

USING THE NON-VERBAL IMAGE CARD DECKS A-M AND N-Z: "THE MEANINGS OF BODY LANGUAGE"

Accompanying this Idea Book, "The Meanings of Body Language," are two 52-card decks of words and photographs. Below the picture on each card is the probable "meaning" of each facial expression or movement in capital letters. Instructions for "acting out" the non-verbal message follows.

Like traditional decks of playing cards, the "Meanings of Body Language" visuals are arranged in sets of four. *Card Deck A-M* contains thirteen different four-of-a-kind sets. The possible meanings of the thirteen sets are the emotions or feelings they represent. Each begins with a different letter from the first half of the alphabet:

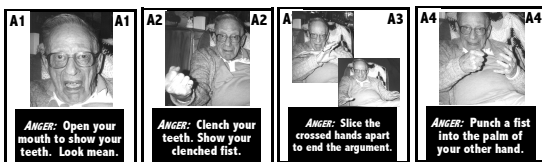
A nger	D anger/Drama	G reetings	J oy/Congratulations
B oredom	E mbarrassment	H ello	K ids, Gestures for
C raziness	F un/Joking	I mpatience	L istening/Loudness

In thirteen more sets of four-of-a-kind, *Card Deck N-Z* presents emotions and feelings beginning with the letters of the second half of the alphabet:

N egative (No!)	Q uestioning	T hreat	W orry
O ffensiveness	R eligion, Respect	U n happiness	X = Kissing
P raise, Self	S urprise/Shock	V ictory/Winning	Y es!
			Z zzz = Sleepiness

Because of the design of "The Meanings of Body Language" Card Decks, made clear by the numbering of the cards (*A1, A2, A3, A4, B1, B2*, etc.), they can be used to play competitive card games. Simple, classic children's card games often require players to do no more than to match cards of pairs or sets of four—or to sequence cards. Some examples are "Pig," "Old Maid," "Concentration," "Snap," "Snip, Snap, Snorem," "Go Fish," "I Doubt It," and others.¹ Simply by playing such motivating games, participants will learn the vocabulary of body language, while associating the words with visuals (photographs).

A set of four matching cards from Deck A-M.



¹ For suggestions on how to adapt the rules of traditional children's card games to educational content such as "Body Language," see *Creative Card Decks & Games for Effective Language Teaching & Learning*, ISBN 13 978-1-891077-09-8. This 52-page Creative Idea Booklet is published by Authors & Editors, 10736 Jefferson Blvd., #604, Culver City CA 90230-4933. E-Mail info@2learn-english.com, www.authorsandeditors.com, Ph 310-836-2014, FAX 310-836-1845.

To stimulate even more efficient and effective use of “The Meanings of Body Language” Card Decks A-M and N-Z for educational purposes, here are ideas for activities that focus on the content of the cards—the non-verbal expression of emotions and feelings.

1 ***Categorizing Non-Verbal Expressions and Movements According to Meaning***

Divide one or two decks of “The Meanings of Body Language” cards into sets of four (A1, A2, A3, and A4; B1, B2, B3, B4, etc.). Provide each group of four to eight learners with the numbers of sets of four-of-a-kind equal to the number of participants.

For example, a group of four players should receive sixteen cards (four sets of four matching cards), a six-person group gets 24 cards, and so on.

