



ÉCOLE DE LA FONCTION
PUBLIQUE DU CANADA
CANADA SCHOOL
OF PUBLIC SERVICE



WORKSHOP UNIT: GET YOUR MESSAGE ACROSS

Defending Points of View

Objective: By the end of this workshop unit you will be able to diplomatically challenge others' points of view while expressing and defending your own.

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CREDITS

Development and Learning Technologies Directorate
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INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDENT

APPROACH

1. Each unit contains materials for an average of five hours of class time. Of course, how long you spend on a unit will depend on your language level, the speed at which you learn, and how much of each unit you choose to do.
2. The emphasis in these units is on oral communication. Most of the activities are designed for pairs or small groups. These activities can be taped so that you can work on them on your own or discuss them with your teacher. A few activities require you to work alone in order to prepare for a subsequent group activity.
3. The teacher's guide for Level C, containing a model syllabus to help plan this level, gives a suggested order for using the units. Each unit is complete in itself; this means that, according to the needs and interests of the class, you can choose the units you need to work on, how much of a unit you want to do, and, if you wish, a different order in which to work on them than the one suggested.*
4. Within each unit, there are further opportunities to make choices. You can focus only on those functions you need, or you can choose which, if any, of the practice activities you want to do. You can also choose when to do the practices: e.g. beforehand in preparation for the unit; *en route* or as they come up in the unit; at the end after you have looked at the whole unit as a review; or at any other time the group wants.
5. Although all activities are complete in themselves, you are invited to contribute your own contexts, information, problems or topics. In this way you can make the units better reflect your own reality and get the most out of them.

OBJECTIVES

Each of the units in Phase 2 presents language for a combination of several objectives as listed below.

- Explaining
- Describing
- Supporting opinions
- Defending points of view
- Counselling
- Advising
- Handling hypothetical questions
- Handling complex work-related situations

The objectives are reviewed in two types of unit: **task** units and **workshop** units.

Phase 2 contains six task units and three workshop units.

*Note: In the teacher's guide for Level C, Phase 2 materials are suggested for use in Session 10, Week 1 and Week 2; Session 11, Week 1, Week 2 and Week 3 and Session 12, Week 1.

Task Units

Workshop Units

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1-The Stranger in Our Homes | 2-Get Your Message Across |
| 3-Safety First | 6-Find the Right Words! |
| 4-What Are You Afraid Of? | 9-How Should I Say This? |
| 5-To Your Health! | |
| 7-What's the Beef? | |
| 8-What Are the Alternatives? | |

Description of Units

Workshop and task units differ in their focus and in their organization.

WORKSHOP UNITS

These are units which focus on language. The language is presented in the context of workshops similar to ones you might attend to improve your communication skills. For example, you can find out what language to use in a variety of situations requiring diplomacy, such as challenging your boss, correcting a colleague at a meeting or persuading co-workers to change their minds.

How Are Workshop Units Organized?

These units are organized by language function, that is, by the purpose for which expressions are used, such as hedging, stalling, refusing, insisting,....

What Do Workshop Units Consist Of?

1. An **OVERVIEW**, framed in a box on the first page of each unit, presents the functions, grammar, vocabulary or strategies presented in that unit.
2. Some units have **BEFORE YOU BEGIN**, it contains questions which will help you focus on finding out what you already know and what you need to learn about the functions and the expressions in the unit.
3. The next sections each focus on a different language function. For each language function you are given lists of the words and expressions you need and activities to help you learn them.
4. Wherever you see **STUDY**, you will find a list of new expressions, vocabulary or grammar which you will need for the activities. Wherever you see **STRATEGIES**, you will find communication strategies which will help you to get your meaning across. **Finally,gives lists of expressions, vocabulary or grammar you may have already learned.**
5. Wherever you see **PRACTICE**, you will find a communication exercise which will practise the expressions, vocabulary, grammar or strategies you have encountered.

6. Each workshop ends with a **CONSOLIDATION ACTIVITY**. Consolidation activities are interactions or games which will allow you to integrate everything you have learned in the workshop.
7. At tab A is the **APPENDIX** which contains expressions for 34 functions, tense usage references and vocabulary.
8. Where required, answers are included and can be found in **ANSWERS** at tab B.

TASK UNITS

These are units which focus on a task requiring the use of language: solving problems, analyzing, making choices or decisions, or making recommendations. For example, you may be asked to choose a candidate for a special project, advise colleagues about work-related problems or recommend ways to reduce costs.

How Are the Task Units Organized?

These units are organized by sub-tasks, that is, by the steps involved in accomplishing the task, for example, preliminary discussions, informal meetings with one or two others, making a final decision, plan or recommendation.

Expressions, vocabulary, grammar or strategies used in accomplishing each of these sub-tasks are presented in sequence where they are needed.

Optional practice activities to help you master these expressions, vocabulary, grammar and strategies are presented at the end of each unit.

What Does a Task Unit Consist Of?

1. As in the Workshop units, the first page is an Overview of the functions, grammar, vocabulary or strategies presented in that unit.
2. The next sections each focus on a different step in the task. For example, when the task is choosing a candidate, the steps include discussing qualifications, preparing for the selection committee and making a decision.
3. As in the Workshop units, wherever you see the headings **STUDY** and **STRATEGIES**, you will find lists of the new expressions, vocabulary or grammar and strategies which you will need for the activities. **gives lists of expressions, vocabulary or grammar you may have already learned.**
4. Often, after these lists, you will see **PRACTICE**. This directs you to optional activities located at the end of the unit. These activities allow you to practise the expressions, vocabulary, grammar or strategies which have been presented. Since these activities are independent of the steps in the task, you may use or omit them, depending on your needs.
5. Where required, answers are included for each task unit in **ANSWERS** at tab B.

