

## A

## Hedging

Hedging is when you avoid disagreeing directly. To hedge, you could say:

- I take your point about punctuality, but clocking in and out would not be very popular.
- I understand what you're saying about the needs of each department, but each department must be treated in an appropriate way.
- I see/know what you mean, but we must look at the human factors as well as the numbers.
- I hear where you're coming from on this, but we must remember this is an advertising agency, not a car factory.

## B

## Checking understanding, interrupting, referring back

To interrupt someone politely:

- Can I come in here?
- Sorry to interrupt you, but ...
- If I can just stop you for a moment ...

To refer back to what was said earlier:

- As we were saying earlier ...
- To go back to what I was just saying ...
- To go back to what X was saying earlier ...

To check that you understand what someone has said:

- Are you saying that ...?
- If I understand (you) correctly, ...
- Are you suggesting that ...?
- If I follow you ...
- Are you implying that ...?

## C

## Agreement, consensus or compromise?

Hilary Rhodes is talking about how to deal with agreements and disagreements:

'It may be possible to reach agreement or to reach an agreement about something, or at least come to a consensus: something that most people can agree with. It may be possible to compromise or to find a compromise: an agreement where people accept less than they wanted at first. (See Unit 65) Or perhaps the differences are so great that there will just be disagreement. Something in particular that you disagree about is a disagreement.'

## D

## Concluding

Carla Eagleton sums up and brings the meeting to a close:

'Right. I'm afraid we're running out of time so we're going to have to stop there. To go over what's been said, there is a disagreement about timekeeping and budgets in the design department. I've listened to both sides of the argument. I think I can sum it up by saying that it's a problem of creativity versus control. I think you'll just have to agree to disagree. I'll let you know my decision about the solution to this problem by the end of the month. So unless anyone has anything else to add, I think that's it. Thank you all for coming.'

**58.1** Use complete expressions from A and B opposite to complete the dialogue, based on the prompts in brackets. The first one has been done for you.

A: We really will have to increase productivity.

B: (hedge: coming) but there are limits to how much we can ask of each individual employee. After all, if you look back at the records for ...

*I hear where you're coming from on this, but there are limits to how much we can ask of each individual employee. After all, if you look back at the records for ...*

A: (interrupt: stop) you have to admit things were different then. That was in the 1980s.

B: (hedge: understand) but that's not so long ago. The pressures were the same.

C: (refer back: go back) there are limits as to what we can ask from the creatives. They ...

A: (interrupt: interrupt) I hate that word 'creative'. A lot of them haven't created anything except chaos since they arrived in the company.

C: (check: imply) that the creative department has people who shouldn't be there?

**58.2** Put the extracts from this newspaper report of a public meeting into the correct order.

1 a compromise or a consensus. There was total disagreement. After four hours of heated discussion, Ms Johns said, 'It's been a very interesting discussion but we're running

2 out of time and we're going to have to stop there. I'll let you know the committee's decision about the solution to this problem by the end of the month.

3 So unless anyone has anything else to add, I think that's it. A very useful meeting. Thank you all for coming.'

4 There were strong differences of opinion at last night's meeting to discuss banning cars from the centre of Newtown. The chair, Ms Yolanda Johns of the town council's transport committee, organized the meeting well. A lot of ground

5 saying it would improve the quality of life. It was not possible to come to

6 was covered and both sides of the argument were heard. To sum up the arguments, there were those who thought that banning cars would damage shops and businesses in the town. Others disagreed,

### Over to you



Are compromises always possible? In your organization or school, are decisions based on compromise and consensus or are they imposed by the management?