

Cautious language and hedging¹

Hedging is a type of language use which 'protects' your claims.
Using language with a suitable amount of caution can protect your claims from being easily dismissed. It also helps to indicate the level of certainty we have in relation to the evidence or support.

Phrases for Hedging

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|---|--|
| 1) Quantifiers
some
a fraction
a minority/majority of
a proportion of
to some extent | 2) Appearance
appears to
seems to
has the appearance of
appears to be
is similar to
shares characteristics with
appears to be in line with |
| 3) Evidence
Based on ...
As indicated by ...
According to ... | 4) Frequency
rarely
tends to
has a tendency to |
| 5) Comparison
in a simpler way than ...
more simply than ...
When compared to ... | 6) Context
In the context of ...
...in certain situations...
Within some households... |
| 7) Possibility
might
may
could
can
has the possibility of
has the potential to
is able to | 8) Description in language
can be described as
could be considered to be
is sometimes labelled
can be equated to
the term is often used to mean
the term is often used to refer to
this may indicate that ...
this may suggest that ... |

9) Hedging expressions according to part of speech²

Verbs	Nouns	Adjectives
assume	probability	probable
estimate	possibility	possible
doubt	likelihood	likely
believe	assumption	doubtful
suggest	tendency	unlikely
think	indication	uncertain
	estimate	
	evidence	

¹ From: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe-writing-centre/develop-academic-voice/caution-hedging>

² From: <https://www.eapfoundation.com>

Adverbs

probably
possibly
seemingly
apparently
arguably
perhaps
maybe
presumably
conceivably
sometimes
generally
usually
commonly
frequently
occasionally
in general
as a rule
approximately
roughly
about
reasonably
somehow
somewhat

Introductory phrases

It is generally agreed that
In our opinion
In our view
It is our view that
We feel that
We believe that
I believe that
To our knowledge
One would expect that