GET YOUR MESSAGE ACROSS

Overview

Class/ Teacher-led presentation

In this unit, you will be attending a workshop which will enable you to fine tune your English language skills.

You will be working with the following **functions**:

- **Explaining/Describing**
- **Disagreeing (degrees of tact)**
- **Challenging/Correcting**
- **Hedging/Stalling**
- **Negotiating**

You will be working with the following **strategies**:

- **Paraphrasing:**
 - to make sure you are understood
 - to make sure you understand
- **Providing support for your explanation, description, position**
- **Being diplomatic by using:**
 - impersonal words
 - passive voice
 - questions
 - verbs and phrases which are tentative
- **Avoiding answering questions by:**
 - playing for time
 - making a general comment
 - answering part of the question
 - answering with another question
 - saying the information cannot be released

Before you Begin

PRE 1

Individual/Read/Discuss

When we speak, we want to get our message across effectively. In order to do that, we have to know the right strategies.

Work alone. Read the situations below and decide how you would handle each.

1. You are going to explain a procedure to a new employee; which of these strategies will you use to make sure your explanation is clear?
 - a. Be brief.
 - b. Give many examples.
 - c. Be well organized.
2. You are replacing a person who now works in another department. Your co-workers are each contributing \$25 towards a wedding gift for this person and think you should contribute too. Under which circumstances would you use each of these expressions to disagree?
 - a. There's no way I'm spending that kind of money for somebody I don't even know.
 - b. I disagree; you shouldn't have to contribute to a gift for somebody you don't know.
 - c. I hate to disagree with you, but is it really appropriate for me to be involved?
3. At a meeting an arrogant employee misquotes you. This person always claims to be an expert on everything. Under which circumstances would you use each of these expressions to correct the employee?
 - a. If I could set the record straight, those aren't the figures I gave.
 - b. You got it wrong. That's not what I said.
 - c. Actually, I said 19 participants, not 90!
4. A colleague has just given a presentation and wants your opinion of it. You are reluctant to say just how bad you think it was. Which of these expressions would you use? Why?
 - a. I really can't say.
 - b. It was different from what I expected.
 - c. The topic was certainly in line with current thinking.
5. You said you would take minutes at the next meeting of the committee on which you sit, but now you discover you can't attend the meeting. Under which circumstances would you use each of these expressions to persuade another committee member to take minutes for you?
 - a. Don't you see that someone has to do it?
 - b. Even though it's boring, it's important to have a decent record of the proceedings.
 - c. Oh, come on!

Step 2

Class/Discuss

Now discuss your answers with the class.

Explaining/Describing

Step 3

Individual/Think

At work and in our private lives, we often have to explain or describe a variety of tasks, plans, procedures, decisions or actions. Some people are better at this task than others. Think about explanations or descriptions you have heard which you found easy to understand.

Step 4

Class/Discuss

Discuss with your class the features these explanations or descriptions had.

Step 5

Read/Consider

Consider the section which follows.

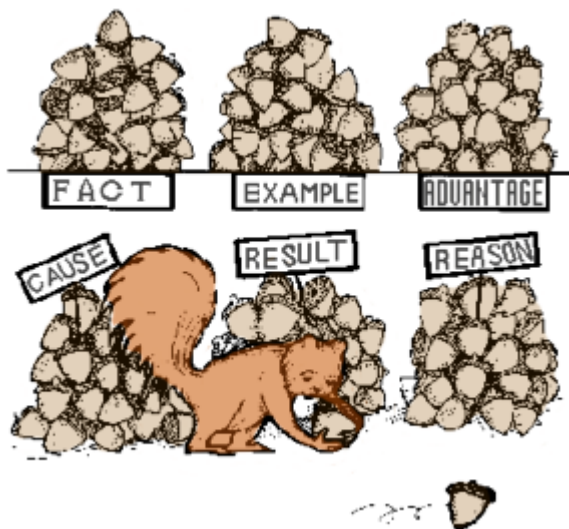
STUDY 1

EXPLAINING/DESCRIBING

Many people feel that successful explanations or descriptions include certain features.

There are sufficient **details** to clarify what is being said. These details can be **facts**, **figures**, **examples**, **advantages** or **disadvantages**, **causes**, **results** or **reasons**.

The information presented is **well organized** so that the listener can follow easily. Often the speaker begins by saying not only what the topic is but also what aspects of the topic will be explained or described. Then, in a logical manner, these aspects are explained or described. At the end, the main points are summarized or reiterated.



Were the features mentioned here the same as the ones you and your class discussed?

Both speakers and listeners have a responsibility in communicating. While speakers should help listeners understand what is being said, listeners should confirm that they have understood. Discuss with your class the techniques you use both as a speaker and as a listener to make sure that the message is communicated. Then consider the strategies on the next page.

Step 6

Read

STRATEGIES 1

PARAPHRASING

One way you can **help listeners understand** is **paraphrasing**, that is, rewording important ideas. For example, in a briefing on management styles, a speaker said:



Let sleeping dogs lie.

A paraphrase for this proverb could begin with any of the expressions below.

