

# Shh, Don't Say a Word

**Age:** Preschool / Kindergarten

**Subjects:** Science, Social Studies, Creative Movement

**Objective:** Students will be able to

- Explain what body language is
- Identify how humans and wolves use body language to convey emotions
- Define that a pack is a group of wolves who live as a family unit

## Background information

Each of us has a way of expressing how we feel without saying a word. Through our facial expressions and body language, our emotions are heard. A smile can mean joy, jumping up and down can mean excitement, avoiding eye contact can mean shame. Wolves highly depend upon body posture to communicate their feelings to other wolves and keep their fine-tuned hierarchical structure intact within the pack system. They, like humans, can communicate their emotions by the way they stand, their facial expressions, and how they hold their ears and tail. To express leadership as an alpha male or female to the rest of the pack, the wolf stands erect and still, its tail horizontal in line with the spine, and stares at the other animals. A submissive state would be to lower the body, hold the tail down and lay the ears back. In a fearful or insecure state, the wolf keeps its teeth covered. When happy, the tail wags and one wolf licks another wolf's muzzle.

## Materials

- TWA presentation or introduction book
- Crayons
- Glue (optional)
- Teacher References
- Copies of wolf postures for each student
- Scissors

## Before Beginning

Print teacher references for wolf communication. Print student copies of the wolf postures (2 pages). Cut out wolf postures.

## Introduction

Invite TWA to give a presentation to your students or read a book about wolves with your class, refer to the reading lists for suggestions.

## Lesson

1. Split the class into groups of 10 or less, packs in the Great Lakes are not normally larger than this. Have the groups determine a name for their pack. Write the pack names for all students to see. Let students know that scientists usually name packs, you could look up a pack name near you to share.

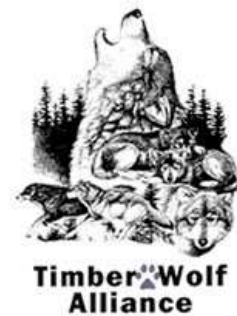
2. Explain how body language works. Show them a few different body postures and facial expressions and have the packs guess what emotion you are showing. If you want, you can make this a competition and have all packs or the first pack guess correctly, get points. You may ask before “How can we tell what each other is feeling without talking?” Some emotions to use.
  - a. Sad
  - b. Happy
  - c. Afraid
  - d. Angry
3. Ask students to share what they saw to figure how what emotion it was. This could be facial expression or body posture. Explain this is how we see body language in humans and that wolves also use their bodies and faces to show body language.
4. Give each pack an emotion. Give the students time to figure out how they will make this emotion look as a pack. Allow each pack to move around the room and show their emotion. Have other packs guess what emotion they are showing. Allow for all packs to participate.
5. Show students the different postures of the wolf (see attachment). This may need to be enlarged or could show on a screen. Explain what each posture means. Have students act this out in their packs.

### **Conclusion**

Have students color the different postures of the wolf. Ask students, now read each prompt and have students put the wolf they think is showing that description into the correct box. Could have the students act these out again as a short, informal assessment.

*Originally Produced by the Timber Wolf Alliance & Ottawa National Forest*

*Updated by: Angela Lee Rivera Rautmann*



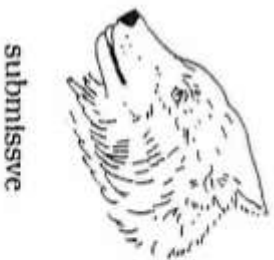
# Wolf communication

Reference sheet for teachers

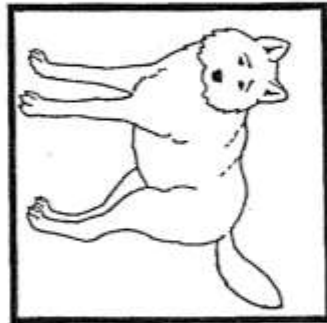
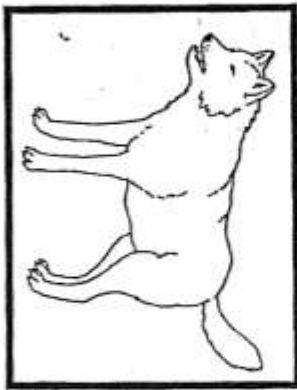
## Tail positions:



## Facial expressions:



Wolf Postures Student Cut Out Sheet



# Wolf Postures

Source: Animal Tracks® Wolves Action Pack, p. 43, ©1999  
a publication of the National Wildlife Federation

Hi. I'm the alpha wolf. I am proud and confident. As leader of the pack, I make decisions such as when the pack will hunt.

When the other wolves approach me, they show that they will follow my leadership. You can tell by the way they stand.

If a less dominant wolf challenges me, it usually ends up backing down in a very vulnerable position.

Sometimes, the omega gets chased away from the group. The omega is the lowest ranking wolf, but is still important.

We all help each other survive. We are always ready to defend our territory, and will attack to protect the pups in the pack.

Of course, we also enjoy each others' company. And it will be a fun morning when one of us gives a sign that it is time to play!