



MODULE 8 PRESENTATION SKILLS

UNIT 5 Body language 1: Posture and movement

Task sheet

The aim of the lesson:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Map out the facets of body language2) Raise awareness of the messages sent by body language signals3) Examine the features of open, confident and closed, intimidated body language4) Learn techniques to control body language during public speech
Language level:	B2 and up



TASK 1 Presenter as visual

Body language is a very powerful asset of the presenter. Our body language signals represent instinctive behaviour, which we had before speech, and also learnt behaviour, which we have acquired through socialisation. We are faster to pick up these visible messages than verbal information. Apparently, 60-80% of what you understand in a conversation is read through body language, not the words.

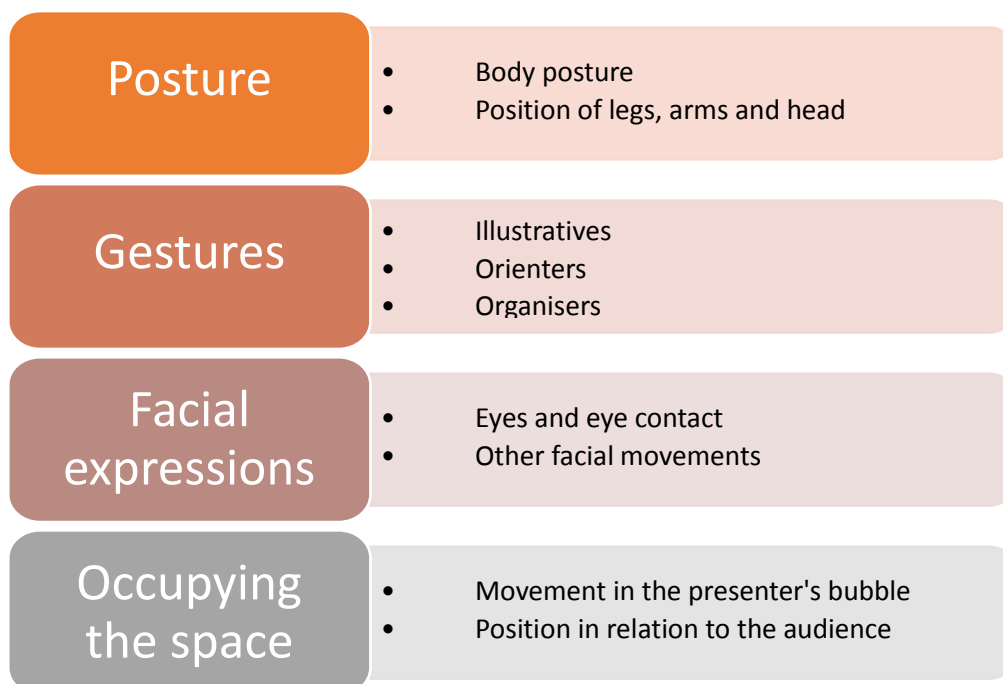
TASK 1/A True or false?

Consider the following statements and discuss them with your partner. Are they true or false, or maybe dependent on the circumstances?

	True/False/Depends
1. While delivering a speech, you shouldn't look at people individually; look at something that is behind them to "take all of them in" at the same time.	
2. When using your hands, you have to move in an imagined "box" in front of your body, not reaching up or down from it.	
3. The closer you stand to your audience, the friendlier you seem.	
4. Never sit down! A sitting person is more boring to look at than a standing speaker.	

Body language includes 4 main functional areas:

Figure 1 Aspects of body language




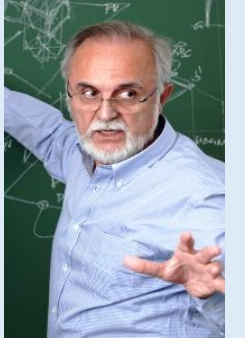






TASK 1/B Instinctive or learned?

Some of our body language is instinctive, and thus, more difficult to control. And there are other aspects which are learnt and culturally embedded, and that is why easier to monitor. Consider the following examples and decide which category they belong to. Put the number of the pictures into the right boxes.