In other words,
That is (to say)
What I mean is
What that means is

if things are going well, don't stir up trouble.

What I was getting at
What it boils down to
Another way to say that

is let's not stick our noses in where they don't belong.

Have you ever tried this strategy in the past? In the situation above **listeners** could **confirm their understanding** by **paraphrasing**, using one of these expressions:

In other words,
So, you're saying,
Let me see if I understand what you're saying;
Let me see if I understand what you're getting at;
Let me see if I understand what that means;

don't make any changes.

Unless I'm mistaken, you're saying
Unless I'm mistaken, that means
Do you mean by that
Does that mean
Is the point that
Do I understand that to mean
Am I right in thinking that
Am I mistaken in assuming that

we're not to make any changes?

As a listener, have you tried this strategy to confirm your understanding?

PRACTICE 1: FORTUNE TELLING

In this activity, you can practise paraphrasing. You will be writing proverbs to tell someone else's fortune. Work alone. Think of and then select three proverbs. Use your own proverbs or some of the following:

- Easy come; easy go.
- Don't spill the beans.
- Look before you leap.
- A stitch in time saves nine.
- Penny wise and pound foolish.
- Don't let the cat out of the bag.
- The early bird catches the worm.
- Don't put all your eggs in one basket.
- When in Rome, do as the Romans do.
- A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.
- People in glass houses shouldn't throw stones.
- Don't cross your bridges before you come to them.
- Don't count your chickens before they are hatched.



Make sure you know the meaning of, and can paraphrase, each of your proverbs.

Step 1

Individual/Write

Write each of your proverbs on a separate piece of paper.

A word to the
wise is
sufficient.

A watched
pot never
boils.

Don't burn your
bridges behind
you.

Step 2

Groups/ Read aloud, paraphrase, ask questions

Working in groups, fold your papers so that the "fortunes" are not visible and place the papers in a pile. When it is your turn, select a "fortune" and read it out. If you think you know the meaning, paraphrase the proverb using an appropriate expression from the second part of STRATEGIES 1. For example, if you had selected "A word to the wise is sufficient," you could say:

"Unless I'm mistaken that means a smart person gets the message without too much explanation."

If you don't know the meaning of the proverb, ask what it means. The person who wrote that "fortune" will paraphrase it for you, using an appropriate expression from the first part of STRATEGIES 1. For the proverb, "Don't burn your bridges behind you," the person might say:

"Another way to say that is when you leave a situation, leave on good terms – don't alienate anyone. You may want to return to that place and you'll need all the "bridges" you can get."

If you pick up one of the proverbs you wrote down, paraphrase it for the group.

PRACTICE 2

Now you can practise explaining and describing, as well as making sure you are understood and making sure you understand. Use the information in Study 1 and STRATEGIES 1 on pages 2-5 and 2-6.

Your class or group is responsible for developing an orientation program for new employees. Each person will present one topic for possible inclusion in the program. Topics will be selected for a number of orientation programs:

- employees new to the workforce
- employees new to the workforce and to the government or your workplace
- experienced employees who are new to the government or your workplace

Step 1

Individual/Make notes

Think about topics that would be both useful and interesting for new employees to hear. You might like to consider some of the following.

- Getting the most out of your work day (time management)
- A desk neatness plan or approach
- How to handle your emotions, especially anger, at work
- Pay (levels, increments, benefits,...)
- Merit
- Workplace procedures everyone should know about
- Work force adjustment program
- Child tax credit
- Deployment/Transfers/Secondment
- The corporate culture of this workplace (clothes, unwritten rules, pecking order,...)
- Health and Safety Committee mandate
- Work times: flex-time, compressed time, part-time, shared time,...
- Statements (pay stub, annual and sick leave summary)
- Leave (statutory, sick, family, parental, jury, annual, education; requirements)

Select one of these topics or use one of your own.

Plan your talk. Brainstorm on paper everything that comes to mind. If you don't know enough about the topic, find out more.

Then ask yourself these questions:

- What aspects of my topic are the most important for new employees to understand?
- For each aspect of my topic, what kind of details should I use to make my explanation or description clear (facts, figures, advantages, disadvantages, examples, reasons, causes, results)?
- Which specific details should I use?
- What words or concepts require paraphrasing?
- Will visual aids (graphs, charts, illustrations) be useful?
- What is the best way to organize my information?

You may want to prepare notes or cue cards to talk from.

Step 2

Individual, pair/Speak, rehearse

Now practise your talk. You can make your presentation to a partner or tape yourself.

Step 3

Individual/Evaluate

If you used a tape recorder, use the checklist below to evaluate your own talk. If you practised with a partner, you may want to adapt the checklist and use it both to evaluate your partner and have your partner evaluate you.

CHECKLIST

- I stated my topic clearly at the outset. Yes ☐ No ☐
- Each aspect/feature I intended to cover was stated clearly. Yes ☐ No ☐
- To make my explanation/description clear, I used:
 - facts ☐ figures ☐
 - examples ☐ reasons ☐
 - advantages ☐ disadvantages ☐
 - causes ☐ results ☐
- I helped my listeners understand by paraphrasing:
once ☐ twice ☐ more than twice ☐
- Improvements I would like to make:



Step 4

Class, group/Speak, ask questions

Now work with your class or a large group and take turns making your presentations.

