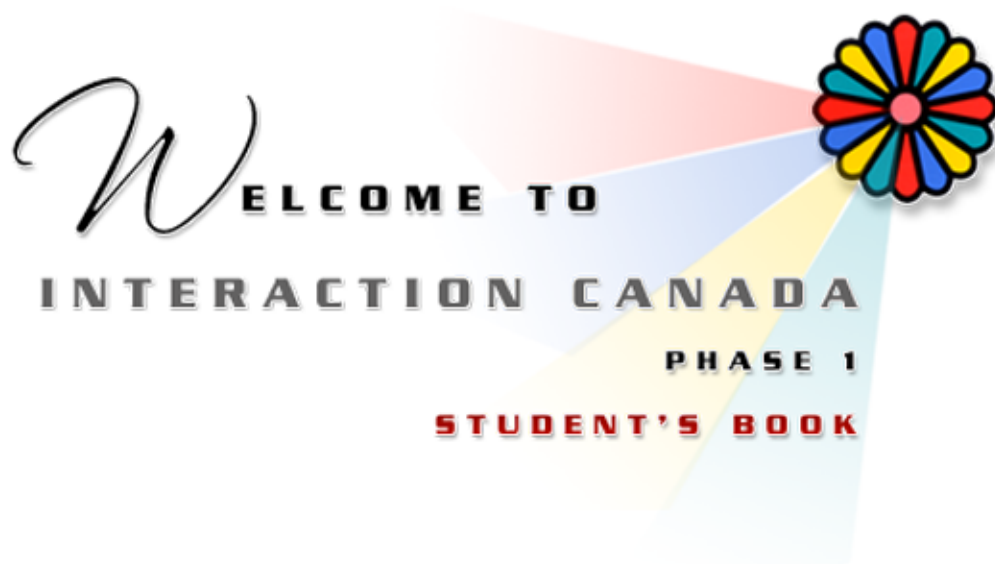




École de la fonction
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Canada School
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ÉCOLE DE LA FONCTION
PUBLIQUE DU CANADA
CANADA SCHOOL
OF PUBLIC SERVICE



**SUPPORTING OPINIONS,
JUSTIFYING ACTIONS - PART 2**

SUPPORTING OPINIONS, JUSTIFYING ACTIONS – Part 2

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CREDITS

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Supporting Opinions, Justifying Actions

EXPRESSING OPINIONS

PRE1

EXPRESSING OPINIONS – STRENGTH, NUANCE

a. Rearrange the expressions below to indicate the strength of feelings from stronger to weaker by putting them into four groups (two, three, three, three).

Stronger



- I'm absolutely/completely/totally convinced that...
- I suspect (that)...
- It's my feeling that...
- I really believe/feel/think (that)...
- To my way of thinking...
- I believe/feel pretty strongly that...
- I can't help thinking (that)...
- There's no doubt/question in my mind that...
- I tend to think (that)...
- I believe/feel strongly that...
- (It) seems to me (that)...