Posture	Instinctive		Learned	
Gestures	Instinctive		Learned	
Facial expressions	Instinctive		Learned	
Occupying the space	Instinctive		Learned	

Examples¹:

1	2	3	4
			
5	6	7	8
			

¹ Source of images:

1: [How to Read Hand Gestures \(palm-reading.org\)](http://palm-reading.org)

2: [Stratégiák, hogy a diákok motiváltak legyenek - Az osztályod, az országod \(tuclase.cl\)](http://tuclase.cl)

3: <https://www.quora.com/When-sitting-why-does-a-woman-cross-her-legs-away-from-the-man>

4: [img5c5bccd98fb1b6.42922137.jpg \(640x479\) \(quizur.com\)](http://quizur.com)

5: <https://www.ft.com/content/cb75844e-d345-4daa-b68d-6bdd471a0e2b>

6: Unknown

7: Unknown

8: [bigstock-Speaker-At-Business-Convention-113888516-700x365.jpg \(700x365\) \(speak-simple.com\)](http://speak-simple.com)

TASK 2 Posture

Task 2/A Hidden messages

Look at the following picture showing three members of a panel at a meeting. What do their postures tell about them?

- Who looks the most open and relaxed, and why?
- Who looks the least open and relaxed, and why?

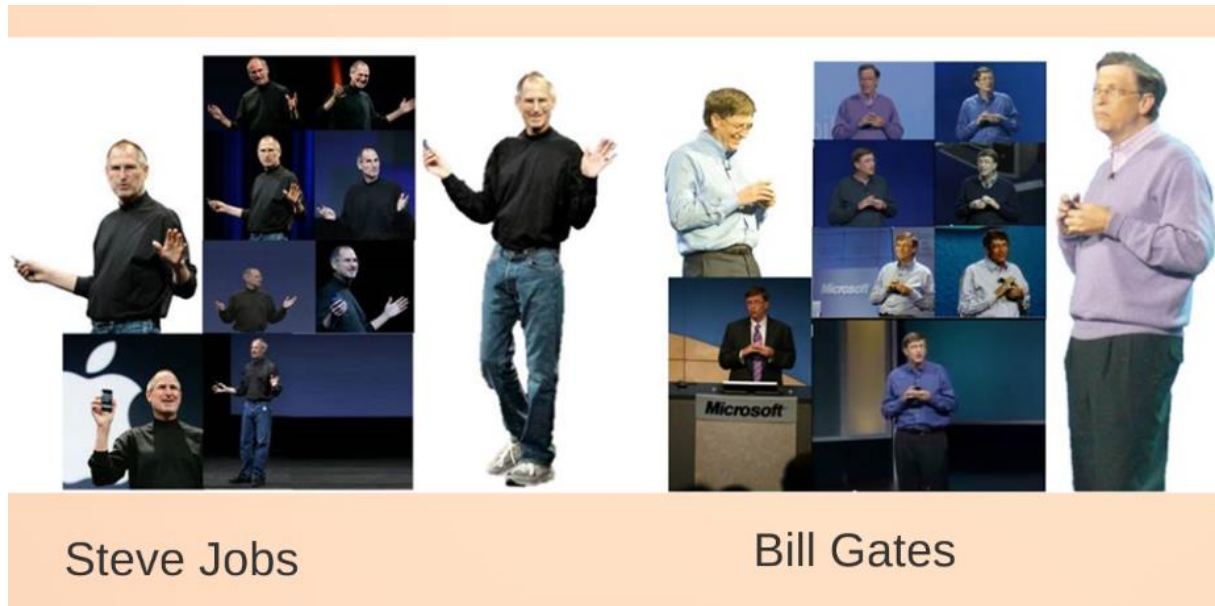


² Source of image: Unknown

TASK 2/B Open or closed

Stance includes body posture (bent, erect or leaning forward), and the ways in which we position our head, arms and legs.

IT gurus Steve Jobs and Bill Gates are often compared based on their characteristic stances. Examine the differences between them. What do their body posture, arm and leg position communicate?



3

³ Source of image: <https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/steve-jobs-vs-bill-gates>



Write your observations here.

SUMMARY

Open body language features

- erect but relaxed posture
- facing audience
- chin up
- legs slightly apart, to establish a firm stand
- hands free allowing for expressive gesturing
- palms open
- no obstacle to hide behind or cover body

Closed body language

- a general tendency to hide, to look small or invisible
- bent back
- often turning away from audience
- bent head
- legs crossed
- hands or arms crossed (often in front of sensitive body parts)
- clasped hands
- hiding behind obstacles

⁴ Source of image: <https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/steve-jobs-vs-bill-gates>

TASK 2/C Posture and objects

In the following pictures⁵ you can see presenters using or positioning themselves around certain objects: a pulpit, a desk, a piece of paper. How do these objects influence our perception of the speakers?

