



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



## Appendix

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## **Credits**

Development and Learning Technologies Directorate  
Language Training Centre  
Canada School of Public Service

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## **ADVISABILITY (PAST)**

*I should have / ought to have (checked).*  
*I shouldn't have / ought not to have (gone).*

## **ADVISING**

### **Using introductory expressions:**

A word to the wise;...  
Do yourself a favour;...  
Don't ask for trouble;...  
For what it's worth....  
Here's a sound piece of advice;...  
If you want my two cent's worth,...  
Right off the bat, I'd say...  
Take a hint;...  
Take it from me;...  
Take it from someone who knows;...  
Take my advice;...  
There are several possibilities. First,... Second,... And third,... (specific advice)

### **Using a present unreal condition:**

*All things considered, I would/wouldn't...*  
*Given the situation, I would/wouldn't...*  
*If I were [you, in your shoes,] I would/wouldn't...*  
*In your position, I would/wouldn't...*

### **Using the base form of the verb:**

Could / Couldn't you say something?  
(I think / Maybe), you should *go*.  
(I think / Maybe), you ought to *go*.  
(I think / Maybe), you had better *go*.  
(I think / Maybe), you could *go*.  
(Perhaps/ Do you think) you could/might *go*?  
Why not *go*?  
You shouldn't *go*.  
You'd better not *go*.  
Don't *go*.

### Using a gerund:

I (would) advise *discussing*...  
I'd like to suggest *discussing*...  
Could I recommend *discussing*...  
We could consider *discussing*...  
Would you think of *discussing*...  
You might want to think about *discussing*...

I'm a believer in *keeping*...  
I happen to believe in *keeping*...  
I (don't) believe in *keeping*...

### Using the subjunctive:

I (would) recommend that we *ask* for extra funding.  
My advice is that she *go*.  
I'd like to suggest that they *remain*.  
My recommendation is that he *go*.

### Using an infinitive:

I think it might / may, perhaps, be wise *to stay*.  
It wouldn't be a bad idea *to go*.  
It [would, might] be a good idea (for you) *to stay*.  
It [would, might] be wise (for you) *to stay*.  
It [would, might] be smart (for you) *to stay*.  
It's advisable (for you) *to stay*. / ...(for you) not *to go*.  
My [advice, reaction] would be (for you) *to stay*. / ...not *to go*.  
My [recommendation, suggestion] would be (for you) *to stay*. / ...not *to go*.  
You'd be well advised *to stay*. / ...not *to go*.

### AGREEING

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

## **BARGAINING**

### **Using present or future real conditions:**

*If you're willing to (support us,) then we can (make it worth your while).*

*If you'll support us, then we'll make it worth your while.*

*If you could (support us,) then we could (make it worth your while).*

*I'll (agree to...), if you (promise to...)*

*Will you (extend the deadline)? If so, we can (do our best to meet it.)*

*Can you (extend the deadline)? If so, we'll do our best to meet it.*

*Could you (extend the deadline)? If so, we could (do our best to meet it.)*

*You (give us your backing) and we'll (do the rest.)*

## **BEING DIPLOMATIC OR TENTATIVE**

Your comments become more diplomatic or tentative if you use:

- *perhaps/maybe*
- impersonal words (*it, there*) instead of personal words (*you*).
- question form
- modals (*could, may, might*)
- introductory expressions (*I (don't) think...I wonder/ was wondering if...*)
- several of these strategies in combination

## **CAUSE, EXPRESSING**

...bring about...

...lead to...

...give rise to...

...because of...

...due to...

...on account of...

## **CHALLENGING INFORMATION**

I'm sorry, but as far as I know, it's/that's (not)...

I'm sorry, but I think/ don't think it's/that's (not)...

Actually/ In fact,...

I'm not sure that's right.

That's not correct, is it?

Is it (really)...?

Is that right?

My information is that...

That doesn't seem/sound right to me.

The truth is...



Whose authority is that based on?  
That's not what I read.  
That's not what I've heard/ been told.  
I don't believe that!  
That can't be right.  
That's mistaken/wrong.  
That's not so.  
That's not true.

