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# The Social Detective: Cracking the Code of Social Cues

## Materials Needed

- Computer or tablet with internet access
- Notebook and pen or pencil
- A short list of pre-selected, dialogue-light video clips (scenes from movies like *Inside Out*, animated shorts, or even muted commercials where emotion is key are perfect).
- Optional: Index cards or sticky notes

## Learning Objectives

Hello Dain! By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

1. **Identify** at least 5 different non-verbal social cues (like posture, facial expression, and tone of voice) in a situation.
2. **Analyze** a social scenario and make an educated guess about the unspoken feelings or thoughts of the people involved.
3. **Create** an original social scenario that shows you understand how these subtle cues can shape a whole interaction.

**SEL Connection:** This lesson connects directly to key Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) skills, specifically **Social Awareness** (understanding others' perspectives) and **Relationship Skills** (communicating clearly and effectively).

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## Part 1: Warm-Up - The "Muted Movie" Challenge (10 minutes)

**Goal: To tune our brains into non-verbal communication.**

### Instructions:

1. We're going to watch a short (1-2 minute) clip from a movie with the **sound completely off**.
  2. As you watch, be a detective! In your notebook, jot down what you think is happening based only on what you see.
  3. Focus on answering these questions:
    - Who seems happy, sad, angry, or confused? **How can you tell?** (Look at their eyebrows, mouth, shoulders, hands.)
    - What do you think their relationship is? (Friends, family, rivals?) What visual clues tell you that?
    - Based on their body language, what do you predict will happen next?
  4. After you've made your notes, we'll discuss your observations. Then, we'll re-watch the clip **with the sound on** to see how close your detective work was!
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## Part 2: Activity - Social Cue "I Spy" (15 minutes)

**Goal: To build our vocabulary for all the ways people "talk" without using words.**

**Instructions:**

1. First, let's brainstorm a list of all the ways people communicate non-verbally. We can create a mind map in your notebook. Think from head to toe!
  - **Eyes:** eye contact, rolling eyes, winking, looking away...
  - **Body:** crossed arms, leaning in, slouched shoulders, hands on hips...
  - **Voice (Tone):** high-pitched, quiet, fast-talking, sighing...
2. **The "I Spy" Game:** Now we'll watch 2-3 different short clips (with sound this time). Your job is to call out specific cues from our list as you see them.
3. When you see one, we can pause and you can say, "I spy someone leaning in, which might show they are interested and engaged." or "I spy someone tapping their foot, which could mean they are impatient or nervous."
4. We'll also discuss how a single cue can mean multiple things. For example, crossed arms could mean someone is feeling defensive, but it could also just mean they're cold! This teaches us that **context is everything**.

## Part 3: Interactive Discussion - "What Would You Do?" Scenario Lab (15 minutes)

**Goal: To apply our detective skills to real-life situations and practice smart decision-making.**

**Instructions:** I'll describe a few common scenarios. Let's talk through them together, focusing on the cues and the choices you could make.

- **Scenario 1:** You're telling your friend about an awesome new video game you played, but you notice they keep glancing at their phone and only giving one-word answers like "cool" or "yeah."
  - **Cues to Read:** Lack of eye contact, distracted body language, short verbal responses.
  - **What might they be feeling?** They could be bored, but they might also be distracted by an important message or feeling upset about something unrelated.
  - **What Would You Do?** We'll discuss the pros and cons of different options, like asking "Hey, is everything okay?" versus just stopping the story.
- **Scenario 2:** You walk over to a group of friends who are talking and laughing. As soon as you get there, they all go quiet and look at each other.
  - **Cues to Read:** Sudden silence, shifting eyes between each other, a change in posture.
  - **What might be happening?** It's easy to assume the worst (they were talking about you!), but maybe they were sharing a secret or just finished a joke.
  - **What Would You Do?** We'll explore responses, from making a light joke ("Did I miss something good?") to asking a direct question.

## Part 4: Creative Project - Design Your Own Social Scenario (20 minutes)

**Goal: To become the teacher and design a challenge that shows you've mastered these skills.**

### Instructions:

1. Your mission is to create your own "What Would You Do?" scenario. You can write it as a short story, draw it as a comic strip, or even map it out to act out later.
2. Your scenario must include:
  - A clear setting (e.g., at the skate park, during a group project, in the lunch line).
  - At least two characters.
  - A detailed description of the **subtle social cues** one character is giving off. Don't say "she was angry," instead describe it: "her jaw was tight and she was staring at a spot on the wall."
  - A final question for your reader/viewer: "What should the other character do or say next?"
3. **Challenge Extension (Optional):** To show expert-level understanding, come up with two different (but equally possible) interpretations for your character's social cues. For example, "Maybe she's angry at him, OR maybe she just got a bad grade and is angry at herself." Then, suggest a different course of action for each interpretation.
4. When you're finished, you'll present your scenario to me, and I'll be the student trying to solve your social puzzle!

## Wrap-Up & Reflection (5 minutes)

### Let's recap what we learned.

- What was the most interesting or surprising social cue we talked about today?
- In your own words, why is being a "social detective" a useful skill to have in life?
- What's one thing you'll try to pay more attention to in your interactions with people this week?

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