- Why do you think S1 does not stand behind the pulpit?
- What difference does it make that S1 stands beside the pulpit, while S2 behind it?
- Is S3 sitting behind the desk more or less appealing than the standing speakers?
- Which presenter holding a paper in pictures 4, 5 and 6 appears to be the most open and relaxed? Why?



⁵ Source of images:

1: [15+ Effective Public Speaking Skills & Techniques to Master \(tutsplus.com\)](https://www.tutsplus.com)

2: [Important Public Speaking Skills for Workplace Success \(thebalancecareers.com\)](https://www.thebalancecareers.com)

3: [Ülő-on Számítógép Iskolapad, A Gazdaság Szemüveg És jogdíjmentes fotó és stock kép \(crello.com\)](https://www.crello.com)

4: Unknown

5: [To Read or Not to Read...Your Presentation \(kelownanow.com\)](https://www.kelownanow.com)

6: [Acing Public Speaking: How to Exude Confidence and Ensure Your Voice Is Heard - IAWomen Blog](https://www.iawomenblog.com)

TASK 2/D Dominant, confident or intimidated?

Our body language sends very strong messages about how we feel in the given situation, in relation to the other participants.

Look at the pictures⁶ below. Which pictures illustrate confident or even dominant behaviour? Which people appear to be intimidated?

Put the features into the diagram. Pay attention to the overlapping parts.



	FEATURES
1.	Extending body contours
2.	Crossed arms or legs
3.	Large gestures
4.	Avoiding eye contact

⁶ Source of images:

1: <https://www.quora.com/When-sitting-why-does-a-woman-cross-her-legs-away-from-the-man>

2: [Uncommon-Tips-for-How-to-Be-a-Better-Public-Speaker.jpg \(1280x720\) \(thefearlessman.com\)](#)

3: [Worst Body Language Mistakes \(businessinsider.com\)](#)

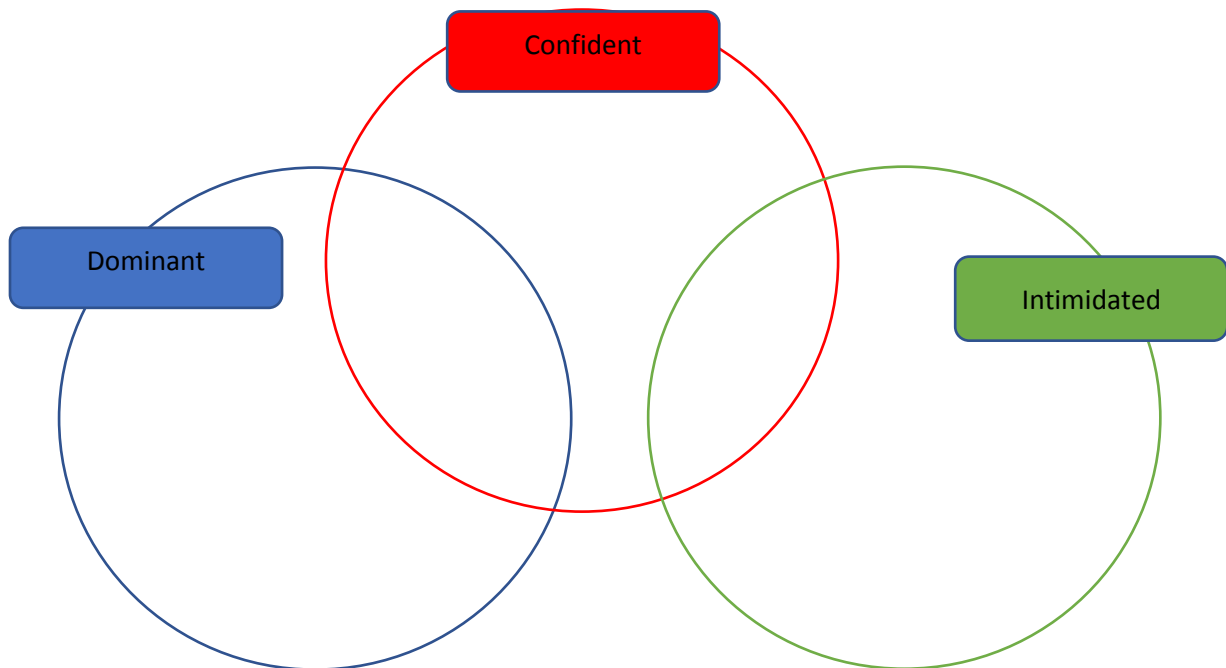
4: [Amy Cuddy: Your body language may shape who you are | TED Talk](#)

