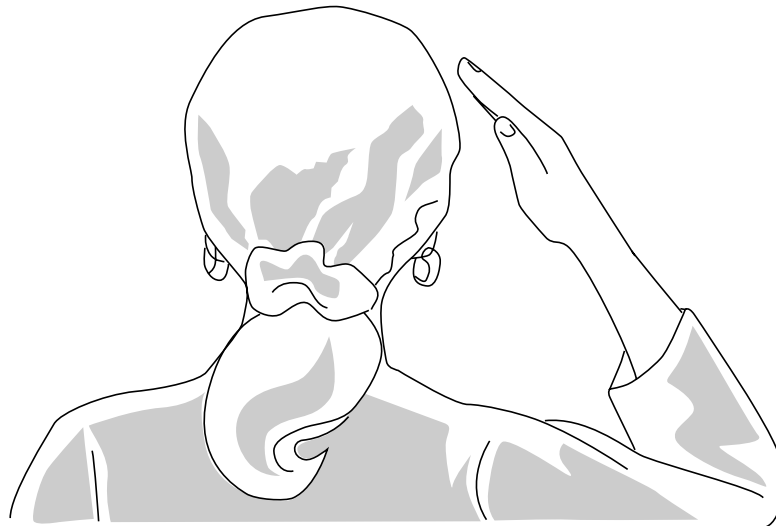
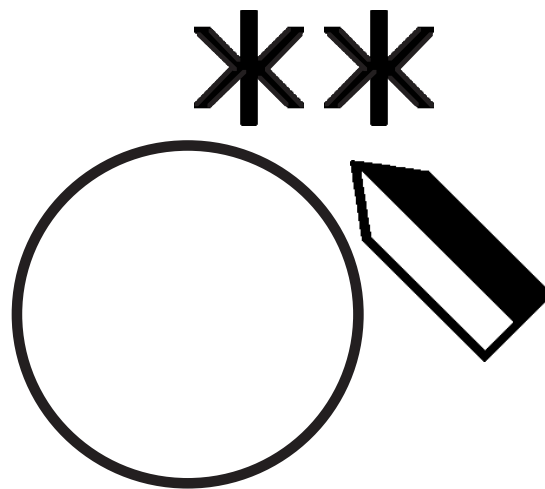
(hand on the left side)

Note: An asterisk means **touch**. Two asterisks mean **touching two times**.
For more information on contact symbols, see page 24.



Right Side of Head

The head is written with a circle, viewed from the back.
When the right hand is near the right side of the head,
the symbol for the hand is placed to the right:



know

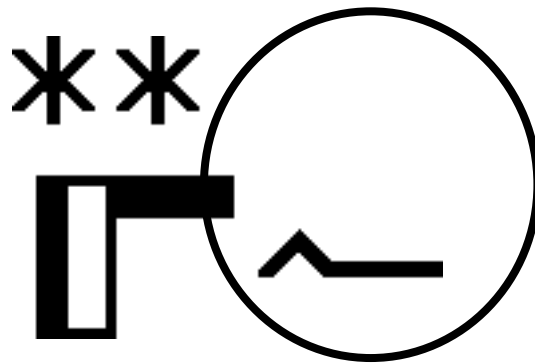
(hand on the right side)

Note: An asterisk means **touch**. Two asterisks mean **touching two times**.
For more information on contact symbols, see page 24.



Left Side of Face

Pretend you can see **through the back of the head**.
You are reading and writing how your face "feels" when you sign:



Your face
feels
like this:

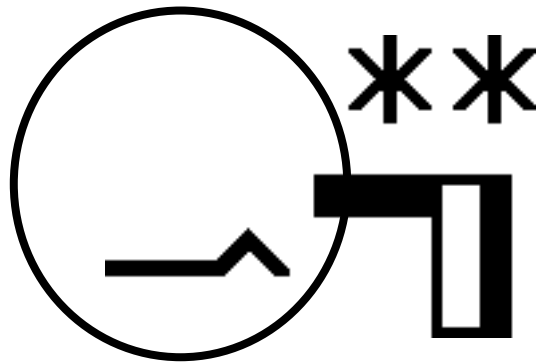


know

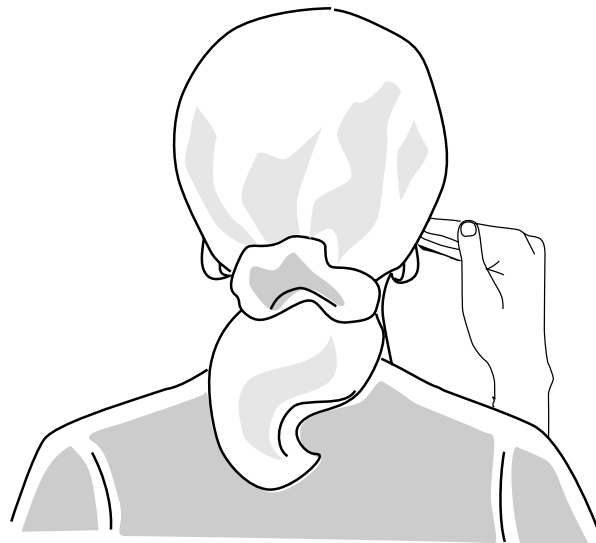
(mouth pushed up on the left side)

Right Side of Face

Pretend you can see **through the back of the head**.
You are reading and writing how your face "feels" when you sign:



Your face
feels
like this:

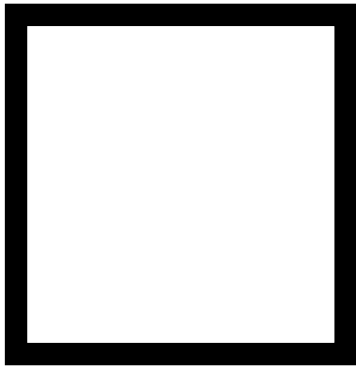


know

(mouth pushed up on the right side)



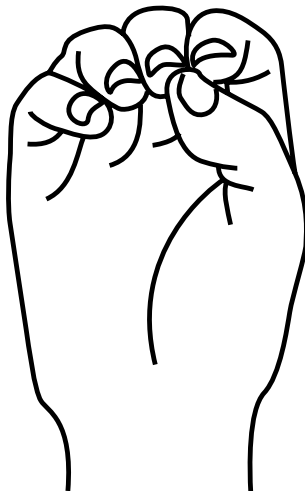
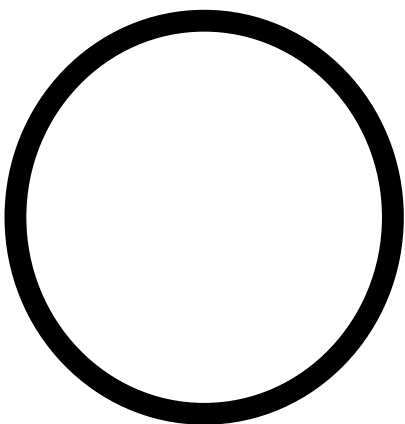
3 Basic Handshapes



Closed Fist

When the fingertips touch the palm of the hand, it is called a **Closed Fist**.

A **Closed Fist** is written with a **square**.

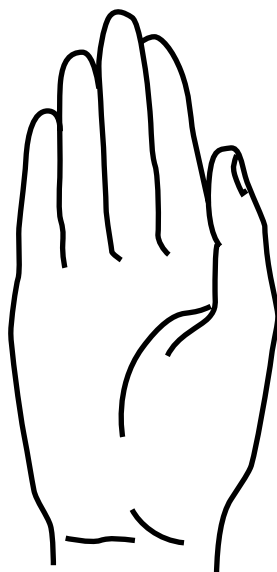
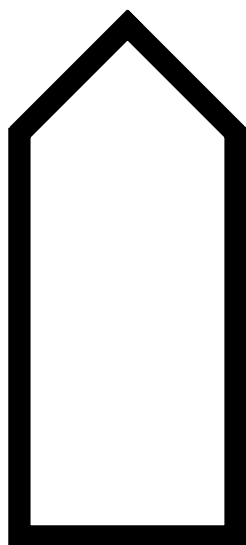


Open Fist

When the fingertips touch each other, it is called an **Open Fist**.

