

American Sign Language Honor Society



High School • College • University

INDUCTION CEREMONY OUTLINE

This document outlines the formal induction ceremony procedures for the American Sign Language Honor Society (ASLHS). The induction ceremony celebrates new members becoming part of the national association of students committed to academic excellence in their ASL studies, and builds pride in being a recognized member of an elite group. An induction ceremony is a rite of passage, and inductees should feel honored, praised, and proud to be recognized.

This induction ceremony serves as a model, though ASLHS chapter sponsors may make changes or substitutions as needed as long as the ASLHS pledge is included. A link to the ASLHS pledge performed in ASL appears on the ASLHS website.

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In This Document:

- 1) Pre-ceremony checklist (page 3)
- 2) Day of ceremony checklist (page 4)
- 3) Ceremony outline & examples (pages 5-7)
- 4) Sample Formal Invitation Letter (pages 8-9)
- 5) Sample Acceptance Letter (page 10)
- 6) Sample ASLHS Certificates (pages 11-12)
- 7) FAQ (page 13)

Available Online:

- 8) Ceremony Booklet Sample
- 9) Ceremony Booklet Template
- 10) ASLHS Certificate Template

A Note on Eligibility and Membership:

The ASL Honor Society's official position regarding student eligibility and membership in the Society is to respect the policies of your district, school, or institution. In many K-12 institutions, any ASL student is allowed to join the Society; in others, only students who meet specific GPA requirements may join. In most post-secondary schools, the Society is open to all interested ASL students.

While the ASLHS may be open to all ASL students, induction ceremonies are traditionally reserved for those students who meet the highest qualifications. These include:

- Being in the final year of study at the institution (typically, juniors or seniors)
- Having an overall grade point average of at least 3.0
- Having a minimum 3.5 grade point average in all ASL and ASL-related coursework
- Documented volunteer service that benefits the Deaf community

Some institutions may want to confer graduation honor materials (honor cords, Alice Cogswell Medal, Laurent Clerc Medal) during the ASLHS induction ceremony. Students must meet all eligibility requirements for those materials regardless of school policies.

Official Pledge of the American Sign Language Honor Society

As a student of ASL, I understand that language can be a powerful connection between peoples of different cultures and backgrounds, bringing them together. Henceforth, I am proud to commit to being a steadfast ally of the Deaf community. I pledge to encourage Deaf and Hearing peoples to come together in unity throughout the world. Lastly, I will reflect the ideals of the American Sign Language Honor Society in scholarship, community service, and personal excellence.

1) Pre-Ceremony Checklist

___ Invite students to apply for formal membership in the ASL Honor Society. Invite students who meet the ASLHS GPA eligibility requirement (minimum 3.0 on a 4.0 scale). Invitation letters should be sent to students at least one month before the induction ceremony. See **Formal Invitation Letter**.

Eligibility: Traditionally, students are invited to apply to join honor societies in their junior or senior years after demonstrating a history of academic excellence and community service.

Alternative: Some schools conduct induction ceremonies for all students interested in joining the Society, though usually not during a students' freshman year.

___ Select a ceremony date.

___ Reserve the appropriate location (i.e. media center, cafeteria, auditorium).

___ Invite a Deaf guest speaker to give a brief speech on a topic relevant to the study of ASL. The speech should inspire and uplift the inductees, current ASLHS members, and their friends and family in the audience. The guest speaker plays an important role during the candle lighting ceremony.

___ Arrange for a certified interpreter to interpret the event.

___ Invite a school administrator to participate in the induction ceremony.

Possible Roles: Opening remarks; introduce the guest speaker; closing remarks.

___ Arrange for the US flag to be present at the ceremony site. If your school has a JROTC available, ask them to present the colors.

___ Select light refreshments that will be provided after the ceremony ends.

Suggestions: Cake, cookies, and beverages.

___ Gather items needed for the refreshment table: Plates, napkins, and cups.

___ Obtain an individual candle for each member to light and hold as part of the candle lighting portion of the induction ceremony. Candles may be white or in one of the school colors.

___ Order enough ASLHS pins so that each member of the society will receive one during the induction ceremony. The pin order form is available on the ASLHS website, on the Induction Ceremony page.

- ___ Obtain a frame for your chapter's certificate from ASLHS. Display the certificate on the refreshment table.
- ___ Create the induction ceremony program book and make a sufficient amount of copies. **See Ceremony Booklet.**
- ___ Print enough individual ASLHS certificates to be presented to each inductee. You can order gold embossed seals from ASLHS. **See ASLHS Certificate.**
- ___ Ask several ASL students to play key roles in the induction ceremony. Preferably, these students are officers of the campus ASLHS chapter.