Weaker

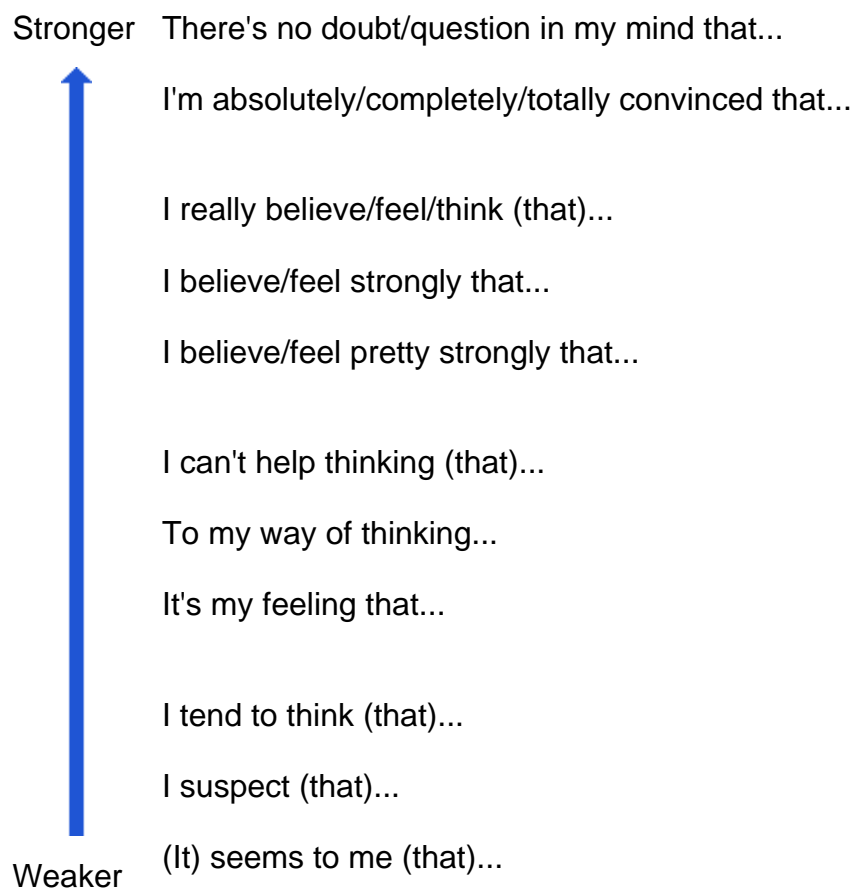
b. **Try** to match expressions to appropriate sentence endings. **Suggestion:** Look at all endings before doing the matching; note one expression is not used in the exercise.

1. _____ the cleaner left the lights on by accident; there's a new guy on staff that really hasn't got the routine down pat yet,...but it could have been anyone.
2. _____ he is guilty. The evidence was already against him; however, the DNA report was the clincher.
3. _____ he did do it even if the jury said otherwise. I wish I could get it off my mind but I can't. For me, he's just gotten away with murder.
4. _____ the guard left the door unlocked; besides me she's the only person who has a key to get in there. It's her – no ands, ifs or buts.
5. _____ maybe she is guilty. I'm leaning that way; however, I need a lot more evidence yet to commit to condemning her.
6. _____ stopping for a rest break would probably be OK, but I really don't care if we do or not. Six of one, half a dozen of another.
7. _____ stopping now would spoil the momentum and we would take for ever to get back on track.
8. _____ Mrs. X should never have been invited to speak. That's just the way my head works, I guess.
9. _____ sending a note might not be such a good idea.
10. _____ we have little choice. We need to send a formal reply.

c. Your teacher will explain what you are to do.

STUDY 1

EXPRESSING OPINIONS – STRENGTH, NUANCE



PRACTICE 1

- a. Practise expressing opinions using expressions from Study 1. First look at the opinions listed below, and form views on each one.

1. Beer and liquor advertisement of any kind should be banned.
2. Computers cause as many problems as they solve.
3. Offices should be shared.
4. Eliminate employment insurance and people will find work much faster.
5. The most outstanding bosses are those who inspire employees to do their best.
6. Employees should be taught to better organize their schedules to be more efficient.
7. Sports sponsorship by companies selling unrelated products should be banned.
8. Insurance companies should be non-profit.
9. People who abuse themselves should not get free medical care.
10. Judges should leave law making to the politicians.

- b. Decide how strong you feel about each opinion above. Express your opinions while working in S1/S2 pairs. S1 and S2 alternate going first.

When S1 gives an opinion first, S2 should first make a comment re the level of feeling S1 has expressed and then give an opinion; vice versa applies for S2's turn. Try to use as many of the expressions as possible for maximum practice.

Agreeing and Disagreeing

PRE 2 – Part 1

- a. Match the idioms in the left column to the sentences with similar meanings on the right.

AGREEING

I couldn't have put it better myself.

Absolutely.

We (certainly) see eye to eye (on this).

We have no disagreement whatsoever on this subject.

You took the words right out of my mouth.

Perfect!

We're on the same wavelength.

I like the way you expressed yourself a lot. I wish I were able to do as well.

You can say that again.*

You just said what I was thinking and about to say.

That's for sure.*

We think the same way about this.

Right on!*

Your opinion is worth repeating and I agree totally.

- b. Look at the three idiom illustrations. Which best represents the idea of the idiom? Which the least? Why?



We certainly see eye to eye.



You took the words right out of my mouth.



We're on the same wavelength.

* Informal expressions

PRE 2 – Part 2

a.