An **Open Fist** is written with a **circle**.

3 Basic Handshapes



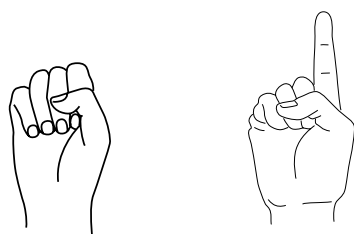
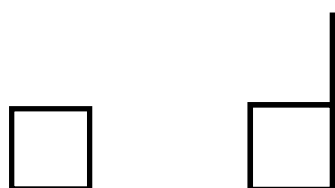
Flat Hand

When the fingers stretch straight up, and touch each other, it is called a **Flat Hand**.

A **Flat Hand** is written with a **rectangle**, with a tip for the fingertips.

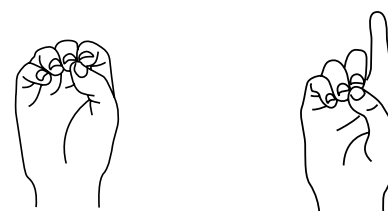
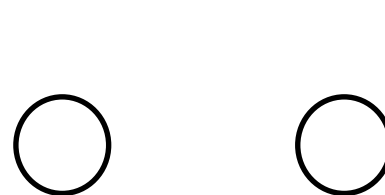
Closed Fist

Both the letter **S** and number **1** in ASL are written with a square for the Closed Fist, since the fingertips touch the palm:



Open Fist

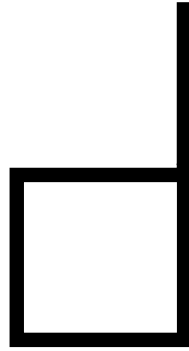
Both the letter **O** and letter **D** in ASL are written with a circle for the Open Fist, since the fingertips touch each other:



Palm Facing

Front View

The hand is parallel with the wall.

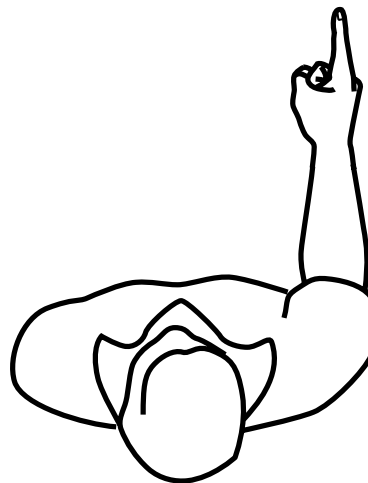
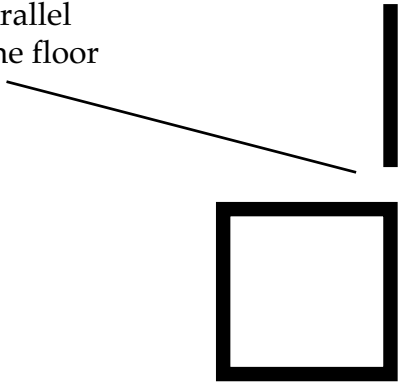


Palm Facing

Top View

The hand is parallel with the floor.

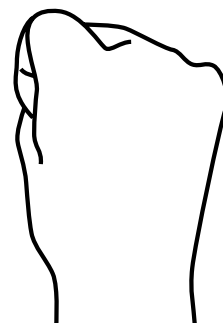
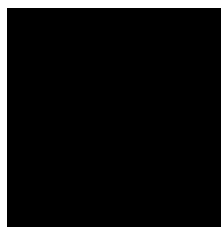
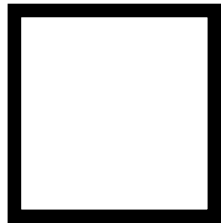
space at
knuckle joint
means hand
is parallel
with the floor



Palm Facing

Front View

The hand is parallel with the wall.

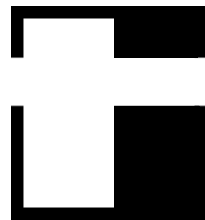
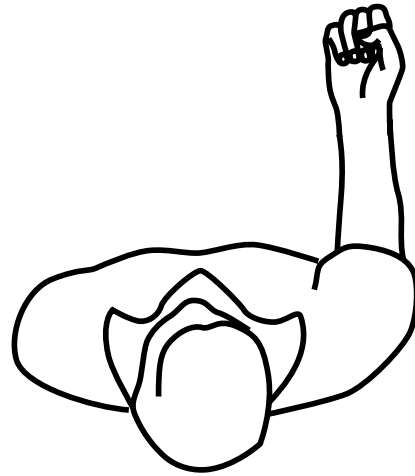
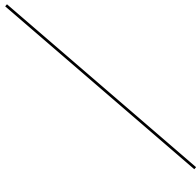


Palm Facing

Top View

The hand is parallel with the floor.

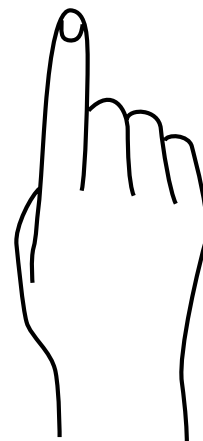
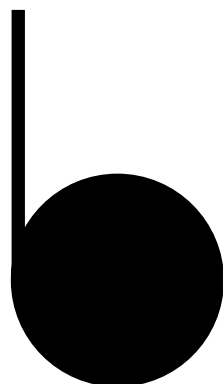
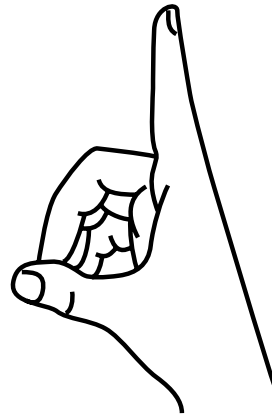
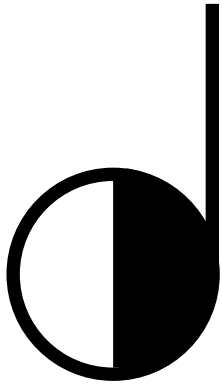
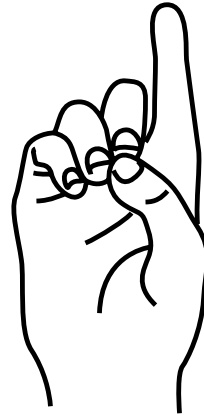
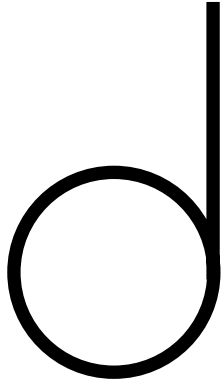
space at
knuckle joint
means hand
is parallel
with the floor



Palm Facing

Front View

The hand is parallel with the wall.