Possible Roles: Introduce the inductees; introduce the keynote speaker; present the ASLHS certificates; pinning the ASLHS pin; overseeing refreshments; signing the pledge of allegiance; serving as ushers.
- ___ The ASLHS chapter sponsor prepares comments.

1a) Pre-Ceremony Options

- ___ Obtain an event signature book for students to sign after the induction ceremony. Keep this signature book to create a record that lasts for years.
- ___ Rehearse the induction ceremony.

2) Day of Ceremony Checklist

- ___ Make sure matches are ready for the candle lighting portion of the induction ceremony.
- ___ Set out refreshments.
- ___ Make sure the guest speaker is familiar with the candle lighting portion of the ceremony that begins after his / her keynote speech ends.

3) Ceremony Outline & Examples

3a) Introduction and Welcome

Should be delivered in ASL by the ASLHS chapter sponsor, with spoken interpretation for audience members unfamiliar with ASL.

Sample Welcome:

Good evening. Welcome to the induction ceremony for the American Sign Language Honor Society. We are here to celebrate and honor students who have made an enthusiastic commitment to the study of ASL and Deaf Culture.

Inaugurated in 2006, the ASL Honor Society is an official program sponsored by the national ASL Teachers Association to encourage and recognize high academic achievement in ASL studies.

The students to be honored here tonight are part of an elite group of students from across the United States and Canada. Out of the hundreds of thousands of students learning ASL each year, these students here have persevered and maintained the highest grade point averages, performed community service, and have pursued excellence. For these reasons they are inducted into the ASL Honor Society.

Please stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Alternative: A school administrator, faculty member, or other person can make welcome remarks, and then introduce the ASLHS chapter sponsor who continues the explanation of the ASL Honor Society.

3b) Pledge of Allegiance

All ASL students and faculty deliver the pledge in ASL, while audience members unfamiliar with ASL deliver it in spoken English.

Comments: The inductees should be familiar with how to sign the Pledge. One student may wish to lead the group, or lead the entire assembly, but all the ASL students should sign simultaneously.

After the pledge, the ASLHS chapter sponsor asks the audience to be seated.

3c) Introduction of Candidates

Delivered in ASL by the ASLHS chapter sponsor or a student ASLHS leader, with spoken interpretation for audience members unfamiliar with ASL. The first and last

names of each inductee are fingerspelled. As his / her name is fingerspelled, that student should rise and be acknowledged by the audience.

Comments: Consider including additional comments about each inductee, such as notable achievements.

3d) Introduction of Keynote Speaker

The ASLHS sponsor or student leader should introduce the keynote speaker. A brief explanation of why the speaker was chosen, his / her background, and other details should be shared. The introduction should be given in ASL.

3e) Keynote Speaker

The keynote speaker should feel free to deliver his / her address and comments as preferred, though it is desirable that he/she keep the keynote focused on the importance of learning ASL, the Deaf community's response to students, and the future benefits (educational, employment, etc.) studying ASL can bring.

After the keynote address is completed, the ASLHS chapter sponsor thanks the speaker and asks him/ her to remain on stage.

3f) ASLHS Pledge Recitation & Pin

The ASLHS chapter sponsor explains that the inductees will recite an oath, a public commitment to the study of ASL. Each inductee will receive the ASLHS pin as a formal token of joining the ASL Honor Society. Inductees should stand facing the audience, and the person leading the oath should stand and face the inductees. All new inductees deliver this pledge in ASL.

The ASLHS chapter sponsor or an assistant pins the ASLHS pin on each inductees' lapel after the pledge is recited.

Comments: Students sign the oath in tandem with the leader. Students will need to practice this in advance for a successful recitation in case they are nervous and encounter unfamiliar signs. The pledge should be given in short segments. A video of the pledge performed in ASL is available on the ASLHS website. Students remain standing after the pledge is completed.

ASLHS Pledge

As a student of ASL, I understand that language can be a powerful connection between peoples of different cultures and backgrounds, bringing them together. Henceforth, I am proud to commit to being a steadfast ally of the Deaf community. I

pledge to encourage Deaf and Hearing peoples to come together in unity throughout the world. Lastly, I will reflect the ideals of the American Sign Language Honor Society in scholarship, community service, and personal excellence.

