

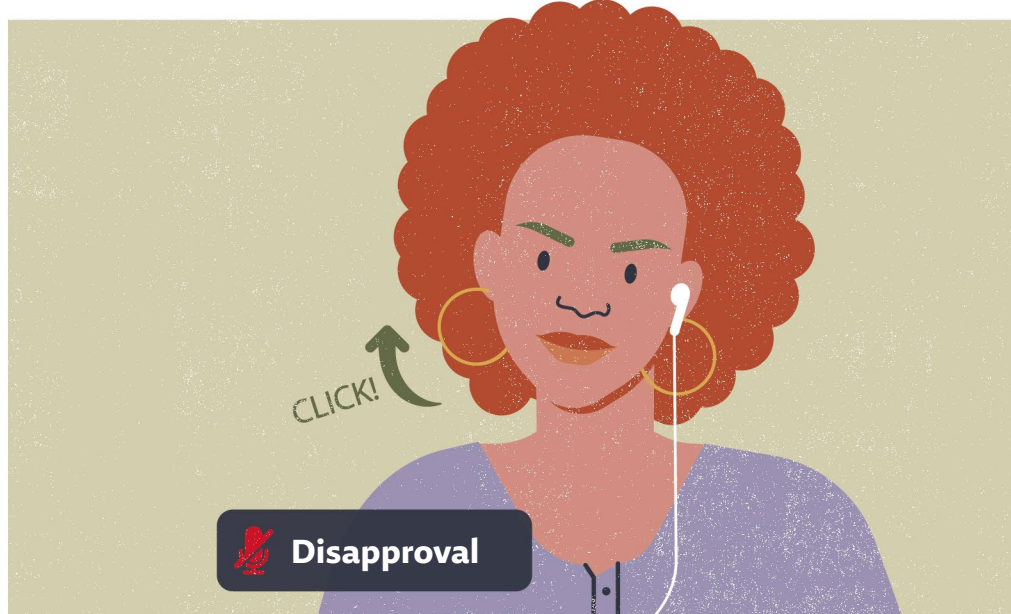
Nonverbal Communication in the Arab World



Showing the sole's 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.



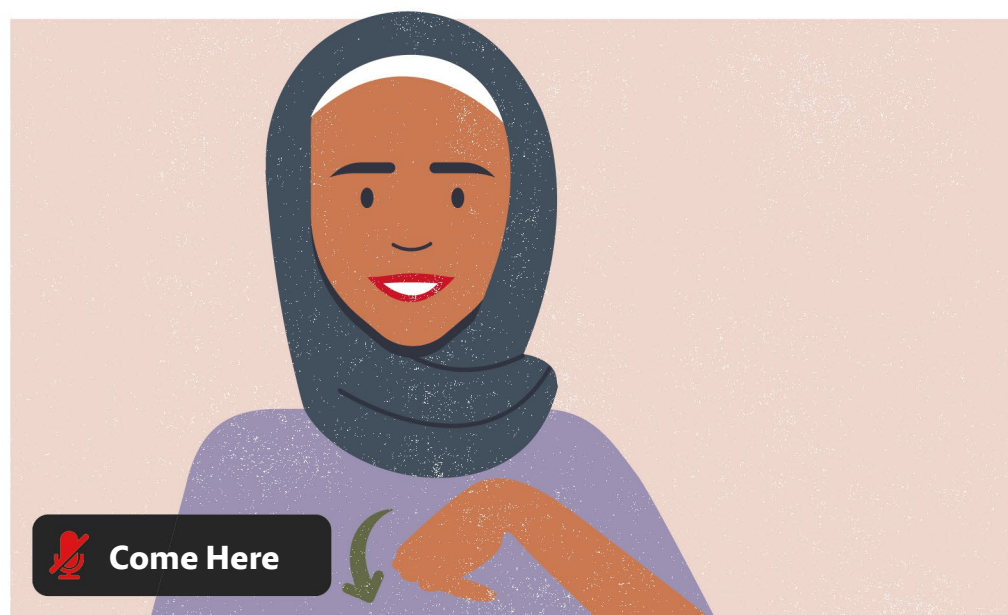
Lifting one's chin up and making a "click" noise with the tongue signifies disapproval. This can be used in various contexts, and is commonly used by parents towards their children.



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 want to greet each other from afar.



In parts of the Gulf, tapping one's head with the palm of the hand means "3la rasi", literally "on my head" which is an expression of gratitude.



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.

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?