### **CHALLENGING THE SPEAKER**

I thought...  
I was under the impression that...  
I think, in fact, you mean...  
(I'm sorry but) didn't/don't you actually mean...?

Have you got that right?  
Did/Didn't you mean/say...?  
Are you sure?  
Have you checked that out?

Really?  
You can't be right.  
You've got it wrong.  
You've got your facts wrong.  
You're mistaken/wrong.  
No!  
Nonsense!  
No way!

### **CLARIFYING**

Can you tell me more about...?  
Can you explain this?  
Could you give more detail?  
Would you expand on...?  
Can you give me an example...?  
[Who, What, When, Where, Why] (exactly)...?  
How much...?  
How many...?  
How long...?  
How far...?

Do you mean...?  
What do you mean by...?  
I have a question about...  
I'm not clear about...

I don't understand  
I'd like to know  
Do you know  
I wonder/ was  
wondering  
Could you tell me (more  
about\*)  
Could you be more  
specific about\*

[who / what / when / where / why / which / how (many) /  
whether/if\* ...]

(\*Note: *if* can not follow about, use *whether* instead)

## CONCEDING

If there's no other way,...  
If that's the case,...  
In that case,...

(I guess)	I can	live with that.
	I'm	go along with that.
	willing	accept that.
	to	agree to that.

Oh, all right!  
Well, OK!  
When you put it that way,...  
I('ll) concede.  
You win!

## CONCEDING WITH QUALIFICATIONS

All right, provided that (we)..  
Yes, with this condition:..  
OK, with one proviso:..  
OK, as long as (you)...

## CONSEQUENCES

(see Support, Providing: State consequences/results)

## CORRECTING OTHERS

I'm sorry, but actually,...  
I'm sorry but didn't you actually mean...?  
As far as I know,...  
I think...  
Do you mean... ?  
Don't you mean... ?  
It's..., isn't it?  
Isn't it... ?  
It won't..., will it?

It'll..., won't it?  
As a matter of fact, (I know that)...  
Actually, (I've been shown that)...  
In fact, (I've seen evidence that)...  
I hate to contradict you, but in fact...  
I'd like to correct one thing.  
It's...

### **CORRECTING YOURSELF**

Excuse me. / (I'm) sorry. That should have been...  
Excuse me. / (I'm) sorry. What I should have said is/was...  
Excuse me. / (I'm) sorry. What I (really) meant (to say) is/was...

### **COUNTER-ARGUING**

(see Insisting; Persuading)

### **DISAGREEING**

(listed from most diplomatic, at the top, to most direct, at the bottom)

Certainly/Yes/Sure/Possibly	
That's true	
That's a good point	
You 're probably right	, but...
You may be right	
I can [appreciate, see, understand] your point	; however,...
That's/It's fine as far as it goes	; on the other hand,...
I agree with most of that	
I agree with what you said	

The only thing is...  
I have [a problem, trouble] with...  
I'm not happy with...  
I don't think...  
I don't see...  
I think...

I tend to disagree.  
I'm not sure I quite agree with you.  
I don't agree completely.

I differ with you about...  
I (have to) disagree.  
I don't see/ look at it that way.  
That's not how I see it.  
(A statement whose content indicates disagreement with what was said.)

I can't agree.  
I don't think so.  
No/Not, unless...  
No way!  
Impossible!

### **ESTIMATING**

(somewhere) around...  
A ball park figure would be (\$30 000).  
a conservative/generous estimate would be...  
approximately...  
I wouldn't want to hazard a guess.  
I'd take a wild guess at...  
in the (\$20 000) ball park...  
roughly...  
something this side of...  
somewhere in the area/neighbourhood of...

### **EXAMPLES, GIVING**

(See Support, Providing: Give examples or illustrations)

### **EXCEPTIONS/ QUALIFICATIONS, STATING**

#### **Prepositions:**

apart from...  
barring...  
except (for) ...  
excepting...  
exclusive of...  
forgetting about...  
leaving out/aside...  
not counting...  
short of...  
with the exception of...

#### **Connectors:**

...but...  
..., however,...