- When you are presenting, try to explain or describe your topic as clearly as you can. Answer any questions raised by your listeners.
- When you are listening to others' presentations, ask for clarification whenever it is needed.
- After everyone has had a chance to speak, work with your class/group to decide which presentations to include in the orientation program for:
 - employees new to the workforce
 - employees new to the workforce and to the government/ your workplace
 - experienced employees who are new to the government/ your workplace




Now if you can all remember your positions, it will be easy come; easy go. Right, Jeff?

Disagreeing

Disagreeing often requires diplomacy.

Step 1

Class/Discuss

 Discuss with your class which factors are most important in deciding the degree of tact necessary:

- the status of the person with whom you are disagreeing
- the personality of the person
- the number of people present to hear the disagreement
- the status of the other people present
- the relationship you have with the person
- the setting (a meeting, a casual conversation over coffee,...)
- other

Step 2

Individual/Study

STUDY 2

DISAGREEING

Read the expressions for disagreement below and mark them according to their degree of tactfulness: **D** for direct, **N** for neutral, and **T** for tactful.

I disagree. ____
I'm not sure I quite agree with you. ____
I don't see it that way. ____
I tend to disagree. ____
That's not how I see it. ____
I don't agree completely. ____
I can see your point, but.... ____
No way! ____
You may be right; however,.... ____
Impossible! ____
I agree with most of what you said, but.... ____
I don't think so. ____

I understand what you're getting at; **however,....**

I see what you're getting at; **however,....**

Step 3

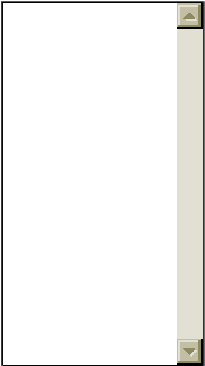
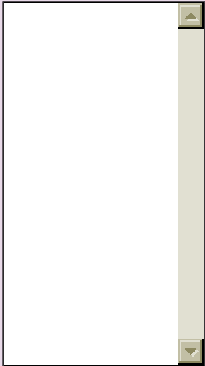
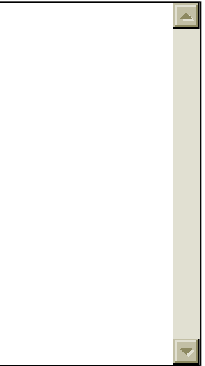
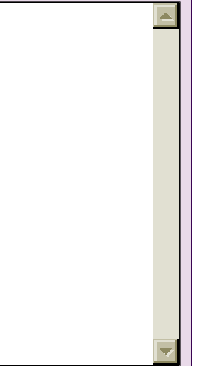
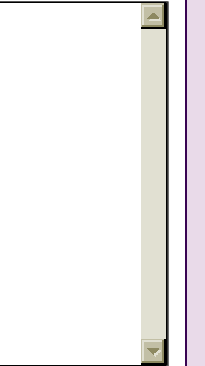
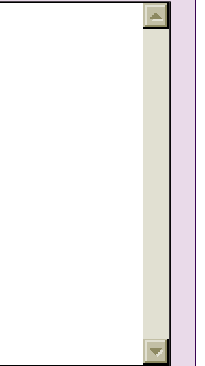
Class/Discuss

Discuss with the class or a group:

- your answers
- what makes the expressions you marked **T** tactful
- other expressions you use for direct, neutral and tactful disagreement

PRACTICE 3: ACTIVITY BOARD FOR DISAGREEING (the instructions follow)

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	<p>You are a team leader. You and your manager, whom you know well and like, are talking together in your manager's office. Your manager says: "We've got a limited training budget so we'll send only our most senior people on training." You disagree.</p>	<p>You are a manager at your division meeting. During a discussion of performance appraisals, an employee, always a troublemaker, says, "Managers should be evaluated by employees." You disagree.</p>	<p>You are a manager alone with your director, a person who does not like to be crossed. The director says, "To minimize stress, inform your employees of the upcoming changes only shortly before the changes occur." Disagree with the director.</p>	<p>You are a supervisor, talking in your office, to one of your team leaders, who is a stubborn person. The team leader insists that additional staff and time are needed for the adequate completion of a project. You disagree.</p>	<p>At a division meeting, your boss says, "We're going to start filling in monthly time sheets again. It's the best way for each of us to keep track of what we've accomplished. You disagree.</p>	<p>At a division meeting, your boss, who is quite open to opposing ideas, says, "In order to keep communications open, we'll have weekly division update meetings." You disagree with the frequency.</p>
2	<p>You have joined a table of your colleagues for coffee. One of the people whom you don't know very well says, "There are absolutely no benefits to all this stuff about alternative work arrangements!" You disagree.</p>	<p>You are a new member of the Health and Safety Committee. You don't know the others well. At your first meeting, there seems to be general consensus on the motion that only nutritious food be served in the cafeteria. You disagree.</p>	<p>You are a long-time permanent employee, attending a branch meeting; there is a discussion of time sheets as the best way to document progress. You disagree.</p>	<p>You are the chairperson of the Health and Safety Committee. At your monthly meeting, there seems to be general agreement that only healthy foods be served in the cafeteria. You disagree.</p>	<p>At a managers meeting, a colleague says, "Our clients will be served better by upgraded electronic systems than by more and better staffed regional offices." You disagree.</p>	<p>After interviewing several candidates for a position, your boss wants to hire a recent graduate who has technological skills rather than a person who is more experienced but does not know the new technology. You disagree.</p>

