

# Most Common Hedges

(Softening Language)

Hedges are words and expressions that make language less direct, more polite, and less certain. Native speakers use them constantly in conversations, emails, meetings, and academic writing.

## 1. Modal Verbs

Use modal verbs to soften requests, suggestions, and opinions.

**could • might • may • would • should**

- This **might** be the best option. / We **could** try another approach.
- **Would** you mind helping me? / You **might want to** check that again.

## 2. Introductory Phrases

Show that something is your opinion rather than a fact.

**I think... • I guess... • I suppose... • I believe... • As far as I know...**

- **I think** this is a good idea. / **I guess** he's busy.
- **As far as I know**, the meeting is tomorrow.

## 3. Hedging Adverbs

Reduce certainty.

**maybe • perhaps • probably • possibly**

- **Maybe** we should wait. / She's **probably** at work.
- It's **possibly** the best solution.

## 4. Vague Language

Avoid sounding too strong or too precise.

**kind of • sort of • a bit • a little • about • around**

- It's **kind of** expensive. / I'm **a bit** tired.
- There were **around** fifty people.

## 5. "Just"

One of the most common softening words in English.

- Could you **just** sign here? / I **just** wanted to ask a question. / I'll **just** be a minute.

## 6. Polite Requests

Common expressions for making requests sound friendlier.

- **Could you...? / Would you mind...? / Could you possibly...? / I was wondering if... / I was hoping... / Could you possibly send me the file? / I was wondering if you could help me.**

## 7. Softening Suggestions & Disagreement

**Suggestions**

- We **could**... / **Perhaps** we should... / It **might be worth**...

**Disagreement**

- I'm **not sure** I agree. / I **think** there might be another way. / I **see your point, but**...

## 8. Academic & Formal Hedges

**may • might • seems to • appears to • suggests • tends to**

Passive forms:

- **It is believed that... / It has been suggested that... / It is generally accepted that...**

## Most Common Hedges in English

**Modal verbs:** could, might, may, would, should

**Adverbs:** maybe, perhaps, probably, possibly

**Introductory phrases:** I think..., I guess..., I suppose..., As far as I know...

**Vague language:** kind of, sort of, a bit, a little, about, around

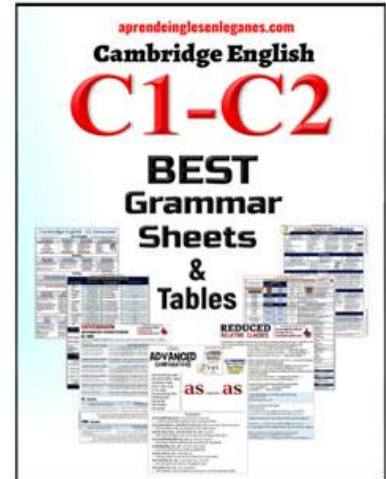
**Softening expressions:** just, I was wondering if..., I was hoping..., would you mind...?, could you possibly...?, it might be worth...

**Purpose:** Hedges make English sound **more polite, natural, diplomatic, and professional.**

# C1-C2

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