NOTE: A link to the formal pledge presented in ASL is on the *Induction Ceremony* page of the ASLHS website. Visit www.aslhonorsociety.org to view the pledge.

3g) Candle Lighting

The ASLHS chapter sponsor informs the audience of the candle lighting portion of the ceremony before asking the keynote speaker to begin the candle lighting.

Sample Explanation:

Candles have a long history in the honor society tradition. They symbolize learning and understanding and serve to illuminate the darkness of ignorance. Our guest speaker will initiate the candle lighting.

The keynote speaker lights his / her candle first, and passes it to an assistant to hold. The keynote speaker then makes a brief comment on the candle's symbolism and then lights the first inductees' candle, who then shares his / her light with the student standing in line until all candles are lit.

Sample Explanation:

This candle represents the sharing of our beautiful language of signs and the strong culture from which it springs. As a Deaf person, I am proud to welcome you and hope you continue to pass your love for ASL to others.

After all the candles are lit, the ASLHS chapter sponsor announces that the inductees are now members of the American Sign Language Honor Society. Have the audience applaud. Ask inductees to blow out their candles and be seated.

3h) Closing Remarks

Thank the audience members for their participation and announce refreshments are available.

Option: If desired, present the ASLHS certificate to each new member. See **ASLHS Certificates**.

Option 2: If desired, have each new member sign the signature book.

4) Sample Formal Invitation Letter



ASL students in their second, third, or fourth year of study who have earned a general GPA of at least 3.0 and an ASL GPA of at least 3.5 are invited to apply for membership in the American Sign Language Honor Society. You meet the academic requirements and are eligible to join the national organization. Benefits include being able to apply for the ASLHS scholarship, mentioning membership on college applications, and taking leadership positions with the organization.

If you choose to join the ASL Honor Society, please fill out the information below and return it to [**insert name of ASLHS sponsor here**] by [**insert date here**].

As a student of ASL, I _____, understand that language can be a powerful connection between people of different cultures and backgrounds. Henceforth, I am proud to be a Signer, and pledge to be a steadfast ally of the Deaf community.

I, _____, pledge to deepen my own understanding and appreciation for ASL, and to encourage in others the same respect I have for visual languages and cultures. I promise to promote friendship and understanding throughout the world, and uphold the ideals of the ASL Honor Society in scholarship, community service, and personal excellence.

Please complete the following:

Name (print): _____

Name of ASL teacher (print): _____

Current Grade in School: _____

Birthdate: _____

Address (print): _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

Note: If you want to wear honor cords or medals at graduation, you are required to perform a certain number of hours of community service in the Deaf community, as well as continue to meet GPA requirements.

[insert here chapter-specific information, such as mandatory induction ceremony meetings, the induction ceremony date, expected dues (if any), and other relevant comments]

Sign below to indicate you have read through the application and are interested in becoming a member of the ASL Honor Society.

Candidate Signature

Date

5) Sample Acceptance Letter



[insert date here]

Dear [name of student],

Congratulations! You have been accepted into the membership of the American Sign Language Honor Society chapter at [insert name of school]. The ASLHS is an official program established by the ASLTA, the only national organization of ASL teachers. ASLHS seeks to recognize and encourage high academic achievement of ASL study. Thank you for your commitment to excellence in ASL.

The [insert school name] chapter of the ASLHS invites you and your family to attend your induction into the Society in [month]. This special event will be held in the [insert location].

Please plan to attend a mandatory meeting on [insert date, time, location]. We will [insert details] and rehearse the induction ceremony, including the ASLHS Pledge. This is an important commitment. I look forward to seeing you at the meeting.

