



AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE
TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

ASLHS Eric "Malz" Malzkuhn ASL Literature Competition

Category: Fable Storytelling

Student Packet

The National American Sign Language Honor Society (ASLHS) is pleased to announce the 2026 ASL Literature Competition. The following instructions and forms provide the necessary information to participate in the competition.

The Literature theme this year will be **"Fable Storytelling."**

A fable is a short, fictional story from your local town or state that often means to teach a specific moral lesson or virtues of common sense or lessons in behavior. Examples of fables are the following: **The Tortoise and the Hare**: Slow and steady wins the race. **The Boy Who Cried Wolf**: Liars are not believed even when they speak the truth. **The Goose with the Golden Eggs**: Greed often overreaches itself.

1. General Competition Guidelines

- a. An introduction signed by the student must be included before signing the Fable. Wait 2-3 seconds after the end of the introduction before beginning. The signed introduction must include:
 - i. The signer's first name.
 - ii. What level of ASL the student is studying
 - iii. The title of their story.
- b. All pieces must be performed naturally. Reading from scripts, cue cards, "cheat sheets" or copy-signing another individual is not permitted.
- c. The student should wear solid contrasting colors with minimal jewelry and hair should be kept away from the face. The background should be free of distractions.
- d. Videos should not exceed **5 minutes**.
- e. Entries must be submitted to the padlet by **March 27th 2026, 11:59PM EST.**

2. Judging Criteria

All entries will be judged according to the following criteria:

a. Clarity - The most important element in presenting in ASL is clarity, which asks this question: *Can my audience understand what I'm signing?* How well is each sign formed? Key aspects of clarity include:

- i. Not rushing or moving too slowly to be distracting
- ii. Well-formed parameters
- iii. Clear facial expressions and non-manuals
- iv. Confidence in the ability to sign the story

b. Presentational Format - Signing for an audience requires a different type of signing than the casual conversation between friends. Presentational communication emphasizes formality appropriate to the situation. Avoid these common errors:

- i. Breaking eye-contact with the camera
- ii. Nervous gestures, such as tucking hair behind the ears, rocking on feet, slouching, and playing with clothes
- iii. Long pauses
- iv. Staring up at the ceiling or down at the ground

Things to include:

- i. Use a larger sign space
- ii. Use the space around the signer to establish reference points and details
- iii. Use facial expressions and non-manual signals deliberately and clearly
- iv. Sign slightly slower than usual with artistic motion
- v. Stand straight with both feet on the flat ground

c. Content - How well does the student communicate what he or she intended to communicate? The judges want to have a clear understanding of the meaning.

3. Time Frame

Submissions will be accepted beginning February 15th 2026 - March 27, 2026 and all entries are due by **March 27th, 2026, 11:59PM EST**.

4. Competition Categories

The contest is open to students regularly enrolled in middle school, high school, and post-secondary language courses. Students at any level of ASL instruction are welcome to submit entries in one category. Students may be disqualified if, in the opinion of the judges, they are in the wrong level or class. The categories are based on student experience, not age.

The following defines competition categories:

- a. **BEGINNER**: Students of ASL Level 1 and 2, CODAs (children of deaf adults) who are not fluent or Deaf students who are not fluent in ASL, and all middle schoolers.
- b. **INTERMEDIATE**: Students of ASL level 3 and above.

- c. **NATIVE SIGNERS:** Students who are CODAs, residential school students, and Deaf students fluent in ASL.

5. Submission Format

Submit your application on Padlet. All entries must be submitted in the form of a **video file**. Other formats, including a YouTube link, will not be accepted for judging purposes.

6. Prizes & Certificates

Winners will be decided by a surprise judge

- a. All participants will receive a certificate of participation
- b. All schools will receive a certificate of participation
- c. Prizes for each categories are as follows:
 - i. First place: \$100.00
 - ii. Second place: \$75.00
 - iii. Third place: \$50.00

7. Announcement of Winners

Winners will be announced in **May** on the ASL Honor Society website and social media. If you win in any category, your teacher will be informed prior to the announcement.

8. Winning Entries

Winning entries will be posted on the ASL Honor Society's YouTube page. **It is essential that any student under 18 years of age have a parent or guardian's permission to have his/her child's entry posted.** The form can be found [here](#).

9. Contact information

For any additional questions, please contact:

Nicole Cruz, ASLHS National Competition Coordinator, at aslhs.competitions2@aslta.org.