



# Animal Communication

By the end of the lesson the learners will be able to:

- Identify the four methods of animal communication, and give examples
- Describe some reasons why animals communicate
- Be able to connect human non-verbal communication with animal communication

## Materials and preparation

For the back-to-back drawing activity:

- *Back-to-back drawing handout* – copy enough for one sheet per two learners.
- Pencils and paper.
- Hardback books or something to lean on while drawing.

For the main activity:

- Chalk and blackboard or equivalent.
- *Animal communication picture resource A3* – this should be printed on A3 paper, using both sides so that the correct information is on the reverse of each image. If this is not possible, just print the images (every other page), and make a note of the relevant information.

## Key words

### **communication**

The sharing or exchange of messages, information, or ideas.

*Sign language is a form of communication used by deaf people.*

### **territory**

An area that is marked and defended by some types of animal.

*Dogs use scent to mark their territory.*

## Starter

*Drawing activity*  
15 min

Get the learners into pairs. Ask them to sit on the floor, back to back. Distribute the *Back-to-back drawing handout* to one learner in each pair (tell them they are not allowed to show the picture to their partner), and give out the pencils, paper, and something to lean on to the other partner in the pair.

The learner with the picture must describe it to their partner, who must draw it without seeing it. Explain that their instructions must be very clear. After ten minutes or so, let them see what their partner has drawn.

Ask the class the some discussion questions:

- What was the hardest part of this activity?
- How good was your partner at *listening*?
- How good was your partner at *explaining* and *describing*?

Explain that verbal communication in humans is obviously very important, but it can be very difficult to communicate with words alone. Humans communicate in many different ways. This activity demonstrates the limitations of speech when it is removed from other forms of communication (body language and gesture for example).

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## Main activity

Discussion  
15 min

1. Write the following words on the board and explain that they are the four types of communication:

**See**

**Hear**

**Touch**

**Smell**

2. Ask the class:

*Can you think of any ways that animals communicate?*

Answers may include things like:

*Dogs growl when they don't want you to come near.*

*Cows 'moo' to each other but I don't know why!*

*Birds sing in the morning.*

3. Ask the class where each of their answers belong out of the four categories written on the board. For example: 'Dogs growling' belongs in the category 'hear', as it refers to communication through sound.

Write down any answers you get under the corresponding headings on the board.

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## Why do animals communicate?

Picture cards  
activity

Use the *Animal communication picture activity resource* in your teacher packs.

15 min

Hold up the first picture. Ask the class if they can:

- a) name the animal pictured

b) if they know how this animal communicates and why.

If they don't get it right, help them with some clues. If they still don't know, explain to them what animal this is, how the animal communicates and for what purpose. The answers are on the back of the A3 sheets if you've printed them double sided.

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## Plenary

Consolidating  
learning

20 min

Return to the words on the board.

**See**

**Hear**

**Touch**

**Smell**

Hold up the pictures cards, one by one. Choose a learner to tell you what the animal is, and how it communicates. Then write the animal and method of communication under the correct heading. Repeat until the cards are used up. For example:

**See**

**Hear**

**Touch**

**Smell**

*Penguins make  
sounds so they  
can find their  
young*

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## Optional extension

Still at the board, ask the class if they can think of ways in which people communicate without using words.