

Good and bad business body language roleplays

Work in pairs or threes. Deal out the roleplay cards between you. Look at your cards but don't show anyone else. Choose dialogue 1 or dialogue 2 below. Choose who will be Student A and who will be Student B, and choose one of your roleplay cards each. Roleplay that situation, reading from the script below and then continuing the conversation in your own words. While you do the roleplay, try to do the thing that is written on your card. As soon as you have done your thing, you can guess what your partner is doing, i.e. what is written on their card. You can't guess your partner's body language before following the instructions on your own card. The first person to do their thing and then successfully guess what the other person's card says get a point. If your guess is wrong you can't guess again until the end of the game, at which point you will get half a point if you can guess correctly.

Do the same, but roleplay the same two situations without looking at the model dialogues.

Look at all the cards and ask about any you don't understand or are wondering about.

Find at least two things described on the cards which are:

- Very bad
- Common
- Normal
- Not bad
- Good/ Great
- Cultural differences

Write tips for good business body language and gestures, including topics like:

- Shaking hands
- Sitting
- Standing
- Hand position
- Business cards

Model dialogue 1 – A and B both standing

A: You must be (name).

B: That's right.

A: Pleased to meet you (name). I'm (name) and this is my colleague (name). (*shaking hands*)

B: Pleased to meet you, too, (name) and you too (name). (*shaking hands*)

A: Please take a seat. (*indicating*)

B: Thanks.

A: Did you have any trouble finding us?

B: No, the map you sent was very clear, thanks. It's a nice area, isn't it?

... (*continue in your own way*)

Model dialogue 2 – A standing, B sitting

A: Is this the right place for the Upper Intermediate English class?

B: Yes, that's right. That's what I'm here for too.

A: Oh, great. Is this seat free?

B: I think so. Please help yourself. (*gesturing*)

A: Thanks. It's not so busy, is it? I expected more people.

B: I expect they are late. It's my third time and people are always get lost on the first day. I don't think I've seen you here before.

A: No, it's my first time. I'm (name), by the way, from (name of company, department, division, etc).

B: Nice to meet you (name). My name is (name). I work for/ in (name of company, department, division, etc). (*shaking hands*)

A: Nice to meet you too, (name). Actually, I've been meaning to contact someone from... Do you have a business card on you?

...(*continue in your own way*)

Cards to cut up/ give out

Avoid eye contact
Fidget (= keep repeating a meaningless gesture such as pulling one of your ears)
Hand over your business card with one hand.
Hand over your business card with two hands.
Keep strong eye contact and/ or keep eye contact for long periods.
Keep your arms crossed as much as possible.
Pat/ Search your pockets as if you aren't sure where your business cards are.
Point at someone with your index finger
Shake hands gripping the other person's hand very strongly (= the knuckle buster)
Shake hands very weakly (= the wet fish)
Shake hands while holding the other person's forearm with your other hand.
Shake hands while holding the other person's shoulder with your other hand.
(Try to) shake hands with your left hand
Stand and/ or sit with your body leaning to one side.
Sit with body very stiff and straight.

Sit with the ankle or one leg on the knee of the other leg.

Sit with your legs crossed.

Slouch in your chair (= don't sit up straight in your chair)

Take the other person's business card and place it carefully on the table in front of you.

Take the other person's business card and put it straight in your pocket.

Look down all the time, e.g. looking at things on the table

Look at the other person's eyebrows or forehead most of time

Move your arms all the time, including lots of meaningless gestures

Keep your hands together in front of you (like in a formal photo)

Keep your hands in your pockets most of the time

Keep holding the elbow of one your arms with the hand of the other arm

Just shake the other person's hand up and down once and then release their hand

Shake the other person's hand three or four times

Shake the other person's hand up and down a lot/ many times (= pumping their hand)

Smile non-stop (= all the time)