



SONGS AND POEMS



Notes

This lesson is about poems and songs in ISL. It is not only spoken languages that can have songs and poetry. Sign languages have these too. Songs and poems are a beautiful and expressive form of a language, and can also be expressed in sign language. In this lesson you will learn the correct use of sign forms and sign space while signing songs and poems as well as how to have creative ideas. They are beautiful examples of creative signing. The national anthem of India in Indian Sign Language is a good example of a signed song.



OUTCOMES

After studying this lesson, learner:

- demonstrates poems and songs in ISL.
- explains sign poetry.
- uses sign forms and sign space creatively.

13.1 FEATURES OF SONG AND POEM IN ISL

- ❖ Songs are a type of group signing where people are expected to sign the same thing at the same time as a group. This may sometimes happen in drama as well but it is less frequent.
- ❖ People must practise with each other when they sign a song in a group to make it flow nicely.

Creative Expressions in ISL



Notes

- ❖ Sometimes when songs are performed, one person stands in front to lead the song and the group follows the leader's signing. When the anthem is performed, often the music and Hindi song are played along with the signing, so the speed of the song should match.
- ❖ Songs can also be performed by a single person.
- ❖ ISL does not follow the text exactly word by word. This is because ISL and Hindi have different grammar and literature. The ISL text maps onto the original Hindi as closely as possible, but it is signed differently so that it can be understood clearly in ISL.
- ❖ The signing has a regularly flowing rhythm because this is a song.

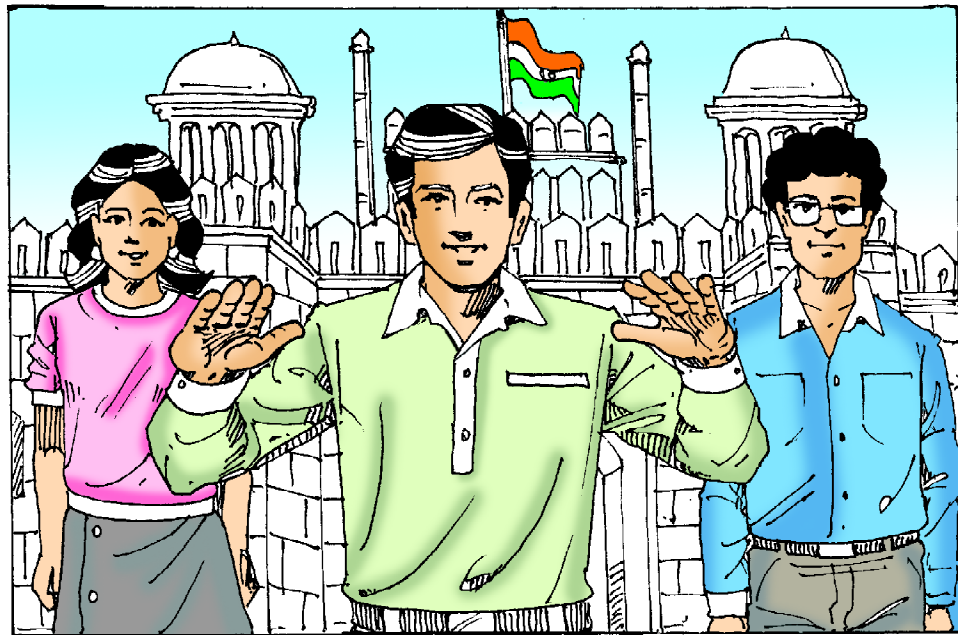


Figure-13.1 : National Anthem in ISL

- ❖ The signer does not move too much but makes head and body movements where necessary in ISL.