5: Unknown

6: Unknown

5.	Bent back
6.	Leaning towards partner
7.	Looking small
8.	Leaning away from partner
9.	Looking down towards partner
10.	Looking up to partner
11.	Standing erect
12.	Adjusting hair
13.	Extending limbs when sitting

Figure 2 Body language messages



TASK 3 Occupying the space

Presenters appear on a stage, which is their activity area. It is our personal choice to what extent we want to occupy this space. Some speakers need a lot of space to move about, point at information on the screen or even act out some of the message, while others find it safer to move less and stay close to the laptop and the screen – and there are other preferences between these two extremes. As a general rule, however, we should be prepared to use the available space to some extent as our body language is an important source of information and entertainment as well – a sitting person is always less inspiring to watch.

Watch part of a talk (32.20 – 36.03) by an education expert, Jeremy Harmer given at the International House Conference in 2012. List minimally 5 purposes that his movement in his space bubble fulfils.

Source:

Jeremy Harmer at the International House Conference in 2012

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JJWT0oaX9V0>

Think over

- how big this space bubble is, and if it overlaps with the audience's space bubble,
- what are the directions of his movement,
- what strategic purposes are fulfilled by his movements,
- how all this subjectively appeals to you.

Take notes here.

In sum

- **Body language is a key visual during presentations, which consists of several interrelated signals, both instinctive and learnt.**
- **By becoming aware of these signals, we can control and use them as effective and functional supportive techniques during the presentation.**

MODULE 2 PRESENTATION SKILLS

UNIT 13 Body language 1:

Posture and movement

Key

TASK 1 True or false?

	True/False/Depends
1. While delivering a speech, you shouldn't look at people individually; look at something that is behind them to "take all of them in" at the same time.	It depends on the size of the audience. In a large lecture hall, it might be a good strategy, but even in this case it is useful to sweep the audience with your eyes occasionally. In the case of smaller audiences, it is better to regularly sweep the audience with your eyes, even engaging in eye contact with individuals.
2. When using your hands, you have to move in an imagined "box" in front of your body, not reaching up or down from it.	True. Too large gestures might come across as theatrical, whereas small, lower-positioned gestures might convey the impression of lack of confidence.
3. The closer you stand to your audience, the friendlier you seem.	No. It is definitely part of a general open attitude to leave the stage and move towards the audience, but going too close to individual members of the audience might be embarrassing. Our personal space bubble consists of four concentric "circles" or zones: (1) intimate zone (0-45 cm) i.e. for hugging or whispering, (2) personal zone (45 – 120 cm) i.e. interactions with family and good friends, (3) social zone (120 – 360 cm) i.e. interactions at school or the workplace with people you know, and (4) public space (360 cm +) i.e. public speaking. These distances are dependent upon your culture as well. A presentation is a public professional event, where you need to respect these zones.
4. Never sit down! A sitting person is more boring to look at than a standing speaker.	True. When seated, half of your body is invisible and motionless, so your general appearance is much less dynamic than when you are standing.

TASK 1/B Instinctive or learned

Posture	Instinctive	6 (closed, defensive, lacking confidence)
	Learned	7 (open, confident posture)
Gestures	Instinctive	1 (sign of lying or difficulty to tell the truth)
	Learned	2 (pointing out someone to contribute)
Facial expressions	Instinctive	5 (I'd rather not say what I want to say)
	Learned	4 (strategic eye contact, checking on audience reactions)
Occupying the space	Instinctive	3 (dominance – extended body contours)
	Learned	8 (moving closer to audience)

TASK 2 Posture

TASK 2/A Hidden messages

Who looks the most open and relaxed, and why?

Who looks the least open and relaxed, and why?