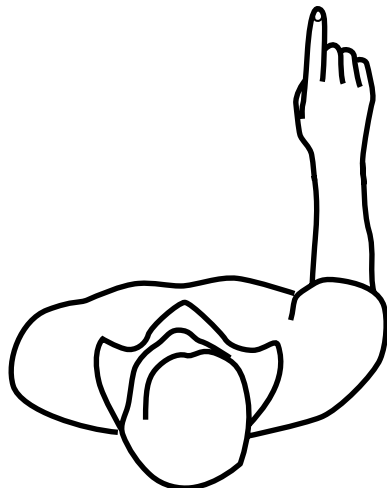
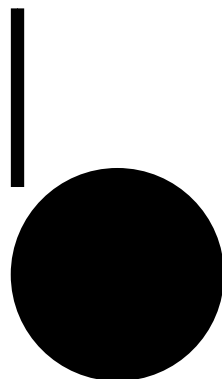
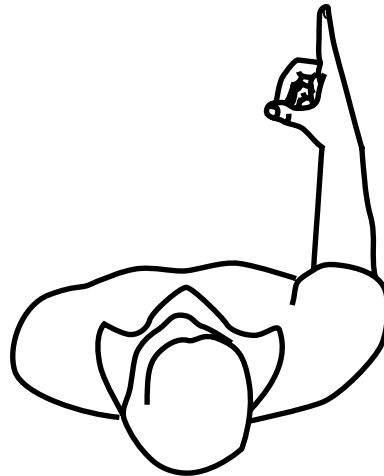
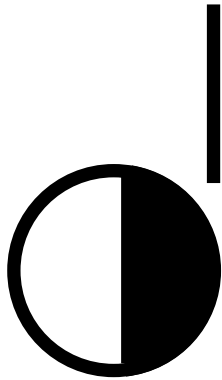
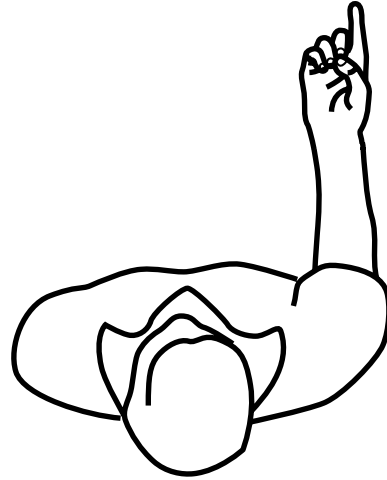
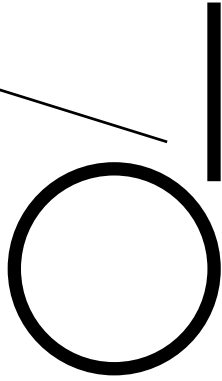


Palm Facing

Top View

The hand is parallel with the floor.

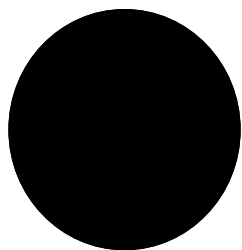
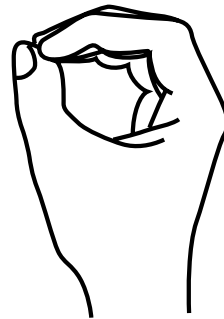
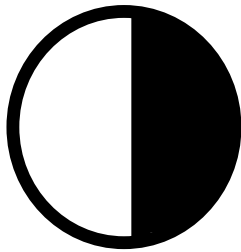
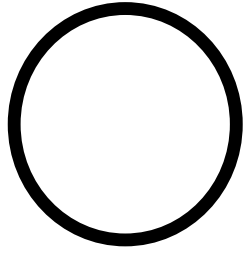
space at
knuckle joint
means hand
is parallel
with the floor



Palm Facing

Front View

The hand is parallel with the wall.

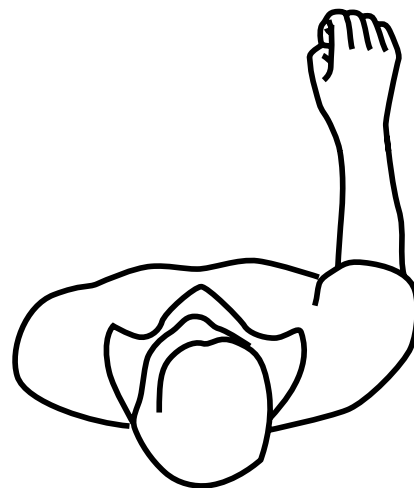
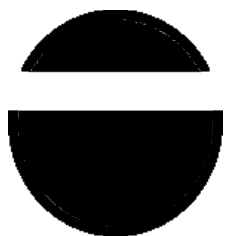
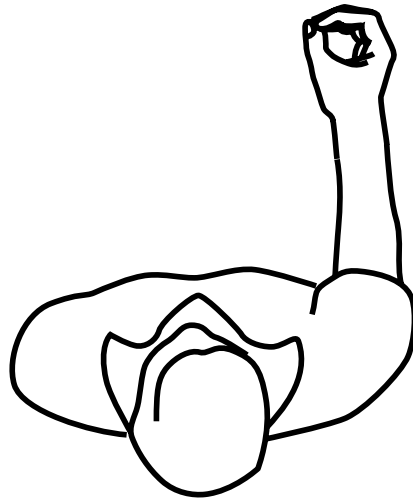
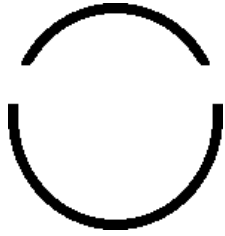


Palm Facing

Top View

The hand is parallel with the floor.

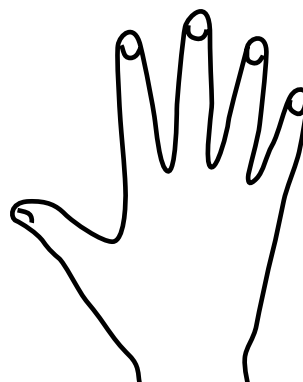
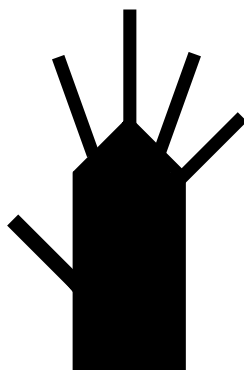
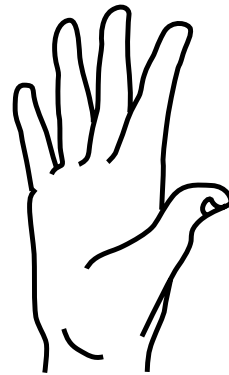
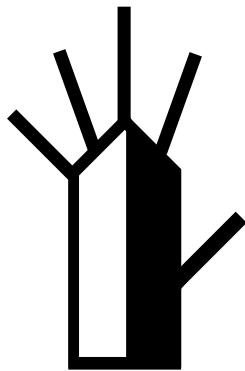
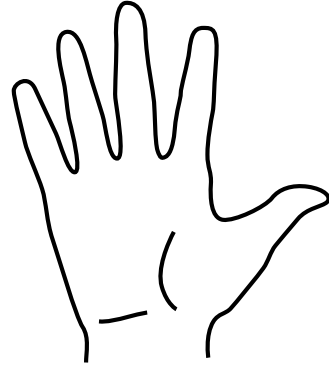
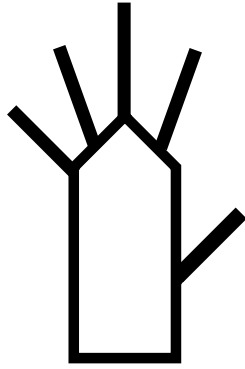
space at
knuckle joint
means hand
is parallel
with the floor



Palm Facing

Front View

The hand is parallel with the wall.