DISAGREEING

See/look

That's not how I see it.
That's not how I look at it.

I see it differently.
I see things in another way.

I look at it differently.
I look at it in another way.

I don't see it like that.
I don't see it that way.
I don't see things the same way you do.

I don't look at it like that.
I don't look at it (in) that way.
I don't look at it the same way you do.

Agree/disagree

I don't agree completely (with you).
I agree with you partially.
I'm not sure I quite agree (with you).
I tend to disagree (with you).
I only disagree on certain points.

b. Look at the expressions for disagreeing, add other expressions you know to the list.

STUDY 2

AGREEING

I couldn't have put it better myself.
We (certainly) see eye to eye (on this).
You took the words right out of my mouth.
We're on the same wavelength.
You can say that again.*
That's for sure.*
Right on!*

DISAGREEING

see	That's not how I see it. I don't see it like that. I don't see it that way.
look	I don't look at it that way. I look at it another way.
agree	I don't agree completely. I'm not sure I quite agree with you.
disagree	I tend to disagree.

* Informal expressions.

PRACTICE 2

Practise agreeing and disagreeing. Work in small groups or as a class.

- a. Individually, write down five opinion statements on topics of your choice on separate pieces of paper. For example:

Busses should not be allowed on main roads during rush hour.
Bus drivers should not be allowed to go on strike.
Children learn languages more easily than adults.
The best part of a worker's day is going home.
A friend is someone who never criticises you.
Cyclists should be allowed to ride on the sidewalks.
People who drink and drive should lose their licenses for five years.
Skate boards should be banned from the streets.
Bicycles should not be allowed on the busiest streets.
Opinion statements of your own.

- b. As a group, place all the opinion statements face down. The first speaker picks an opinion statement and reads it aloud to the group agreeing or disagreeing with it.

The group listens to the opinion statement read by the first speaker and the speaker's own opinion. You agree or disagree with the speaker, using different expressions.

PRE 3

BOMB THREAT – Imagine everyone works for a newspaper.

- a. SITUATION: The paper has a policy of not reporting bomb threats because the publicity tends to encourage copycats and pranksters. But a terrorist organization gives you a warning that a bomb will go off the next day at a public building.

Should you a. notify the police, then print the threat anyway?
 b. notify the police but not run the story?

- b. Discuss what you think the newspaper should do.

STUDY 3

SUPPORTING OPINIONS: GIVING WEIGHT OR IMPACT

Opinions have greater weight or impact if they are supported. Support opinions in several different ways by using one or a combination of the strategies below.

For example:

Newspapers shouldn't publicize bomb threats...



give reasons:

...because it encourages imitation.



give examples:

...For example, after the last bomb story another high school had the same problem.



describe experiences:

... My neighbour's son read about the bomb scares at the high schools and he was all set to try it at his school because he wasn't prepared for his exams.



state facts:



...The last three bomb threats turned out to be pranks.

give details:



The pranksters were three students who didn't want to write their exams.

state consequences:



...It often results in a lot of needless anxiety.

Use these strategies whenever you want to give more weight or impact to your opinions.

PRACTICE 3

Your teacher will give you instructions for parts a., b. and c. of this practice.

PRE 4

Jot down some ways you know to support opinions by stating results or consequences.



STUDY 4

SUPPORTING OPINIONS: RESULTS, CONSEQUENCES

An effective way of supporting an opinion is to state the results or consequences which could ensue from either adopting or not adopting a certain position.

If we **publish** a negative review of the concert, the fans **will be** furious.*

The result of publishing this review could be a more discriminating audience.

The consequence of publishing the review might be a lawsuit.

The effect of it all will be a lot of publicity.

Publishing this will/could/might/may

result in** a lot of trouble.

cause a lot of trouble.

bring about** a lot of trouble.

produce a lot of trouble.

lead to** a lot of trouble.

land (us) in** a lot of trouble.

get (us) into** a lot of trouble.

* Note: The present tense is used in the if-clause of real conditions. The future describes the result or consequence.

** Note: These two-word verbs are inseparable.

PRACTICE 4

Choose a "policy" from the list below or create your own. Present your opinion re a policy and state possible results or consequences.