#### **Expressions:**

An exception is....  
That doesn't include...

### **EXPLAINING**

(see Support, Providing)

## **FOCUSSING**

Even more important...  
I want to reiterate that ...  
I'd like to stress....  
I'd like to emphasize....  
In fact,...  
It's important (for us) to remember that...  
It's crucial that...  
The emphasis should be on...  
The fact is...  
The problem is...  
The real question is...  
The real point is...  
The truth is...  
What really counts is...  
What we can't forget is that...  
What we've got to remember is that...  
What's significant is...  
What's important is...

## **FREQUENCY, EXPRESSING**

semi-annual (review)  
third-quarter (review)  
every other (week)  
every (three) (weeks)  
I'm forever trying to...  
now and then  
now and again  
every so often  
once in a while  
once in a blue moon

## **GENERALIZING**

(Taken) all in all,...  
As a rule, ....  
Basically,...  
By and large,....  
Generally (speaking), ....  
In general,....  
In most cases,....  
Most of the time,....  
Mostly,...  
On balance,...  
On the whole,...  
Ordinarily,...  
Typically,...  
Usually,...

## **GIVING BAD NEWS**

### **Using introductory words, statements or questions to prepare the listener for the bad news:**

I'm afraid...  
I'm sorry....  
Unfortunately,...  
I have some bad news;...  
I've got some bad news;...  
I have to tell you something you won't want to hear.  
I know this is a touchy subject, but...  
I'm sorry (I've got / I have) to tell you this, but (, unfortunately,...)  
I'm sorry / I hate to tell you this, but...  
I hate to do this to you,...  
There's some bad news.  
There's something I have to tell you.  
You're not going to like this, but...  
Are you ready for bad news today?  
Can you take bad news today?  
The worst has come to pass.

### **Distancing yourself from responsibility by using the passive voice and/or impersonal words:**

It looks like/ as if...  
It seems (that)...  
It was felt that...  
It would seem (that)...  
It's been pointed out that...  
There seems to be...  
Unfortunately, (a freeze) has been placed on...

### **Explaining your position/action/decision (and accepting responsibility):**

I have/had no alternative.  
If I could do things differently, I certainly would.  
If I could have done things differently, I certainly would have.  
I'm awfully sorry but there is/was nothing (else) I can/could do.  
I'm afraid I haven't been able to protect you.  
I've tried to avoid this (problem/situation).  
I've been put in a terrible situation.  
I would have preferred it if things had worked out differently.  
I would have preferred things to have worked out differently.

### **Expressing sympathy or empathy:**

I know what this means to you (and I'm very sorry.)  
I know how bad you feel (and I'm very sorry.)  
I know what a blow this is (and I'm very sorry.)  
I know what you're up against (and I'm very sorry.)

(I recognize that) this must be very hard for you.  
I wish things had worked out differently.  
I understand the difficulties....  
I'm not unaware of the difficulties....

### **GIVING NEGATIVE FEEDBACK**

I don't like to complain, but...  
I hate to mention this (again), but...  
I don't really want to bring this up, but...  
I'm afraid...  
I'm sorry (to have to say this), but...

### **HEDGING**

A general comment specific to the situation:  
e.g. "What do you think of the way the boss handled the meeting?"  
"That kind of meeting is really tough."  
I can't say one way or the other.  
I really can't answer that / couldn't say.  
I'd rather not (talk about it.)  
I'd just as soon not get into that.  
I'd like to be more forthcoming, but...  
I'm not [free, able, at liberty, in a position] to comment (on that). (What I can say, however, is...)  
I'm not sure I can give more details.  
It/That depends on...  
It's a moot point.  
It's a matter of opinion.  
It's an open question.  
It's an interesting (idea)...  
That's a can of worms.  
There are always two sides to every question.  
Well, it certainly is (a complex issue.)

### **HYPOTHESIZING**

#### **Posing a hypothetical question:**

Suppose we (leave/left early)?  
What would they say if we (left early)?  
What if I were to (leave early)?  
Let's say that we had to (leave early)?  
What would we do if we couldn't (leave early)?

