



# ONE GESTURE IS ENOUGH

GUIDELINE  
5

## Projects with Deaf and HoH Partners



With the support of the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union





**ONE GESTURE IS  
ENOUGH**

When carrying out projects with Deaf and HoH partners, it is important that the project structure is designed to ensure the 'equal' participation of these partners in the workflow and coordination.

**The use of a translator:**

It is important to recruit a sign language interpreter in all meetings and also in written communication (even if information can be accessed from written sources, there may be cases where explanations and support may be required).

The interpreter should have:

- Certified competence in sign language
- Professional ability to work in harmony and coordination with the Deaf and HoH.
- Accumulation (general culture and knowledge) to understand the content of the study
- Process management experience and professional time to take on the workload
- The technical and hardware infrastructure for sign language interpreting (simultaneous from spoken to sign language, from sign language to spoken language, sight translation, consecutive interpreting) in the face-to-face and online meetings
- Knowledge and experience in supporting the Deaf and HoH in accessing written resources
- The ability to adapt to and meet the needs in the ad hoc/immediate work in the process.



**ONE GESTURE IS  
ENOUGH**

### **Working with the Deaf and HoH in Meetings and Communicational Settings**

- Make sure that all written sources are available to the interpreter and that additional information is provided upon request.
- When communicating verbally facilitate access to information by using visuals such as PPP; design visuals in plain format and provide alongside written and verbal information.
- Consider that 'experiences' regarding processes may not be shared by all stakeholders. For example, it is unlikely that an average full-time employee or professional has never seen a pay slip or filled out a time sheet. However, the Deaf and HoH with lesser opportunities on the job market may not have similar knowledge and experiences. If there are such requirements during the work process, the person in charge may have to prepare information about such processes and provide explanations.
- Turn your camera on when communicating through Zoom or similar platforms and make sure that your face is clearly visible. Write your full name when identifying yourself. Deaf and HoH stakeholders will not recognize your voice, understand that you are speaking (as soon as your voice is heard) or infer information from your tone when they cannot see you. Therefore, it is important to take steps to reinforce communication channels.

### **The Use of Written Texts as a Common Language with the Deaf and HoH:**

The common language used by the Deaf and HoH and the hearing society is written language. However, written language is a language derived from the verbal mode and can be the mother tongue of a hearing person, while this is not the case for the Deaf and HoH

It is a kind of 'foreign language' for the Deaf and HoH. All written texts are produced for the average hearing reader, that is, for people who use the language in question as their mother tongue. For the reasons specified above, a linguistic design that specifically targets the Deaf and HoH becomes necessary.



ONE GESTURE IS  
ENOUGH

### WHAT NOT TO DO:

- Creating a text based on sign language (If we try to transcode the structure and narrative of a sign language into written text it will become incomprehensible and inefficient)
- Using simplistic language (the target audience is not a child whose perception and knowledge is relatively lower than other individuals. Furthermore, in some cases in projects the use of professional language and discourse may also be important. In creating an accessible version it is important to strike a balance.)

**Things to consider: We often refer to the PLAIN LANGUAGE approach when presenting informative content for the Deaf and HoH. The use of plain language covers the following:**

- a) the choice of words
  - b) the order of words,
  - c) the length of sentences,
  - d) affixes and suffixes,
  - e) tenses,
  - f) implicit and explicit expressions
  - g) content to be understood through world knowledge and general culture
  - h) other similar elements
- There CANNOT be a concrete guide for plain language use, because language itself offers infinite variations.
  - Therefore, PLAIN LANGUAGE USE may be referred to as an approach(see: Guideline on plain language use).



ONE GESTURE IS  
ENOUGH

## THERE ARE LAYERS TO PLAIN LANGUAGE:

### LANGUAGE:

In creating plain language versions, it is important to consider the layers of language itself

a. Sentence layer: Generally, comprehensive meaning is easier to understand when presented in a single sentence for individuals who are native speakers of a language. However, this native speaker will be familiar with grammatical and syntactic tools such as the use of conjunctions and affixes in sentence construction; on the other hand these types of unfamiliar structures may increase cognitive load for the Deaf and HoH. It would be appropriate to explain this by way of an example.

