

APPENDIX A: STRATEGIES FOR MAKING REQUESTS IN ENGLISH

DIRECT	Plain/Informal	More Polite/Formal	Softer, Even More Polite
	Command form	Add <i>Please</i>	Add softeners and/or hesitation markers
	<i>Give me the book.</i>	<i>Please give me the book.</i>	<i>If possible, uh, please give me the book for a second.</i>
INDIRECT	Conventional formulas	Past tense/more polite and formal	Add softeners and hesitation markers
Ability	<i>Can you give me the book?</i>	<i>Could you give me the book?</i>	<i>Do you think you could perhaps give me the book?</i>
Possibility/Permission	<i>Can I have the book?</i>	<i>Could I have the book?</i>	<i>Would it be possible to have the book for a minute?</i>
	<i>May I have the book?</i>	<i>Might I have the book?</i>	<i>If it's not too much trouble, might I possibly have the book?</i>
Willingness	<i>Will you give me the book?</i>	<i>Would you give me the book?</i>	<i>Do you think you would maybe give me the book?</i>
	<i>Do you mind giving...?</i>	<i>Would you mind giving...?</i>	<i>I was wondering if you would mind giving me the book?</i>
HINTS			
Feasibility	<i>Do you have the book?</i>	<i>Was it you who had the book?</i>	<i>Did you, by any chance, happen to have the book?</i>
Grounder	<i>I don't have the book.</i>	<i>I forgot to bring the book.</i>	<i>Oh, it looks like I may have forgotten to bring the book.</i>
Vague question	<i>Do we need the book today?</i>	<i>Was it necessary to bring the book?</i>	<i>Oh dear, I wonder if we might need the book today.</i>

*Please note the following are not requests when uttered under certain conditions; for example,

ORDERS (from higher to lower status; required action; no choice but to do it)

Command	<i>Give me the book (right now).</i>		<i>Give me the book when it is convenient.</i>
Desire	<i>I want you to give me the book.</i>	<i>I'd like you to give me the book.</i>	<i>When you have time, I'd like you to give me the book.</i>
Requirement	<i>You must/have to give me the book.</i>		<i>At your convenience, you are required to give me the book.</i>

Note: This set of strategies includes a subset of the standard strategies set forth in Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989). For instance, the three indirect strategies listed in this table are separate instances of a single conventionally indirect strategy, which is commonly referred to as a preparatory strategy. The first hint type represents a precondition on a successful request (checking on the feasibility of the request); the second offers a reason for the request (which could be a supportive move if a more direct head request act were expressed, but serves as a hint when no other head act is present); and the third, a vague question, is a less transparent kind of hint (Weizman, 1989). Because they contain elements of the intended request act, they fall somewhere within the conventional category of strong hints.

APPENDIX B: HANDOUTS

Handout 1: Expressing Your Opinion: Some Softeners and Intensifiers

When expressing an opinion, one of the most important things you need to consider is the **context**. Think about the following questions:

1. What is the relationship you have with the person you are discussing with?
2. How sensitive is the topic you are discussing?

Depending on the context, you will want to use other expressions to soften or emphasize your opinion:

1. Softeners—To soften an opinion, use softeners such as the following:

For lower proficiency students:

- *A little bit, or a little* (modifying an adjective)
— Example: It might be *a little* distracting.
- *Kind of, sort of* (modifying an adjective)
— Example: The music is *sort of* loud.

For more advanced students:

- *Not really* (modifying adjectives, verbs)
— Example: She's *not really* ready to play in the band.
— Example: They *don't really* play the type of music we want.
- *Not that* (modifying an adjective)
— Example: It's *not that* good.
- *Such, such (a)* (modifying a noun or noun phrase)
— Example: That is *such* idiocy.
— Example: Bob Dylan is *such a* great composer.
- *Just*—meaning "only" (modifies many types of phrases, e.g., adjective phrase, verb phrase, noun phrase, adverbial modifier)
— Example: *just* tired, *just* looking, *just* a student, *just* a little worried

2. Intensifiers—To strengthen an opinion, use intensifiers such as the following:

For lower proficiency students:

- *So* (with simple adjectives), *so much* (with comparative form of adjective)
— Example: She was *so* . . . wild! She's *so much* better live . . .

- *Such (a)* (with nouns)
 - Example: She is *such a* nice person.
 - Example: That's *such* good cheese.
- *Really* (with adjectives, adverbs, verbs)
 - Example: It's *really* hot today.
 - Example: They go out for dinner *really* often.
 - Example: I *really* like that new movie.

For more advanced students:

- *Just* (with other intensifiers)
 - Example: She's *just so* wild
- *Just* (before negative expression)
 - Example: He *just doesn't* have the talent to be in the band.
- *Too* (for a negative opinion): *Too* implies an undesirable situation, even when paired with a positive adjective. Being "too beautiful" or "too happy" is a bad thing.
 - Example: She'll never go out with him. She's *too* good for him.

Handout 2: Videotaped Interviews With Pam and Julian

Note: The following two videos are in Flash format. For the transcripts, see Appendix C or visit <http://www.tesolmedia.com/books/pragmatics>.

