Discussion skills phrases miming game

Work together to think of at least one way of miming the sentences on each line below.

- "Are you following me?"

- "Can you say that again (a little) more slowly?"/ "Can you speak a little more slowly, please?"
- "Can you speak a little louder?"/ "I can't hear you very well."

- "Can you say that again?"
- "Can you say that one more time?"

- "I'm afraid I don't (fully/ really) understand."/ "I'm not sure I understand."
- "You've lost me"

- "Can I interrupt (you) (for a second)?"/ "Can I come in there?"/ "May I interrupt?"

- "Can I just finish (this point)?"/ "If I can just finish,…"/ "Please allow me to finish,…"/ "Before you interrupt,…"

- "Where was I? Oh yes,…"
- "To get back to what I was saying…"/ "Anyhow,…"/ "Anyway,…"/ "To get back on topic,…"
- "We seem to be getting off the point."

- "More or less"/ "So-so"

- "How do you feel (about…)?"
- "What do you think (about…)?"

- "I strongly believe…"/ "I really think…"

- "Off the top of my head,…"

- "Exactly!"/ "Precisely!"
- "I wholeheartedly agree."
- "You took the words right out of my mouth."

- "I partially agree."/ "I partly agree."

- "Are you joking?"/ "Are you kidding?"

- "I don't really agree."/ "I'm not sure that I agree."

When your teacher stops you, ask about any you can't think of mimes for and/ or watch your teacher do some gestures and guess the sentence.

The phrases above are arranged into sections. What is the function of each section?

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Mixed functions
Use this list to help with the last task above:

- Asking for differences in delivery
- Asking for opinions
- Asking for repetition
- Checking the other person's understanding
- Generalising/ Hedging
- Getting back to the point/ Finishing what you were saying
- Giving strong opinions
- Giving weak opinions
- Interrupting
- Showing a general lack of understanding
- Stopping interrupting
- Strong agreement
- Strong disagreement
- Weak agreement
- Weak disagreement/ Polite disagreement

Check as a class.

Suggested gestures
Without looking at the previous page, write one (longish and polite) phrase for each of the gestures below. If you can't work out what the gesture means, ask your teacher.

Cup your right ear with your open right hand and lean that ear towards the person speaking.

Hold both hands out with the palms down and move your arms up and down.

Hold up your index finger (= first finger).*

Hold up your open palm towards someone and turn your head away.

Hold up your palm facing someone, like trying to stop a car.

Hold your chin with one hand and look up towards the sky, then suddenly nod and smile.

Hold your hand over the heart while smiling, nodding, and or giving a thumbs up sign.**

Hold your right hand out open with the palm down, then twist it from side to side.

Make a chopping gesture with one open hand towards the person who is speaking.

Make a question gesture (palms up, shrugging your shoulders), point to your partner, then grab your heart.**

Make a questioning gesture (palms and shoulders up), point to your partner, then point to your head.**

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Mime laughing, for example by holding your ribs and shaking your body.

Mime moving something from far away into the middle of the table in front of you.*

Mime one person walking after another with the first two fingers of both hands.**

Mime quickly taking something from the top of your head and throwing it.*

Mime taking something out of your mouth and putting it into your partner's.**

Nod while also looking doubtful (perhaps also holding your index finger and thumb of one hand about two centimetres apart, like measuring a thick book*).

Put your index finger (= first finger) sideways in front of your stomach and then move it round and round away from and back towards your body to make a circle.

Put your left hand in front of you with your palm up. Make your right hand into a fist and then bang it down on your left palm.

Screw up your face to show confusion.*

Select and point at something very carefully.

Shrug your shoulders and look around in a confused way.

Wriggle one hand like a snake as you move it away from you.*

** = not a real gesture (just used to practise this language in this lesson)
* = not a common gesture (but possible to reinforce what you are saying)

Use the list of phrases on the first page to help you check your answers.

Check your answers with the answer key or as a class.

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Suggested answers

Checking/ Clarifying

Checking the other person's understanding

- "Are you following me?" – Mime one person walking after another with the first two fingers of both hands.**

Asking for differences in delivery

- "Can you say that again (a little) more slowly?"/ "Can you speak a little more slowly, please?" – Hold both hands out with the palms down and move your arms up and down.
- "Can you speak a little louder?"/ "I can't hear you very well." – Cup your right ear with your open right hand and lean that ear towards the person speaking.

Asking for repetition

- "Can you say that again?" – Put your index finger (= first finger) sideways in front of your stomach and then move it round and round away from and back towards your body to make a circle.
- "Can you say that one more time?" – Hold up your index finger (= first finger).*

Showing a general lack of understanding

- "I'm afraid I don't (fully/ really) understand."/ "I'm not sure I understand." – Screw up your face to show confusion.*
- "You've lost me" – Shrug your shoulders and look around in a confused way.

Turn taking

Interrupting

- "Can I interrupt (you) (for a second)?"/ "Can I come in there?"/ "May I interrupt?" – Make a chopping gesture with one open hand towards the person who is speaking.

Stopping interrupting

- "Can I just finish (this point)?"/ "If I can just finish,…"/ "Please allow me to finish,…"/ "Before you interrupt,…" – Hold up your open palm towards someone and turn your head away.

Getting back to the point/ Finishing what you were saying

- "Where was I? Oh yes,…" - Hold your chin with one hand and look up towards the sky, then suddenly nod and smile.
- "To get back to what I was saying…"/ "Anyhow,…"/ "Anyway,…"/ "To get back on topic,…" – Mime moving something from far away into the middle of the table in front of you.*
- "We seem to be getting off the point." – Wriggle one hand like a snake as you move it away from you.*

Generalising/ Hedging

- "More or less"/ "So-so" – Hold your right hand out open with the palm down, then twist it from side to side

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Opinions

Asking for opinions

- "How do you feel (about…)?" – Make a question gesture (palms up, shrugging your shoulders), point to your partner, then grab your heart.**
- "What do you think (about…)?" – Make a questioning gesture (palms and shoulders up), point to your partner, then point to your head.**

Giving strong opinions

- "I strongly believe…"/ "I really think…" - Put your left hand in front of you with your palm up. Make your right hand into a fist and then bang it down on your left palm.

Giving weak opinions

- "Off the top of my head,…" – Mime quickly taking something from the top of your head and throwing it.*

Strong agreement

- "Exactly!"/ "Precisely!" – Select and point at something very carefully.
- "I wholeheartedly agree." – Hold your hand over the heart while smiling, nodding, and or giving a thumbs up sign.**
- "You took the words right out of my mouth." – Mime taking something out of your mouth and putting it into your partner's.**

Weak agreement

- "I partially agree."/ "I partly agree." – Nod while also looking doubtful (perhaps also holding your index finger and thumb of one hand about two centimetres apart, like measuring a thick book*).

Strong disagreement

- "Are you joking?"/ "Are you kidding?" – Mime laughing, for example by holding your ribs and shaking your body.

Weak disagreement/ Polite disagreement

- "I don't really agree."/ "I'm not sure that I agree." – Lean your head to one side and screw up your face in a doubting way.

Do the same steps as above with these new expressions:

- "On the one hand,.. On the other hand,… In balance,…"

Mime one of the gestures above without your partner looking at the phrases. Your partner must say exactly one of the phrases written there.

Useful language for playing the game
You've got the right idea, but you need a longer/ more polite phrase.
Let me give you a hint.
Nowhere near!

Brainstorm more phrases for each of the functions above (not worrying about being able to mime them).

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