Notes

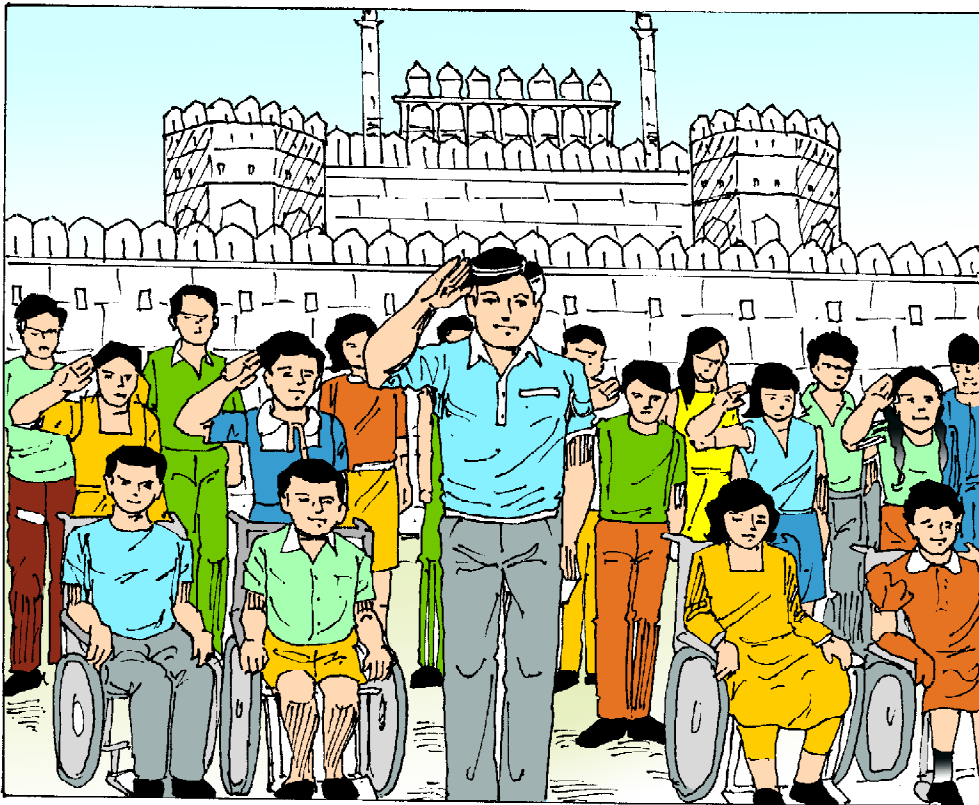


Figure-13.2 : National Anthem in ISL

13.2 TEAM

The next example “Team” is an original ISL creation and not translated from another language. We can see it as a poem, but we can also see it as a song because it has dance-like movements and rhythm.



Figure-13.3 : Song

Creative Expressions
in ISL



Notes

- ❖ The signer moves her body in a dancing way while signing.
- ❖ The video is divided up into regular parts. Each part ends with signing TEAM.

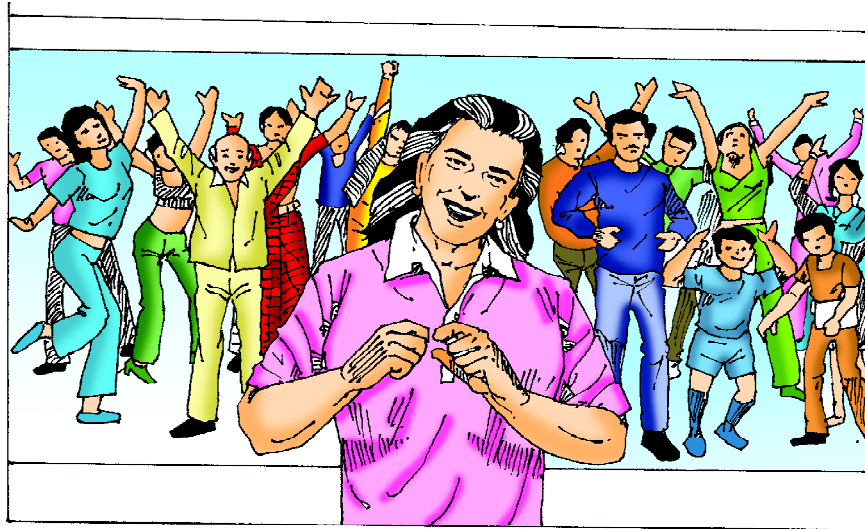


Figure-13.4 : Song

- ❖ The movement of some signs is different from normal signing. Some signs are slower than normal, and some are repeated to create a clearer impression. There are pauses to create the regular flow of signing.
- ❖ Pictures are used to create a visual impression along with the signing. This is very creative. For example, when signing about 'dark' and 'light', the picture in the background has a dark side and a light side, and the signing is also on these same two sides. When there is a tree in the background, the sign for 'tree' is made exactly in front of picture so that they match.

