

Grammar Hedging and tentative language

5A Look at this sentence from the recording in Exercise 2A. Underline the words and phrases Ruth uses to sound more tentative.

But perhaps if you explained your family situation to her a little, you might find she would be more understanding.

B Look at the words and phrases in bold in the extracts (1–10) from the recordings and classify them according to the structures used (a–e).

- I've been leaving **a bit earlier** to look after my younger brother, who hasn't been well, actually.
- The three of us **should be able to** reach **some kind of** reconciliation.
- It's conceivable** that Zoe **might** be more flexible than you give her credit for.
- There have been **a few minor** conflicts between managers and **certain** members of staff.
- I thought it would** be a good opportunity to hear what you have to say.
- It appears quite a few** employees think their line managers are 'on top of them', and that they are being micromanaged **to a certain extent**.
- I was wondering**, actually, whether micromanaging is always effective.
- Could** there **possibly** be mitigating circumstances?
- It is possible** they've already made up the time.
- What **seems** fair to you **might seem quite** unfair to a colleague.

→ **page 121** See Grammar reference: Hedging and tentative language

6 Use the words in brackets to make the sentences sound more tentative.

- Try not to take a long holiday in August because we're going to be busy then. (probably / pretty)
Try not to take a long holiday in August because we're probably going to be pretty busy then.
- Francine is under a lot of pressure to meet her production targets. (seem / quite / some)
- Luigi was being unfair when he told the department to cut costs. (it / possible / slightly)
- Don never thinks about how his goals affect others. (sometimes / not think / may)
- Jan's team isn't working together effectively. (not appear / very)
- If we buy new equipment, we'll definitely improve output. (possibly / to a certain extent)
- It isn't a good idea to buy new equipment because we can't afford it now. (might / not have a lot of money)
- Let's have a face-to-face meeting to identify the problems and resolve these issues. (wonder if / could / certain)

Sounding tentative

Use:

- modal verbs
- quantifiers and adverbs of degree
- certain verbs
- adverbial phrases of degree
- adjective + clause

T Teacher's resources:
extra activities

Speaking 7 Work in small groups. Read the scenario. How would you address the problem? What would you consider while trying to find an outcome which suits both sides?

Increasing production costs

You work in HR at a manufacturing company, working closely with two managers, Stefan and Eva. Stefan heads Production, and wants to buy a 3D printer that will increase output. Eva is the Purchasing Manager, and is keen to reduce costs. She understands Stefan's motivation, but has written to him informing him the organisation can't make any new purchases. This has created conflict and tension that is spreading throughout your organisation.

Self-assessment

- How successfully have you achieved the lesson outcome? Give yourself a score from 0 (I need more practice) to 5 (I know this well).
- Go to My Self-assessment in MyEnglishLab to reflect on what you have learnt.