

NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION IN THE ARAB WORLD

Language and culture are intertwined, which makes non-verbal communication a key aspect in language learning. Not all communication is language-based; people also convey what they're thinking using gestures, eye contact, and facial expressions. Understanding differences in non-verbal communication is

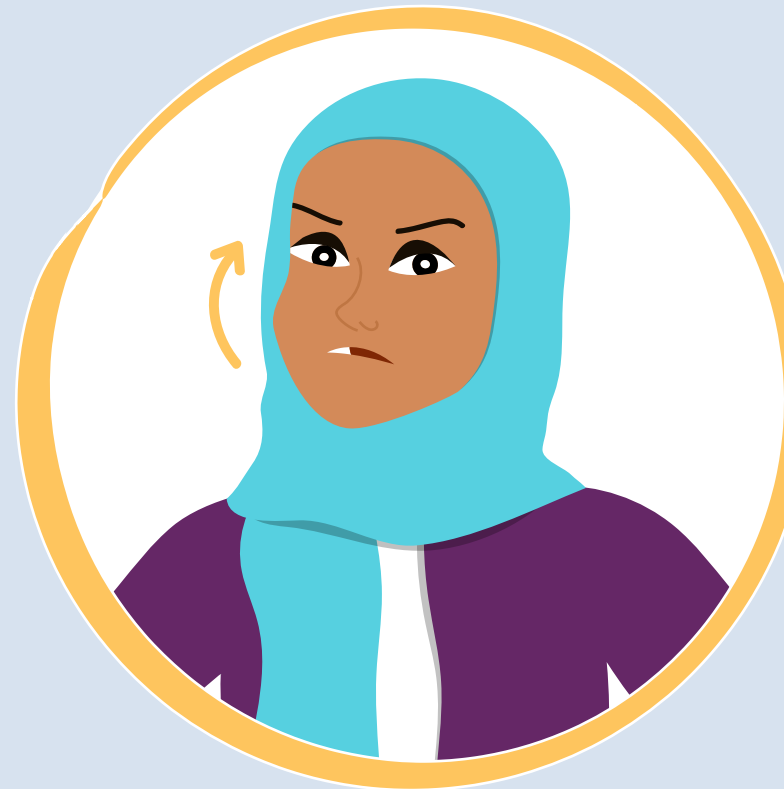
a vital part of building cross-cultural relationships. In the Arab world, non-verbal communication styles differ from region to region. Here are six commonly-used gestures that you may see in the Arab world. Think about the non-verbal communication you use in your life. **How do these gestures compare?**



Placing one's right hand over one's heart signifies a **warm greeting**, especially when preceded by a wave. This gesture is commonly used when friends see each other from far away and want to greet each other.



In parts of the Gulf, **tapping one's head with the palm of the hand** means "ala raasi," literally "on my head," which is an expression of **gratitude**.



Lifting one's chin up and making a "click" noise with the tongue signifies **disapproval**. This can be used in various contexts, and is commonly used by parents towards their children.



Showing the soles of one's feet or shoes to another person is considered **rude**: be mindful of how you sit!



Making the symbol that, in America, means "a-okay" (thumb and index finger making an "O" shape) can be considered either a **threat** or an expression of **the evil eye**.



Placing one's palm out and face down and gesturing inward repeatedly with the fingers means **"come here."** It is considered impolite to make this gesture with the palm up, like we do in the US, because it is a gesture used for animals.