



Social Skills

Polite Wording

Available in the format below:



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Polite Wording

This straightforward worksheet works on listener presupposition and perspective taking skills. It begins with a written discussion of thinking about your listener before speaking and why it's important to modify your requests and comments in order to get the best results. It provides examples of polite phrases to add to requests and opinion statements, followed by several sentences into which students can incorporate those phrases. This activity gives students practice at modifying their wording while considering their listeners' feelings.

Name _____

Date _____

Adjusting Your Wording to Fit the Situation

How we say something is often as important as what we say.

We should try to predict how our listener would react to what we say.

Choose your wording carefully to get the best reaction.

In some situations, being assertive is best.

In many other situations, being gentle is best.

Think of situations where it is best to use gentle wording. **Discuss.**

Here are some words/phrases that “soften” your requests and opinions:

“I think”	“I believe”	“perhaps”	“maybe”	“might”	“could”
“it might be a good idea”	“try to”	“please”	“can”	“if”	“would”
“often”	“sometimes”	“it may be”	“it could be”	“I’d appreciate it if”	

Soften the following requests and opinions:

1. Move your book off the table.
2. Give me a pencil.
3. Let me speak.
4. I have the best solution.
5. He definitely cheated.
6. Take this to Larry.
7. Talk to your girlfriend again.
8. Women are more nurturing than men.
9. New York is the best city in the world.
10. Buy me new sneakers.
11. I want French fries and an iced tea.



Adjusting Your Wording to Fit the Situation

Answer Key

How we say something is often as important as what we say.
We should try to predict how our listener would react to what we say.
Choose your wording carefully to get the best reaction.
In some situations, being assertive is best.
In many other situations, being gentle is best.

Think of situations where it is best to use gentle wording. **Discuss.**

(Note: After hearing from your students, you can point out that each of the eleven sentences below can be categorized as either a request or comment/opinion. You can discuss how softening requests will often make the person you are talking to more amenable to fulfilling your request, and how softening an opinion makes your listener less likely to view you as antagonistic and therefore less likely to respond defensively.)

Here are some words/phrases that “soften” your requests and opinions:

“I think”	“I believe”	“perhaps”	“maybe”	“might”	“could”
“it might be a good idea”	“try to”	“please”	“can”	“if”	“would”
“often”	“sometimes”	“it may be”	“it could be”	“I’d appreciate it if”	

Soften the following requests and opinions:

(Note: Answers provided are samples.)

1. Could you please move your book off the table.
2. I’d appreciate it if you would give me a pencil.
3. Please try to let me speak.
4. I believe I may have the best solution.
5. I think he may have cheated.
6. Could you please take this to Larry?
7. Perhaps try talking to your girlfriend again.
8. I feel that women are sometimes more nurturing than men.
9. I believe that New York is the best city in the world.
10. Would you please buy new sneakers for me?
11. I would like French fries and an iced tea, thank you.