



NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Beyond Words | More Than You Say | Communicates Always

IT'S NOT
WHAT YOU SAY,
IT'S HOW
YOU SAY IT!

What is Non-Verbal Communication?

Non-verbal communication (NVC) is the process of sending and receiving messages without using spoken or written words. It relies on the body, voice, space and appearance to convey meaning.



Key Characteristics



Continuous

It never stops — even silence and stillness communicate something.



Multi-channelled

Face, voice, body, space and time can all signal meaning at once.



Culture-bound

A gesture polite in one culture may be offensive in another.



Largely unconscious

Much of it is spontaneous and harder to fake than words.



Ambiguous

The same cue (e.g., crossed arms) can mean different things in different contexts.

Why It Matters



Reinforces or contradicts the verbal message

Mismatch signals insincerity.



Regulates conversation flow

Turn-taking cues, eye contact, pauses.



Substitutes for words entirely

A nod instead of “yes.”



Central to teaching-learning

Classroom communication research shows most of a teacher's impact on learners is non-verbal.

Major Channels of Non-Verbal Communication

Body



Gestures, posture, facial expressions

Voice



Tone, pitch, pace, volume, pauses (paralanguage)

Space



Distance and physical space (proxemics)

Time



Use and perception of time (chronemics)

Appearance



Dress, grooming, artefacts, body type

“Meaning lives in gestures,
not just in words.”

MASTER THE NOTES? TAKE THE QUIZ



Types of Non-Verbal Communication

Beyond Words, More Meaning!

Eight Major Channels

Type	What It Covers	Example
 Kinesics	Body movements, posture, gestures, facial expressions	A firm handshake; nodding while listening
 Proxemics	Use of physical space and distance between communicators	Standing close = intimacy; far = formality
 Paralanguage (Vocalics)	Tone, pitch, pace, volume, pauses — the “how” of speech	Sarcastic tone changing the meaning of “great job”
 Chronemics	Use and perception of time in communication	Arriving late signals disrespect in some cultures
 Haptics	Communication through touch	A pat on the back; a handshake; a hug
 Oculesics	Eye contact and gaze behaviour	Sustained eye contact signalling confidence or interest
 Physical Appearance	Dress, grooming, artefacts, body type	A uniform conveying authority or role
 Environment/Artefacts	Physical setting, objects, colours used to communicate	Office layout signalling hierarchy

Quick-Revision Grouping

Body-based


Kinesics, Haptics, Oculesics

Voice-based


Paralanguage

Context-based


Proxemics, Chronemics, Environment

Identity-based


Physical appearance / artefacts



Facial Expressions

The Universal Language of Emotion



Same Face,
Different Stories!

Emoji	Emotion	Facial Cue
	Happiness 	Raised cheeks, crow's-feet wrinkles, mouth corners lifted
	Sadness 	Drooping upper eyelids, downturned mouth, inner eyebrows raised
	Anger 	Lowered, drawn-together eyebrows; tightened lips; glaring eyes
	Fear 	Raised eyebrows, widened eyes, slightly open mouth
	Surprise 	Raised eyebrows, wide eyes, jaw dropped open
	Disgust 	Wrinkled nose, raised upper lip, narrowed eyes
	Contempt 	One-sided lip corner raised — the only asymmetrical universal expression

Why the Face Matters Most



Fastest channel

Micro-expressions flash in a fraction of a second, often before a person can control them.



Hardest to fake

Genuine (Duchenne) smiles involve eye muscles that are difficult to fake deliberately.



Culturally universal core

Some facial expressions are universal, but display rules (when/how much emotion to show) vary by culture.



Classroom relevance

A teacher's facial expressions strongly shape learner engagement and trust.

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> Types of Gestures (Ekman & Friesen's Classification)

Gesture Type	Feature	Example
 Emblems	Direct verbal translation exists	 'okay/well done'
 Illustrators	Accompany and emphasise speech	 Hands spreading apart while saying 'it was huge'
 Regulators	Control the flow of conversation	 Raising a hand to signal 'wait, let me speak'
 Adaptors	Manage inner feelings/tension, often unconscious	 Fidgeting, tapping a pen, touching hair when nervous
 Affect Displays	Show emotion, often via face and body together	 Clenched fists showing frustration

> Types of Posture

Posture Type	Description	What It Signals
Open posture 	Arms/legs uncrossed, body facing the listener	Signals openness, confidence, receptivity
Closed posture 	Arms crossed, body turned away	Signals defensiveness, discomfort, disagreement
Forward lean 	Body inclined toward the speaker	Signals interest and engagement
Slouched posture 	Shoulders drooped, low muscle tone	Signals low energy, boredom, low confidence
Congruent posture 	Mirrors the other person's posture	Builds rapport ('posture echo')

Key Points

- ✓ **Gestures** are quick, deliberate hand/arm movements carrying specific meaning.
- ✓ **Posture** is the overall body stance — slower to change, reflects sustained attitude or emotion.
- ✓ Together with facial expression, they form the three pillars of Kinesics.

Observe
Understand
Connect

"Your body speaks, even when you are silent."



MASTER THE NOTES? TAKE THE QUIZ