Policies:

- Boxing is violence packaged as entertainment. It should be banned.
- Smoking should be made illegal.
- Mothers of children under six should not be allowed to work.
- Governments should no longer fund any programs through lotteries.
- Retirement should be mandatory at age 50.
- Couples counselling should be required before marriage to help reduce the divorce rate.
- All television watching should be pay per view regardless of the program.
- Ideas of your own.

PRACTICE 5

- a. Read the cases that follow and write supported opinions in the space provided. Use different strategies and expressions for each item for practice.
1. **BAD REVIEW:** Many readers complained when a reporter reviewed a popular restaurant negatively. Should the newspaper send another reporter to review it again?

 2. **UNBIASED OPINION?** A travel writer wrote a favourable account of a trip to Paris, giving special mention to a particular airline and travel agency. After the article was published, the newspaper discovered that the reporter's trip was paid for by the travel agency and airline featured in the report. The newspaper's policy is to pay its own way. All reporters are aware of this policy. Should the newspaper fire the reporter?

 3. **LOSER'S TEARS:** A school sports coach wants a newspaper not to print a dramatic picture of a 14-year-old football player in tears, after his team loses. The coach feels that the boy will be ridiculed at school. It is the best of the photographs taken of the event. Should the newspaper run the picture?

4. **PAST HISTORY:** A well-respected, highly-admired professional athlete admits to a reporter that a long time ago, he used cocaine. He has not used drugs since. For the sake of his good reputation, he asks the newspaper not to print the story. What should the newspaper do?

5. **CAUGHT IN THE ACT:** While covering a fire at a motel, a photographer takes an excellent picture of a couple shivering together under a blanket. They ask the reporter not to use the picture because they are married to other people. Should the paper print this picture or another one which is less dramatic?

- b. Share your opinions. What support is given to the opinions? Are they well supported? Give other possibilities for extra practice if desired.

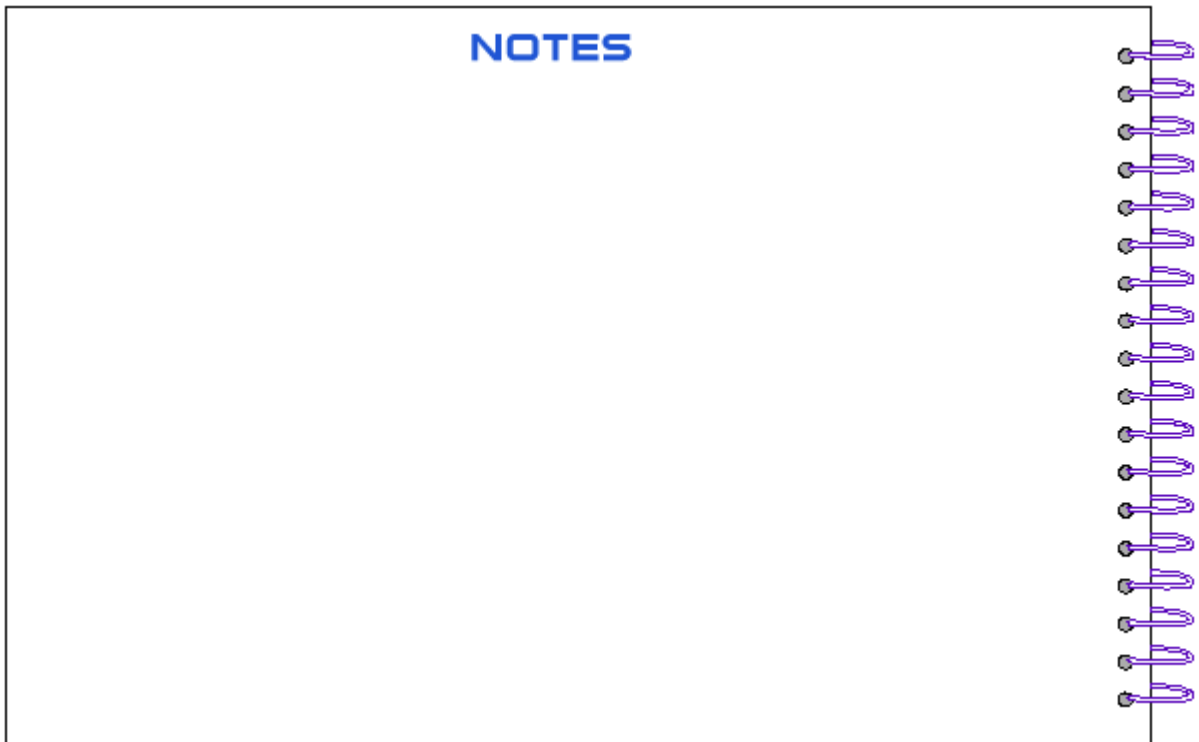
PRACTICE 6

- a. Work in small groups. Read, make notes, then discuss this case. Consider whether the newspaper has any other options for dealing with the story. Support your views by showing what the results **could, would, might** or **will** be. Make notes below.