Conversation with Pam:

<http://flash.atlas.illinois.edu/video.html?src=/iei/iei-v-2010-1/Pam&player=SDNC>

Conversation with Julian:

<http://flash.atlas.illinois.edu/video.html?src=/iei/iei-v-2010-1/Julian&player=SDNC>

Lyrics to the songs discussed by Pam and Julian and videos of performances are available at the following websites:

Pam's preferred music: "The Sound of Silence"

- Lyrics: http://www.lyricsfreak.com/s/simon+and+garfunkel/the+sound+of+silence_20124712.html
- Video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eZGwQauQOaQ&feature=related>

APPENDIX A: HANDOUTS

Handout 1: Constructive Criticism—Mitigation Devices

Mitigation devices are linguistic devices that can reduce the potential offence of a speech act. They include external mitigating devices such as additional comments; and internal linguistic softening devices such as uncertainty markers, shifts in tense or condition, and softening lexical items or phrases.

1. **External modification:** additional comments, separate from the problem identification and advice giving

Compliment: Say something good about the thing you are going to criticize. Avoid bluntness or frankness.

Ex: It's an interesting paper.

Ex: That was a great presentation.

2. **Internal modification:** linguistic softeners

a. *Uncertainty markers:* Show hesitation or uncertainty about the criticism.

- i) Use explicit statements of uncertainty.

Ex: *I'm not sure* about that; *maybe* it needs a transition word.

Ex: *I don't know* that I agree with the third point you made.

- ii) Use modal verbs, adverbs, and phrases that indicate uncertainty: *might, could, may, possibly, probably.*

Avoid modal verbs and phrases such as *must, should, and have to* when you are trying to soften problem identification and advice; these modals are usually associated with directness.

Ex: This section *could* be clearer. (Problem) You *might* add a transition word here. (Advice)

Ex: Your presentation *may* be too long. (Problem) *I'm not sure* but *maybe* you *could* cut out the second section. (Advice)

- iii. Use questions, rather than bald statements or imperatives, to identify a problem or propose a potential solution.

Ex: *Did you summarize the main ideas?*

Ex: *Could* this work?

- b. *Past tense, conditional:* Create a sense of distance between the speaker and the comment.

Ex: Past tense: *I thought* it *would* make more sense that way.

Ex: Conditional: *If you added a few more examples, your presentation would be stronger.*

Teaching Constructive Critical Feedback

Other linguistic softeners:

- i. Use modifying words and phrases such as *kind of, a little, sort of*.
Ex: This sentence is *sort of* confusing. It's *kind of* unclear.
Ex: Your second point is *a little* too direct.
- ii. Use the verb *seem*.
Ex: Your introduction *seems* too long.
- iii. Use parenthetical phrases such as *I think, I'm afraid*.
Ex: *I think* you need more examples.
(Note: *I think* is a very weak softener, and may have little or no effect.)

Handout 2: Strategies for Offering Constructive Criticism

The two main strategies for offering constructive criticism are (1) identifying the problem and (2) giving advice for correcting the problem.

1. Identifying the problem

State the problems or errors found with the hearer's choice, work, or products. Be as specific as possible. Avoid using negative words such as "wrong," "weak," and so on.

The following examples illustrate acceptable problem identification statements.

Ex: I thought you had two conclusions.

Ex: I didn't see your introduction.

2. Giving advice: One "do" and some "don'ts"

Explain how the problem can be repaired.

Problem	Advice
Ex: You wrote "their"	but I think "t-h-e-r-e."

Peer feedback can be tricky, especially between speakers of equal status. To avoid sounding imposing, native English speakers often choose to avoid the following:

- Don't use the modals/phrasal modals *should, must, have to, ought to*.
— Too strong: You should elaborate more on this.
- Do use the modals *could, may, might*.
— Softened: You might want to give more examples.
- Don't use imperatives.
— Too strong: Give more examples.

APPENDIX A: HANDOUTS

Handout 1: Types of Responses to Indirect Complaints With Examples

Type of Response	Example Responses	Some Typical Responding Expressions (Degree of Formality)
No response or change of topic	IC*: A: One thing that drives me crazy is getting phone calls from telemarketers* at home. R*: B: What's keeping you busy at home? A: I'm renovating* our kitchen. It should be finished in a couple weeks.	
Question Clarification or elaboration requests, or questions expressing doubts about the validity of the complaints (often don't require response)	IC: A: Unfortunately, it's impossible to do anything here without a car. R: B: Oh, really? My bike and the bus system work fine for me.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Really? • You think? • Don't you think that . . . ? • What about . . . ?
Contradiction Disagreeing with the complaint or defending the object being complained about	IC: A: I am sick and tired of her backing out* of the plans we have made. This is the third time in the last 2 weeks. R: B: Don't be so hard on her.* You know that she's going through a really difficult time at home.	
Using humor, joking, or teasing	IC: A: Oh, my gosh! That movie was so boring that you couldn't pay me to sit through it again. R: B: Look on the bright side.* If anyone ever asks you the worst movie you ever saw, you'll have an answer!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look on the bright side . . . (neutral) • At least . . .
Advice or lecture	IC: A: I can't believe my computer froze again last night and I lost my entire assignment. R: B: Have you tried programming your computer to save your work every 10 minutes or so?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You might try . . . • You probably need to . . . (formal) • Why don't you . . . ? • Did you ever consider . . . ?
Commiseration Agreeing with or reassuring the speaker	IC: A: I have no idea how these crazy drivers managed to get a driver's license. That guy just cut me off*! R: B: I know what you mean. The other day I was almost hit by someone who was talking on his cell phone.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I know what you mean. • You can say that again. • I hear you. • That's true./That's for sure. • I'm with you on that one.

*IC = indirect complaint

R = response

telemarketers = people who sell things or advertise by calling people on the phone

renovating = to make something like new

to back out = to refuse to do something that was agreed to earlier

to be hard on someone = to be unforgiving

look on the bright side = be positive

to cut someone off = to suddenly drive in front of another car; it is a rude and dangerous action