

Teacher's  
Notes

# Say **Yes** to Languages

Primary  
Sampler  
Module

Irish Sign  
Language



# Say Yes to Languages

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## Foreword

The six plans contained in this booklet are provided to support teachers delivering the Primary Sampler Module in Irish Sign Language. This six-week sampler module is targeted at pupils in third to sixth class for up to 1 hour per week within the normal school timetable.

The Sampler Module aims to:

- Generate awareness among pupils of the range of languages used by their peers, including Irish Sign Language, in their schools and communities which may help support greater inclusion and appreciation of diversity in society
- Encourage uptake of languages at post-primary level
- Provide opportunities for increased levels of collaboration among the school community with regard to the celebration of languages and cultures
- Support implementation of Strategy for Foreign Languages

We would like to point out that the order in which the plans appear in this booklet is only a suggestion, and some teachers might prefer to follow a different sequence. However, the order follows the progression of the sections of the pupils' Language Passport and teachers are invited to encourage pupils to engage with its relevant sections as they progress. Teachers might find that some additional material is required, such as videos of specific vocabulary, images, or flashcards. We invite teachers to consult the additional links available for download from our website.

Each plan contains a selection of activities in order to provide enough range to suit different pupils, from the younger ones in third class to the older ones in sixth class. Teachers will decide which they would like to use in their classes and how to adapt them to suit their contexts.

Most importantly, we would like to invite our colleagues to encourage pupils' spontaneity by creating a safe space where all attempts are rewarded, with an emphasis on communication over accuracy. We hope that all pupils are given a voice and a chance for their languages to be seen. Finally, we hope that you will be supported in the delivery of this module through collaboration with other teachers, as well as with parents and guardians.

## A guide to the sections of each plan

The main **Heading** captures the central theme.

The **Overview** introduces the plan, providing a link with the aims of the module and the rationale.

The **Learning intentions** describe the learning outcomes that pupils should be able to demonstrate after having engaged with the various activities.

The **Links with the Primary Curriculum** show potential for cross-curricular opportunities and interconnection with other areas, subjects, and strands from the Primary Curriculum. For tutors who are not familiar with the Primary Curriculum, it will be very beneficial to link with the hosting primary teacher to explore these. Primary school teachers, on the other hand, might think about further extension activities and links with curricular areas other than those listed.

In some of the plans, **Questions** and suggested vocabulary are also included. This is intended as a guide and reflects the content of the Language Passport. We have also included information on Deaf culture and suggestions for exploring it with the pupils. This is of particular importance to achieve the first aim of the Sampler Module.

The **Before we start** and **Before we finish** prompts provide opportunities for student and class reflection before and at the end of a series of activities. Together with the Language Passport, they accompany pupils on their journey towards increased communicative competence, language awareness, awareness of Deaf culture, and understanding of their own learning strategies.

The **Suggested activities** are a non-exhaustive list, as described above, but rather a guide to support teachers and offer some suggestions.

The **Language Passport** icon offers a visual reminder of the relevant pages that teachers might invite pupils to refer to, complete, and reflect on during or after each class.

The **What went well** and **Even better** if areas are for teachers to note their reflections on various aspects of the lessons, such as: time and classroom management; pupil engagement and motivation; extent of pupils' achievement of the learning intentions; language-specific and cross-curricular outcomes; how to improve the effectiveness of the class or of individual activities; further ideas to better achieve learning intentions; and, generally, everything worth noting down for one's own future reference and to support colleagues.

We hope that you will find these ideas useful, and above all that you and your pupils enjoy the experience of having fun whilst engaging with Irish Sign Language.

The Primary Team at PPLI

# My Linguistic Portrait



## Overview:

Our identity is shaped by the languages that we use, hear, and see around us. Each one of us makes different associations with the languages in our lives, uses them for different purposes, and attributes different values to them. One important step towards inclusion is appreciating this linguistic diversity.

## Learning intentions:

Through various learning experiences, pupils should be able to...

