

What is Hedging Language?

Worksheet

Hedging language uses words like 'appear,' 'seem,' 'arguably,' and 'sort of' to express uncertainty or weaken claims. It shows intellectual honesty and acknowledges evidence limitations without stating absolute facts.

Questions

1. Which word is a hedge?
A) is
B) appears
C) will be
D) was
2. Why do academics use hedging?
A) To sound less intelligent
B) To show honesty and avoid overstating evidence
C) Because it is mandatory
D) To confuse readers
3. Rewrite with hedging: 'The data supports this theory.'
A) The data definitely supports this.
B) The data might support this theory.
C) The data absolutely proves this.
D) The data refutes this theory.
4. Which sentence hedges appropriately?
A) The Earth is flat.
B) The results seem to link stress and illness.
C) Water always boils at exactly 100°C.
D) I am certain this is wrong.
5. The report appears to show an increase in sales.
6. She seemed somewhat interested in the proposal.
7. This evidence arguably suggests a connection between diet and health.
8. Define: What is hedging language?
9. Define: Why use hedging in academic writing?
10. Define: Give three hedging words.

Answer Key

1. B) appears — 'Appears' softens certainty. The others make direct statements.
2. B) To show honesty and avoid overstating evidence — Hedging allows careful presentation of evidence and acknowledgment of uncertainty.
3. B) The data might support this theory. — 'Might support' adds appropriate hedging to show uncertainty.
4. B) The results seem to link stress and illness. — 'Seem to link' appropriately hedges a tentative claim about causation.
5. The verb 'appears' hedges the claim. Instead of 'The report shows' (definitive), 'appears to show' softens the statement and admits uncertainty.
6. Both 'seemed' and 'somewhat' hedge. 'Seemed' expresses uncertainty about feelings; 'somewhat' weakens the level of interest expressed.
7. 'Arguably' hedges by indicating this is one interpretation, not an absolute fact, inviting debate and acknowledging other viewpoints.
8. Words and phrases expressing uncertainty or weakening claims, like 'seem,' 'appear,' 'sort of,' or 'arguably.'
9. To show intellectual honesty, acknowledge evidence limitations, and avoid overstating conclusions.
10. 'Seem,' 'appear,' 'arguably,' 'perhaps,' 'somewhat,' 'might,' 'could,' 'sort of.'

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