What would happen if people chose to (leave early)?  
How would people feel if they weren't allowed to (leave early)?  
What about (leaving early)?

**Expressing a present unreal condition:**

If I (had more free time), I [would, might, could] maybe/conceivably (get more reading done).  
If I (had more free time), it's just possible (that) I might (get more reading done).  
If I (had more free time), there's a chance I could (get more reading done).  
If I (had more free time), it could be that I'd (get more reading done).

If I (didn't have patience), I [wouldn't, couldn't, might (not)] (do this kind of work.)

**Expressing a past unreal condition:**

If I had/hadn't (realised)...., I could/couldn't have  
If I had/hadn't (realised)...., I might (not) have (chosen)...  
If I had/hadn't (realised)...., I would/wouldn't have

**INSISTING**

(I'm afraid,) you have to.../can't.../must.../won't be able to...

(I'm sorry,) I must insist (on this point).  
(I'm sorry,) I'm sticking to my guns.  
(I'm sorry,) I'm putting my foot down.  
(I'm sorry,) my position remains the same.  
(I'm sorry,) that's all there is to it.  
(I'm sorry,) there's nothing more to be said.

How many times do I have to tell you that...?  
I insist.  
I keep telling you that....  
I said before and I say again:....  
I still maintain/think/believe that...

**Preposition + Noun:**

[In spite of, Despite, Regardless of] (your problems), (the deadlines must be met.)

**Subordinate adverb clause:**

[Although, Even though, Though] (there's a cost), (I maintain...)

**Adverbial connector:**

(I realize... ); [even so, still] (you must consider...)  
(I realize... ); [nevertheless, nonetheless] (you must consider...)



## JUSTIFYING

(see Support, Providing)

## OPINIONS, EXPRESSING

(listed from strongest, at the top, to weakest, at the bottom)

I don't **think**, I **know** (that)... (Note: the words in **bold** are emphasized)

Without a doubt...

I've no doubt whatsoever that...

There's no question/doubt (in my mind) that...

I'm absolutely/completely/totally convinced that...

I'm convinced that...

I believe/feel strongly that...

I believe/feel quite/pretty strongly that...

My gut reaction is (that)...

I (really) think (that)...

I believe (that)...

I feel (that)...

I can't help thinking that...

To my way of thinking...

It's my feeling that...

Off the top of my head, I'd say...

At first blush, I would say...

My first reaction would be to...

If you ask me...

I tend to think that...

I suspect that...

It seems to me that... / Seems to me that... / Seems to me... / Seems...

## ORDERING BY ENUMERATING

first..., second..., third..., last/finally...

the first..., the second..., the third..., the last...

## ORDERING BY DEGREE OF IMPORTANCE

fairly/quite (significant)...

more/less (significant)...

the most/least (significant) ...

## PARAPHRASING

Another way to say that is...

I mean ...

In other words,...

That is to say,...

That means...

What it boils down to is ....  
What I was getting at is...  
What that means is....

## **PERSUADING**

(see Support, Providing: for strategies to support your position)

Can/Can't we iron out our differences?  
Can't I persuade you to...  
Consider the matter from my/another perspective.  
Couldn't you just (allow)... ?  
Don't you agree/see/recognize that... ?  
Don't forget (that)...  
I urge you to...  
If you'd just...  
If you'll reconsider, I'm sure you'll see...  
Let's not forget that...  
Look at it this way/my way....  
Put yourself in my position / my shoes.  
Surely you can see that ..., can't you?  
Won't you consider ...  
You have to agree that...  
You've got to /must/ have to admit that...  
Oh, come on,... (use this expression ONLY in informal situations or with friends)

## **POSITION, STATING: FOR OR AGAINST**

I approve of (that idea.)  
I back (that idea.)  
I support (that idea.)  
I like (that idea.)

I'm for...  
I'm in favour of...

The main advantage of... is (that)...  
(Statement whose content indicates support)

I oppose...  
I disapprove of...  
I dislike...  
I don't like...  
I can't go along with...  
I can't back...

I'm against...  
I'm not in favour of...  
I'm opposed to...

