

Insights into Auslan

Structure of Signs in Auslan.

*(Adapted by Anne Horton from "Australian Sign Language: An introduction to sign language linguistics"
by Johnston and Schembri)*

- The structure of a sign in Auslan has four main aspects:
 - **Handshape:** the shape of the hand used in the sign.
 - **Orientation:** the direction of the palm and fingers.
 - **Location:** the position of the hand in the signing space.
 - **Movement:** the way the hand(s) move through space.

- A significant change in one of these aspects may alter the meaning of the sign or result in a completely different sign. (eg: CAR and DRIVE – the only difference being the direction of movement)

- Other significant aspects include:
 - Stress and duration
 - Rate of repetition
 - Non-manual features (facial expression, eye gaze, mouth gestures, mouthing of spoken words, movements of the head and body).