

Deaf Culture Question of the Week – April 25-29, 2011  
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Thanks to everyone who completed the DCQW survey over the last few months.  
The results are viewable at [DCQW Survey Results](#).

The English sentence, “My brother, who is a lawyer, works in Olympia, WA.,” contains a relative clause, “who is a lawyer.” How does ASL express a relative clause like this?

- a) WHO LAWYER
- b) MY LAWYER BROTHER
- c) HIMSELF LAWYER
- d) ASL breaks it into two sentences  
MY BROTHER WORK OLYMPIA, WA. HE LAWYER.

Go to the bottom of this message for the answer.

Answer: “c” - Relative clause structures in ASL are expressed using the non-manual signals of eyebrows raised and head tilted slightly up while , in this case, the signs HIMSELF LAWYER are signed. The sign HIMSELF/ITSELF is produced by signing HIMSELF/ITSELF and striking the index finger of the non-dominant hand held in neutral space. The sign WHO, which is a question sign in ASL, is not used. You may sometimes see signers use WHO as a relative pronoun. Technically this is ungrammatical in ASL and likely due to code switching or interjection of the common English usage in place of the ASL structure.

Practice use of relative clause structure by translating and signing these sentences.

My brother, who is a lawyer, works in Olympia, WA.

The sign WHO, which is a question sign in ASL, is not used.

My sister, who works in Seattle, is a pilot.

### **DCQW Survey is closed.**

Thanks to everyone who took time to answer the survey questions. Your responses were very helpful and interesting. If you are interested in viewing the survey results go [here](#).

Note: All previous issues of DCQW are archived at the Washington School for the Deaf website: <http://www.wsd.wa.gov>