The main disadvantage of...is (that)....  
(Statement whose content indicates opposition)

## POSSIBILITY OR PROBABILITY, EXPRESSING

**Maybe** you can...  
They can **probably**...  
We **might** be able to...

## PREFERENCE, EXPRESSING

### Expressing one's own preference:

Gerund: I prefer (*skiing*).  
Base form of verb: I would rather (*stay* indoors.) I prefer to (*stay* inside).

### Expressing one's preference re someone else's behaviour:

Infinitive:  
I would prefer you to (consult with me first).  
It would be better to (consult with me first).  
It would have been better to (consult with me first).

Clause:  
I would have preferred it if you/you'd (asked me first).

## QUALIFYING

(see Exceptions)

## REFUSING OR REJECTING

I'm not convinced.  
That doesn't move/sway me.  
I'm unmoved/unconvinced by that (argument).

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

No.  
No way!  
Nonsense!  
Over my dead body!  
I'm afraid not.  
I'm sorry, (but)...  
I'm afraid...  
I can see your point, but/, however,...

That's (totally/absolutely) [impossible, unacceptable, out of the question].

That's not...

That won't do.  
I'm against  
I'm not in favour of that.  
I don't agree to that.  
We can't **go along with** that.  
It's too (expensive.)  
That's not (good) **enough**.

## REPORTING

(statements: present)  
"We *can't*..." – They *said* they *couldn't*.... present becomes past

(statements: past)  
"We *weren't* able to..." – They *said* they *hadn't been* able to... past becomes past perfect

(questions)  
"When *will you*...?" – She *asked* when I *would*... future *will* becomes past modal *would*  
"Are you going?" – He *asked* if I was going. present continuous becomes past continuous

## RESULT, EXPRESSING

(see Support, Providing: State consequences or results)

## SENSITIVE TOPICS, DISCUSSING

There seems to be a problem with ...  
It seems as if there've been problems with...  
It would seem that...  
It's been pointed out that...  
It was felt that...  
I know this is a touchy subject, but...  
You're not going to like this, but...

## STALLING

A final decision hasn't been made yet.  
Can I get back to you?  
I'll have to check about that.  
I'll have to get back to you.  
I'll have to sleep on it.  
I'll have to think it over.  
I'm not sure we've got all the facts (yet).  
I'm not sure I'm/we're ready to act/say yet.  
It hasn't been decided yet.  
It/This needs more thought.  
It's too early to say.  
Let me get back to you.  
Let's put it on hold for now.  
That would require further reflection.  
That would require more time.

Things are still up in the air.  
We're working on it.

## SUGGESTING

Suggestions become more diplomatic or tentative

- if *perhaps* or *maybe* is added,
- if they are impersonal,
- if they are in question form,
- if the modals *might* or *could* are used (*would* is polite but more direct),
- if several of these strategies are used in combination for maximum effect.

(Perhaps) (Maybe) (Could I make a suggestion?) (If I could [just] make a suggestion?)	We/You could/might... It would/might be wise to ...
(Could I make a suggestion?) (If I could [just] make a suggestion?)	What would you think of (perhaps)...? Could we/you (perhaps)...? Do you think we/you could Would it (perhaps) be a good idea to... ?
I'd like to suggest... Could I suggest...	

## SUPPORT, PROVIDING

### Giving reasons:

Preposition + noun:

because of...

by virtue/reason of...

due/owing to...

for want/fear of...

for the sake/benefit of...

from/through/for lack of...

in view of...

in light of...

on account of...

on the strength of...

out of...

Subordinate adverb clause:

(I stayed late), because (somebody had to finish the report.)

Past participle:

Given (the situation), (I had to...)

Specific expression:

The reason was that...

Content indicating a reason.

**Giving examples or illustrations:**

Preposition + noun:

like...

such as...

Adverbial connectors:

For example,...

For instance,...

Expressions:

Consider \_\_\_\_, (for example,)...

I'll give you an example/illustration.

Let me illustrate.

Let me give you an example/illustration.

Take, for example,...

To illustrate that point,...

