

**ENGLISH | DUTCH | ITALIAN | NORWEGIAN | POLISH**

# Task sheets

**GREETINGS AND GESTURES ACROSS CULTURES**



**MADE FOR:**

language teachers and  
multicultural educators

**TO BE USED WITH:**

immigrants, exchange students,  
language learners,  
and many more

**READY TO GO, EASY TO USE!**



# Task 1

Greeting people can be awkward: do you shake hands? Go in for a hug? Kiss?

Match the left and right columns. One greeting does not match any of the countries.

Count its letters to get the first digit of the code.

- |  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| <b>A</b> A handshake, fist bump, hug, or wave    | <b>1</b> The United States           |
| <b>B</b> A bow or handshake                      | <b>2</b> Greece                      |
| <b>C</b> A half-bow with your palms put together | <b>3</b> Saudi Arabia                |
| <b>D</b> A hug and a kiss on the cheek           | <b>4</b> Japan                       |
| <b>E</b> A kiss and a slap on the back           | <b>5</b> Tibet                       |
| <b>F</b> A nose bump                             | <b>6</b> New Zealand                 |
| <b>G</b> A firm handshake                        | <b>7</b> Mozambique                  |
| <b>H</b> Rubbing elbows                          | <b>8</b> China                       |
| <b>I</b> A bow                                   | <b>9</b> Greenland                   |
| <b>J</b> Sticking out your tongue                | <b>10</b> Serbia                     |
| <b>K</b> Rubbing noses and foreheads             | <b>11</b> Western Europe             |
| <b>L</b> Clapping your hands                     | <b>12</b> Central and Eastern Europe |
| <b>M</b> Putting your hand over your heart       | <b>13</b> Malaysia                   |
| <b>N</b> Sniffing faces                          | <b>14</b> India                      |
| <b>O</b> Three kisses on the right cheek         | <b>15</b> Argentina                  |
| <b>P</b> Two kisses                              | <b>16</b> Germany                    |
| <b>R</b> Three kisses                            |                                      |

CODE DIGIT: \_\_\_\_\_



## Task 2

Customs surrounding handshakes are specific to cultures. Check if you know them. Complete the texts with the correct words from the box. Some words may be used more than once, but there are also two extra words that you do not need to use. Count the letters in each of them and multiply them together to get the next two digits of the code.

**FIST BUMP  
GREETINGS**

**HANDS  
CHEEK**

**FINGERS  
CHEST**

**PALMS  
GRIP**

**EYES  
HANDSHAKES**

**ELBOW  
HUGS**

**WRIST  
ARM**

In Anglophone countries, \_\_\_\_\_ are common in business situations. In casual non-business situations, men are more likely to shake hands than women.

Related to a handshake but more casual, some people prefer a \_\_\_\_\_, done with a clenched hand. Only the knuckles of the hand are typically touched to the knuckles of the other person's hand. It is however not used to seal a business deal or in formal business settings.

\_\_\_\_\_ between men and women are not encouraged in conservative Muslim societies and countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Pakistan, Iran, etc. As a general rule, in such conservative societies and countries, men are not allowed to get close to the opposite sex or touch them and vice versa.

In some countries such as Turkey or the Arabic-speaking Middle East, handshakes are not as firm as in the West. Consequently, a \_\_\_\_\_ that is too firm is rude.

In some areas of Africa, handshakes are continually held to show that the conversation is between the two talking. If they are not shaking \_\_\_\_\_, others are permitted to enter the conversation.

Masai men in Africa greet one another by a subtle touch of \_\_\_\_\_ of their hands for a very brief moment of time.

In Armenia, handshakes are the most common \_\_\_\_\_ between men, optionally followed by a kiss on the cheek if the two parties have a close relationship. Traditionally, a woman needs to wait for the man to present his hand for the handshake. Women usually greet each other with hugs and a kiss on the \_\_\_\_\_.

In Korea, a senior person will initiate a handshake, which is preferred to be weak. It is a sign of respect to grasp the right \_\_\_\_\_ with the left hand when shaking hands. It is considered disrespectful to put the free hand in one's pocket while shaking hands. Bowing is the preferred and conventional way of greeting a person in Korea.