3	<p>At lunch, one of your colleagues insists that it is the responsibility of every employer to provide on-site daycare. You disagree.</p>	<p>At a division meeting, your boss, who likes to keep tight control, says, "In order to keep communications open, we'll have weekly division update meetings." You disagree with the frequency.</p>	<p>During lunch, your usual lunch crowd are discussing the food in the cafeteria. One of your group wants junk food banned from the cafeteria. You disagree.</p>	<p>At a management committee meeting, your director, who does not like to be crossed, says, "To minimize stress, inform your employees of the upcoming changes only shortly before the changes occur." As a manager, you do not agree with this management style.</p>	<p>You have joined a table of people for coffee. Amongst the group is the director who says: "There are absolutely no benefits to all this stuff about alternative work arrangements!" You disagree.</p>	<p>You are a team leader at a division meeting. Your manager, whom you know well, says: "We've got a limited training budget so we'll send only our most senior people on training." You disagree.</p>
4						

In this activity, you can practise **disagreeing** in situations **requiring different degrees of tact**.

Materials

Activity board

A 6-sided die to indicate each player's position on the board.

Step 1

Class, group/Discuss, write

Preparation

If you wish, add your own workplace scenarios to the blank squares in the bottom row of the Activity Board. If not, proceed with the activity, using only those scenarios already on the board.

Step 2

Class, group/Game

Procedure

Roll the die one after the other to decide who will begin; the player with the highest number starts. The next number you roll indicates the number **across** the board, i.e. 1 to 6; the number of your turn indicates the number **down** the board. For example, first turns are all in the first row – you throw a three, go to the square which is three across and one down. Second turns are in the second row. Unless you have added scenarios in row four, you will each have three turns during a game. If you added scenarios, you will have four turns each.

When you land on a square:

- read the scenario
- think about appropriate content and the right degree of tact to use
- disagree with the statement in the square

For example, if you rolled a one on your first turn you go to box one across and one down, and, you might say,

"No way! We should send the person who will benefit most."

If you land on a square on which someone else has already landed, respond to the scenario using an expression for disagreement different from the one already used.

If you want to award points, with your class or group, decide on criteria such as these:

- The right degree of tact: 3 points
- Complete accuracy: 2 additional points
- Penalty for taking too long to reply (e.g. more than 15 seconds): 2 points
- ...

Challenging/Correcting/Contradicting

Step 1

Class/Discuss

Discuss with your class the circumstances under which it is acceptable to challenge, correct or contradict someone directly.

Often it is necessary to be diplomatic when challenging, correcting or contradicting. Imagine that you are in this situation.

At a staff meeting your boss says: "The information session is from 9:00 till 12:00 on the 30th." You know that the latest plan is to have the session from 1:30 to 4:30 on the 27th.

Step 2

Individual/Read, write

Read the strategies below. Under each, write several different examples of tactful statements you could make to challenge and correct what your boss said.

1. Use impersonal words ("that", "it", "there") instead of a personal pronoun ("you"). In this way, focus is deflected from the person who has made the error.

2. Use the passive voice so that responsibility for the error is not mentioned.

3. Be tentative about your challenge.

4. Use questions.

5. Try introductory words and phrases.

Step 3

Class/Discuss

Discuss your examples with the class.

- Have others used expressions which were unfamiliar to you?
- Compare the expressions you used for each strategy with those on the next page.

STRATEGIES 2

CHALLENGING

When you need to be diplomatic while **challenging**, **correcting** or **contradicting**, you can use some of the strategies and expressions below.

1. Use impersonal words ("That", "It", "There") instead of a personal pronoun ("You"). In this way, focus is deflected from the person who has made the error.

That's not what I was told.

That's not what I understood.

There must be some mistake.

Somebody must have given you incorrect information.

2. Use the passive voice so that responsibility for the error is not mentioned.

Has that been verified?*

3. Be tentative about your challenge.

I'm not sure that's right.

That doesn't seem right to me.

That doesn't sound right to me.

I thought it was on the afternoon of the 27th.

I was under the impression it was on the afternoon of the 27th.

I think it is on the 27th in the afternoon at 1:30.

I believe it is on the 27th in the afternoon at 1:30.



That doesn't sound right to me.

4. Use questions.

Is that date and time **right**?
Which memo **is that based on**?
Has there been a change?

You can use affirmative or negative questions to feed the correct information to the speaker who has made the error, and in this way, allow the speaker to save face.

Don't you mean from 1:30 to 4:30 on the 27th?
Isn't it from 1:30 to 4:30 on the 27th?

Question tags are another way to soften the challenge.

It won't be in the morning of the 30th, **will it**?
It'll be in the afternoon of the 27th, **won't it**?

5. Try introductory words and phrases.

As far as I know,
I think
As a matter of fact,
Actually,
In fact,
If I could set the record straight,**

it's in the afternoon of the 27th.

To further dilute the effect of the challenge, preface the introductory words and phrases above with an apology:

I'm sorry, but actually, it's from 1:30 to 4:30 on the 30th.

6. Use a combination of the strategies above.

I'm sorry, but that doesn't sound right to me, I think it's been changed to the afternoon of the 30th, **hasn't it**?

Were there any expressions in this list that weren't in yours?
Were there expressions in your list omitted from this one?

*Question form adds to the tact of the challenge.

**This is a rather formal expression.

PRACTICE 4

Step 1

Pair/Role-play

Work with a partner. Decide who will work with Information List A on this page, and who will work with Information List B on the following page.