FLAWED PRODUCT: After several rough years, a local company that employs several hundred workers has survived near bankruptcy and appears to be on the road to financial recovery. Your business reporter is alerted by a disgruntled employee that the company's much promoted new product – on which it has staked its future – has major flaws. The president of the company tells you that any bad publicity at this crucial time will force the company out of business and cost hundreds of jobs. He asks you not to run the story.

- Do you
- a. run the story and risk the lost jobs?
 - b. hold the story?
 - c. do something else?

NOTES



- b. Report your views to the class. Is there a consensus to run the story or to hold it?

PRE 5

FOR AND AGAINST

- a. Look at the picture on the right. Check off whether the five comments are for or against using the picture for a front-page newspaper article.

- The picture is dramatic, relevant to the story and clearly indicates the nature of the threat more than a full column of text ever could.

Reader is: For ☐ Against ☐

- I had nightmares because of this picture. Kill the picture but the story may be written.

Reader is: For ☐ Against ☐

- This is not a kind, gentle society. We shouldn't be shielded from the fact that ordinary people face real problems which may overwhelm them.

Reader is: For ☐ Against ☐

- Any child abuse should get prominent coverage because it is such a widespread problem and public should be alert for it.

Reader is: For ☐ Against ☐

- An effective news picture is supposed to tell a story. This....tells a more powerful story than a number of words could do.

News editor is: For ☐ Against ☐



- b. The comments do not use words like **for**, **against**, **(not) in favour of**. How do you know whether the comments are for or against using the picture?

STUDY 5

FOR AND AGAINST: VOCABULARY PLUS CONTEXT

Statements in favour of or against something are often introduced by words like these:

for	against
pro	con
in favour of	not in favour of
support	opposed to
happy about	unhappy about

However, sometimes the above clues are omitted. Careful attention must be paid to the choice of words made by a speaker or writer.

Some words give us a clue because they refer to concepts that no one favours;

e.g. **nightmare, abuse, threat.**

Similarly, other words refer to concepts that are generally favoured;

e.g. **clear, relevant, effective, powerful.**

Use word clues like these, together with the contexts in which they appear, to help identify which side a speaker or writer is taking.

PRACTICE 7

1. In the picture in PRE 1 a distraught father holds the police at bay while dangling a baby out of an apartment window and waving a knife. The standoff eventually ends peacefully with the child unhurt. The shocking picture undoubtedly will offend some people.

Should a newspaper

- a. run this type of picture?
- b. kill such a picture and use something else entirely?

2. Are you for or against printing the picture?*

* Supplementary Exercise:

You may be interested to know that 56% of the readers asked, and 100% of the newspaper editors, were in favour of running the picture.

Why do you think the editors took this position? Remember to support your opinions?

PRE 6

FOR AND AGAINST: CONNOTATION VS CONTEXT

Do the words listed have a neutral (NEU), positive (P) or negative (N) connotation? Identify whether the underlined words in the sentences are still neutral, positive or negative or if the connotation is now different.

