

Body language and phrases for managing classes

Teacher training worksheet

Try to think of gestures, facial expressions and/ or body positions to go with the phrases on each of the lines on the two pages below.

Go through your gestures as a class. Are there any gestures which you need to be careful about, e.g. because they are rude or wouldn't be understood in other countries?

Test each other in pairs:

- one person reads just one phrase from below, and their partner should make the gesture.
- one person makes a gesture from below, and their partner should make at least one suitable phrase without looking at the phrases. Phrases which aren't below but which have the right function are also fine.
- One person says one of the headings from below and their partner should make a gesture and say the right phrase at the same time, with the other person giving hints if they can't do those two things.

Greeting

- “Hi (guys)”/ “Hello (everyone)”/ “Morning (all)”/ “Good morning (ladies and gentlemen)”

Getting students’ attention/ Getting started

- “Right/ Okay,…” (like a more dynamic “Well” or “So”)
- “Okay, everyone”/ “Can I have your attention, please?”
- “Okay, please take your seats”
- “Okay, everyone, settle down, please”/ “Okay, can I have a little quiet, please?”

Acknowledging the students/ Making a personal connection to the students

- “You don’t look very lively today!”/ “You all look rather tired but…”
- “Wow, where is everyone?”

Checking that students prepared for the class

- “Please hold up your notes”/ “Please show me your answers to the homework task”

Putting students into pairs or groups/ Moving students around

- “Everyone, please come forward and sit in the front three rows”
- “Students on the back row, please move to the front”
- “Work in pairs”/ “You and you work together. And you and you. And you and you…”/ “Student A and Student B. Students A and B…”/ “In twos – Pete and Jane, John and…”
- “John, you’re number one, Peter number two, you are number three, number four. This group: one, two, three, four. One, two, three, four. Over here: one, two, three, four.”
- “All the number 1s over at the back please. And all the number 2s up here at the front”
- “Stand up, find a new partner, and then sit down together”
- “Please come up to the front of the class and…”
- “Turn around and work with the person behind you”
- “This half of the class, sit together over here. And this half of the class, please move here”
- “Form a circle”/ “Sit in a circle”
- “Swap seats”
- “Move your seat…”
- “Move around the class and…”
- “Make a line”/ “Stand in a (straight) line”/ “Put your chairs in a (straight) line”

Dealing with teaching materials (handouts etc)

- “Please take one and pass them along”
- “Don’t show your worksheet to your partner”/ “Hide your worksheet from your partner”
- “Please turn to page 3”/ “Open your books to page 3.”
- “If you look at the top right corner of this slide, you will see that…”
- “Does everyone have a copy of this worksheet?”

Explaining what students should do (rules of the activity etc)

- “First,…”/ “First of all,…”/ “Firstly,…”
- “Secondly,…”
- “After that,…”/ “Next…”/ “The next step will be to…”
- “Finally,…”/ “Lastly,…”/ “Last of all,…”
- “You absolutely must…”
- “Please do not…”/ “You’re not allowed to…”
- “Take turns”/ “Student A, then Student B, then A again”/ “Give feedback to each other”
- “After the presentation, each person must ask at least two questions”
- “As you are listening, make notes on…”
- “Just speaking”/ “There’s no need to write anything down”/ “Pens down”

- “Quickly read...”/ “Skim the text and...”
- “Scan through the text for...”

Instruction-checking questions

- “So, should you work on your own?”
- “So, how many minutes do you have?”
- “So, can you show your worksheet to each other?”

Questions to prompt critical thinking

- “Are you sure (that’s what it means)?”/ “What evidence do you have for that?”

Inviting and dealing with student questions

- “If you have any questions, please raise your hand”/ “Please put your hand up if anything isn’t clear”
- “Yes, please go ahead”/ “Yes, what’s your question, please”/ “Yes, (name)”/ “Yes, what would you like to know?”/ “Okay, fire away”
- “Hmmm, that’s a tricky one/ difficult question”/ “Let me think/ see”
- “Just a moment/ minute/ second/ sec/ mo’ while I...”

Starting the activity

- “Okay, go!”/ “Ready, steady, go!”/ “If there are no more questions, please start now”
- “Not yet”/ “Wait for it!”/ “Hold on. Before you start...”

Interrupting

- “Can I come in here?”/ “Sorry to interrupt/ for interrupting, but...”/ “Before you go on...”

Dealing with communication problems

- “Sorry, could you speak a little more loudly?”
- “Sorry, I don’t really understand your question”/ “Sorry, what do you mean by...?”
- “Sorry, could you say that again?”/ “Sorry, could you repeat...?”

Controlling time

- “Five more minutes”/ “Five minutes left”
- “You’ll have to speed things up”/ “Sorry to hurry you up, but...”
- “We’re running out of time”/ “Just a couple of seconds left”

Ending the activity

- “Okay, stop there”/ “Okay, can I stop you there?”/ “Okay, time’s up. Stop speaking please”/ “Time’s up”

Giving (positive and negative) feedback

- “... was excellent/ superb/ (almost) perfect/ (practically) flawless/ impeccable.”
- “Congratulations on...”/ “Well done for...”
- “I was glad to see that...”/ “I was very happy that you...”/ “I was very pleased with...”
- “... is really improving.”/ “... is slowly but surely getting better.”
- “... wasn’t so good.”/ “... could have been better.”
- “... was terrible/ a disaster/ awful”
- “I was (rather) disappointed by...”/ “I wasn’t really satisfied with...”

Concluding/ Summarising

- “To summarise,...”/ “To sum up,...”/ “Overall, people seem to believe that...”
- “The one thing you should remember from today is...”

Talking about after the class

- “Don’t forget your homework”/ “Please remember to prepare for the next class”
- “You can type and print or write by hand, I don’t mind which”

Farewell greeting

- “See you (next week)”/ “Bye”