

## Exam technique: Sounding polite

**Exam tip:** In all parts of the exam, you may ask the examiner to repeat the question.

- 1 Listen to these candidates. Only one sounds polite enough. Why do the other candidates sound impolite? Think about word choice and intonation.
  - a Repeat, please.
  - b Could you say that again, please?
  - c What?
  - d What did you say?
- 2 1 Listen to the following sentence being said using both polite and impolite intonation. Can you tell which is which?  
*Would you mind repeating the question?*  
 To sound polite, your intonation should be high and your voice should sound soft. Impolite intonation tends to be low and flat and the person's voice sounds hard.
   
2 Practise saying the following sentences with a friend. Can your friend guess whether you are trying to sound polite or impolite?  
*Could you say that again, please?*  
*Would you mind repeating the question?*
- 3 In Part 3, the examiner can reformulate a question. This is useful as the questions can be complex. The following statement will signal to the examiner that you want him or her to reformulate.  
*I'm sorry, I'm not sure I understand the question.*  
 Listen to Track 09 again and repeat the sentence, paying attention to the intonation.
- 4 You may want to indicate that you do not understand a particular word. This will show the examiner which word is preventing you from understanding the question so he or she can reformulate it effectively. Write down the sentence you hear. Check your answer, then practise saying it correctly.
- 5 Learn the phrases you have studied in this part so you can use them in the exam. Practise using the phrases when you next speak English.