Take turns presenting the information in your lists. If your information on a topic is different from your partner's, challenge your partner using an expression appropriate to your respective roles. Feel free to respond to a challenge in any way you wish; you can invent an explanation for the difference, or apologize and make corrections. Listen carefully to the expressions your partner uses to challenge you. If you feel that the challenge is not sufficiently diplomatic for the context or for your role, make a note and discuss it at the end of the activity.

INFORMATION LIST A

1. You are the supervisor speaking to a new employee. Your Director has cancelled today's meeting with your division to address issues regarding changes to the organization. The new time for the meeting is Friday at 3 p.m.
2. You are an employee speaking to a close colleague. You have heard that the supplies warehouse has been relocated and reorganized. An honour system will be used – you fill out a form and find what you need yourself.
3. You are a front-line employee speaking to a client. You have been told that there will be new hours of operation for your service but the exact date for the changes to take effect has not yet been announced.
4. You are a new employee speaking to a supervisor whom you hardly know. Your section chief told you when you started that you would be given several days of training on different ways to organize filing systems.
5. You are a project leader speaking to a member of your team. You understand from discussions with the section chief that attendance at the Christmas party is compulsory, although it isn't necessary to stay for the whole party.
6. You are speaking to the vice-president of your community association. You understand from a phone message you just had to confirm everything with the association president, that everyone has been asked to help pick up the litter in the neighbourhood on Saturday from 10:00 a.m. sharp until about 2 p.m. when lunch, donated by your company, will be served at the community centre.

INFORMATION LIST B

1. You are a new employee speaking to your supervisor. You received a memo this morning informing you that the meeting scheduled for today has been cancelled and postponed indefinitely.
2. You are an employee speaking to a close colleague. You have heard that the supplies warehouse has been closed; supplies will now be available only through division secretaries who will fill out the forms and get the necessary supplies themselves.
3. You are a client speaking to a front-line employee. You have read in the newspaper that new hours of operation have been announced and are now in effect.
4. You are a supervisor speaking to a new employee. You are responsible for reorganizing the filing system of your unit. Your section chief has told you that the new employee will be assigned so that you can get started at once. You do not really know the employee but you do recognize the face.
5. You are a team member, speaking to your project leader. A Christmas party is coming up. You think that, according to company policy, attendance at social events is voluntary. You do not want to go as you do not celebrate Christmas.
6. You are the vice-president of your community association, speaking to a resident of the community. Although you missed the last community association meeting, you understand that a decision was made to ask everyone to help clean up litter on the weekend beginning exactly at noon and going until the job is finished which should be at about 5 p.m. but could be earlier.

ADDITIONAL PRACTICE

Step 2

Pair/Role-play

Work with a partner and make up similar situations. Exchange your situations with another pair. Proceed as in the Practice Activity above. If you wish, role play the scenario you like best to the class.

Hedging/Stalling

Sometimes we find ourselves in situations in which we either do not want to, or cannot, give an answer or explanation. In these cases it is useful to know how to evade the issue, that is to hedge or stall in order to avoid answering directly.

In what kind of work situations do you sometimes have to hedge or to stall?

PRACTICE 5

Step 1

Pair/ Role-play, write

Work with a partner to try your skills at evading. In each of the scenarios below, you will need to evade the questions asked. Use as many different strategies and expressions as you can for each one. You may want to write down your responses because you will be discussing them later with your class.

1. "When will you let us know which of us will be relocated and which of us are staying?"

You think:

I should have made the decision by now but I haven't.

You could say:

2. "When will you let us know which of us will be relocated and which of us are staying?"

You think:

The director said not to say anything until the official letters have been sent.

You could say:

3. "What do you think of the work Pat is doing?"

You think:

The work is rather sloppy but I certainly don't want to cause trouble for Pat.

You could say:

4. "What do you think of the new decor?"

You think:

It's awful but I don't know who's responsible for it, so I'd better be careful.

You could say:

5. "Wasn't the fund-raising breakfast I organized fun?"

You think:

It was boring; besides, we could just make donations without wasting our time.

You could say:

6. Chris asks, "What was your starting salary?"

You think:

It's really none of Chris' business! I hate people who are so nosey and competitive.

You could say:

7. "What do you think of the way the union rep handled the meeting?"

You think:

It could've been better but the rep is new and I don't want to be negative.

You could say:

8. "How do you like working in our division?"

You think:

It's not as efficient or as friendly as the one I left but I'd better not let on.

You could say:

9. Your manager says, "Where's your team's report? It was due yesterday."

You think:

I thought they'd completed it. The director will kill us if it wasn't submitted.

You could say:

10. "I've heard you were briefed on the reorganization. What tidbits can you tell a buddy?"

You think:

That information was strictly confidential, but I don't want to sound officious.

You could say:

Step 2

Class/Discuss, write

Now work with your class. On the board or on a flip chart, list the expressions each pair used to evade the questions. If an expression occurs more than once, include it on your list only one time.

Read all the expressions and try to categorize the strategies used.

Is each expression an example of

- stalling?
- indicating that information cannot be released?
- making a general comment instead of answering the question asked?
- answering part of the question?
- answering a different question?
- other strategies? If yes, list the strategies.

Label each expression according to the strategy exemplified, as shown below.

