Beyond the Words

Read how a speaker uses movement and expression to support a message.

9-10.SL.4.b "Demonstrate effective nonverbal communication (eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, presence, and proximity)."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline Maya's choices about where she looks, circle her facial expressions and gestures, and number the moments when she changes her stance or position. Use your marks to consider how each choice affects her audience.

A Request for the Activity Bus

1 At a school board meeting, Maya asks for a later activity bus so students can stay for clubs. Before speaking, she plants both feet behind the lectern and lowers her shoulders. Her hands rest on the lectern rather than gripping its sides. She looks toward students on her left while explaining that robotics practice ends after the current bus leaves. Then she turns toward board members on her right as she asks them to consider a trial route. One member glances up from a laptop and nods. Maya checks her notes briefly, then looks back at the room.

2 When Maya mentions that some families cannot pick up students after practice, her smile fades and her face becomes serious. She pauses long enough for the point to settle. Next, she raises one finger for her first proposal, a bus on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and a second finger for her next proposal, a stop near the public library. She keeps each gesture small enough to avoid blocking her face. A student in the back lifts a hand to ask about costs. Maya lets her arms fall to her sides and turns her body toward the student before answering.

3 Instead of walking straight toward the student, Maya takes one step out from behind the lectern and stops several feet away. She hears the question, repeats its main point, and says the trial could use sign-up counts to estimate demand. As she answers, her eyebrows lift slightly and she opens one hand toward the board, inviting them to review the numbers. When the chair says time is nearly up, Maya returns to the lectern, stands still, and finishes with a request for a vote on the trial. She scans the room once more, then thanks the board.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does Maya direct her gaze so both students and board members are included?

2. Why does Maya's change in facial expression fit the point she is making about families?

3. How do Maya's finger gestures help listeners follow her proposal?

4. When the student asks about costs, how do Maya's position and distance help her respond?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Plan a 30-second pitch for a lunchtime book swap, including how you would handle a classmate's question about lost books. In five or six sentences, describe your eye contact, facial expression, gesture, stance or movement, and distance from listeners at specific moments.

ANSWER KEY

Beyond the Words

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline Maya's choices about where she looks, circle her facial expressions and gestures, and number the moments when she changes her stance or position. Use your marks to consider how each choice affects her audience. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does Maya direct her gaze so both students and board members are included?	**She looks toward students while explaining the need, then toward board members when requesting a trial. After checking her notes, she looks back at the room.**
2	Why does Maya's change in facial expression fit the point she is making about families?	**Her smile fades and she becomes serious when she explains that some families cannot pick up students. Her expression matches the concern she is raising.**
3	How do Maya's finger gestures help listeners follow her proposal?	**She raises one finger for the proposed bus days and a second for the library stop, making the two parts easier to distinguish.**
4	When the student asks about costs, how do Maya's position and distance help her respond?	**She turns toward the student and steps out from behind the lectern, showing attention, but stops several feet away rather than crowding them.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I stand steadily beside an empty table and ask my class to try a lunchtime book swap. I look toward students on both sides of the room, not just my friends. Smiling, I open one hand toward the table as I describe where books could go. When someone asks about lost books, I turn toward them and listen with a thoughtful expression. I stay a few feet away and explain that swapped books belong to their new readers, so no return is required. I look across the room once more and invite volunteers to set up the table.

Accept other interpretations of Maya's choices when students support them with details from the passage. For Part 3, look for all five nonverbal elements tied to specific moments, including a respectful response to the question.