

Body Language



Warm up

- How important is body language in business and every day life?
- Do you use your hands a lot when you speak?
- What is a common way to greet someone in your country?
- What are some examples of gestures from your own country? What do they mean?
- What are some common gestures you know from other countries?
- Is it polite to maintain eye contact in your country?
- Do you think that some body language has the same meaning in all cultures?
- What impression do you get from the woman in the picture on the right's body language?



1. Work with a partner. Imagine you were in a business meeting talking one on one to someone. What impression would you get if they did the following?

- Put their hands on their hips
- Put their hands in their pockets
- Cross their arms
- Rub the back of their neck
- Look at the floor
- Roll their eyes
- Fidget with a pen
- Clasp their hands behind their back
- Play with their hair



2. Work with a partner and discuss the following.

- Do people kiss each other on the cheek to say *hello* where you come from?
- Is shaking hands a common form of greeting in your country?
- What purpose does a hand shake have?
- What are some typical *faux pas* one can make when shaking hands?
- Are first impressions important to you? How much do they tell you about a person?
- If you were meeting someone for the first time in a business context, what would be an appropriate greeting? Have you ever been to a business meeting where you had to use a different form of greeting?





3. Look at the images below. Describe what the people are doing and what it means. Use the prompts below if you would like to.

to stare into the distance
to point at each other

to fist bump
to scowl

to grimace
to shrug

to gasp
to point at so/sth

to widen one's eyes
to bury one's face in their hands

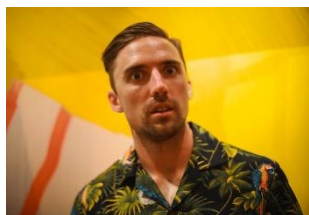
1. **For example:** She's crossing her fingers. This is done to wish luck to oneself or to another person.



3. **He is wrinkling his eyebrows and grimacing with anger.**



5. **He is widening his eyes. He looks shocked by something he has just heard.**



7. **He's burying his face in his hands. He could be stressed or embarrassed about a situation.**



9. **She is raising her eyebrows and gasping. She looks shocked about something she just heard.**



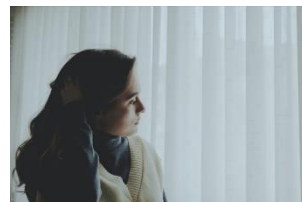
2. **Fist bumps can be used as a form of greeting or celebration. In fact, fist bumping became a popular go-to way of greeting during the covid pandemic.**



4. **He is scowling. He might be annoyed about something or at someone.**



6. **She is staring into the distance. She looks distracted, possibly upset about something.**



8. **She is shrugging. This is usually the gesture to say you don't know something.**



10. **They are pointing their fingers at each other. It looks like they are angry and blaming each other.**





4. Work in pairs. **Student A should look away from the worksheet now!**

Student B look at the list below. Get student A to guess the emotion by only using body language.

- Nervous, insecure
- Disbelief, doubt
- Confidence
- Defensive
- Thinking
- Doubt, lying
- Boredom, impatience
- Aggressive disgusted
- Arrogant



5. Work with a partner. Read the phrases below about body language and etiquette around and guess if they are true or false.

1. Don't shake hands in Thailand. *True. The Thai bow slightly with the palms pressed together in a prayer like fashion. In fact, hand shaking is not the traditional way to greet people in Thailand and Thai people may get uncomfortable engaging in this very western greeting.*
2. Hugging and touching is uncommon in Brazil. *False. Hugging and touching is common place in Brazil. Both men and women frequently touch you when speaking. This can be through patting your shoulder or placing their hand on your hand or arm to make a point.*
3. Nodding ones head is usually a sign of approval, however, in Bulgaria it means 'no'. *True. In fact, to shaking your head is the most common way to say 'yes' in Bulgaria.*
4. Finns and Japanese are embarrassed by direct eye contact and only use it at the beginning of a conversation. *True. In Japanese culture people are taught not to maintain eye contact with others because too much eye contact is often considered disrespectful. The Finns can be very shy and they usually avoid eye contact in public for example on the bus or in the elevator.*
5. In Portugal tugging one's earlobes indicates tasty food. *True.*
6. Blowing your nose in China, Japan or Korea is considered inappropriate, especially at the dinner table, one should leave the table and be as discreet as possible. *True. Blowing one's nose in a handkerchief and returning it to one's pocket is considered vulgar.*
7. In Filipino, Native American and Puerto Rican cultures people often use their lips to point. *True*
8. It is disrespectful to show the sole of your shoes in the Middle East and Asia. *It is a sign of disrespect, as they are considered the lowest and the dirtiest parts of the body, since they touch the dirty ground.*



6. Match the vocabulary on the left with their definitions on the right.

- | | | |
|------------------------|----------|---|
| 1. life hack | <i>g</i> | a. socially uncomfortable |
| 2. to tweak | <i>c</i> | b. reasonable |
| 3. awkward | <i>a</i> | c. to make small improvements to something |
| 4. interaction | <i>h</i> | d. making simple generalisations for large groups of people |
| 5. valid | <i>b</i> | e. existing from birth |
| 6. sweeping judgements | <i>d</i> | f. lacking abilities or skills |
| 7. incompetent | <i>f</i> | g. something simple to make your life easier |
| 8. congenitally | <i>e</i> | h. communication with someone |



7. You are going to watch a video¹ called 'Your Body Language My Shape Who You Are'. Watch the video up to 5:30 and discuss the following questions with your class.

1. What happens in the clip when the policeman tries to shake the Prime Minister of England's hand?

The President of the United States walks up to the policeman and shakes his hand. The Prime Minister or England walks up to the policeman, however, walks away with out noticing the policeman tried to shake his hand.

2. What are common non-verbal expressions of power and dominance?

In the animal kingdom they are about expanding and making yourself big. This is found across the animal kingdom and is not just limited to primates. Humans also do this.

3. What is interesting about the expression referred to as 'pride'?

People who are born with sight and people who are congenitally blind (born blind) both do this when they win at a physical competition.

4. What do we do when we feel powerless?

We close up, wrap ourselves up and make ourselves small. Animals and humans do the same thing.

5. What do we tend to do when someone is being very powerful with us?

If someone is being really powerful with us, we tend to make ourselves smaller. We do not mirror them, we do the opposite of them.



¹ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ks-_Mh1QhMc



8. Watch the rest of the video at home. Take notes and discuss the following questions in your next class.

1. Is there a difference in body language between men and women?
Yes. Women feel chronically less powerful than men and tend to make themselves tiny and participate less.
2. In the experiment how did 'high-power' poses vs. 'low-power' poses effect participants rection to gambling?
When you are in the high-power pose you are more likely to gamble. In fact, 86% of participants gambled in the high-power pose while only 60% gambled in the low-power pose.
3. What happened when they put participants through job interviews?
The people evaluating the interviews did not know about the hypothesis of the experiment and which poses the participants were making. However, at the end all of the interviewees in the high-power poses were chosen by the evaluators.
4. Amy Cuddy was in a serious car accident when she was 19. How did it affect her life?
She was sent to a rehab ward, was withdrawn from college, and she learnt that her IQ had dropped. She was considered a 'gifted child' so this was very traumatising for her as she felt as though her identity had been taken from her. She worked hard and eventually graduated from college four years after her peers.
5. What is the speaker's final message on 'fake it until you make it'?
She says 'Don't fake it until you make it' instead 'Fake it until you become it'.