CONNOTATION

honestly _____

condone _____

investigate _____

tabloid _____

filtered _____

report _____

in the public interest _____

ivory tower _____

substantiate _____

cover up _____

information _____

screaming headlines _____

clear the air _____

docile _____

gossip _____

suppress _____

CONTEXT

1. That politicians can honestly state that this policy is "in the public interest" is beyond my comprehension. _____, _____
2. At the news stand I saw nothing but screaming headlines of imminent war. _____
3. If such behaviour is condoned you can be sure of what will happen later. _____
4. Those so called executives in their ivory tower should be drawn and quartered. _____
5. Clearing the air puts people at ease. _____
6. The boys set off to investigate the small pond they had discovered earlier. _____
7. Substantiating facts is a detective's job. _____
8. He's a rather docile puppy. _____
9. Tabloids have less text and more pictures than newspapers. _____
10. Most tabloids are little more than lies. _____
11. Because of the cover up three people went to jail. _____
12. Office gossip is one of the quickest ways to get a message out. _____
13. Spin doctors write filtered information. _____
14. I've drunk filtered water for years. _____
15. Free flu shots were given in the public interest. _____
16. Many broke into tears on hearing the information. _____
17. Vitamin K is supposed to suppress bleeding. _____
18. Suppressing feelings can lead to disease. _____
19. She was reticent about reporting the results. _____
20. The information was essential. _____

PRACTICE 8

Look at these comments. Do they imply that a paper should or should not pursue such stories? Your teacher will ask whether certain words are neutral, positive or negative.

1. "The Canadian press is too docile; this story is in the public interest." _____
2. "I don't want *my* information filtered through some arbitrary standards the media set up." _____
3. "I am upset that this information is suppressed and funnelled through a media bureaucracy. Once the spin doctors are through with a story who knows what the 'real' truth is." _____
4. "There is so much nepotism and patronage... it could only help to clear the air." _____
5. "I'm proud that we don't stoop to gossiping about the private lives of our public officials." _____
6. "Our family newspaper is turning into a tabloid!" _____

PRACTICE 9

Question: Should a paper research and print stories about topics such as these?

- a. Write opinions re the two rumours below using vocabulary which reflects your opinion.
- b. Present your opinion to the class; the other students will say whether your opinions are for or against. Discuss the vocabulary clues that indicate whether the opinion is for or against.
 1. A public official seems to have a drinking problem. The official has attended press briefings smelling of alcohol.
 2. Another public official is said to have a lover on the public payroll. The lover has never been seen in the official's local office but they have been seen together on out-of-town business trips.

PRACTICE 10

Look at the suggestions below. Write two opinions re each suggestion. The opinions may be one **for** and one **against**, or both **for**, or both **against**. No introductory **for** or **against** expressions can be used, content must indicate your position.

1. Boys and girls should be educated separately.
 2. As well as the 11:00 p.m. cut off, there should be a limit on the decibel level of music played outdoors at any time.
 3. People who endanger their lives – for example by using drugs, abusing alcohol, not wearing seat belts, ... – should not have access to subsidised medical care.
 4. The press should not publish the names of people charged with offences until they have been found guilty.
 5. The police should not be allowed to engage in high-speed chases.
 6. Family size should be restricted by law.
 7. Tele-marketing should be banned after 6:00 p.m.
 8. If governments have to watch where they spend citizens' tax dollars, free enterprise should have to do the same with "its dollars": for example – rather than spending enormous sums on racing car teams and yachts as "advertising", the money so used should be passed on to the consumer in lower prices. The money free enterprise uses as "its money" actually comes from citizens just as tax dollars do.
 9. User fees should be charged to maintain all highways and roads.
 10. We should have to pay only for the television shows we watch.
- Suggestions of your own.

PRE 7

Answer this question: How can listeners understand your views more easily?

ENUMERATING AND ORGANIZING

STUDY 6

ENUMERATE

- "There are **three** aspects: **first**, there's consideration for people's feelings; **second**, there's the example it sets; (and) **third**, there's simply showing good taste."
- "Remember there are only three steps to follow: **(number) one**,...; **(number) two**,...; and **(number) three**...."
- "To do this is as simple as A, B, C: **A**, open...; **B**, remove...; **C**, close...."

ORGANIZE

- **Increasing significance**

Simply showing good taste is **fairly** important, and setting a good example is even **more** important, but **the most** important (**of all**) is consideration for people's feelings.

- **Decreasing significance**

Lack of consideration for people's feelings is **the most** upsetting (**of all**); setting a bad example is **less** upsetting, and showing bad taste is **the least** upsetting.

PRACTICE 11

- a. Read the cases below.

THEY SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE THAT (1)

A famous sports star was arrested and charged with a serious offence involving violence towards a female victim. The newspaper printed several reports concerning the arrest and subsequent trial of the sports star. All these reports appeared on the sports pages. Many readers objected to this placement.

In your opinion, where should these reports have appeared – on the front page, on the back page, in the national news section, on the women's page or elsewhere?