Best Wishes in Your Continued ASL Studies,

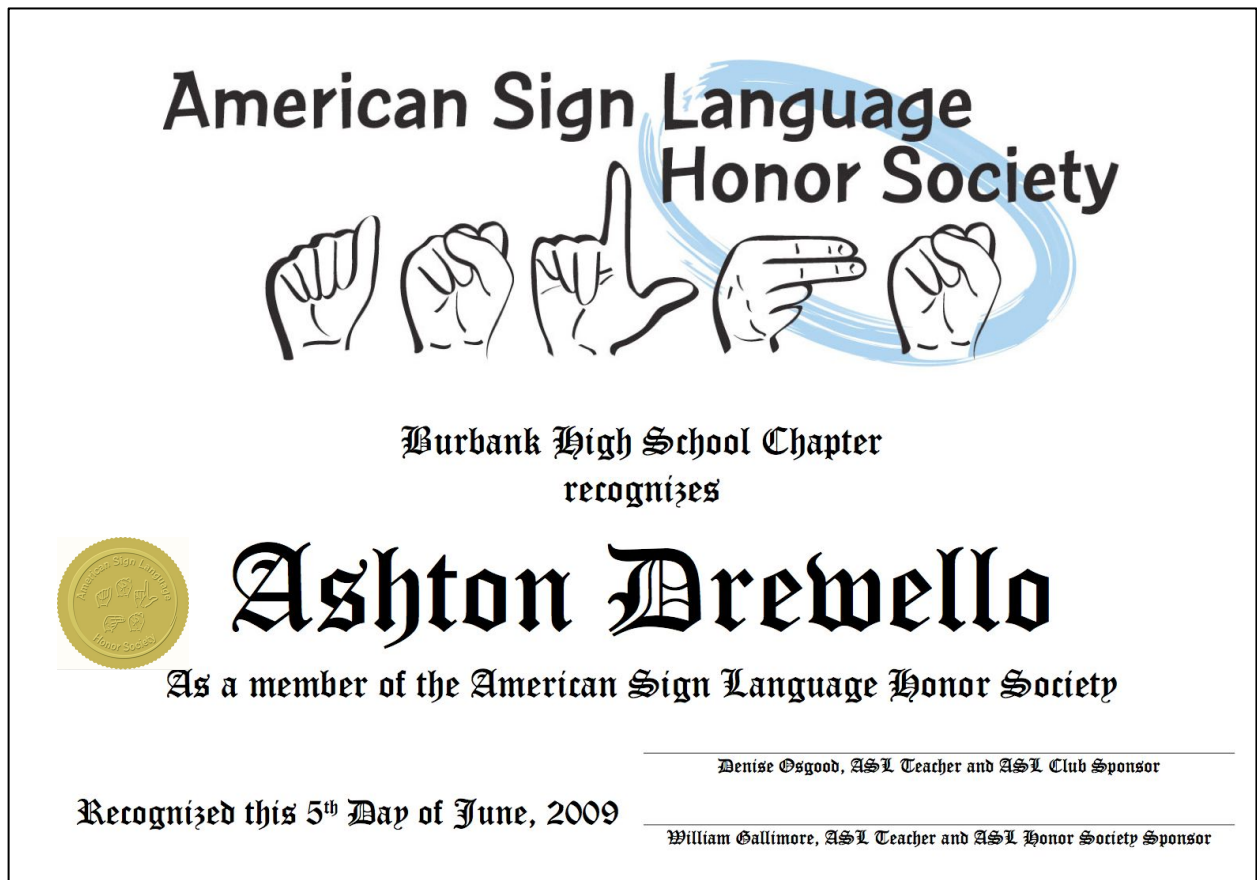
[name of ASL teacher]

6) Sample ASLHS Certificates

Each certificate template may be downloaded from the ASLHS website. Teachers should consider printing certificates on substantial paper for presentation.

6a) Blank Template

Teachers can customize the certificate with specific information and then printed.



6b) Generic Template

Teachers can print this generic certificate and then handwrite specific information.

American Sign Language Honor Society



 recognizes

As a member of the American Sign Language Honor Society

Recognized this ____ Day of ____, 20____

ASL Teacher and ASL Honor Society Sponsor

7) Frequently Asked Questions

a) ***Can I use the ASLHS logo?***

Yes, you can. Download the official ASLHS logo from the Induction Ceremony page on the ASLHS website. Please do not modify the logo in any way. You are free to use the logo for certificates, program books, or other uses.

b) ***Where do I get the ASLHS pins? Can I use them for other purposes?***

ASLHS pins are available for order. You can find the order form on the Induction Ceremony page on the ASLHS website. Please allow 2-3 weeks for delivery.

You can use the ASLHS pins for purposes other than induction ceremonies. Some schools recognize students who do well in ASL, but who do not meet GPA requirements to earn honor cords or medals, with a pin. Other schools give pins to all members of the ASLHS on campus, or reserve them only for seniors.

c) ***Where do I get the embossed gold ASLHS seals?***

You can order embossed seals using the order form on the Induction Ceremony page on the ASLHS website. Please allow 2-3 weeks for delivery.

d) ***Do I have to follow this ASLHS induction ceremony exactly?***

No, you do not. These materials are provided as a suggested guide. You are free to modify the ceremony and materials as desired. However, we do ask that you retain the ASLHS pledge exactly as it is performed in ASL and its English interpretation.