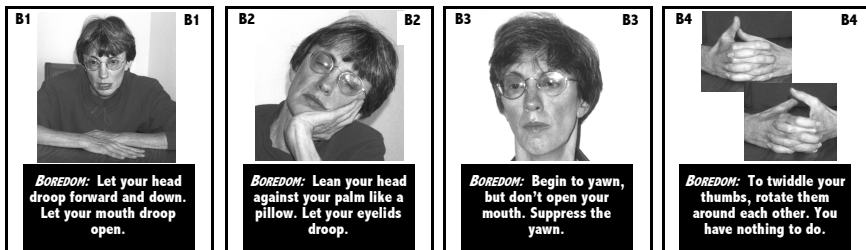
- A. One person in each group shuffles the cards and deals them out one at a time. Each player should receive four cards. In their hands, participants put together the “matching cards”—the cards with the same letter of the alphabet illustrating similar or associated meanings. For example, a person with two or three “Anger” cards puts them next to one another. (In most cases, all four photos that belong together show the same person. Therefore, beginning students that don’t read quickly will be helped in their matching efforts by the picture.)
- B. At a signal, all players “discard” one of their cards, preferably a card that has no matches in their hands. To do so, they pass the unwanted card to the participant on their left. This simultaneous card passing continues until one player has four of a kind—that is, a set of cards (1-4) the meanings of which all begin with the same letter of the alphabet. That person places his or her set of four face down on the table while the others continue passing their unwanted (non-matching) cards around the circle. After a short time, everyone should have collected four of a kind.
- C. In turn and without words, each person pantomimes (acts out) the emotion or meaning illustrated by his or her set of cards. The observing participants name the feeling or significance they believe the “actor” is trying to express. To tell the reasons for their guesses, they describe the body language (facial expressions, movements, and gestures) they see. Each observer then pantomimes the same or a similar emotion in a different way, if possible.
- D. The group may then discuss the expression of that meaning. Here are some possible questions to answer: *In what situation might each emotion or feeling be appropriate or common? Explain why. Do all the examples of body language have exactly the same meaning in all situations? If so, how? If not, why not? Do these particular expressions or movements have the same or different meanings in participants’ native cultures? Explain the similarities and differences.*
- E. When the class reconvenes, each participant repeats Steps C and D for the large group, again showing examples of body language and discussing their meanings. That person might even give a short “presentation” on his/her particular kind of non-verbal expression. For example, a participant presenting the emotion of “Anger” might describe situations in which the facial expressions, movements, and gestures would be appropriate and helpful. With words and illustrations, he or she could compare the expression of anger in two or more cultures.

2 Identifying & Comparing Expressions of Body Language

Divide one or two decks of “The Meanings of Body Language” cards into sets of four (A1, A2, A3, and A4; B1, B2, B3, B4, etc.). Provide each group of four to eight learners with the numbers of sets of four-of-a-kind equal to the number of participants. The cards should be shuffled and placed face down on the table or playing surface.

- One participant picks up the top card of the face-down deck and looks at the photo and words. Without showing the card face to the group, that player pantomimes the facial expression and/or movement illustrated by the card. (Alternatively or for more oral language practice, the “performer” can explain the expression or gesture, *telling* others how to create it.)
- If everyone (or the majority of observers in the group) identifies the meaning or performs the expression of body language correctly, the performer or explainer keeps the card. Alternatively, the learner that first identifies the meaning correctly can “win” the card.
- Each group goes through its deck of cards in this way until all the cards have been distributed. The winner of the “round” is the person with the most cards.
- Everyone shuffles the stacks of cards he or she has “won.” (If some players have too few cards to continue to participate, they can “borrow” some cards from others.) They place their stacks face down in front of them on the table. At a signal and simultaneously, all learners turn over the top cards of their stacks and imitate the illustrated body language. While “acting,” they look around to see if any two, three, or four pantomimes are a “match”—that is, if they signify a similar emotion. The first person to identify a “non-verbal meaning match” wins all the relevant cards—if and when he or she can explain how the expressions fit together. The player with the most cards wins the round.
- As a whole-class follow up to this activity, each group in turn can sit or stand in front of the room. At a signal, everyone simultaneously pantomimes or acts out the meaning of his or her top card. Observers tell how many “actors” are illustrating the same emotion or feeling.

Alternatively, all the actors of a group pantomime the same meaning in different ways. Observers identify the emotion or feeling that is being portrayed and tell the reasons for their answers. Discussion can follow.



The photographs in this set of four images from “The Meanings of Body Language Card Deck A-M” show various possible ways to express the feeling of boredom. All the pictures are of the same person against the same background.