- find out what languages are used in their school and community
- appreciate how different languages are important to different people
- represent and express what the languages they use mean to them
- learn to sign the names of languages spoken in the classroom

## Links with Primary Curriculum

Areas and Subjects	Strands
Social, Personal and Health Education	Myself Myself and others Myself and the wider world
Arts Education – Visual Arts	Drawing Paint and colour

## Questions

### Deaf culture and ISL:

Do you think that all sign languages around the world are the same?

Do you think sign language alphabets from all around the world are the same?

When or where do you see sign language being used in Ireland?

What is a sign language interpreter?

## My Linguist Portrait



### Suggested activities

#### Before we start:

Guess how many languages are used in our school / community

- Tutor presents her/his linguistic portrait and explains the different roles of different languages in his/her life
- Pupils work on their own linguistic portraits (in their Language Passports or on a single page)
- Tutor asks what languages are spoken by pupils in the classroom and teaches the signs
- Pupils present their linguistic portraits to each other and make a multilingual chart/poster of all the languages from their class, where the names of languages are written in the original language (e.g.: Polski for Polish) and possibly including the pupils' names. They practice signing the names of the languages in their linguistic portrait
- Pupils can be asked to complete the activity on page 4 of the Language Passport: "Why learn a language?". They can be asked to note which of the reasons were ticked the most in their class, and discuss why they are the most important to many of them
- Pupils can be asked to find classmates who have something in common with them, such as: languages in common, using the same language in the same contexts, having chosen the same reasons in the "Why learn a language?" activity
- Pupils can be encouraged to merge their findings with those of the other classes taking part in the module, then edit the poster "In our school community we speak" included in the school pack, to display in the school building

#### Before we finish:

Encourage pupils to describe what they have learned and record these thoughts  
Encourage pupils to continue the discussion on linguistic identity at home

## Teacher reflection

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# Getting to Know You



See Page  
6

## Overview:

One of the first conventions to learn about different cultures and in different languages are greetings and introductions. Pupils will get to know a little more about their tutor and each other. They will learn how to greet each other, fingerspell their name, express their feelings in role-plays, and practice using different identities. Because our first name is a very important component of our identity, particular care should be given to correct handshapes and orientation of fingerspelling names correctly.

## Learning intentions:

Through various learning experiences, pupils should be able to...

- Greet the tutor and each other
- Introduce themselves to their classmates and tutor
- Understand basic feelings
- Understand basic Deaf culture norms

### Important note for teachers:

ISL is a visual and spatial language with its own distinct grammar and is not only a language of the hands, but also of the face and body. It is also recognised as a language that does not derive from spoken language and has its own grammatical and syntactical structures.

#### Examples are:

**Spoken English:** My name is Carmel      **ISL:** MY NAME C-A-R-M-E-L

Body movement and facial expressions are part of conscious communication.

Three notes about Deaf culture

- Eye contact is extremely important
- Touch in Deaf culture is acceptable to get another person's attention
- Pointing is acceptable for Deaf culture even though it is rude in hearing culture. The pupils need to understand the difference. Examples: MY FRIEND [POINT TO HER and make eye contact] NAME M-A-R-Y

## Links with Primary Curriculum

Areas and Subjects	Strands
Arts Education – Drama	Drama to explore feelings, knowledge, and ideas, leading to understanding
Social, Personal and Health Education	Myself



## Getting to Know You



### Questions

#### Deaf culture and ISL:

Have you met Deaf people before?

What are Deaf culture norms? (include maintaining eye contact, touching, waving, tapping the shoulder, stamping on floor, turning the lights on and off to get someone's attention (depends)).

How do you introduce yourself to a Deaf person?

How would you get a Deaf person's attention?

#### Before we start:

Can you introduce yourself in a different language?