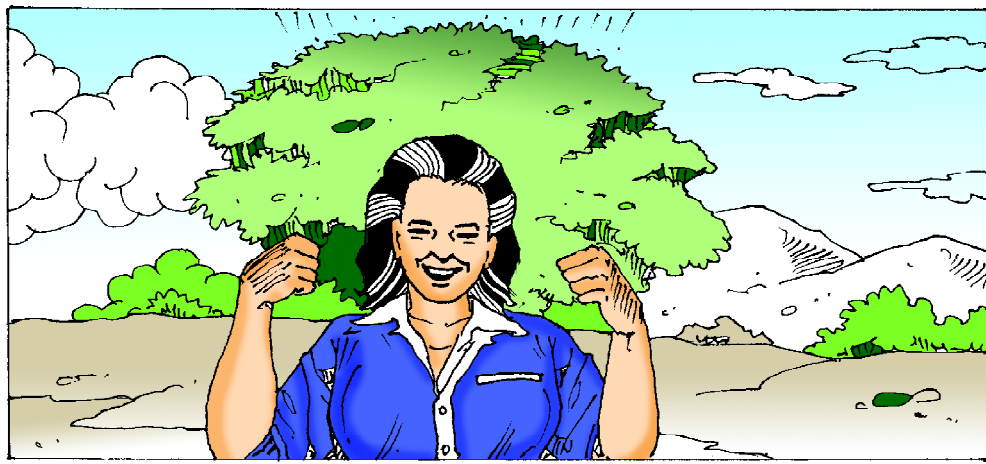


Figure-13.5 : Song

- ❖ The signer also interacts with the pictures in other ways, for example through eye gaze, direction and pointing.



Figure-13.6 : Song



Notes

13.3 DUST OF SNOW

Like the national anthem, which is a translation into ISL, some poems are also interpreted into ISL by deaf community members. The following example is an ISL translation of a poem by the writer Robert Frost, called 'Dust of Snow'. However, it is actually more than a translation because other things are added to the ISL poem that are not in the written version. There is a lot of creativity in the translation, so that it makes sense to ISL users and is beautiful to watch.

- ❖ The original poem's text is put on screen and the background picture matches the story in the poem.



Dust of Snow

Robert Frost

The way a crow
Shook down on me
The dust of snow
From a hemlock tree
Has given my heart
A change of mood
and saved some part
of a day I had rued.

Figure-13.7 : Poem

Creative Expressions
in ISL



Notes

- ❖ There are repeated forms, for example the flowing signs with wiggling fingers e.g. in the signs SNOW and INSPIRED



Dust of Snow
Robert Frost

The way a crow
Shook down on me
The dust of snow
From a hemlock tree
Has given my heart
A change of mood
and saved some part
of a day I had rued.

Figure-13.8 : Poem

- ❖ This poem is about emotions. So the signer’s facial expressions are very strong, showing the different emotions from stress to surprise to inspiration to happiness. Expressing emotions is common in poetry.



Dust of Snow
Robert Frost

The way a crow
Shook down on me
The dust of snow
From a hemlock tree
Has given my heart
A change of mood
and saved some part
of a day I had rued.

Figure-13.9 : Poem

13.4 AMANDA POEM

Let's see one more example. The next example looks like a poem but it is also similar to a story because it explains what happens step by step. But the signing is different from just telling a story, so we can also include it here as a poem. Watch and observe the signer's movements, facial expressions, and emotions. The signer shifts between acting in different roles.