3 Positive, Negative, or Neutral?

Provide each pair of learners with a small deck of “The Meanings of Body Language” cards, containing at least twenty different images. The cards can be taken from any or all of the 26 matching sets of four. Using the images as “flash cards,” participants quickly go through their decks one time, identifying each emotion, expression, or gesture as “positive” or “negative.” Since feelings and body language are “open to interpretation,” here are some suggested general classifications:

Positive +		Negative -		Neutral Ø
fun	religious	anger	shock	craziness
greetings	respect	boredom	threat	listening/loudness
hello	victory/	danger	unhappiness	money
joy	winning	embarrassment	worry	praise, self
kids (except "shame on you")	X = kiss	impatience		questioning
	yes	no		zzz = sleepiness

- The cards are divided equally between the two players. Both shuffle their short stacks, placing the cards face down on the table. At a signal and at the same time, both look at the faces (images) of the top cards on their stacks. They pantomime the gestures, act out the body language, and/or explain their image and its meaning.
- If both players have presented either positive or negative or neutral kinds of body language, they place those cards in a face-up stack. They continue turning over cards and presenting or discussing examples of body language in this way.
- If one player turns up and presents a “positive” image while the other shows or describes a “negative” one, the first person “wins” all the cards in the second person’s turned-up stack. A “negative” expression or movement “wins” over a “neutral” one and a “neutral” kind of body language over a “positive” one. When time is called, the player with the most collected cards wins.
- In a simpler version of the same type of activity, the “neutral” classification is left out, and *all* images become either “positive” or “negative.” The two participants of each pair try to “cooperate” by “matching” their partners’ positive or negative body language. To do so, they hold all their cards in their hands. At a signal and simultaneously, they both *choose* an image to imitate or show. One or more observers act as “scorekeeper.” If both come up with a *positive* expression or movement, they score a point. They also score a point if they happen to choose and perform or show a *negative* kind of body language. However, if one person comes up with a positive facial expression or movement while the other demonstrates or displays a negative one, they subtract a point from their team score. When time is called, the pair with the highest score wins.
- As a whole-class follow up to such activities, learners can react to questions like: *Do some emotions (expressions, movements, gestures, etc.) have inherently positive (or negative) connotations? Can “neutral” facial expressions or movements express positive (or negative) feelings? How? What is the role of non-verbal language in expressing personality or character? How could (or should) non-verbal expressions of meaning be used in productive (or destructive) ways in communication?*

4 Communicating Non-Verbal Meaning Quickly

Each pair of learners or team gets a deck of “The Meanings of Body Language” cards of the same size, containing at least 8 cards each, compiled from any or all of the available 26 sets of four. Teams can compete against one another at the same time (with other learners watching as “judges”) or one at a time in front of the class.

- A. One participant in each pair holds all the cards in a stack so that the images cannot be seen by his or her teammate. One by one, the “actor” pantomimes the facial expressions and gestures for his or her observing partner, who tries to describe what the first player is doing and explain its meaning. When a “judge” deems an answer correct, the actor goes on to the next image. If the observer cannot respond correctly to a pantomime, the “presenter” can put the difficult image in a separate pile, coming back to it later if time allows.
- B. The object of the game is to get through the deck within a pre-specified length of time, with all the examples of body language correctly described and interpreted. If more than one “team” perform at the same time, the winner is the pair that presents and guesses the meanings of the most cards correctly within a time limit.
- C. With the same or different short stacks of body-language image cards, pairs of teammates can reverse the guessing process. Instead of pantomiming or acting out each visual image, the second presenter *describes* each facial expression or gesture to his or her partner, who “illustrates” it with the appropriate posture or movement. Again, one or more “judges” assess each response as correct or incorrect. Again, the presenter (describer) may relegate difficult images to a separate stack to return to if there is time. And again, the “winner” of the game or a round is the pair that first completes the entire stack or that gets through the most cards within the pre-specified time limit.
- D. In a whole-class version of these action and observation activities, each individual can be presented with a body-language image card in turn. That player has a pre-specified length of time, perhaps thirty seconds to either pantomime the expression or gesture or describe it in words. That person’s “score” depends on the number of observers that correctly interpret the meaning, perhaps by writing it down.
- E. The above steps might lead naturally to a class discussion of responses to questions such as these:

- *Which facial expressions and body postures always (or usually) have the same or similar meanings? Explain how or why.*
- *Which expressions and movements have different meanings in various combinations, contexts (situations) and/or cultures? Give examples.*
- *What are some other non-verbal ways of expressing the same and the opposite emotions or feelings throughout the world?*
- (Questions about body language suggested by teachers or students)