For instance: A refrigerator in which food items in containers and similar storage units are stored on shelves, is an electrical kitchen appliance that prevents food from spoiling at low temperatures.

Considering this example within the context of plain language, this sentence is altered as follows: (Please note that the example is exaggerated to illustrate a point)

Example: The refrigerator is a machine. Refrigerators are placed in kitchens. We put food in the refrigerator. It is cold inside. Food does not spoil in the cold. The containers in which we put the food are placed on shelves. Food is cold and does not rot. It works with electricity.

In line with the example above:

**SENTENCE STRUCTURE:** Each unit of information given in a single sentence is designated as a separate sentence. To make sense of the sentence parts which we connect with commas and conjunctions the end users must understand the purpose of each to comprehend the sentence, meaning and connection of the meaning units in the text (sentence).

**OPEN CONJUNCTIONS:** Information can be combined with open (to be selected at a single glance) conjunctions such as 'AND'. Such conjunctions are also used in sign language. This is not a foreign element for the end users.



**ONE GESTURE IS  
ENOUGH**

**LOGICAL AND VISUAL FLOW:** While providing the information flow visualization—logical sequencing is used and the information is given in layers one leading to the other.

- what is described (a machine),
- where it is located (kitchen),
- what purpose it serves (to put food in it),
- how it serves this purpose (food does not spoil in the cold),
- how it is used (food is placed in containers),
- reiteration of the result achieved for emphasis (food does not spoil),
- additional information (electrically powered).

While providing a logical and visual flow, the most important or basic information (the refrigerator is a machine) should be given primarily and each piece of new information should be presented in augmenting the previous informative entry.

The 'subject' should be clear. For example, the 'A refrigerator is a machine'. Although it is obvious to the reader that the 'it' referred to in the second sentence ('It is placed in the kitchens') is the refrigerator, it may in some instances be appropriate to reiterate this subject for the sake of clarity (Refrigerators are found in kitchens).

**WORDS CHOICES:** Some words may be substituted with their commonly used equivalents.

- o The first important issue in this context is to prevent ambiguity whenever possible ('a certain temperature' does not refer to a concrete degree in Fahrenheit or Celsius- on the other hand 'cold' (though there are degrees of coldness) is a simply understood concept.
- o The second important issue in this context is related to the register: Although temperature is a concept used in daily language, it is a concept perceived through a world knowledge and experience. We probably hear of this measurement unit in science and geography lessons in primary school, then while watching the weather forecast on the television or reading the books for science lessons. Although this example related to the use of register is not a technical word, it is a concept that we make sense of with a certain educational and socio-cultural interaction. Therefore, if it does not change the intended meaning in the text, it would be appropriate to replace it with a plain language equivalent.



**ONE GESTURE IS  
ENOUGH**

**AVOIDING CIRCULAR DEFINITIONS (WORLD KNOWLEDGE-GENERAL CULTURE):** It is assumed that the readers know all the words and terms used in a definition.

For example, if in describing/defining a 'crankshaft' we start out with '..... is a shaft', we are assuming that the end-users know the word 'shaft', what a shaft is, what purpose it serves, and that there may be different types. However, this may not always be true. It is necessary to consider not only the vocabulary but also the level of general culture and world knowledge of the end-users. For example, in the example of the crankshaft, it may be necessary to explain what a shaft is either within the definition or as a separate entry.

**IN CONSIDERING A BROAD GROUP OF END-USERS:** While some explanations may be clear to those who work in the field or to those who have received training, some concepts may not be familiar to all end-users. Therefore, when the material is to be used by a large end-user group it must be carefully tailored. For example, the description of an 'allen socket' will be differ according to whether or not all the end-users know what a 'socket' is.