

Unit 1 Personal Space

Objectives

- Discussion topic: Personal Space in Japan and Other Cultures
- New Words and Expressions: affect, aggressive, behavior, comfortable, communicate, ensure, gender, gesture, harmony, offend, rural, spend time, status, unintended, urban

Introduction

New Words and Expressions (5 minutes)

- Greet your students.
- Ask students to make observations about the image on page 11.
- Have learners review the “New Words and Expressions” and attempt to define them in pairs or as a class.
- Ask them to predict how the words or expressions might relate to the unit content.
- Note that it does not matter whether their predictions are correct or not. It simply aims to make them speak about their predictions to stimulate their curiosity and make them active.



Optional

Have students go over the words in the Vocabulary Preview section. They should simply check all the words they are unfamiliar with. Survey the class to find out which words the majority of the class is unfamiliar with. Discuss those words as they relate to the topic so that students will be prepared for usage of the words in the reading passage. If time permits, have students make sentences with the words.

Warm-Up (10 minutes)

- This section works to engage students' interest in the unit topic.
- As an introduction to the main idea, this section includes a general prompt for students to consider.
- Before asking students the warm-up questions, ask for volunteers to share their thoughts on personal space. Ask follow-up questions like: Why is personal space important to you? When do you need more personal space? How do you feel when someone stands too close? Does personal space change depending on the person?
- Have students look at the warm-up questions:
 1. How close do you typically stand to a friend? A family member? A stranger?
 2. Do you hug your friends or family members? Do you shake hands with people?

Tip

Ask learners to work silently at first. Have them read the questions and jot down a few notes (words or phrases) related to each question. After learners have had the opportunity to silently consider the questions and write notes, they are better prepared to speak with partners or in small groups. For this unit, the answers focus on student opinion. There are no wrong answers to these questions. Giving any answer at this stage promotes active listening and reading later in the unit.

Before You Read (5 minutes)

- Have students open their SBs to page 12 and read a paragraph to facilitate comprehension of the listening and reading material in the unit. It is usually best to let them read it silently by themselves.

Vocabulary Preview (10 minutes)

- This section presents learners with the meaning of a vocabulary item.
- Have students go over the words in the Vocabulary Preview section. They should match the words with the given definitions.
- Check the answers as a class. When checking, discuss how the words relate specifically to the unit topic.
- If time permits, have students make sentences with the words.

Vocabulary Practice (25 minutes)

- This section requires learners to use target words in some way, either pairing items with synonyms or filling in blanks within given sentences.
- Question 1 (finding synonyms):
 - Before asking students to choose the correct answers, have them look at the words. Ask them to think of synonyms, or similar words, for each of the given words. This will encourage students to learn the meanings of each of the words.
 - Then have students choose the word that is similar in meaning to each target word.
- Question 2 (note-taking activity):
 - Before students listen to the audio track, have them look at the chart. This will naturally make them active listeners (listening for specific information) rather than passive listeners when the audio track is played.
 - Then listen to the audio track and have students write brief answers for each question as they listen.

Optional

Before students listen, have them brainstorm possible words or ideas related to personal space. For example, one section talks about situations where people may feel uncomfortable when others stand too close. Students might suggest words such as crowded, stranger, family, friend, coworker, comfortable, uncomfortable, close, far, or distance. List their ideas on the board, and leave the list there for reference while students listen.

Useful Expressions

- Ask students to read the Useful Expressions on page 13: offend, spend time, and comfortable. Write the words on the board and have students make example sentences with them.
- Then ask for volunteers to share their ideas with the class. They can speak their ideas or write their ideas on the board.

Before You Read

Personal space is the distance between two people that allows them to feel comfortable. If the distance between two people is too great, one person may see the other as cold or shy. If it's too close, the person may feel even as oppressed or angry. Some cultures are comfortable with touch while others never come into contact with each other. When talking with someone from another country, it is important to remember that his or her personal space may be different. Understanding that countries are different in their approach to space may help create better understanding and fewer problems with miscommunication.

VOCABULARY PREVIEW

Match each definition with the correct word. Two words are extra.

- a movement that you make with your hands, head, or face to show a particular meaning
- this sex, male or female, of a person
- study, bold, and assertive
- to cause a change in someone or something
- to express thoughts, feelings, or information with someone else

VOCABULARY PRACTICE

Choose the word that is similar in meaning to the one provided.

- urban
a. city
b. problem
c. village
d. together
- harmony
a. rule
b. dislike
c. agreement
d. culture
- need
a. country
b. outside
c. day
d. ready
- status
a. culture
b. space
c. time
d. position
- behavior
a. sharp
b. action
c. shy
d. distance

LISTENING

Listen carefully to the following information and complete the note-taking activity.

Scene: Two friends are talking about cultural differences.

What are two reasons Samantha is upset?

Samantha is upset because Victor's _____ when they talk. He also does not look a _____ in public.

How does Al explain personal space in Japan?

People in Japan are _____ close together. Men and women also rarely _____ in public.

What does Samantha think will help?

Samantha thinks that a _____ more _____ with Victor will make him more _____ with her.

What does Al suggest that Samantha do?

Al suggests that Samantha ask him for coffee because he is not a _____.

