

This document is intended to be used in conjunction with the Official Rulebook and Evaluation Criteria, and not as a substitute for either. Download the Official Fine Arts Rulebook and the Evaluation Criteria at www.faf.ag.org/rules.cfm.

AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE

1. ASL IS NOT ANOTHER HUMAN VIDEO CATEGORY.

American Sign Language is just that... an actual language like English, Spanish, or French. This category is not another genre within the Drama Division – it isn't for Human Videos. Learn the actual language because your goal in this category is to creatively but accurately interpret a song for ministry to the Deaf.

2. NO LIP SYNCING.

Interpretation of a song in American Sign Language does not use English word-for-word interpretation. There is no lip syncing in ASL. ASL shows a visual picture to interpret word/concept meaning rather than a signing of English word-order only.

3. CONCEPTUAL ACCURACY.

Choose the best possible signs for the overall meaning of a word, concept, or phrase so that the message is easily and clearly understood by the Deaf person. There must be a clear choice of signs and grammar that are appropriate for the song-to-language interpretation.

4. APPROPRIATE CLOTHING.

It is culturally unacceptable for an ASL interpreter to wear busy, multi-colored, flamboyant, or patterned clothing. Too much color, busy prints, and shiny necklaces behind the signer's hands distracts from the communication of the language and message of the song.

5. SHOES!

Wear your shoes! Again, this is not Human Video. You wouldn't show up to the United Nations to interpret English for the French Ambassador without shoes so why would you show up to interpret a song for a Deaf person in just your stocking feet? It is totally inappropriate for the culture and language to interpret without appropriate dress, including your shoes.

6. FACIAL GRAMMAR.

Your face is vitally important to the communication in ASL! Facial grammar should be used which includes puffed cheeks, pursed lips, and raised eyebrows. Your facial expression should demonstrate the appropriate emotion of the conceptual sign. Eye contact is necessary, too!

7. UNNECESSARY MOVEMENT.

Too much bobbing and bouncing distracts from your message, interpretation, and the language making it difficult for Deaf folks to follow. Be very intentional in your spacing, sign placement, and use of the stage.

8. ORIGINALITY.

Work to be creative and original in your song selection and interpretation of the song. Don't just take last year's Award of Merit recipients song and sign choices and present it as your own in this year's festival.

9. FIND AN EXPERT.

ASL is a language. Find an expert – an individual who is certified to interpret or teach ASL and ask them to help you with sign choices, ASL concepts, clothing choices, facial grammar, etc.

10. PRACTICE.

If you wait until the last minute to put something together or you don't practice sufficiently, it will show in the quality of your presentation and the effectiveness of your interpretation.