#### Suggested activities:

- Tutor introduces himself/herself to the pupils (may bring along a puppet or other character and let them introduce themselves too, and/or involve the other adults in the classroom)
- Vocabulary building games on basic greetings + "My name ..."
- Practice greeting + "My name ..." + name, with classmates. This can be done in pairs/groups or playing a circle game where a ball or teddy is thrown around and whoever catches it signs a greeting and introduces himself/herself. Remind them to use eye contact: whoever says a greeting, make sure all eye contacts are with him/her
- Tutor presents basic feelings (may use puppets/emojis/pictures, own facial expression or body language)
- Activities involving new vocabulary (matching, odd one out, true/false, sorting)
- Other activities can include:
  - Tutor acts out different feelings using body language or shows a card, while pupils raise hands up in the air then sign a word
  - Pupils draw emojis based on the words the tutor signs or shows
- Tutor signs how he/she is right now, then asks pupils how they are
- Tutor can also give out role-cards (name + feeling) and ask pupils to role-play.

#### Before we finish:

If someone introduced themselves in ISL, do you think that you would understand?

## Teacher reflection

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# What I Like to Do

## Overview:

Being able to express likes and dislikes is one of the first things we all like to do when we learn a new language. This topic should enable pupils to do this in the context of hobbies. Pupils will be able to recognise and use some very basic phrases to sign about their hobbies. Pupils will also learn to express likes and dislikes. Special attention should be paid to facial expressions.

## Learning intentions:

Through various activities pupils will learn to:

- Recognise days of the week and numbers
- Share one of their favourite hobbies
- Express likes and dislikes
- Reflect on how Deaf people “listen” to music or TV
- Learn about Deaf athletes, musicians, actors etc.

## Links with Primary Curriculum

Areas and Subjects	Strands
Arts Education – Drama	Drama to explore feelings, knowledge, and ideas, leading to understanding
Social, Personal, and Health Education	Myself

## Hobbies

### Suggested vocabulary

indoors: reading, listening to music, watching tv, dancing, gym, video games such as xbox, etc.

outdoors: running, swimming, walking, etc.

### Questions:

What hobbies do you like? What don't you like?

When do you do your hobby? (days of the week)

## What I Like to Do

### Hobbies continued...

#### Music and Dancing in Deaf lives

Do you think a Deaf person can hear music – how?

Any ideas?

There are famous Deaf people who are known for dancing; how do you think they can dance without hearing the music?

Examples from UK Strictly Come Dancing 2021 and US Dancing with the Stars:

Rose Alying-Ellis (UK) – present, first contestant

Nyle DiMarco (US) 2016 second contestant and he won

Marlee Matlin (US) 2008 first contestant

Signmark, a Deaf rapper in Finland.

#### Sports

DEAFLYMPICS – how is it different from other Olympics (Hearing and Paralympics)?

(Deaflympics.com is a sports event for deaf athletes who compete at an elite international level dating back to 1900's)

Why do you think Deaflympics are needed?

How many Irish people have won medals?

#### English Channel swim

Patricia Heffernan, an Irish Deaf woman.

Have a look <https://www.swimireland.ie/news/diversity-inclusion-patricia-heffernans-story>

#### Suggested activities:

##### Before we start:

Tutor signs some hobbies they like and some they don't. Get pupils to notice facial expression and body language.

- Tutor shows some flashcards with hobbies and ask pupils to guess the sign
- Teacher introduces the correct sign for the hobbies
- Ask pupils for additional hobbies they may have that haven't been introduced
- Play a game of What Is Missing with the flashcards (see document on games)
- Tutor places the flashcards in two columns on the board and signs what he/she likes and doesn't like

## What I Like to Do

### Suggested activities, continued...

- Tutor picks a flashcard from the board and shows it to the class. Pupils who like that activity stand up and sign I like... Pupils who don't stay seated and sign I don't like. Special attention is placed on facial expression
- Tutor introduces the days of the week
- Play a game. Assign students a day of the week. When the tutor signs that day, they have to put their hands up
- Get students to sign days of the week in reverse order
- Get students in pairs to sign the days of the week to each other
- Tutor signs what days of the week he/she practices their hobbies
- Ask pupils to work in pairs and tell each other. Tutor walks around checking

#### Before we finish:

Decide and sign a sentence to share with your family or friends who do not have ISL. Do you think they will understand you?

## Teacher reflection

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# Count Me In 🖐️🖐️🖐️



## Overview:

Numbers and counting are part of daily communicative interactions. Pupils already possess some mathematical skills and are able to associate words with numerical symbols in the languages they are familiar with. In this series of activities, we will leverage pupils' mathematical knowledge and reinforce those skills by linking them to familiar vocabulary such as classroom objects and clothing items, while also involving physical movement.

