

8 I can talk about body language

A Reading the signs



BODY LANGUAGE can be very informative, but if you **jump to conclusions** when you interpret a particular **gesture**, you may **misinterpret** what it means. For example, people who look away to avoid **eye contact** may **not necessarily** be lying: they could just be very shy. To understand body language, therefore, we need to

observe a **combination** of behaviour that a person **displays**. With lying, for example, **look out** for any or all of these:

-  avoidance of eye contact
-  **going red**
-  **biting fingernails**¹
-  **sweating** a lot
-  **excessive hand gestures**.

Glossary

jump to conclusions	make a decision about sth too quickly, before you have thought about all the facts. SYN leap to conclusions .
gesture	a body movement you make to show a particular meaning.
misinterpret sth	If you misinterpret sth , you understand it wrongly.
eye contact	the action or moment of looking into another person's eyes.
not necessarily	used to say that sth is possibly true but is not always true.
observe sth	FML see or notice sth; an observant person is good at noticing things. observation N .
combination	a mix of two or more things. combine V .
display sth	show signs of sth, often a quality or a feeling. display N .
look out for sth/sb	look and try to see or find sth/sb.
go red	become red in the face, often when you're angry or embarrassed.
sweat	If you sweat , water appears on the surface of your skin because you are hot.

1 Good or bad? Write G or B.

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|---|--|
| 1 He sweats a great deal. _____ | 5 She's covered in perspiration. _____ |
| 2 She goes red all the time. _____ | 6 He always leaps to conclusions. _____ |
| 3 She has strong powers of observation. _____ | 7 He can't make eye contact with me. _____ |
| 4 She never bites her fingernails. _____ | 8 The cost didn't exceed his ability to pay. _____ |

2 Complete the sentences with a suitable word.

- You should stop and think before _____ to conclusions.
- The teacher said she'd _____ for more articles on body language.
- My brother is very _____: he always notices people's body language.
- Even when he's very angry, he doesn't _____ any sign of emotion.
- It's easy to _____ someone's body language if you don't know them very well.
- If you *go red*, does it mean you're angry? ~ No, _____.
- I use hand _____ a lot, but I hope they're not _____.
- The increase in the number of students is the result of a _____ of different factors.

B Interpreting gestures

Here are some common interpretations of gestures, although **bear in mind** the danger of **making generalizations about** body language (as stated on the previous page).



A **clenched fist**¹ shows anger; **folded arms**² may **imply stubbornness**.



People who **lean towards**³ each other are displaying an interest in each other.



Women who **fancy** someone often **fiddle with** their hair; men **stroke** an earlobe. Women lift their heads to show more of their neck when they're **flirting**.

Glossary

bear sth in mind	remember to consider sth.
make generalizations about sth	make general statements about sth that may only be based on a few examples. generalize v.
imply sth	suggest that you feel or think sth without saying so directly. implication n.
stubbornness	a determination not to change your opinion or attitude. SYN obstinacy . (The related adjectives are stubborn and obstinate .)
fancy sb	INF be attracted to sb.
fiddle with sth	keep moving or touching sth with your hands.
stroke sth	move your hand or fingers gently over the surface of sth.
flirt (with sb)	behave towards sb as if you find them sexually attractive, but not in a serious way.

3 Cross out the wrong word.

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|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 make / do generalizations | 4 fold your arms / legs |
| 2 a clenched hand / fist | 5 fiddle with / on something |
| 3 stroke / fancy someone's arm | 6 flirt with someone / something |

4 Complete the words in each sentence.

- He didn't actually say I was being rude, but that was the i_____.
- Both girls like Conrad, and they're always f_____ with him.
- She l_____ towards him and whispered in his ear. I think she f_____ him.
- If my dad decides something, he won't change his mind; he's very s_____ / o_____.
- When a man talks to a woman and strokes his ear, it i_____ that he fancies her. But bear in m_____ that it is very dangerous to g_____ about body language.
- Girls often f_____ with their hair when they fancy someone, or they're bored.

5 ABOUT YOU Write your answers or ask another student.

Do you do any of these things? If so, what do you think they often mean?

- stroke your ear, chin, or the back of your head? _____
- fiddle with your hair, jewellery, or watch strap? _____
- fold your arms or cross your legs? _____
- clench your fist or bite your nails? _____



Remember to test yourself

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