

# A

• **Read these questions. Then read the article. Underline the answers in the text.**

1. What does body language communicate?
2. Give 3 examples of body positions described in the article below and say what they mean.

*John Mole is an expert on nonverbal communication. The following information is from his website.*

## ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS

John Mole teaches people all over the world how to understand nonverbal communication. He is an expert on body language; he knows how to read it and how to use it. In his article, “Decoding<sup>1</sup> Body Language,” Mole describes how your body language can communicate your interest in what you are hearing or seeing. For example, when you lean forward toward a speaker, you communicate that you want to hear what the speaker is saying. However, when you lean back and cross your arms, you’re showing that you’re not very interested.



Body language can also show whether a listener agrees or disagrees with the speaker. If you sit with your arms and legs uncrossed, and your hands open, you probably agree with the speaker. On the other hand, crossing your arms and legs and making fists<sup>2</sup> with your hands usually means that you do not agree.



Mole also teaches how to read the nonverbal messages that people send with their eyes, feet, and head. For example, a woman with her head to one side and her eyes half open is communicating, “I’m thinking about what you are saying.” A man who is tapping his foot is saying, “I’m getting tired of listening. I have other things to do.” A student, slumped in a chair and looking up at the ceiling, is saying, “I’m bored. This doesn’t interest me.” If someone looks off to the side while he is speaking, you may want to check the information he gives you. This type of body language can mean that the speaker isn’t telling the truth!



Mole explains that body language isn’t the same in all cultures. There is, however, body language that most North Americans “speak.” You can learn to “read” people from the United States at parties and at work, but be careful . . . they may try to read you too!

1. **decode:** to understand what something means
2. **fist:** a closed hand

*From : Read and Reflect: Academic Reading Strategies and Cultural Awareness. Book 1. Oxford University Press, 2004*

• **Work with your partner. Use the answers to the questions above to summarize your article.**

- Work with your group to respond to the prompt and create the Venn Diagram.

**THINK:** What kind of non-verbal messages do different types of body language convey? Which are positive? Which are negative? Which are culture bound- E.g. depend on the culture of the "speaker" or the "listener." What statements in your text support your opinion?

**SHARE:** Work with your group to complete the Venn Diagram below. You can start with the list below and add your own ideas:

- leaning forward
- yawning
- crossing legs at the knee
- crossing arms in front of chest
- touching the palm in a handshake
- putting hand in front of mouth
- shaking hands firmly
- playing with hair
- squeezing hand in a handshake
- avoiding eye contact