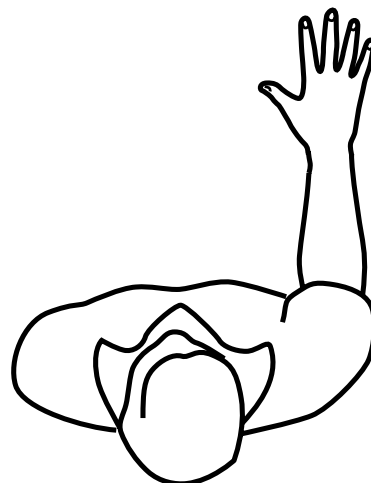
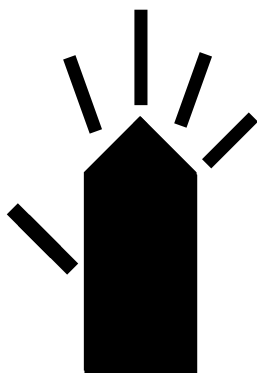
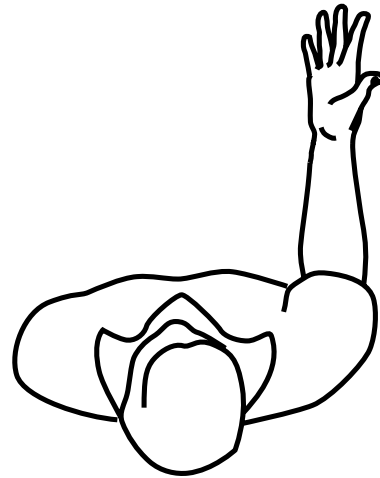
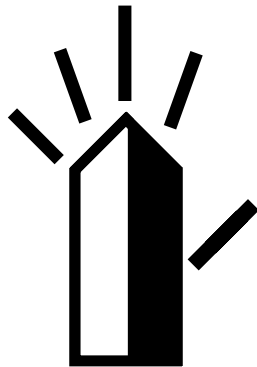
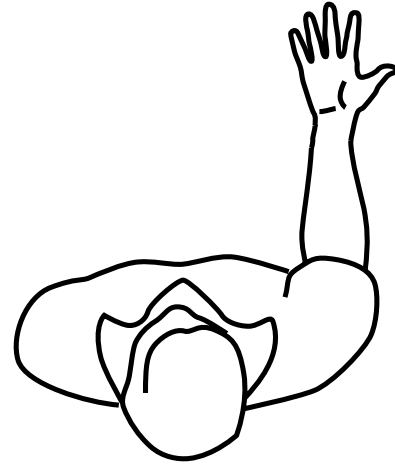
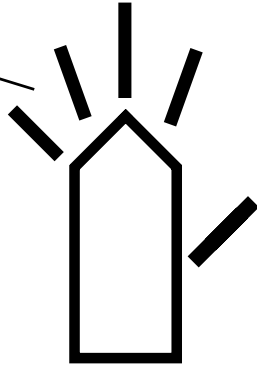


Palm Facing

Top View

The hand is parallel with the floor.

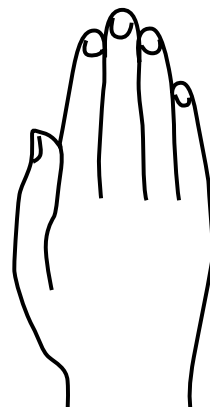
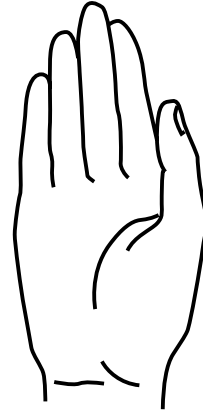
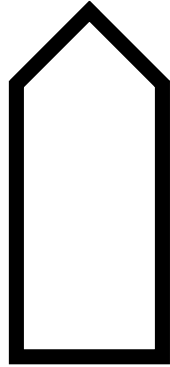
space at
knuckle joint
means hand
is parallel
with the floor



Palm Facing

Front View

The hand is parallel with the wall.

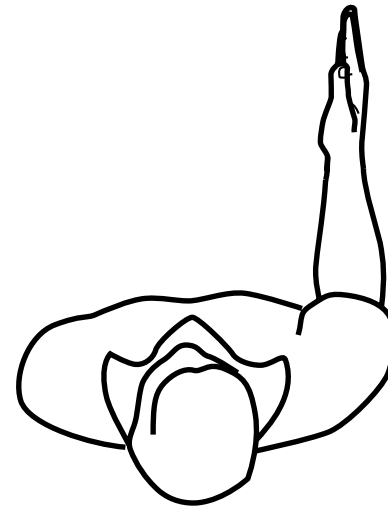
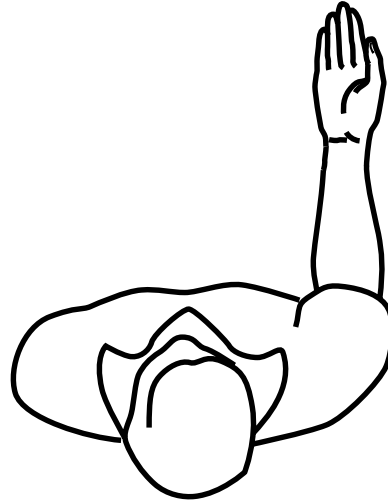


Palm Facing

Top View

The hand is parallel with the floor.

space at
knuckle joint
means hand
is parallel
with the floor



6 Contact Symbols

1. Touch

*

4. Strike

#

2. Grasp

+

5. Brush

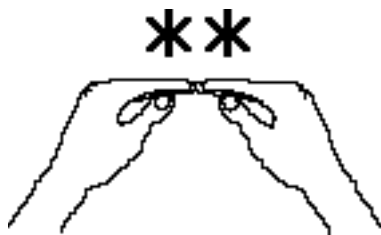
⊙

3. In-between

|*|

6. Rub

⊗



Touch

Touch Contact is written with an asterisk.

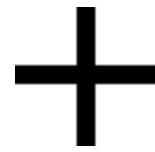
Touch is defined as the hand gently contacting another part of the body.



more



school



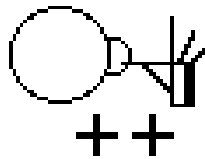
Grasp

Grasp Contact is written with a plus sign.

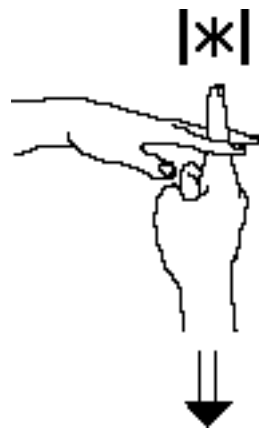
Grasp is defined as the hand grasping a part of the body or a piece of clothing.



congratulations



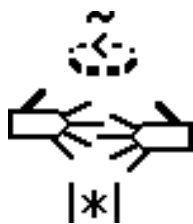
earring



In-between

In-between Contact is written with an asterisk between two lines.

In-between is defined as touching between two parts of the body, usually between fingers.

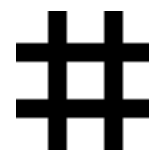
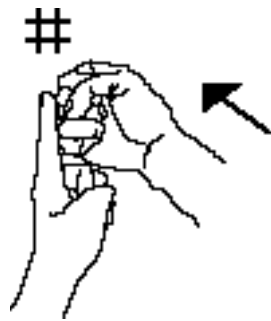


America



disappear

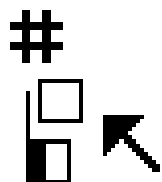




Strike

Strike Contact is written with two lines crossing two lines.

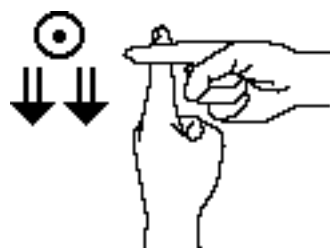
Strike is defined as the hand forcefully contacting a surface.



hit



clap



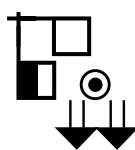
Brush

Brush Contact is written with a circle with a dark dot in the center.