**State causes:**

Preposition + noun:

as a result of

because of

due to

on account of

owing to

thanks to

**State consequences or results:**

Preposition + noun:

at the cost of

in the wake of

thanks to

Result clause of conditional statement:

If I had (done nothing), it [would, could, might] have (been disastrous.)

If I hadn't done anything, it [would, could, might] have (been disastrous.)

Had I (done nothing), it [would, could, might] have (been disastrous.)

Adverbial connectors:

As a result,...

Consequently,...

Therefore,...

Nouns:

The result [is..., was..., will be...]

The effect [is..., was..., will be...]

The consequence [is..., was..., will be...]

The upshot [is..., was..., will be...]

The outcome [is..., was..., will be...]

Verbs:

be landed with...

bring about...

cause...

come of...

end in...

end up with...

follow from...

get (us) into...

land (us) in...

land up in...

lead to...

produce...

result in...

### **Stating purpose:**

Preposition + noun:

by way of...

for...

for/with the purpose of...

in the interest of...

with the view of...

with the object of...

with the intention of...

Subordinate adverb clause:

so that...

Infinitive (of purpose):

(in order) to...

### **Giving explanations:**

Expressions:

Let me explain...

Let me fill you in...

To explain (that point)...

What that means is (that)...

### **Describing experiences:**

I *often go* to the cottage on weekends in the summer. frequency adverbs, present tense

I *used to go* to Europe before it became so expensive. past habits/ repeated actions

### **Giving facts:**

I *was* a manager. I *did* many different things.

**Giving details:**

As a manager, I *was responsible for* all the publishing for the department.

I *analysed* the costs with my staff and *allocated* funds and human resources to the projects.

**TIME MARKERS, USING**

always  
often  
sometimes  
never

now  
at present  
at the moment

(5 years) ago  
last (year)  
in (1989)

since  
for  
recently  
yet  
already  
just

**UNFULFILLED PAST OBLIGATION, STATING**

They should have\* (worked harder.)  
They could have (worked harder.)  
They ought to have (worked harder.)

They shouldn't have (missed the meeting.)  
They ought not to have (missed the meeting.)

It would/might have been better to...

\* In speaking, syllables are reduced. Have becomes 've; not becomes n't:

should've / shouldn't've  
could've / couldn't've  
would've / wouldn't've  
might've / mightn't've  
ought to've / ought not to've



## **VERIFYING**

In other words,...  
So you're saying...  
Let me see if I understand what you're saying;....

Unless I'm mistaken, you're saying....

Do you mean by that....?  
Does that mean...?  
Is your point that...?

Do I understand that you're saying that...?  
Do I understand you to mean...?  
Do I read you right in thinking that....?  
Am I right in assuming that...?  
Am I mistaken in assuming that...?

## **WARNING**

(Whatever you do) [Don't (ever)...., Never...]  
(No matter what) [Don't (ever)...., Never...]

Make/Be sure you (don't)...  
Make/Be sure (not) to...  
Be careful (not) to...  
Remember to...  
Don't forget to...

If you don't..., you'll...  
Unless you....,  
If I were you, I'd...  
Have you thought about (possible negative consequences)?  
Is it worth upsetting (everyone concerned).

You'd better cool it!  
Don't be a fool!  
Get a life!

Let sleeping dogs lie.  
Don't rock the boat.

**PERFORMANCE CHECK LIST**

	YES	NO	
AM I SATISFIED WITH MY PERFORMANCE?			
Did I feel comfortable?			
Did I use all the strategies I could have used?			
Did I speak without hesitation?			
Did I sound natural?			
Did I understand readily everything that was said to me?			
Did my listener(s) understand everything I said?			
WAS I ABLE TO MEET THESE LEVEL C PERFORMANCE STANDARDS:	YES	NO	EXAMPLES
Did I use precise vocabulary to convey exact meanings?			
Did I link my sentences effectively (by correctly using coordinating words; by correctly using subordinating clauses: relative clauses, adverb clauses of time, contrast, condition, reason, result, purpose etc.)?			
Did I link my ideas effectively (by correctly linking sequences of events in time; by correctly linking facts in logical sequence)?			
Was I able to expand on my ideas?			