

Activity Type

Reading, Writing and Speaking Activity: guided discussion, summary writing, presenting, answering comprehension questions, freer and communicative practice (group work)

Focus

Reading exam preparation

Aim

To practice reading comprehension and summarising.

Preparation

Make one copy of the paragraph cards and cut as indicated.

Also, make one copy of the comprehension questions worksheet and summary cards for each group of four and cut as indicated.

Level

Intermediate (B1)

Time

40 minutes

Introduction

In this reading exam preparation activity, students practice analysing a text, summarising key information, presenting their findings and answering comprehension questions.

Procedure

Explain that the students are going to work in groups to understand a reading text using the jigsaw method.

Divide the students into groups of four. This is their home group.

Assign each student a number (1 to 4) and regroup them so all students with the same number sit together in 'expert groups'.

Give each expert group a corresponding paragraph of the text.

Tell the students that they are going to each analyse one paragraph of the text, discuss its key points, and write a summary to present to their home group.

Students then read the text in their groups.

Next, write the following discussion questions on the board:

1. What is the main idea of the paragraph?
2. What key details support the main idea?
3. How does the paragraph connect to the overall topic?

After that, students discuss the questions in their groups.

Following that, give each student a summary card.

Students then complete the summary card and prepare to present their findings.

Students then move back to their home groups and take turns presenting their paragraph summaries so the group gains a full understanding of the text.

Afterwards, give each group a copy of the worksheet.

Working together, students then answer reading comprehension questions about the text.

Exercise A - Answer key

2

Exercise B - Answer key

1. Asian
2. touch
3. lively

(continued on the next page)

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Procedure continued

Exercise C - Answer key

1. True
2. False
3. Not Given

Exercise D - Answer key

1. bows
2. peaceful communication
3. problems in conversations

Exercise E - Possible answers

- a. In Asian cultures, body language is usually calm and gentle, and direct eye contact can be seen as rude. In contrast, Mediterranean cultures use more expressive gestures and facial expressions.
- b. Understanding body language is important because it helps people avoid misunderstandings, communicate more effectively, and show respect in different cultural contexts.

Finally, students discuss the reflection questions at the bottom of the page in their groups. Afterwards, elicit answers as a class and discuss any interesting ideas further.

Here are some example summaries for students to compare their own summaries at the end of the activity.

1. Non-verbal communication varies across cultures, just like spoken languages. What is normal in one culture may be considered rude in another, making it important to understand body language when interacting with people from different backgrounds.
2. In many Asian cultures, body language is subtle and respectful. Bowing is a key form of greeting in Japan, while direct eye contact can be seen as impolite. Chinese and Korean cultures also emphasise calm and controlled movements, with closer physical proximity in conversation.
3. Mediterranean and Latin American countries use more expressive body language. Italians rely on hand gestures, while Brazilians and others use physical touch in greetings. In Spain and Greece, facial expressions are livelier compared to the more reserved styles in Northern Europe and North America.
4. Misunderstanding body language can lead to communication problems. Learning about non-verbal differences helps people show respect, avoid mistakes, and improve connections, which is especially useful in travel, work, and study in international settings.

1

In our connected world, communication goes beyond spoken words. Body language is a powerful way of expressing ourselves, but it can be very different across cultures. What seems normal in one country might be considered rude or strange in another. These non-verbal communication differences can create confusion when people from other cultures interact. Just like spoken languages, body language has its own set of rules and meanings that can change significantly from one country to another. This makes understanding non-verbal communication an important skill for anyone who wishes to connect with people from different parts of the world.

2

In many Asian cultures, body language is usually calm and gentle. Japanese people, for example, use bowing as a primary way of greeting, showing respect, or apologising. How deep or long a bow is can show different purposes or ways of being formal. Direct eye contact is often seen as rude or aggressive, especially when speaking to someone older or in a higher social position. In China and Korea, people value peaceful communication, which is reflected in more controlled body movements. They tend to stand closer together during conversations compared to Western cultures, but their body movements remain more subtle and controlled.

3

In contrast, Western cultures, particularly in Mediterranean and Latin American regions, have more expressive body language. Italians are famous for using hand gestures while speaking, with each movement carrying a specific meaning. In Brazil and other Latin American countries, physical touch during conversation is common. People often greet each other with hugs and kisses on the cheek, which might feel uncomfortable for those from cultures with stronger personal space boundaries. Countries like Spain and Greece use more lively facial expressions compared to the more still communication styles of Northern European or North American cultures.

4

Understanding these cultural differences in body language is key in our global world. When people misunderstand body language, it can create problems in conversations and relationships. Learning about how people communicate without words can help us connect better with others. This can help us show respect and avoid mistakes when talking to people from other cultures, something especially important when travelling, working or studying in international environments. By understanding these differences, we can become better and more sensitive communicators in an increasingly connected world.

Summary: write the main idea and key details of the paragraph in your own words.

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Reading Comprehension Questions

A. Choose the correct option to answer the question about the text.

What is the main focus of the text?

1. the benefits of non-verbal communication in global business
2. the cultural differences in body language and their impact on communication
3. the similarities in non-verbal communication across different cultures

B. Complete each sentence with a word from the text.

1. In cultures, body movements are usually calm and gentle.
2. In Brazil, physical is a common part of communication.
3. Spaniards and Greeks use facial expressions more than North Americans.

C. Mark each statement as True, False or Not Given according to the text.

1. Italians use hand gestures that carry specific meanings.
2. Direct eye contact is acceptable in all professional settings.
3. Mediterranean cultures tend to use more physical contact during conversations.

D. Answer the question using no more than three words from the text.

1. What do Japanese people use to greet others?
2. How is communication in China and Korea described?
3. What can misunderstanding body language lead to?

E. Answer the questions in full sentences, using examples from the text.

1. How does body language differ between Asian and Mediterranean cultures?

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2. Why is understanding body language important in international communication?

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Reflection: Discuss the following questions in your group.

1. How did summarising your section help you to understand the text better?
2. Was it easier or harder to answer the questions after the group work?
3. How did working in a group change the way you answered the comprehension questions?