

5 Expressing degrees of certainty

Choose the two correct forms in each sentence.

- A: I bet / guess / hope they do better than they did last year.
B: Fat / No / Impossible chance!
- A: The British guy doesn't have a chance / an opportunity / a hope of winning.
B: I don't know. I think he's got a similar / an even / a reasonable chance.
- There's a definite / really / distinct possibility that they'll call an election some time this year and the likelihood / possibility / probability is that the Conservatives will win.
- The chances of Leeds ever winning the title are pretty slender / slim / skinny.
- The odds / chances / possibilities are I won't get into Cambridge University, but it's worth a try.
- You shouldn't worry about it so much. I mean, what are the odds of any of us actually getting killed in an aeroplane? Pretty low / little / slim, I would've thought.
- I'll do my best to finish the report by Friday, but in all likelihood / chance / probability, it won't be ready till Monday.

Real English: The odds

When you make a bet in a bookmaker's (or 'bookies'), you look at the odds – the chances of something happening, expressed as a number (10 to 1, for example). In spoken English, we often use the odds to mean the probability of something happening – or not happening.

- A: What're the odds of Iceland actually winning?
B: About a million to one, I would've said.

Now complete these sentences with your own ideas.

- The chances of me getting married in the next few years are
- There's chance will win the league this year.
- If there was an election this year, the likelihood is
- There's a possibility I
- What are the odds of ?

Discuss what you have written with a partner.

For more information on expressing degrees of certainty, see G21.

6 Talking about sports and keeping fit

Complete the texts with the words in the box.

challenging	dribbled	hacked
off-piste	charging	drown
kickabout	undertow	dragged under
flipped	obsessive	virgin

- I guess I'm a bit (1) about it. I go most weekends to a resort near our town, but the runs aren't that (2) and there isn't much in the way of (3) stuff. I went to Colorado last year, where there was loads of (4) snow. It was incredibly exhilarating.
- We were just having a (1) in the park really, but this one guy was taking it all really seriously, (2) around like a lunatic and screaming at his team-mates if they didn't pass. Anyway, at one point I (3) past him and he tackled me – or rather (4) me down – and he managed to break my leg!
- It was quite frightening actually, because one wave (1) me over and I could feel there was a really strong (2), and I had to kick really hard to stop myself being (3) I did think for a moment I might even (4)

Now complete these texts with the words in the box.

beat	calls	fade	paced
blasted	collapsed	fell apart	play-off
blew	dropped	get	whacking

- It was great. I think I (1) my personal best by about 10 minutes! I felt so strong all the way round and I didn't (2) towards the end like I normally do. I think I (3) myself a bit better – didn't set off so fast. Last time, I really hit the wall and nearly (4) in exhaustion.
- She was playing really well, but then she had a couple of bad line (1) at crucial moments, and I think she let it (2) to her and her whole game just (3) She just kept (4) it out of the court or netting it. It was just embarrassing!
- He completely (1) it. I think he (2) five shots over the last three holes. He could've still got into a sudden-death (3) right at the end, but he (4) it right over the green and took three to get down from there.

Which sports are being discussed in each of the six texts? Do you ever watch – or take part in – any of these sports?

Have you ever seen any of the things described happen – or have they ever happened to you?