

B1-B2 English Worksheet

Body Language and First Impressions: Can We Really Tell Who Likes Us?

20 October 2026

Article

It is easy to form a first impression, especially when someone seems unfriendly. A new colleague might look away while you are speaking or come across as distant at a party. We pick up on tiny signals and try to make sense of them. A Guardian article published on 18 October discussed five possible signs of dislike: limited eye contact, fewer smiles, negative facial expressions, bodies pointing elsewhere and greater physical distance. These clues can be useful, but no single gesture gives a reliable answer about another person's feelings.

Someone who begins to turn away during a chat may be distracted rather than rude. They could be anxious, tired or uncomfortable in a busy room. If we jump to conclusions, we may read too much into an ordinary movement. Even a smile can be misleading: a polite person might smile without feeling friendly, while a shy person may look serious. Cultural habits also matter. Eye contact that seems confident in one country might seem disrespectful in another. The same behaviour can mean different things depending on the situation.

The writer questions the idea that a simple checklist can reveal what people really think. Instead of trying to guess everyone's feelings, we can watch for patterns and consider the circumstances. We can brush off an awkward moment rather than assume the other person dislikes us; they may simply be having a difficult day. Asking friendly questions and listening carefully can put people at ease. Some people need time before they open up. First impressions matter, yet they can change once we get to know someone better.

Source: The Guardian (18 October 2026); BBC Science Focus (12 October 2026).

True/False

Decide if each statement is True (T) or False (F).

No.	Statement	T / F
1	The article describes more than one type of non-verbal signal that people notice.	
2	The Guardian article says a single gesture can confirm that somebody dislikes you.	
3	Avoiding eye contact always means that a person is behaving rudely.	
4	Different cultural habits can affect how eye contact is understood.	
5	Someone who smiles politely may not feel particularly friendly.	
6	The writer recommends immediately trusting your first interpretation of a stranger.	
7	A difficult day can influence the way a person behaves during a conversation.	
8	According to the article, people never change their opinion after a first meeting.	

Phrase Match

Match the phrases (1-10) to the correct meanings (A-J).

Phrases (1-10)	Definitions (A-J)
1. look away	A. treat something as unimportant or not worth worrying about
2. come across as	B. move your body so that you face elsewhere
3. pick up on	C. give a particular impression to others
4. make sense of	D. find more meaning in something than is justified
5. turn away	E. begin to speak more freely about thoughts or feelings
6. jump to conclusions	F. understand something that is confusing
7. read too much into	G. help others feel relaxed and comfortable
8. brush off	H. turn your eyes in another direction
9. put people at ease	I. decide something is true without enough evidence
10. open up	J. notice something small or not directly stated

Synonym Match

Match each article word (1-10) with the closest synonym (A-J).

Words (1-10)	Synonyms (A-J)
1. distant	A. worried
2. tiny	B. uncomfortable
3. gesture	C. inattentive
4. reliable	D. movement
5. distracted	E. deceptive
6. anxious	F. conditions
7. confident	G. aloof
8. misleading	H. self-assured
9. awkward	I. dependable
10. circumstances	J. minute

Use the New Language

Choose five words or phrases from the worksheet and write your own sentences.

No.	Your sentence
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

Discussion Questions

Student A - Personal experience	Student B - Deeper discussion
1. Have you ever got the wrong first impression of someone?	1. How often do first impressions lead us to jump to conclusions about people?
2. What do you usually notice first when you meet a new person?	2. Is body language more useful than words for understanding how someone feels?
3. Has someone ever misunderstood your facial expression or tone of voice?	3. What misunderstandings can arise when people from different cultures meet?
4. Do you find eye contact comfortable, or does it sometimes make you nervous?	4. Could interviews unfairly reward confident behaviour over genuine ability?
5. When has a shy person become friendlier after you got to know them?	5. When might paying too much attention to someone's gestures damage a relationship?
6. Have you noticed different body-language habits when travelling?	6. How can people avoid reading too much into short or awkward social encounters?
7. What helps put you at ease when you meet strangers?	7. Should schools teach students how to recognise non-verbal communication?
8. Do you tend to open up quickly, or do you prefer to take your time?	8. Is it better to trust your instincts about someone or wait for more evidence?

Answer Key

True/False 1=T, 2=F, 3=F, 4=T, 5=T, 6=F, 7=T, 8=F

Phrase Match 1=H, 2=C, 3=J, 4=F, 5=B, 6=I, 7=D, 8=A, 9=G, 10=E

Synonym Match 1=G, 2=J, 3=D, 4=I, 5=C, 6=A, 7=H, 8=E, 9=B, 10=F

Example Sentences With the Phrases

No.	Example sentence
1	I sometimes look away while thinking about what to say.
2	A quiet colleague can come across as unfriendly even when they are kind.
3	Good listeners pick up on changes in a speaker's tone.
4	It took me a while to make sense of his unusual reaction.
5	She began to turn away when the conversation ended.
6	We should not jump to conclusions after one short meeting.
7	Do not read too much into one unanswered message.
8	He tried to brush off the awkward moment and continue talking.
9	A welcoming smile can put people at ease.
10	It may take several meetings before new colleagues open up.