Brush is defined as movement that contacts and then **moves off a surface**.



excuse



monthly

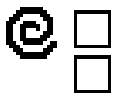


Rub

In a Circle

Rubbing Contact in a circle is written with a spiral symbol.

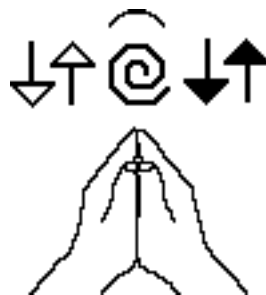
Rub is defined as contact that moves, but **stays on the surface**.



coffee



chocolate



Rub

In A Line

Rubbing Contact in a line is written with the same spiral symbol...**but...**the symbol is **connected with an arrow**.

When the **Rub Contact** symbol is connected with an arrow, it rubs in a straight line (not in a circle). It moves in the arrow's direction, **staying on the surface**.



neat



eager



6 Finger Symbols

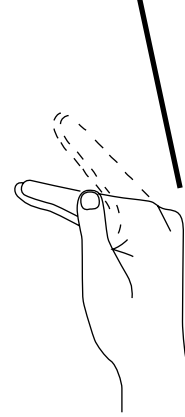
- | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Middle Joint Closes | ● | 4. Knuckle Joint Opens | ^ |
| 2. Middle Joint Opens | ○ | 5. Knuckles Open-Close Together | ∩ |
| 3. Knuckle Joint Closes | ∨ | 6. Knuckles Open-Close Alternating | ⋈ |

● ○
**Middle
Joint**

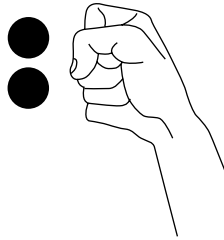


Middle Joint finger movements are written with small dots.

∨ ^
**Knuckle
Joint**



Knuckle Joint finger movements are written with small arrowheads.



huh?

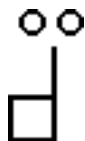
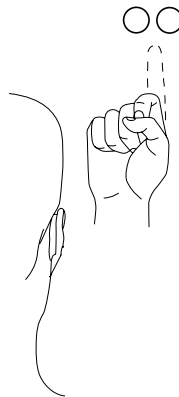
milk



Middle-Joint Closes

When the middle-joint of the finger closes (bends down or in), this **closing finger movement** is written with a **dark dot**.

The dot is placed near the finger joint that does the movement. Two dots represent two closings.



eleven

understand

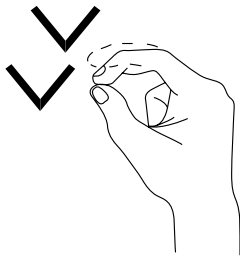


Middle-Joint Opens

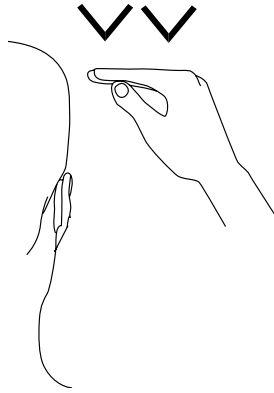
When the middle-joint of the finger opens (bends up or out), this **opening finger movement** is written with a **hollow dot**.

The dot is placed near the finger joint that does the movement. Two dots represent two openings.





twenty



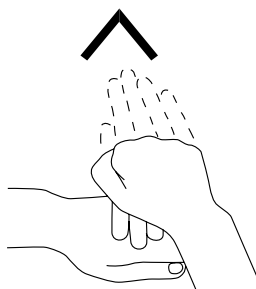
boy



Knuckle-Joint Closes

When the knuckle-joint of the finger closes (bends down or in), this **closing knuckle movement** is written with a small arrow that points down.

The arrow is placed near the knuckle joint that does the movement. Two arrows mean 2 closings.



send



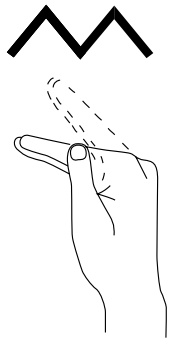
send-send



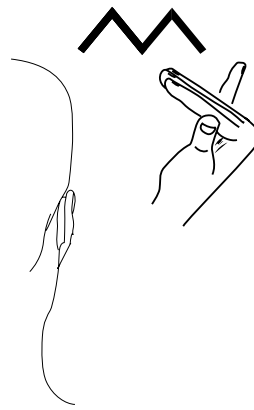
Knuckle-Joint Opens

When the knuckle-joint of the finger opens (bends up or out), this **opening knuckle movement** is written with a small arrow that points up.

The arrow is placed near the knuckle joint that does the movement. Two arrows mean 2 openings.



goodbye



why

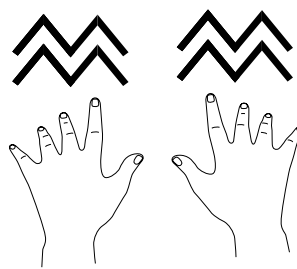


Knuckle-Joints Open-Close

The fingers move together in the same direction, as a unit. The knuckle-joints of the fingers open and close (bend up and down) together. This **open-close knuckle movement** is written with one row of small connected arrows pointing up and down.



fingerspell



typing



Knuckle-Joints Alternate

The fingers do not move together in a unit. Instead they move in opposite directions. One moves up, as the other moves down. This is called **alternating**.

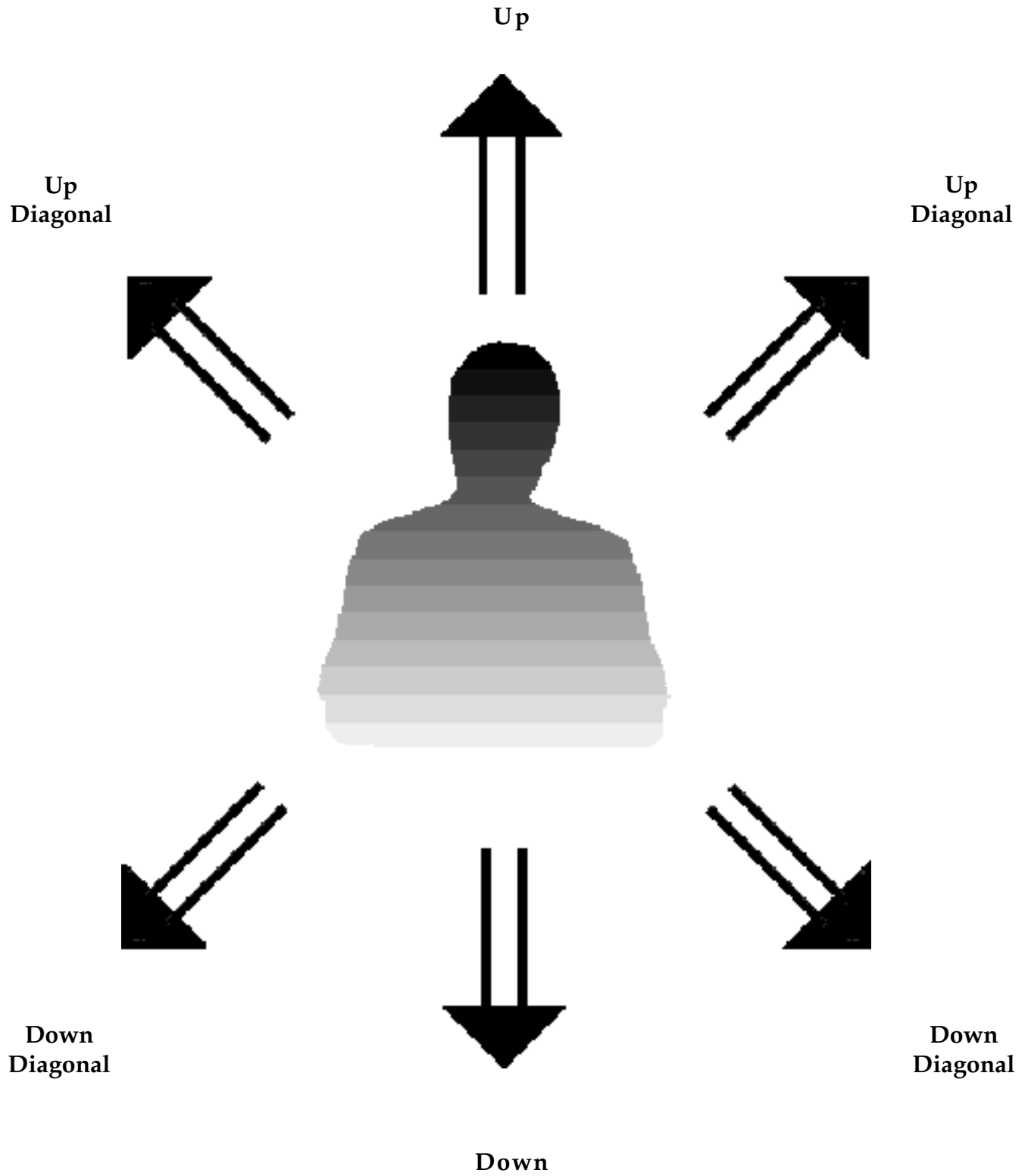
This **alternating knuckle movement** symbol is written with two rows of small arrows pointing up and down.