EVADING Hedging/Stalling

Expression. **(Strategy)**

Is hasn't been decided yet. **(Stalling; general comment)**

A final decision hasn't been made yet. **(Stalling)**

It's hard to say. **(General comment)**

I can't say. **(Can't release information)**

Things are still up in the air. **(General comment)**

We're working on the relocations. **(Answering a different question.)**

Compare your list with the ones on the next pages.

STRATEGIES 3

STALLING/HEDGING

Imagine you are in the three situations which follow and note the strategies and expressions suggested for evading the question asked in each.

SITUATION 1

Your colleague says: "What have you heard about the new policy?"
You think: I'm not supposed to say anything yet.

You can **stall by evading**, that is, not really answering the question:

Things are still up in the air.
A final decision hasn't been made yet.
Things haven't been decided yet.

You can **hedge by indicating that, either because you don't know or aren't at liberty to say, you cannot release the information:**

I'm not (really) able to comment (yet).
I'm not (really) in a position to comment (yet).

I'd like to tell you but I can't.
I'd like to be more forthcoming but I can't.
I'd like to say more but I can't.

I can't say (one way or the other).

You can **hedge by making a general comment** rather than giving a specific answer:

SITUATION 2

A colleague says:
"Mel's leaving. Do you want to contribute to a gift?"
You think: These gifts are getting expensive but I don't want to look cheap.

It's (an) interesting (idea).



I'm not at liberty to say

You can **hedge by answering only part of the question**:

Lunch could be OK.

You can **hedge by asking or answering another question**:

Do we have any kind of policy on gifts and parties?

SITUATION 3

An employee asks: "What do you think of raising morale by sending each of us on special training?"

You (as manager) think: There's no way I'm even entering into this discussion right now.

You could **stall by playing for more time**:

That would require further reflection.

I'll have to think about it.

I'll have to get back to you (on that).

I'll have to sleep on it.



Owl: When do we hear about the new cafeteria?

Eagle: I can't say; it's a can of worms!

I'm not sure what all the implications are.

You could **hedge by making a general comment rather than giving a specific answer**:

That's/It's a can of worms.

It's/That's a matter of opinion.

It's hard to say for sure.

It's hard to know for sure.

It's (a) different (approach).

There are pros and cons.

I'm not sure we've got all the facts yet.

Look back at your answers in Practice 5. What strategies and expressions from this **Strategies 3** section could you have used?

Negotiating

Negotiating can involve a cluster of functions: persuading, counter-arguing, insisting, bargaining, refusing or conceding.

STRATEGIES 4

In order to convince someone, it is not enough to state your position. You have to support it. Discuss with your class the strategies you use to **support** your case when you are trying to **persuade** someone. Do you use the same strategies in English and in your own language?

Which of the strategies below were mentioned in your class discussion?

Advantages of your point of view
Positive effects of your way
Reasons
Examples

Disadvantages of the other point of view
Negative results of other possibilities
Relevant personal experience
Facts

PRACTICE 6: PART A

Step 1

Class, group/Read, choose

Work with your class or a group. Select four or six of the following role-plays which are relevant to you or which would give you useful Practice. If you prefer, substitute situations that are typical of your experience, workplace or personal life.

Persuade your boss to:

- simplify a procedure
- extend coffee breaks
- set up courses at lunch time
- make a purchase (computer/new software)
- have fewer meetings

Persuade your employee(s) to:

- take shorter coffee/lunch breaks
- sit on one additional committee
- recycle paper and other waste more rigorously
- participate in noon hour fitness activities
- undertake a United Way fund-raising project

Persuade a co-worker:

- to join everyone for weekly lunches out
- to take an evening training course
- to grieve
- not to quit
- not to upset co-workers

Persuade a client to:

- calm down
- use your services
- respect your billing procedures
- reconsider cancelling an order
- extend your deadline

Persuade a consultant to:

- rework a report
- respect the deadlines established

Step 2

Pairs/ Discuss, make notes

Now work with a partner. Think of as many different supports as you can for both sides of each situation. Take notes so that you will be able to refer to your strongest supports when you role-play the situations in Practice 6: Part B.

STUDY 3

PERSUADING

Which expressions do you use to introduce the arguments by which you hope to **persuade** another person? Put a check mark beside the expressions below which you have tried.

You must admit
You 've got to admit

You have to admit
You have to agree
Let's not forget
Don't forget

workplace social events can have good side effects.

Surely, you can see that we're more productive when we're happy, **can't you?***

Don't you see that having some fun raises morale?**

Don't you agree that having some fun raises morale?

Don't you think that having some fun raises morale?

Don't you recognize that having some fun raises morale?

Couldn't you just allow one social event as a pilot? **

(I urge you to)/(If you'd just) consider the matter from another perspective.

(I urge you to)/(If you'd just) put yourself in other people's shoes.

(I urge you to)/(If you'd just) look at it our way.

(I urge you to)/(If you'd just) look at it from a different perspective.

If you would just try it this once....



Look at it from a different perspective

Step 3

Class/Discuss

Discuss with your class any other expressions you use for persuading.

*A negative question tag invites an affirmative response

**A negative question invites an affirmative response

STRATEGIES 5

INSISTING

In the course of persuasion, you often have to **insist**. It is strategic to indicate that you are considering the other person's position. Imagine this situation: You have been trying to persuade management to allow social events. Your manager has presented counter-arguments. You could insist on your viewpoint, using some of the following expressions:

In spite of your fears about lost time, I **still** think we'll gain productivity in the long run.
Despite your fears about lost time, I **still** think we'll gain productivity in the long run.

