



ELECTION 2015



# It ain't what they say, it's the way that they say it...

Richard Newman, director of UK Body Talk, and Dr Harry Witchel, of Brighton and Sussex Medical School, decode the body language on display at Thursday's leaders' debate

 COMMENT AND LEADING ARTICLE, P40-41



**David Cameron**

**RN** His style had poise and control, but seemed to lack passion. He has a great slow, measured pace, but the energy trailed off at the end of sentences. It was only when he was probed that he grew in strength to rise to the challenge. **HW** David Cameron is a “brows down” politician, which means he’s serious, concerned and potentially angry. He also looks consistently down the barrel of the camera which he has been doing since 2010.



**Ed Miliband**

**RN** His stance was strong, with his feet centred and his posture more lifted than usual. But his overall style was too staged. He used the same gesture over and over, right hand with the palm facing up and his thumb and two fingers squeezed together. His voice coach has told him that this shows strength; in fact, a palms-up gesture shows submissiveness or weakness. **HW** When Miliband consistently turned to face the barrel of the camera he was inviting contributions.



**Nick Clegg**

**RN** He appeared to be the most relaxed on stage, occasionally placing one hand in his pocket and seeming unfazed by questions. He also connected directly with the people who had asked the questions, who could be seen nodding along to his answers. **HW** Nick Clegg still has the same natural abilities as a speaker that he had before. He’s copied Tony Blair in the way he hugs an invisible person when he speaks.



**Nicola Sturgeon**

**RN** Her stance was feet planted and her gestures firm. She did not appear as strong when she started the evening. During her opening statement, she rocked slightly from side to side and kept her hands firmly together despite her elbow shifting as if she wanted to gesture. Her blink rate was also very high, which is a signal of high stress. **HW** Somewhat bouncy, she might be used to being seen as vivacious. But she was also charismatic, competent and consistent.



**Nigel Farage**

**RN** Shiny and sweaty, it’s possible he shunned the powder offered to anyone appearing on camera. His lack of polish, and simple language, may help him to gain support. However, the moments where his behaviour resembles a pantomime villain, bobbing up and down and laughing at the others on stage with him, diminish his credibility as a leader. **HW** He uses open-finger gestures, which suggest he is trying to reach out and make people think.



**Natalie Bennett**

**RN** She sounded nervous, by taking lots of small, snatch breaths. She also ignored the cameras, forgetting to speak to the audience at home, and her style lacked the warmth that we require of our leaders. **HW** Bennett is a thinker and she came across as intellectual and dry. She tilts her head to the right and to the left, which shows us that she is formulating her thoughts internally as she speaks.



**Leanne Wood**

**RN** Her tone had great warmth and control but she often looked down at her notes while making a critical point. She was standing with her feet close together, diminishing her status, and she was the only person not wearing a collared jacket, choosing a lower-status outfit. **HW** Physically, she’s a very still person, which suggests a reserve that doesn’t work with a rapid-fire debating style of politics.