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LANGUAGE:
NUANCED PERSPECTIVES

When discussing complex issues, one of the challenges you might face involves handling the different perspectives surrounding the topic.

It can be easy to view people's opinions, for instance, in mere 'black-and-white' terms. In other words, you might immediately divide the perspectives of an issue into those *in favor* and those *against* in order to keep things simple.

This isn't a bad place to start because it grants initial access into the conversation, but eventually, you'll need to give a nod to the tremendous amount of grey area in between *pro* and *con*!

In essence, every argument contains multiple, nuanced perspectives that you'll need to consider when discussing the issue!

This handout will help you demonstrate nuance when discussing these issues.

One way to avoid the absolute, *binary* language of 'for/against' is to **hedge** your words. This involves a careful type of wording which helps you express approximation, degree of certainty, or doubt as you discuss an issue.

It is crucial to any courtroom scene, academic conversation, or in any political circumstance, just to name a few!
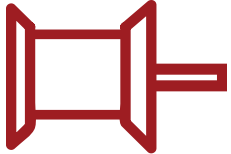
Hedging

THE CAREFUL USE OF WORDS TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN FACT AND OPINION; ALSO USED TO SHOW YOUR AUDIENCE THE EXTENT TO WHICH YOU SUPPORT THE INFORMATION YOU ARE PRESENTING.

Hedging helps you avoid overgeneralizing, it helps you set and/or recognize limits to what you're saying, protect yourself from criticism or error, and it can demonstrate well-meaning when looking at something through a critical lens.

Some of the most common ways to hedge you words involve the use of **modals** and/or **qualifiers**.

Developing nuance

MODALS ARE USED TO EXPRESS ATTITUDE AND INTENSITY TOWARD AN ACTION. SPECIFICALLY, THESE SIMPLE WORDS CAN BE USED TO MODIFY THE FORCE OF AN ASSERTION IN ORDER TO DISTINGUISH IT FROM FACT:

- *forms of 'be'*
- *should*
- *would*
- *could*
- *can*

- *forms of 'have'*
- *may*
- *must*
- *might*
- *ought*

- *forms of 'do'*
- *will*
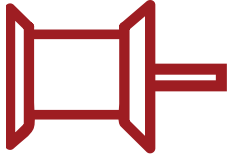- *shall*

Peace **might** be achievable if...

This solution **does** appear viable if...

The change **could** lead to a problem with...

The court's decision **may** trigger...

jill pavich

Article excerpted and adapted for instruction from: CNN News

Developing nuance

QUALIFIERS ARE WORDS OR PHRASES USED TO SET LIMITS TO WORDS, EITHER MAXIMIZING OR MINIMIZING THEIR VALUE. THIS IS BECAUSE THESE TERMS CONTROL THE INTENSITY OF TONE.

- *very*
- *definitely*
- *rather*
- *so few*
- *apparently*
- *nearly*
- *especially*
- *somewhat*
- *completely*
- *some*
- *arguably*
- *extremely*
- *hardly*
- *usually*
- *really*
- *many*
- *likely*
- *barely*
- *mainly*
- *too*
- *mostly*
- *most*
- *possibly*

Notice the difference between these two statements, the former without qualifiers, and the latter with:

Print books help our mental capacity to understand a story, and they have some physical benefits as well.

Print books **apparently** help our mental capacity to understand a story, and they **likely** have some physical benefits as well.

jill pavich

Article excerpted and adapted for instruction from: CNN News

Yo, I'm Jill!

I live on macha green tea lattes + nerdy lesson planning sessions.
I'm on a mission to flip the script on how we teach today's writers.

I empower secondary ELA teachers with the

resources + mindset

they need to make the

writing process

more

relevant, authentic, and applicable

for today's learners and tomorrow's leaders.

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