Although there's a cost, I **maintain** it's an excellent investment in our people.
Even though there's a cost, I **maintain** it's an excellent investment in our people.

I realize we've never done this;
I know we haven't done this
before;
I (fully) understand this is
different;
I'm (quite) aware this is new;

nevertheless,
nonetheless,
even so,
still,

nothing ventured, nothing
gained.
only those who dare achieve.

See page [A-30](#) of the Appendix for more details.



...I still think it was a good idea!

After each side has done everything possible to persuade the other side, the negotiating process may continue with bargaining, refusing or conceding.

STUDY 4

Do you know what expressions to use for **bargaining**, **refusing** or **conceding**?

BARGAINING

You can express the terms for your bargain by using a present or future real condition.

I **'ll** agree to a trial period if you **promise** to take responsibility for all arrangements.
We**'ll** take care of the logistics if you **'ll** handle the financial aspects.

CONCEDING WITH QUALIFICATIONS

All right,/Yes,/OK,/Fine, provided that
All right,/Yes,/OK,/Fine, with this condition:
All right,/Yes,/OK,/Fine, with one proviso:
All right,/Yes,/OK,/Fine, as long as

we evaluate in 2 months time and see if morale and attitude are any better.

REFUSING

I'm not convinced.

That doesn't move/sway me.

I'm unmoved/unconvinced by that (argument).
I'm unmoved/unconvinced by what you've said.

You haven't persuaded me.
You haven't won me over.
You haven't brought me round.
You haven't proved your point.

Check the Appendix on pages [A-10](#), [A-13](#) and [A-33](#) for more expressions for bargaining, conceding and refusing.

PRACTICE 6: PART B

Step 1

Pair/ Get together

Find a different partner from the one you had in PART A of this Practice ACTIVITY. Use the same situations you used in PART A.

Now you will have an opportunity to Practice negotiating.

In half of the situations, you will try to persuade your partner; in the other half, your partner will try to persuade you. Together, flesh out the details of each role-play.

Step 2

Individual/ Review and prepare

Work alone for the next part.

- For the situations in which you will be persuading your partner, review the support you wrote down for your point of view as well as the support for the opposing side. Try to prepare arguments to refute the points your partner will make.
- For the situations in which your partner will try to persuade you, review the arguments to support your point of view as well as counter-arguments for ideas your partner might raise.

Step 3

Pair/Role-play

Work with your partner and role-play each of the situations you selected. Use the expressions you have learned for persuading, insisting, bargaining, refusing or conceding. If possible, tape your role-plays so that you can decide what improvements are needed. If there is time, try to improve your performance by role-playing the same situations again or preparing and role-playing new situations.

VARIATION

Use this activity as a game by awarding points:

- 5 points if the partner is completely persuaded
- 3 points if the partner is partially persuaded, that is, if there is acceptance but with conditions

Consolidation

Read the tasks described below and work on the one which will give you the kind of language Practice you need.

TASK 1 –

Step 1

Individual/ Read, make notes

Work alone. Read the announcement below.



Write down all the ideas you can think of on the topic of improving workplace productivity. Select the five ideas which you think will give the best results.

Step 2

Group/ Persuade, insist and bargain

Now work with a small group.

- Take turns presenting your five ideas to the others. Explain why these ideas will increase productivity. Use the strategies and expressions for describing and explaining you have learned.
- Now work together to select the five ideas to enter into the contest. Use the strategies and expressions for negotiating, disagreeing, challenging or hedging as they are needed.

Step 3

Class/Negotiate

Finally, work with your class.

- Act as the committee which selects the winning entry. You may have to use your skills of persuasion again.

TASK 2 –

Step 1

Individual/ Read, make notes

Work alone. Read the announcement below.



Write down all the ideas you can think of on the topic of how the merit system should work and what the criteria should be.

Step 2

Group/ Persuade, insist and bargain

Now work with a small group.

- Take turns presenting and explaining your ideas to the others. Use the strategies and expressions for describing and explaining you have learned.
- Now work together to draft new guidelines for an effective merit system. Use the strategies and expressions for negotiating, disagreeing, challenging or hedging as they are needed.

Step 3

Class/Negotiate

Finally, work with your class.

- Act as the committee which reviews the guidelines and select the proposal which you think will work best. You may have to use your skills of persuasion again!

TASK 3 –

Step 1

Individual/ Read, make notes

Work alone and read the ad below.

WANTED

Small group of compatible adults to share a winter getaway in a warm climate. Split expenses with congenial company in a comfortable home.
Write to Box 310 c/o this newspaper.

What characteristics do you think people should have if they are to be compatible with you and be able to form a congenial group? Write down your ideas.

- Now consider what ground rules you think are needed in order to make the group function successfully. Write down your ideas.

Step 2

Small group / Describe and explain

Work with a small group.

- In turn, describe and explain the personality characteristics and the ground rules you think are necessary for compatibility and successful functioning of the vacation group. Use the strategies and expressions for describing and explaining you have learned.
- As you listen, take notes. Make sure you understand what each person means.

Step 3

Group/ Negotiate, disagree, challenge, hedge

- Now try to establish the personality requirements and the rules for smooth functioning which will allow your group to holiday together. Use the strategies and expressions for negotiating, disagreeing, challenging or hedging as they are needed.

Step 4

Group/Discuss

- Could the people in your group share a winter getaway?