Up-Down Movement

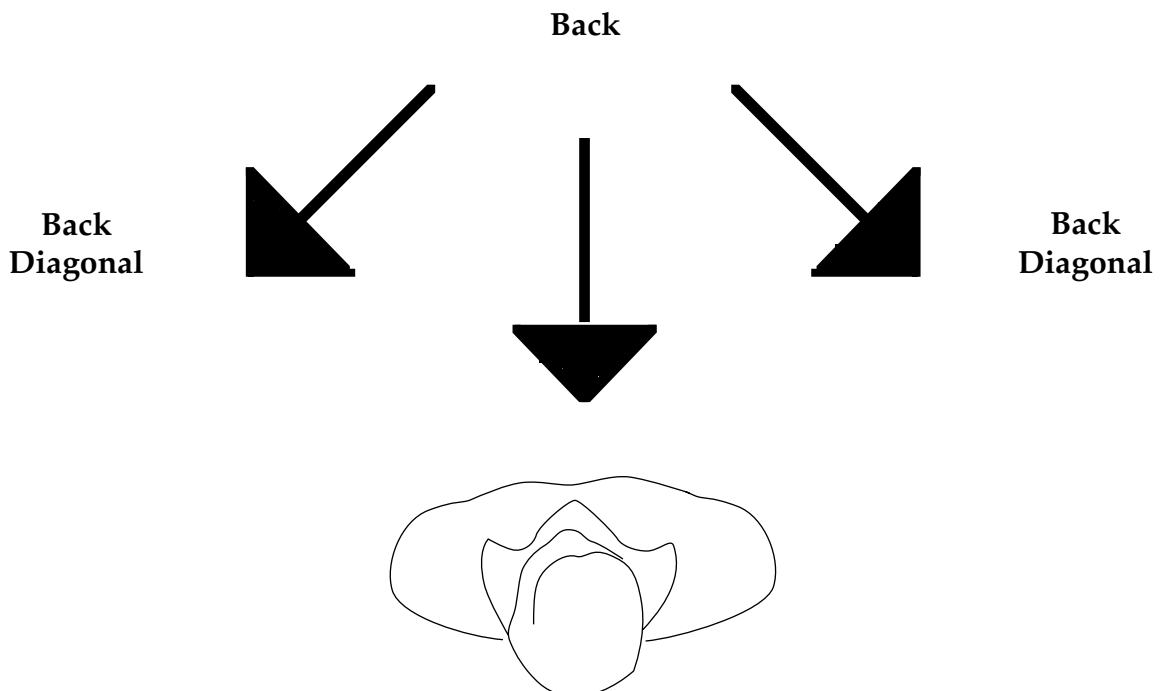
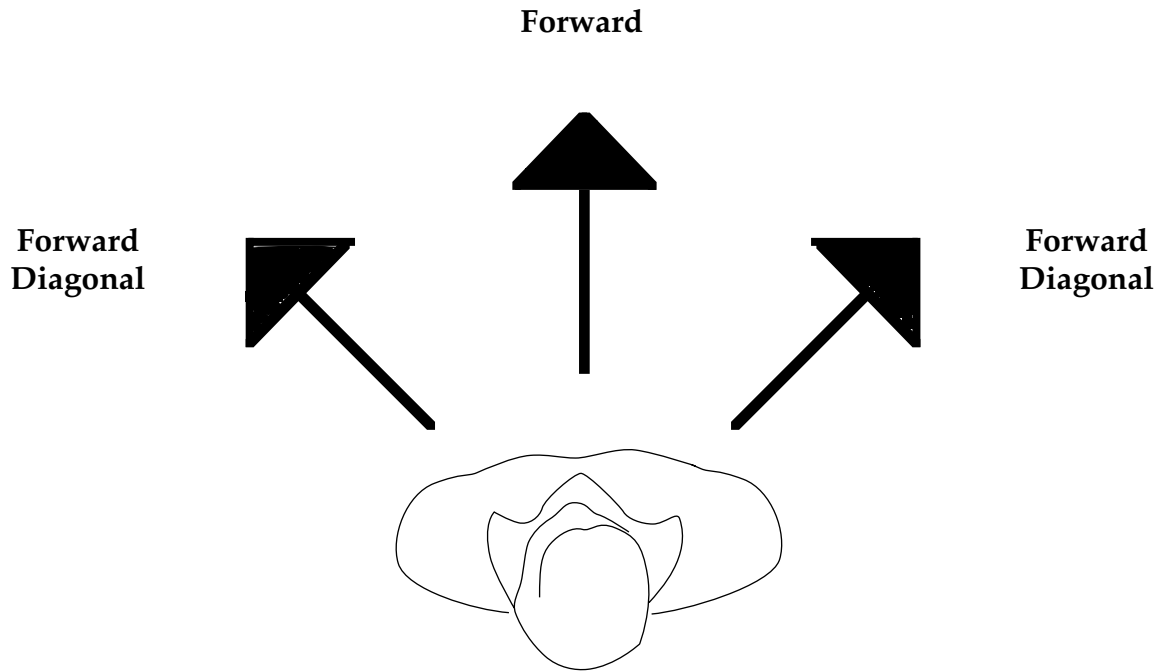
Up-Down movement is parallel with the front wall.