USEFUL EXPRESSIONS

offend to hurt one's feelings to annoy
spend time to use one's time to do something that requires a significant amount of time
comfortable feeling relaxed

Reading

How Close Is Too Close? (5 minutes)

- Let students read the text silently by themselves.
- Have the students time themselves when reading, and then read again and try to improve their time.

After Reading

Comprehension (5 minutes)

This exercise checks students' reading comprehension.

- Students are to complete the chart based on the information presented in the Reading section.
- Check answers together as a class, then have students use the information from the graphic organizer to quiz one another on comprehension.

Discussion (10 minutes)

Students will read and consider the questions for discussion.

- Have students work in pairs to answer one or both of the questions. To fully respond to a question, students can work together on one of them.
- Ask pairs to select one person to act as secretary to record notes as the discussion proceeds. Then, have the other student share their ideas with the class.
- Students who responded to the other question should develop follow-up questions for the pairs presenting.

Follow-up Questions

Question 1:

- How did you react when they stood closer to or farther away?
- Do you think their behavior was influenced by their culture?

Question 2:

- Why do you think age might affect personal space?
- Have attitudes toward personal space changed over time?

READING

How Close Is Too Close?

People **communicate** in many different ways. Obviously people talk to each other. However, it is also possible to "talk" without ever leaving a word. For instance, facial expressions, **gestures**, and personal space can also "say" things the speaker may not even know about.

Personal space refers to the distance between two people. It differs among countries, what is **comfortable** in one culture may be seen as **aggressive** in another. This is not something that is known from birth. It is learned. Personal space in Middle Eastern or Latin American countries is very small. However, because Japan is a small country with many people, space is important.

Where people grow up **affects** how they view personal space. People raised in **big** or **urban** environments will be different. A person from Tokyo may have need for a smaller amount of space than someone from rural Ohio.

Personal space is also affected by the amount of space available. For example, in Japan, subways can be very crowded during rush hour. At some stations, there are vacuum hoses to push people into trains during rush hour. The Japanese normally need more personal space than Americans or Europeans. However, due to the culture, Japanese people are better able to accept the lack of space on subways to **avoid bumping** with others.

Another factor is **gender**. Two women will typically stand closer together than two men. They will also stand closer than a man and a woman. Women also have a further issue. If a couple is dating, they will stand close. The kind of relationship between the people affects personal space.

STATUS also affects personal space. A person of high status will be given more personal space. This is important in places like Japan. Status will also affect things such as the amount of eye contact made.

Personal space is important to be aware of. It may also affect people from other countries in a way that is **unintended**. Being aware of it provides understanding about how **behavior** affects others.

USEFUL EXPRESSIONS

response to make sure of or make happen
unintended without a particular reason in mind; accidental

COMPREHENSION

Complete the chart based on the information in the Reading section.

Personal Space in Japan	
Definition	Personal space is the distance between two people.
Who seems to have smaller personal space?	People from _____ or _____ countries. People from big cities like _____. People on the _____. Two _____ or _____ couples.
Who seems to have larger personal space?	People from _____ like Quito. Two _____ or a man and a woman who are not dating. A person of _____.

DISCUSSION

Read and consider the following questions. Discuss them with your class.

- How do you feel about people from other countries? Do they stand closer to or further away from you? Did it make you uncomfortable?
- Do you think attitudes toward personal space are different depending on age? Do you think older generations keep more of a distance, or do they stand closer?

Further Discussion

Writing (15 minutes)

- Have students work in pairs. Ask them to write their partner's name and choose personal space as the topic.
- Have students interview their partner using the questions about the intimate, personal, and social zones. Encourage them to ask follow-up questions and record their partner's answers on the lines provided.
- After the interviews, ask students to report their partner's opinions and experiences to the class in complete sentences.

WRITING Further Discussion

Interview a partner about his or her opinions on personal space. Use the questions provided. Record your partner's answers on the lines below. Then report back to the class in complete sentences.

Partner: _____ Topic: _____

1. Intimate Zone
The intimate zone is 0–45 cm. Only those closest to us are allowed into this zone. Who do you allow into this zone? How long have you known these people?

2. Personal Zone
The personal zone is 45 cm–1.22 m. This is the zone we use at office parties and social functions. Do you feel comfortable with your coworkers or classmates at this distance? Can you think of a time when you were not comfortable? Why?

3. Social Zone
The social zone is 1.22–3.6 m. This is the distance we usually keep from strangers. Have there been situations where you felt you needed to move when talking to a stranger? Are there exceptions to this?

Sample Response

1. Intimate Zone

I allow my family members and a few close friends into my intimate zone. I have known them for many years, so I feel comfortable being very close to them.

2. Personal Zone

I usually feel comfortable with my classmates at this distance. However, I once felt uncomfortable when a coworker stood too close while speaking to me. I moved back slightly because I needed more space.

3. Social Zone

I sometimes move back when a stranger stands too close while asking me a question. However, I may stand closer in a crowded place or when it is difficult to hear the other person.

Extension

Put students in groups of four. Have them share what they learned from their partners about the intimate, personal, and social zones. Encourage students to compare their answers and discuss any similarities or differences. Go around the classroom and listen to the group discussions. Wrap up the activity by asking volunteers from each group to share one or two interesting points with the class.