In Liberia, the snap handshake is customary in which the two shakers snap their \_\_\_\_\_ against each other at the conclusion of the handshake.

In Thailand, handshaking is only done if the traditional 'wai' is not offered. When a person offers a 'wai', they place their palms together at \_\_\_\_\_ level and bow. This is then returned, with men saying 'Sawadee-krap' and women, saying 'Sawadee-kah' (both mean 'Hello').

In Kenya, when greeting an elder, a political leader or someone of higher status, it is a sign of respect to lower your \_\_\_\_\_ and grasp the right \_\_\_\_\_ with the left hand while shaking hands.

*Based on: Wikipedia*

**CODE DIGITS:** \_\_\_\_\_



# Task 3

Do you know how to say 'Hello' in different languages? It is useful when you travel a lot. Match the languages with the correct greetings. One language does not match any of the greetings. Count its letters to get the last digit of the code.

Hindi	Здраво (Zdravo)
Italian	你好 (nǐ hǎo)
Japanese	ສະບາຍດີ (sa-baai-di)
Korean	Ciao
Lao	नमस्त् (Namaste)
Macedonian	안녕하세요 (Anyeong haseyo)
Mandarin (Chinese)	こんにちは (Kon'nichiwa)
Norwegian	Hei
Polish	Salut
Romanian	Olá
Russian	Dobar dan
Ukrainian	Cześć
Bulgarian	Habari
Dutch	Hoi
Greek	Bună
Turkish	Привет (Privet)
Swahili	Hallo
French	Merhaba
Azerbaijani	Здравейте
Arabic	Привіт (Privit)
Uzbek	γεια σας (Yassas)
Afrikaans	ابرحم (marhaba)
Bosnian	مآلس (سالام)
Portuguese	

CODE DIGIT: \_\_\_\_\_

# Task 1

Eye contact occurs when two people look at each other's eyes at the same time. The customs and significance of eye contact vary between societies, with religious and social differences often altering its meaning greatly. Based on the text below, judge in which countries eye contact is welcome, acceptable or not recommended. Count the number of countries in each column to get the code.

In Western cultures, eyes are considered to show the central point of a person's focus. It is considered proper and polite to maintain almost constant eye contact with another person during a business exchange or a conversation. If you avoid making eye contact with a person, you might be considered to be distracted or even insulting.

In many Central European countries, as well as in Australia, Canada and the UK, eye contact should be maintained directly as it translates sincerity, trustworthiness and approachability. However, it is important to break eye contact intermittently as holding it for prolonged periods can make interlocutors uncomfortable.

In Asian cultures, extended eye contact can be taken as an affront or a challenge of authority. Only sporadic or brief eye contact is considered acceptable. Avoiding eye contact is usually interpreted as showing respect.

Muslims and other religious groups consider eye contact between men and women inappropriate and flirtatious. Only a brief moment of eye contact would be permitted between a man and a woman, if at all.

In Arab and Middle-East countries, eye contact is only acceptable when the participants are friends or family.

In African and Latin American cultures, eye contact should be avoided when speaking to someone older or of a higher social status.

AUSTRALIA	BAHRAIN	CAMBODIA	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	EGYPT	QATAR
FRANCE	GREECE	IRAN	ITALY	JAPAN	JORDAN
LITHUANIA	CANADA	UNITED STATES	SAUDI ARABIA	POLAND	SPAIN
TUNISIA	TURKEY	PORTUGAL	VIETNAM	CHINA	UNITED KINGDOM

WELCOME	WELCOME BUT NOT TOO MUCH	ACCEPTABLE BETWEEN FAMILY MEMBERS	NOT RECOMMENDED

CODE DIGITS: \_\_\_\_\_

# Task 1

Check how much you know about gestures and their cultural meanings. Add up the numbers next to your answers to get the first digit of the code.

