

# CONVERSATION CONNECTION ACTIVITIES

<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>Gestures</b>
<b>ACTIVITIES:</b>	<p><b>1. OPENING ACTIVITY – Choose one of the following:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Discuss and demonstrate gestures (see below - <u>The Language of Gestures</u>).</li> <li>○ Show pictures of different American gestures.</li> <li>○ Have students answer “What’s in a gesture?” (10 questions and answer key – see Resources),</li> </ul> <p><b>2. VOCABULARY-BUILDING ACTIVITY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Review vocabulary words – definitions and pronunciation.</li> <li>○ Review expressions.</li> </ul> <p><b>3. CONVERSATION STARTERS – Small group discussion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Choose a facilitator for each group to throw out questions to promote discussion (see below), or post each group of questions by topic on an overhead or smart classroom computer. Allow sufficient time for small groups to view and discuss questions.</li> <li>○ Encourage students to generate their own follow-up questions.</li> <li>○ Rotate the topics so that all groups have an opportunity to discuss them.</li> </ul> <p><b>4. CLOSING ACTIVITY</b></p> <p>Read and discuss the article about the Bush family’s use of the Texas Longhorn gesture (see Resources).</p>
<b>VOCABULARY EXPRESSIONS REDUCTIONS</b>	<p><b><u>WORD LIST</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. non-verbal</li> <li>2. gestures</li> <li>3. insulting</li> <li>4. facial</li> <li>5. jargon</li> <li>6. handshake</li> <li>7. bow</li> <li>8. nod</li> <li>9. shrug</li> </ol>

## EXPRESSIONS

1. *Small talk* – Casual or unimportant conversation
2. *Straight talk* – Plain, honest speaking
3. *Sweet talk* – Flattery, coaxing
4. *Walk the talk, talk the talk* – Do and say what one has committed oneself to
5. *All talk (and no action)* – Much discussion but no action or results
6. *Bite one's tongue* – Stop oneself from speaking out
7. *In plain English* – In clear, understandable language (not technical jargon)
8. *Blabbermouth (a big ...)* – A person who talks constantly and cannot keep secrets

## MATERIALS/ ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- **Questions** <http://iteslj.org/questions>
- **Reading:** Article about Bush family's use of Longhorn gesture (*Star Telegram* article with picture available in "Downloads" section)  
"Some Norwegians thought Bush was saluting Satan" By Jack Douglas Jr., *Knight Ridder Newspapers*  
<http://www.southcoasttoday.com/daily/01-05/01-23-05/b03wn262.htm>
- **Listening (audio):**  
Randall's Cyber Listening Lab: Mini-lecture and exercise on "Culture Shock" (medium level) <http://www.esl-lab.com/shock1/shock1.htm>  
Madeleine Brand talks with Roger Axtell, author of *Gestures: The Do's and Taboos of Body Language Around the World*, about Scalia's hand-under-the-chin gesture from NPR (National Public Radio)  
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5312065>  
'Field Guide to Gestures' New Book Gives Origins Behind Cultural Signs from NPR (National Public Radio)  
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=1415859>  
"Meet the Family" Master Card Commercial at <http://priceless.com/film/nowshowing.html>
- **Dictionaries:**  
Definition of gesture and related terms (audio and visual) <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Gesture>  
<http://encarta.msn.com/encnet/features/dictionary/dictionaryhome.aspx> (with audio)  
<http://www.yourdictionary.com> (with audio)  
Reductions: Etymology, pronunciation, and part of speech explained at  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reduction\\_\(linguistics\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reduction_(linguistics))
- **Gestures**  
What's in a gesture? 10 questions and answer key [http://www.everythingsl.net/downloads/gestures\\_version02.pdf](http://www.everythingsl.net/downloads/gestures_version02.pdf)  
*Communicating with Gestures:* Very few gestures are universally understood and interpreted. What is perfectly acceptable in the United States may be rude, or even obscene, in other cultures

[http://www.everythingsl.net/in-services/body\\_language.php](http://www.everythingsl.net/in-services/body_language.php)

Definition of gesture along with list of different types and their explanation – good vocabulary source

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gesture>

Rick Steves - Archive: Favorite Gestures - cultural insights from travelers

<http://www.ricksteves.com/graffiti/archives/gestures.htm>

The Nonverbal Dictionary of Gestures, Signs & Body Language Cues <http://members.aol.com/nonverbal2/diction1.htm>

### **The Language of Gestures**

Culture affects not only the way we communicate with words, but also the way we communicate with movements such as gestures and body language. This exercise will explore some of the ways that such movements differ from culture to culture.

1. Your teacher will assign each student one of the words or expressions from the following list.
2. Think of how the word you were assigned can be expressed using gestures or movements instead of spoken language.
  - a. In your country, what gesture would you use to express this idea?
  - b. In the U.S., what is the appropriate gesture?
3. One by one, each student will demonstrate the gesture used in his or her own country. (Some countries may not have gestures for some of the concepts.) The class will try to guess the meaning of the gesture. Next, the student will show what the corresponding gesture is in the United States. The teacher can demonstrate the gesture if students don't know it.

### **Word List**

be quiet  
come here  
crazy  
excellent  
five (5)  
go away  
good luck (for the person making the sign)  
good-bye  
I'm disappointed! (darn it!)  
I'm joking.  
I promise (Scout's honor)  
me (I, myself)  
money

nine (9)  
one (1)  
Shame on you!  
so-so (OK, wishy-washy)  
ten (10)  
two (2)  
victory  
write  
you

**Discussion:** Can you give examples of how other kinds of body language, such as speaking distance, eye contact, handshakes, and so on, differ in other cultures?

*Bridge to College Success – Intensive Academic Preparation for Advanced Students* by Heather Robertson (Heinle & Heinle Publishers)

**CONVERSATION-  
STARTER  
QUESTIONS**

**CONVERSATION STARTERS – Group discussion questions**

**TOPIC - Gestures**

1. What are some gestures you know?
2. What are some good gestures in your country?
3. What are some insulting gestures in your country?
4. Can you think of some gestures that have different meanings in different countries?
5. Has your teacher ever used a hand or facial gesture that was o.k. in the teacher's country but an insult in your country? If so, did you tell the teacher so it would not happen again?
6. What are some bad gestures that you have seen in Western films but you don't know the meaning of?
7. What are some gestures that you used when you were a child that you don't use anymore?
8. What are some gestures that you didn't learn until you were a teenager or a young adult?
9. What are some gestures you know that relate to the sporting world?

Activities developed by: Mirtha O. Martinez Date: 11-27-06