**Creative Expressions
in ISL**



Notes



Figure-13.10 : Poem

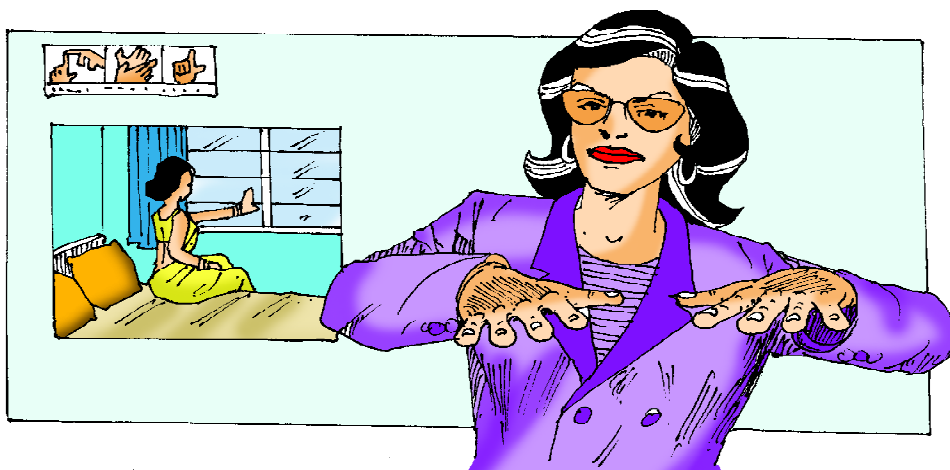


Figure-13.11 : Poem

Creative Expressions in ISL



Notes

Both songs and poems share these points:

- ❖ They are very creative and use the beauty of signing. They sometimes combine with other visual elements such as pictures on screen.
- ❖ They have a different speed and rhythm in the whole poem/song, as well a different way of making individual signs.
- ❖ Many songs or poems have repeated elements. In spoken language this is called “rhyme”. In signing, this can be repeated words or handshapes that come up throughout the signing.

Poems and songs are perfect for expressing emotions, and enjoyable to watch and perform, alone or as a group.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 13.1

1. Give one well known example of a song in ISL.
2. Give an example of ISL creative work.
3. How are pictures and images used in Poem and Songs?
4. How important the flow of signs in Poems/songs?
5. What is important for a signer while signing a poem/songs?
6. What does rhyme means in ISL?



WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- Poems and songs are perfect for expressing emotions, and are enjoyable to watch and perform alone or with a group.
- In a group song, one person can lead and others follow but all the signers must sign the same thing at the same time, so good coordination is required.
- The ISL version of the National Anthem is a good example of a signed song.
- Signed songs can be original ISL signed songs with or without music or popular Hindi or other language songs can also be signed in ISL. Signing has to match the speed of the lyrics if in background spoken form of the song is being played.

Creative Expressions
in ISL

Notes

- 'Team' is an example of an original ISL song/poem. At the end of each part the signer signs 'Team'.
- The ISL version of Hindi songs is not word to word translation but creative interpretation of the song. Repeated words of the song is shown through a repeated handshape or a sign.
- Signed songs have a flow and rhythm.
- While signing songs, some signs would be slow, some fast and some repeated.
- Visuals may be used to enhance the experience of a signed song. The signer may even interact with the visuals by eye gaze or pointing.
- Through the signing of classic songs like 'Dust of Snow', signer can beautifully express all the emotions expressed in the song. Matching visuals and lyrics shown on the background screen enhance the experience and create magic.
- While signing songs, a signer may also engage in some acting to create impact.

**TERMINAL EXERCISE**

1. How are stories different from songs? Give any two differences.
2. Choose one example of a poem or song translated from a spoken language and explain what you know about it.
3. Choose one example of a poem or song originally created in ISL. and explain what you know about it.
4. Does ISL have a rhyme? How do we rhyme in sign language?
5. Describe the creativity options in ISL for signing poetry.

**ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS****13.1**

1. National anthem in ISL.
2. Poem or songs, because it has dance like movement and rhythm.
3. They are used to create visual impression together with signing.

**Creative Expressions
in ISL**



Notes

4. There are pauses or slow/fast signing to create the regular flow of signing.
5. The Signer does not move too much but make Head & body movement where necessary in ISL.
6. In ISL, signing can be repeated words or handshakes that come up throughout the signing.