

What is Nuance and Hedging?

Worksheet

Nuance is the subtle expression of complex meaning; hedging is the use of words like 'peut-être,' 'quelque peu,' or 'en quelque sorte' to soften statements and avoid absolute claims.

Questions

1. Which shows hedging?
A) 'Je suis absolument d'accord.'
B) 'Je suis, en quelque sorte, d'accord.'
C) 'Je suis certainement d'accord.'
D) 'Je suis totalement d'accord.'
2. Nuance is about...
A) Avoiding an answer
B) Being unclear
C) Expressing complex meaning with precision
D) Using fancy vocabulary
3. Why hedge in disagreement?
A) To hide your real opinion
B) To show respect and leave room for discussion
C) Because you don't speak French well
D) To make sentences longer
4. What does 'quelque peu' mean?
A) very
B) somewhat / a little
C) definitely
D) never
5. Compare: 'C'est un problème grave.' vs. 'C'est peut-être un problème assez grave.'
6. Express nuance: 'Je ne suis pas d'accord' (I disagree) → diplomatic version
7. Hedging in academic writing: 'L'étude montre X.' → hedged version
8. Define: What is nuance?
9. Define: What is hedging?
10. Define: Common French hedging words?

Answer Key

1. B) 'Je suis, en quelque sorte, d'accord.' — 'En quelque sorte' (in a way) is a hedging phrase that softens the certainty.
2. C) Expressing complex meaning with precision — Nuance is the ability to express subtle, layered meaning — more precise, not less.
3. B) To show respect and leave room for discussion — Hedging in disagreement is diplomatic — it softens the message while showing intellectual humility.
4. B) somewhat / a little — 'Quelque peu' = somewhat / a little — a classic hedging phrase that softens claims.
5. First: direct, absolute, no hedging. Second: hedged — 'peut-être' (maybe) and 'assez' (quite, not 'very') soften the claim. Nuance: the second acknowledges uncertainty and invites discussion.
6. Diplomatic nuance: 'Je comprends votre point de vue, mais j'aurais une légère réserve.' Or: 'C'est une perspective intéressante, bien que peut-être...' Hedging softens disagreement, showing respect.
7. Hedged: 'L'étude suggère, en quelque sorte, que X pourrait être le cas.' Or: 'L'étude propose un argument selon lequel X.' Hedging: cautious language (suggère, pourrait, selon lequel) typical in research.
8. The subtle expression of complex or multi-layered meaning; avoiding black-and-white statements.
9. Using words like 'peut-être,' 'quelque peu,' or 'en quelque sorte' to soften claims and show uncertainty.
10. Peut-être, quelque peu, en quelque sorte, d'une certaine façon, presque, un peu, semble-t-il.

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