- The woman on the right, in the dark suit. She stands straight, but not very erect, with open arms and hands, only slightly touching the desk.
- The woman on the left and the man in the middle seem equally stiff and defensive, by combining an erect posture with clasped hands. The man, however looks slightly more defensive by covering sensitive parts of his body with open clasped but open palms turned towards his body.

TASK 2/B Open or closed

Steve Jobs:

Open, erect posture: straight back, head and chin looking ahead, open arms, expressive gestures, and open palms facing the audience. When seated, he looks more confident but not dominant: does not explicitly lean towards partner, and uses open gestures.

Bill Gates: Closed posture with bent back, head hanging, hands clasped close to the body (defensive),. When seated, he also looks more defensive by leaning away from partner and closing hands.

TASK 2/C Posture and objects

Why do you think S1 does not stand behind the pulpit?

- He wants to be closer to the audience, and look relaxed and interactive. It does not work if you hide behind the pulpit.

What difference does it make that S1 stands beside the pulpit, while S2 behind it?

- S1 looks more relaxed, informal and more open to the audience than S2, who is separated from the audience by the pulpit.

Is S3 sitting behind the desk more or less appealing than the standing speakers?

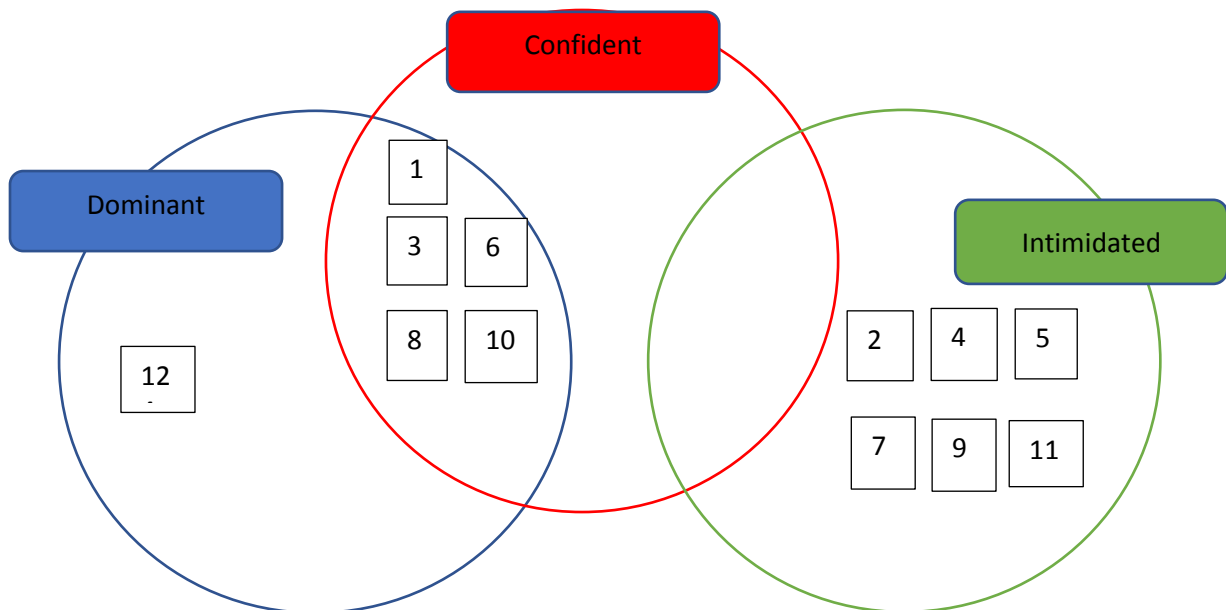
- Definitely less appealing, even if S3 uses intensive gestures.

Which presenter holding a paper in pictures 4, 5 and 6 appears to be the most open and relaxed?

Why?

- S4 as he has a free hand to gesture even despite the fact that he is covering himself with the paper.

TASK 2/D Dominant, confident or intimidated?



TASK 3 Occupying the space

Think over

how big this space bubble is, and if it overlaps with the audience's space bubble:

- He moves in a relatively large space bubble despite the tight stage, and it overlaps with the audience's bubble.

what are the directions of his movement:

- He dominantly moves vertically between the screen and the audience, and also horizontally, left and right.

what strategic purposes are fulfilled by his movements:

- Opening towards the audience, „bringing” his message closer
- Changing position when moving onto a new topic
- Pointing out information on the slide
- Acting out message
- Emphasising important information