## Learning intentions:

Through various learning experiences, pupils should be able to...

- Use numbers 1-12 to count items in the classroom
- Engage in games involving numbers
- Sing a song about numbers

## Links with Primary Curriculum

Areas and Subjects	Strands
Mathematics	Number
Arts Education – Music	Listening & Responding
Physical Education	Games

### Before we start:

Can you count in more than one language? Have you ever watched a famous song being signed?

## Suggested activities:

- Call the roll, repeat the replies with the pupils and exchange greetings
- Tutor introduces numbers through various activities, inviting pupils to watch and copy. Video clips can help
- Introduce digits and do vocabulary building activities such as: matching, simple additions/subtractions, true/false
- Present a limited list of vocabulary of items in the classroom (for example: furniture, features such as windows/doors/desks, schoolbag items etc.) and play games using numbers to count these items. Pupils can be asked how many of a particular item there are/they have and match with the correct number

## Count Me In 🖐️👉👋

### Suggested activities (continued):

- Pupils can create multilingual cards with numbers and use them to challenge each other in simple sums
- Pupils can be given (or can create) bingo cards and play the game. Another game could be to assign a number to each pupil and ask them to sign them in a chain (vary the game by giving instructions such as: skip every second number, count in reverse order, every time we make a mistake, we start again)
- Many active games can be played involving numbers, such as the classic “Capture the flag”, or skipping rope while counting. Some of these may extend outside of the classroom and require outdoor or gym space
- Introduce simple numbers (1 to 12)
- Ask pupils if they know how to sign numbers in any other sign language. Is there anything they found surprising or interesting about signing numbers?

#### Before we finish:

What most helped you to learn about numbers and other words?  
Do you think that you would enjoy watching songs in different signed languages?



## Teacher reflection

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# A Typical Day in School

## Overview:

There are actions, instructions and communicative exchanges that are repeated nearly every day in the classroom with the same structure and patterns. Pupils, as a result, are very familiar with the meaning associated with such routines. This is very fertile ground for transferral of literacy skills from the languages they know to additional languages. In the next series of activities, pupils will explore some of these routines that they will consolidate with use over time.

## Learning intentions:

Through various learning experiences, pupils should be able to...

- Recognise days of the week and numbers
- Respond to simple classroom instructions
- Reflect on school life and Deaf culture
- Note which strategies they prefer to memorise vocabulary
- Recognise different types of hearing devices

## Links with Primary Curriculum

Areas and Subjects	Strands
Arts Education – Visual Arts	Drawing Paint and colour
Arts Education – Drama	Drama to explore feelings, knowledge and ideas, leading to understanding
Physical Education	Gymnastics
Social, Personal and Health Education	Myself

## Questions

**Deaf education and Deaf schools:** Special Schools, Mainstream schools, Deaf Units, Residential School

If you are deaf, what type of school can you go to?

Do you know the differences between these types of schools?

Do you know where the schools are?

Degree of Deafness?

What is a Cochlear implant?

## A Typical Day in School 🖐️🖐️🖐️

### Questions continued...

**Deaf education and Deaf schools:** Special Schools, Mainstream schools, Deaf Units, Residential School

Do you think all Deaf people wear hearing aids or Cochlear implants?

Do you know anyone who has a Cochlear Implant?

Do you think if Deaf people have Cochlear Implants, then they can hear like you?

What is the difference between your school and Deaf schools?

What may be challenging for a deaf pupil in a mainstream classroom?

### Suggested activities:

#### Before we start:

What are the things  
that you do or say almost every  
day in school?

