

**A World of Gestures** Nonverbal cues help us overcome language barriers but are often fraught with cultural nuance. A nod, for instance, can mean “yes” or “no.” What seems like a friendly thumbs-up to an American may insult an Afghan. And in Mediterranean countries, hugs or kisses are a normal public greeting, while in Japan such close physical contact would offend.

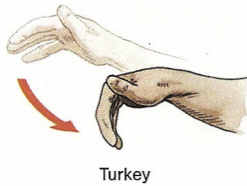
Social scientists point out that context is crucial—who is gesturing, how, on what occasion—and generalized definitions go only so far in multicultural settings. When unsure, perhaps you’d better keep your hands to yourself. —Amanda Fiegl

*Different motions are used to convey the same meaning, depending on culture and geography. But exceptions abound, even within a country.*

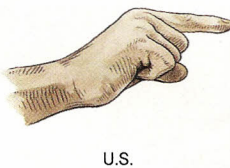
**Hello**



**Come!**



**Look!**



*These gestures may look the same, but their meanings vary greatly based on how and where they're used.*

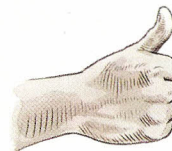


| Country | Meaning       |
|---------|---------------|
| U.S.    | Rock on!      |
| Brazil  | Good luck!    |
| Italy   | Vulgar insult |

**Don't tell**



**No**



| Country     | Meaning       |
|-------------|---------------|
| U.S.        | Great!        |
| Germany     | One           |
| Japan       | Five          |
| Afghanistan | Vulgar insult |



| Country | Meaning       |
|---------|---------------|
| U.S.    | OK            |
| Japan   | Pay me        |
| France  | Worthless     |
| Russia  | Vulgar insult |