Reading Unit 3: Ways of socialising
(Các cách giao tiếp xã hội)

To attract someone’s attention so that we might speak to that person, we can use either verbal or non-verbal forms of communication. Let us discuss non-verbal communication in English first. Probably the most common way of attracting someone’s attention is by waving . For example, if we are at a noisy party and see a friend in the door about 20 meters away, we might raise our hand and wave to her as a signal that we see her.

But how hard can we wave in a situation like this? Suppose you are at the airport, and you see your brother get off the plane and begin walking towards you. If you're excited you might jump up and down and wave as hard as you can to attract his attention. This is the instance where big, obvious non-verbal signals are appropriate.

But there are some social situations where smaller non-verbal signals are more appropriate. In a restaurant, for example, if we want to attract the attentions of our waiter, we have several choices. We can wait until he passes near us, catch his eye and nod slightly to let him know that we need assistance. We do not whistle or clap our hands to get the person's attention. That is considered impolite and even rude.

In most social situations where some informality is allowed, a brief raise of the hand or a small wave is fine. For instance, if you are walking across the schoolyard and see your teacher approaching you, a small friendly wave to attract his or her attention is appropriate.

Once you’ve got your friend’s attention, you shouldn’t point at the person or thing you want her to look at. A slight nod will do. Pointing at someone is usually considered rude. Of course, there are times when pointing is perfectly acceptable, such as when a teacher wants to get someone’s attentions in class, the teacher often points to the student and says “David, would you read the next sentence, please? “. Pointing here is not impolite; it’s simply a way to get someone’s attention.