- Call the roll, repeat the replies with the pupils and exchange sign greetings
- Introduce vocabulary activities associated with routine actions in the classroom (these can include roll call interaction, saying the day of the week open your copy, raise your hand, stand up, sit down and other instructions)
- Encourage pupils to draw the signs they learn.  
Images of different calendars, school journals and other items can be used to introduce the days of the week. Practice how to sign the days of the week, today, tomorrow, yesterday, etc.  
Numbers 1-7 can be reviewed and associated with the days of the week (play basic memory games, matching, sorting)
- Ask pupils to try to memorise the days of the week using any strategy they prefer, before you play a game to see how many they remember. Give them time, then check
- Ask them to note their preferred strategies on page 9 of the Language Passport
- Tutor introduces basic classroom routine expressions. Pupils can be given or make cards with expressions such as: open your copy, raise your hand, stand up, etc.

## A Typical Day in School

### Suggested activities continued...

- Various games can be played, based on the different routines, such as:
  - Charades: tutor signs and pupils guess by lifting the correct card
  - Stand up if you do this every day: tutor signs the expression, pupils respond
  - Snap (clap once, clap twice): tutor signs the expressions while showing visual representations in a random order. When the two don't match, pupils clap once, when they do, they clap twice
  - What Is Missing: Tutor shows all the expressions (or days of the week) on the board, then takes away one at a time and pupils sign which is missing
  - Watch and Respond: tutor signs the prompt, pupils respond by doing the action (IE: open your copy, raise your hand)
  - Form a train of actions: each pupil is assigned an action. In a given order, each pupil signs and mimes that action forming a chain (can be done faster, in reverse, or in random order)
- Create one or more multilingual poster(s) for the classroom with illustrations and routine instructions in all the languages used by the pupils

#### Before we finish:

Are you able to follow instructions in a new language? What most helped you to learn new words?

What did you find interesting about Deaf culture and school life?

## Teacher reflection

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# What's on Your Plate?



## Overview:

Food forms a big part of all our days, including our school day. In this series of activities, pupils will learn to sign typical foods and drinks in ISL, what's in their lunch boxes, and their habits, likes, and dislikes.

## Learning intentions:

Through various learning experiences, pupils should be able to...

- Recognise some basic types of food and drink
- Share one of their favourite dishes
- Express likes and dislikes for some types of food with the emphasis of using facial expressions
- Reflect on how Deaf people may order in a restaurant or shop

## Links with Primary Curriculum

Areas and Subjects	Strands
Mathematics	Early mathematical activities
Social Environmental and Scientific Education – Science	Designing and making Materials
Arts Education – Visual Arts	Drawing Paint and colour
Social, Personal and Health Education	Myself

Deaf ordering food (take away)	<p><b>Examples of questions</b></p> <p>Not many staff who work in restaurants or take away restaurants know ISL How do you think that Deaf people can communicate while ordering?</p> <p>Can Deaf people order take away over the phone? What is an alternative to ordering on the phone?</p> <p>How would you order if you were Deaf or had a hearing impairment?</p>
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## What's on Your Plate?



### Suggested activities:

#### Before we start:

Imagine you are Deaf and you are going to the shop to get something. How will you communicate with the cashier? Any ideas?

- Call the roll, repeat the replies with the pupils and exchange greetings
- Tutor and pupils sign what day of the week it is, with the visual support of the material they previously created
- Tutor introduces basic foods often used as ingredients
- Do vocabulary building activities (matching, odd one out, true/false, sorting). For example, pupils could be asked to assemble the ingredients of various recipes, or find in a list the only ingredient not used in a particular dish
- Play games where pupils associate colours and food items
- Use vocabulary games to practice the signs for food items, drinks and colours
- Play a true/false game signing items of food or drink you may find in a school lunch box
- Tutor presents one of their favourite dishes, signing "I like" and describing it
- Pupils can be invited to sign their favourite dish, and might be encouraged to draw, colour or even make a visual representation of the dish using different materials available to them
- Pupils can play maths games of addition and subtraction based on the ingredients of dishes and tutor instructions
- Tutor can encourage the class to create a colourful and multilingual visual representation of all their favourite types of food
- Pupils can be asked to reflect on similarities and differences in people's eating habits, as well as the vocabulary of food and drink across different languages

#### Before we finish:

Do you know the sign for your favourite food? Do you know how to ask your friends what food they like in ISL?

## Teacher reflection

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## Notes

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## Notes

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