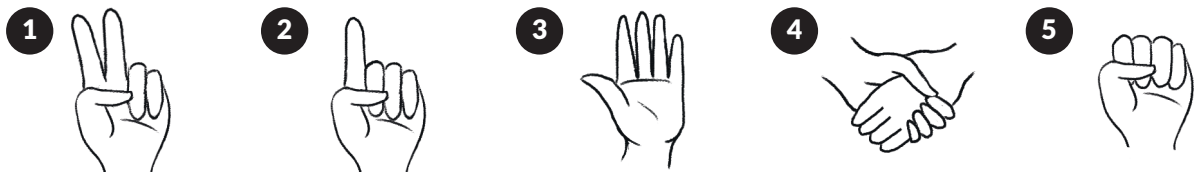
A. Indicates success and shows that everything is OK in most cultures.



B. Somebody may use this gesture to show you that you have done a perfect job.



C. This is, first of all, a sign of victory.



D. On seeing this gesture most people will understand they are not welcome.



CODE DIGIT: \_\_\_\_\_

## Task 2

No gesture has the same meaning across cultures. Not understanding this can lead to misunderstandings, insults and even violence. Below you see some gestures that are the most common in European countries. Assess whether their meanings are true or false. Count the 'true' answers and add them up to get the next digit of the code.



- signifies that someone is looking for a ride (T/F)
- signifies approval or agreement (T/F)



- signifies good quality (T/F)
- signifies that someone is cheating on you (T/F)



- signifies money (T/F)
- signifies failure (T/F)



- signifies that something smells bad (T/F)
- signifies hoping for good luck (T/F)

CODE DIGIT: \_\_\_\_\_

# Task 3

Choose the picture with a correct description and count its words to get the two next code digits.



- A gesture popular in New Zealand.
- Invitation to coffee in the Netherlands.
- Means 'victory' in Italy.



- Shows dissatisfaction.
- You feel anger at seeing this gesture.
- In Japan it means 'No', 'No can do', 'Impossible'.



- Has positive associations in Poland, means 'high quality'.
- To the Japanese people it suggests that someone has money.
- May show someone is compared with a zero.



- In Italy it is used when something is unclear.
- In China indicates the number 8, which is considered a lucky number.
- In the US usually used as a taunt, it means 'loser'.



- In America the gesture means 'you are done for'.
- In Brazil it means 'you are fired'.
- In Germany it is an invitation to a drink.

CODE DIGITS: \_\_\_\_\_



# Answer key

GREETINGS AND GESTURES ACROSS CULTURES



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CODE DIGIT: 9

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GREETINGS	CHEEK	CHEST	GRIP	HANDSHAKES	HUGS	ARM

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In Kenya, when greeting an elder, a political leader or someone of higher status, it is a sign of respect to lower your eyes and grasp the right wrist with the left hand while shaking hands.

*Based on: Wikipedia*

CODE DIGITS: 2,0

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Korean	안녕하세요 (Anyeong haseyo)
Lao	ສະບາຍດີ (sa-baai-di)
Macedonian	Здраво (Zdravo)
Mandarin (Chinese)	你好 (nǐ hǎo)
Norwegian	Hei
Polish	Cześć
Romanian	Bună
Russian	Привет (Privet)
Ukrainian	Привіт (Pryvit)
Bulgarian	Здравейте
Dutch	Hoi
Greek	γεια σας (Yassas)
Turkish	Merhaba
Swahili	Habari
French	Salut
Azerbaijani	سلام (salam)
Arabic	مرحبا (marhaba)
<b>Uzbek</b>	
Afrikaans	Hallo
Bosnian	Dobar dan
Portuguese	Olá

CODE DIGIT: 5

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WELCOME	WELCOME BUT NOT TOO MUCH	ACCEPTABLE BETWEEN FAMILY MEMBERS	NOT RECOMMENDED
France Greece Italy Portugal Spain United States	Australia Canada Lithuania Poland United Kingdom	Bahrain, Egypt Iran, Jordan Qatar Saudi Arabia Tunisia, Turkey United Arab Emirates	Cambodia China Japan Vietnam

CODE DIGITS: 6, 5, 9, 4

# Task 1

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C. This is, first of all, a sign of victory.



D. On seeing this gesture most people will understand they are not welcome.



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## Task 2

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- signifies that something smells bad (T/F)
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CODE DIGIT: 5

## Task 3

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- In Brazil it means 'you are fired'.
- In Germany it is an invitation to a drink.

CODE DIGITS: 2, 6