

She Sat, He Stood
What Do Your Characters Do While They Talk?
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Body Positions for Characters

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| <p>Shoulders shoulders straight or hunch</p> <p>Head head: nod, shake, cocked left or right forehead furrowed brow: left brow raised, right brow raised, both brows raised, brows knit eyes: staring, rolled, blink, flutter, lids: closed, squeezed, crinkled nose: flared nostrils, wrinkled nose, pinched cheeks: sucked in, puffed out lips: compressed, parted, smile: with upper teeth showing, with lower teeth showing mouth: openmouthed laugh, mouth drawn down, pursed lips, tongue: protrudes right, protrudes left, licks lips. chin: thrust forward, dropped</p> <p>Neck neck: Adam’s apple jerk, swallowing</p> <p>Body body: right lean, left lean, rigid, upper trunk bend. arms: crossed—right over left or left over right, behind back, folded across chest, hanging sides, swinging (as in walking), one hand in pocket, one hand carrying object, one hand in belt.</p> | <p>Hand notation clapping, hand to nose, hand to mouth, hand to eyes, hand over eyes, hand to knee, hand to forehead, hand wipe brow, hand to back neck muscle thumb hooked, palm up, hand shake, hands folded, hands clasped, hands steepled</p> <p>Legs and feet Standing with feet apart, left or right leg back, left or right leg forward, stepping, walking, running, long strides, short strides, swagger, marching, dancing, skipping, tiptoeing Seated with feet flat on the floor, right leg crossed with ankle over left femur above knee (majority American male young or informal), or with left leg over. Seated: legs crossed, left over at knee—female; ankle cross, knees closed; ankle cross with knees spread, legs crossed at knees with a kick or dangle</p> <p>The foot Right or left foot pat, right or left foot sweep, or circle, foot firm on base, heel firm on base—remainder of foot up; toe firm on base—remainder of foot up.</p> |
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The above body position examples were taken from Ray L. Birdwhistell’s “Kinesic Recordings” in *Kinesics and Context Essays on Body Motion*. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970.