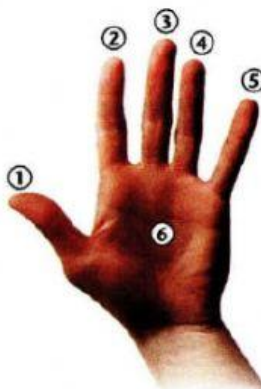


BEFORE YOU READ

SCAFFOLD
FLASH
CARDS

▶ 1:10 **VOCABULARY** • *The hand* Read and listen. Then listen again and repeat.

- | | |
|-----------------|----------|
| 1 thumb | 5 pinkie |
| 2 index finger | 6 palm |
| 3 middle finger | 7 fist |
| 4 ring finger | |



READING ▶ 1:11

We talked to June Galloway about her book, *Get off on the Right Foot: Don't Let the Wrong Gesture Ruin Your Day*.



English is the world's international language.

But in your book, you've focused on non-verbal communication. Why is that so important?

Well, gestures and other body language can have different meanings in different places. Something that you think is friendly or polite could come across as very rude in another culture. I've described many of these customs and cultural differences so my readers don't get off on the wrong foot when they meet people from places where the culture differs from their own.

Can greeting someone in the wrong way really lead to misunderstanding?

In some cases, yes. The firm handshake a North American expects may seem quite aggressive in other places. And a light handshake—which is normal in some countries—may seem unfriendly to a North American.

In what ways can hand gestures lead to misunderstanding?

Well, as an example, we assume all people indicate the numbers one to ten with their fingers the same way. But in fact, they don't. While North Americans usually use an index finger for

"one," most Europeans use a thumb. North Americans extend all ten fingers for "ten." However, Chinese indicate the numbers one to ten all on one hand. For example, an extended thumb and pinkie means "six," and a fist means "ten." Imagine how confusing this can be when you're trying to communicate quantities and prices with your hands!

What other gestures can cause confusion?

Take the gesture for "come here," for example. In North America, people gesture with the palm up. Well, in southern Europe, that gesture means "good-bye"! And in many Asian countries, the palm-up gesture is considered rude. Instead, people there gesture with the palm down.

I've heard that, in Japan, pointing with the index finger is not polite. Is that right?

Yes. Japanese prefer to point with the palm open and facing up.

Surely there must be some gestures used everywhere, right? What about the thumbs-up sign for "great"?

Sorry. That's extremely rude in Australia and the Middle East. This is why it's so important to be aware of these cultural differences.

What gesture do you use . . .



. . . for the number six?



. . . for "Come here": palm up or down?



. . . for pointing? Do you use your index finger or an open palm?

A IDENTIFY SUPPORTING DETAILS Check the statements that are true, according to the article. Write *X* next to the statements that are not true. Explain your answers.

- ☐ 1 In most of Europe, a thumb and an index finger mean "two."
- ☐ 2 In North America, a thumb and a pinkie mean "two."
- ☐ 3 Japanese point at pictures with an open palm facing up.
- ☐ 4 To be friendly, North Americans greet others with a light handshake.
- ☐ 5 Everyone uses the thumbs-up sign for "that's good."

True. Galloway says most Europeans begin with the thumb. So the index finger is the next finger after that.

B RELATE TO PERSONAL EXPERIENCE Discuss the questions.

ORIGINAL
MORE
EXERCISES

Have you ever been surprised by someone's gestures or body language on TV, in the movies, or in real life? What did you see? What do you think the action meant? Why were you surprised?

NOW YOU CAN Discuss gestures and customs

A PAIR WORK Read the travel tips about gestures and customs around the world. Compare your own gestures and customs with those described. Do any of them seem strange or rude?

Travel Tips ✈

If someone gives you a gift, thank the person and open it right away. (Ecuador)	When a visitor is leaving your home, you should walk with that person out the door. (Korea)	If you are going to be more than 15 minutes late for a party, lunch, or dinner, you should call to explain. (United States)	To gesture that something is good, hold your hand up, palm facing out, and slowly bring all your fingers to the thumb. (Turkey)
If you want to get a server's attention, it's more polite to use eye contact rather than hand gestures. (Kenya)	When greeting people, older people should always be greeted first. (Mongolia)	Before you enter someone's home, you should take off your shoes. (Ukraine)	

B NOTEPADDING With a partner, choose a topic and discuss your country's customs. Then write notes about your country on the notepad.

Topic: <i>showing respect for older people.</i>
Customs: <i>It's not polite to disagree with an older person.</i>
Topic:
Customs:
Are the rules the same for both men and women? How about for young people or older people? Explain.

Topics

- showing respect for older people
- do's and don'ts for gestures
- topics for polite small talk
- invitations
- visiting someone's home
- giving gifts
- offering or refusing food
- touching or not touching
- (your own topic) _____

Text-mining (optional)

Find and underline three words or phrases in the Reading that were new to you. Use them in your Discussion.

For example: "body language."

C DISCUSSION Tell your classmates about the customs you described on your notepad. Does everyone agree?