THEY SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE THAT (2)

The newspaper published, on page one, a story concerning a local murder-suicide. The photographer covering the story submitted a photograph showing the killer's dead body lying on the ground. A police officer is lifting the sheet covering the body, revealing the gun used in the incident. The Chief News Editor chose not to print this picture. Instead, at the end of the story on page two, the newspaper printed a less dramatic picture, which nevertheless showed both shrouded bodies lying on the grass. The reporter felt the first picture should have been used on page one to accompany the beginning of the story. Other newspapers across the country did in fact print the picture.

In your opinion, should the first picture have been printed, and if so, where should it have appeared, taking into account consideration for relatives' feelings, sensationalism, good taste, ...?

- b. Write down your opinions re each question and then organize them logically for presentation to the class.
- c. Present your opinions re the two situations.

PRE 8

What perfect modals do you think could be used to express alternate views? In particular which perfect modals can be used to support or justify opinions?

STUDY 7

MODAL PERFECT

Positive

They **could have*** printed the picture on page one.
They **should have** printed the picture on page one.
They **ought to have** printed the picture on page one.

Negative

They **shouldn't have*** printed the story at all.
They **ought not to have** printed the story at all.

It **might have been better to** print both the story and the picture on page four.
It **would have been better to** print both the story and the picture on page four.

*Reminder: In speaking **have** becomes **'ve**; **not** becomes **n't**.

PRACTICE 12

Use perfect modals to express views about what should or should not have happened. For each situation use as many expressions as you can. See the example below.

e.g. Situation: Because of budget cuts, your city council has cancelled outreach programs to senior citizens.

Comments: They shouldn't have done that.
They could have consulted us first.
It would have been better to find out from the seniors which programs they needed most.
...

Situations:

- Your corner store has started to stock pornographic videos.
- Your city council decided to save money by discontinuing its maintenance of outdoor skating rinks.
- From now on, city council members will be able to take their spouses with them on business trips at the expense of city council.
- People in your neighbourhood have voted against a Neighbourhood Watch program.
- In order to economize, your employer has decided to abolish all bonuses.
- Situations of your own.

PRACTICE 13

- a. Read the questions below and decide on your views re each.
- Should beer advertisements be banned?
 - Do computers create more problems than they solve?
 - Should all offices be shared?
 - To help reduce unemployment, instead of laying people off, should there be a law obliging employees to job-share?
 - To compensate for budget cuts, should all employees have to take a certain number of unpaid leave days?
 - What is the best way to save time at work?
 - What is the best kind of boss to have?
 - What is the most important thing for a working parent to remember?
 - Questions of your own.
- b. Select one of the above questions to comment on.
- c. Think of as many ideas as possible about the question chosen. Decide how strongly you feel about the question.
- d. Take turns stating your views. Use a different expression for each of your ideas. Expressions should reflect the strength of your feelings.

PRACTICE 14

Read the situation and then give your opinion re what should be done or not done. Quickly organize your ideas and be prepared to back them up to give your opinion the most punch. Ask for clarification of the situation if needed. This is an open exercise; i.e. you should say as much as you can.

This activity is meant to be done fairly quickly. The idea is to give a rather organized opinion yet one almost off the top of your head – i.e. you should be allowed to collect your thoughts but not be given a lot of time for preparation. Use the language, strategies and skills you have acquired up to now when giving your opinion.

OPINION GIVING

Situation

The phone company has just delivered 500 000 copies each of the new phone book and yellow pages. In them only one address is given for all city departments and services – that of the city hall business office.

This address listing has resulted in people arriving at City Hall with their pets in tow expecting to find sterilization services, and families have shown up looking for the swimming pool. In fact hundreds of citizens have arrived looking for a myriad of other services.

The city reported the "problem" but did not receive an acknowledgement from the phone company that one even existed for over three weeks. The city has been obliged to hire extra staff just to deal with irate citizens and to handle the extra work.

The city is, therefore, demanding compensation for poor service, and an apology.

The phone company has made corrections in its dial-up directory assistance information but says not much else can be done this year. The city service account is worth millions of dollars to the phone company.

It seems the computer that designs the phone books automatically puts in the billing address for each number that goes into it rather than the actual address, hence the single address for all city departments and services. The program was designed for the phone company by an outside company on contract.