It is written with **double-stemmed** arrows:



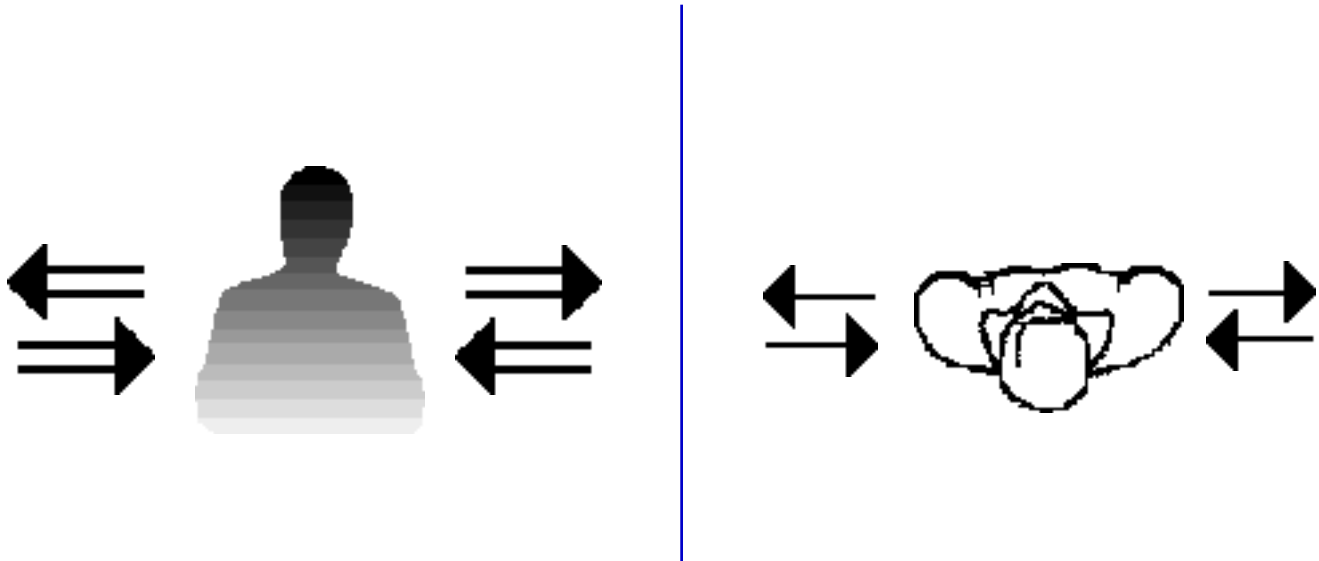
Forward-Back Movement

Forward-Back movement is parallel with the floor.
It is written with **single-stemmed** arrows:



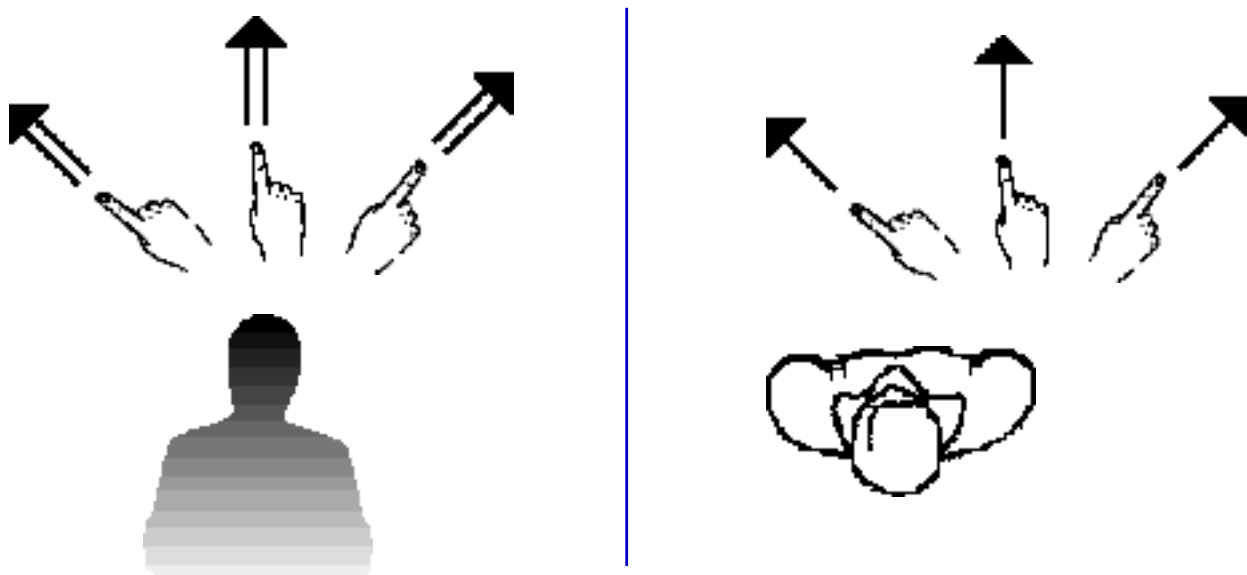
Movement To The Side

Movement to the side can be viewed from either the Front View or the Top View.
It can be written with **either** single or double-stemmed arrows:



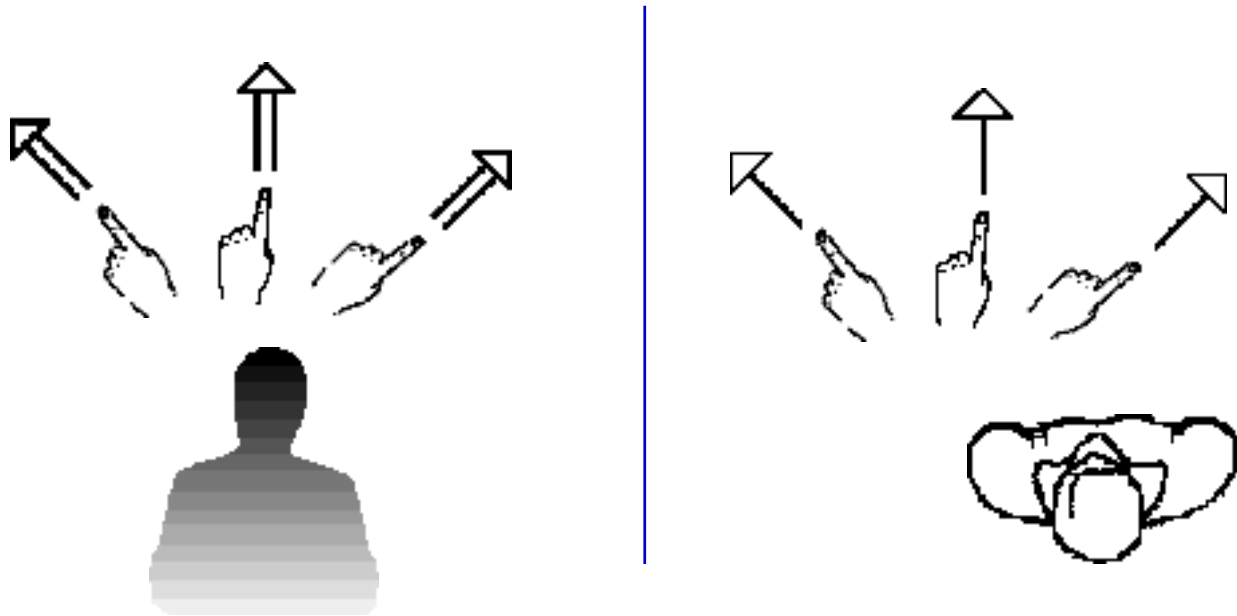
Right Hand Moves

Movement with the right hand is written with dark arrowheads:



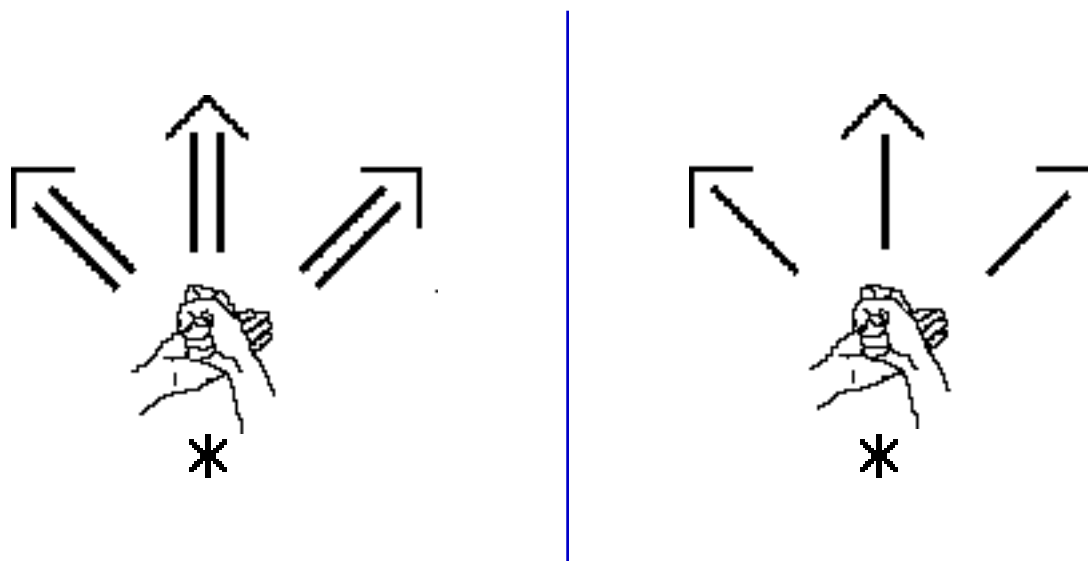
Left Hand Moves

Movement with the left hand is written with light arrowheads:

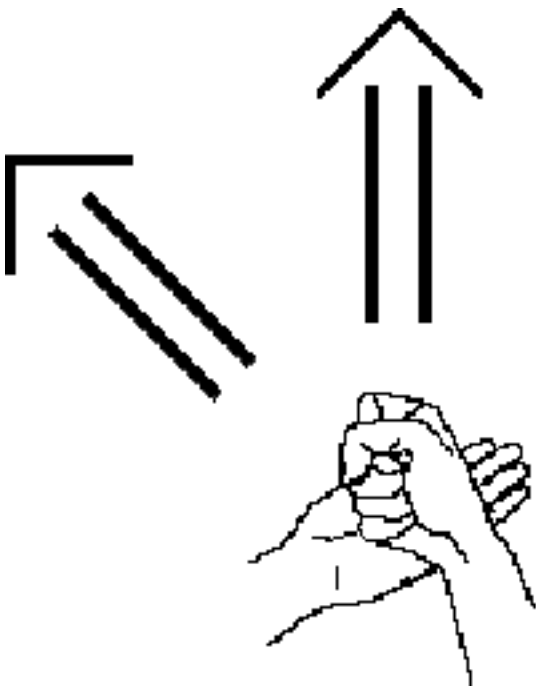


Two Hands Move As One Unit

When both hands contact, and move together in the same direction, they move as **one unit**. The movement is **both** right and left. It is written with a neutral arrowhead, that is neither dark nor light:



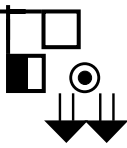
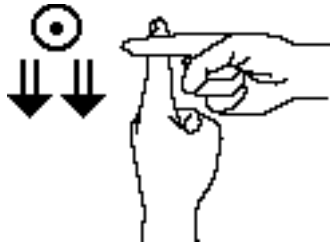
Do not confuse these arrows:



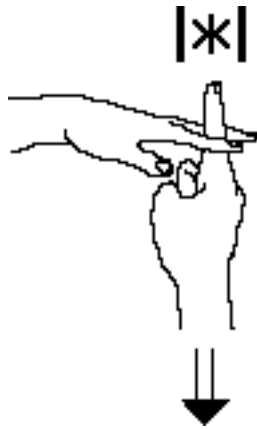
double
stemmed
arrows
mean
up



single
stemmed
arrows
mean
forward



monthly



disappear



Straight
Movement

Up or Down

A double-stemmed arrow means that the movement is straight up or down, parallel with the front wall. The movement is flat with the front of your body.



excuse



eager

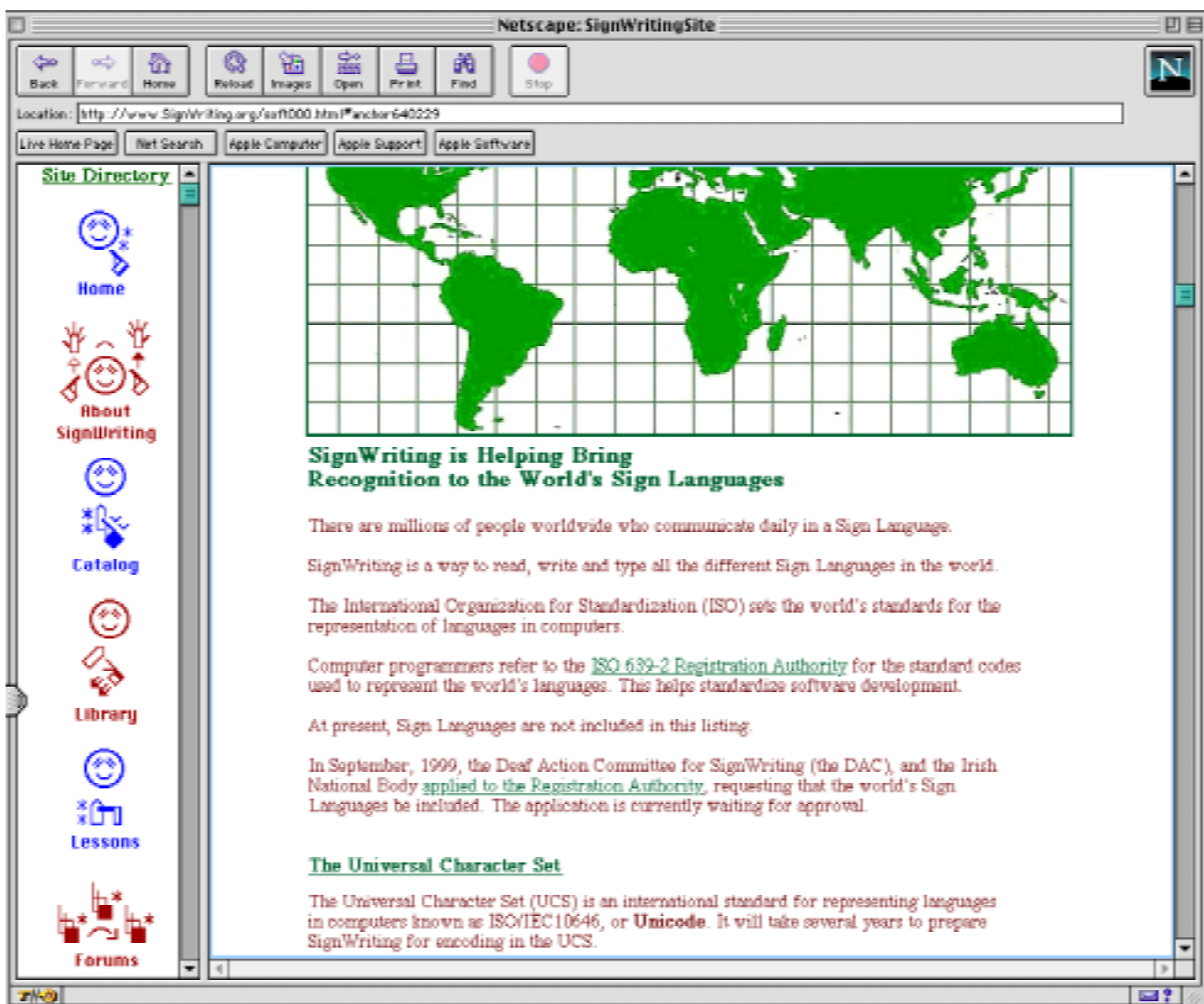


Straight
Movement

Forward or Back

A single-stemmed arrow means that the movement is forward or back, parallel with the floor. You are looking down, on top of the movement.





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