Discussion Topic:

Consider the statement “The rules that apply in one culture may be entirely inappropriate in another.” Share three examples of body language that might be acceptable in one culture, but not in another.

Discussion Answer:

Touching: In some cultures, physical touch is a common and accepted form of communication, while in other cultures it is not. For example, in Mediterranean cultures and Latin America, physical touch such as patting on the back or shoulder is a common way to show support, while in some Asian cultures, physical touch is not as common and may be viewed as inappropriate or disrespectful.

Gestures: Certain hand gestures can have different meanings in different cultures. For example, in Western cultures, pointing with the index finger is a common gesture to indicate a specific direction or object, while in some Asian cultures, pointing with the index finger is considered impolite and the open hand or a slight nod of the head is used instead.

Proximity: Personal space and distance vary greatly from culture to culture. In some cultures, it is common to stand close to others during conversations, while in other cultures, maintaining a greater distance is considered more appropriate. For example, in some Mediterranean and Latin American cultures, people tend to stand close to each other during conversations, while in some Asian and Northern European cultures, people tend to maintain a greater distance as a sign of respect and personal space.