



WHY WE HESITATE WHEN WE SPEAK



Scan to review worksheet

Expemo code:

1B9I-37N8-XTLF

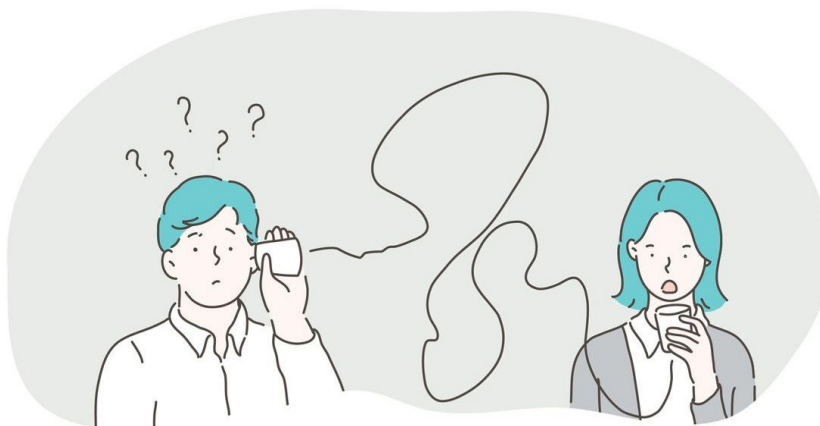


1

Warm up

In pairs, answer the following questions.

- What words and phrases do English speakers use when they are trying to think of what it is they want to say?
- What words do you use in your language to do the same thing?
- Which of the words or phrases in both languages do you use the most? Why?
- Are there any words or phrases in English or your native language which you don't like or annoy you? What are they? Why do they annoy you?





2

Focus on vocabulary**Part A: Match the vocabulary to the correct definitions.**

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 1. <u>renowned</u> (adj.) | a. a pause before acting or speaking, or a word said during that pause |
| 2. <u>lump</u> (v) | b. when actions are taken in a considered and correct way |
| 3. <u>seemingly</u> (adv.) | c. negative feelings or thoughts attached to something |
| 4. <u>hesitation</u> (n) | d. to describe something that has a bad reputation and causes fear. Often used ironically. |
| 5. <u>conscientious</u> (adj.) | e. to decide, usually about someone's attitudes or feelings |
| 6. <u>gauge</u> (v) | f. to group something together with something else, even though they aren't very similar |
| 7. <u>dreaded</u> (adj.) | g. in a manner that may not be true, despite appearing to be |
| 8. <u>stigma</u> (n) | h. well-known and well-respected |

Part B: Now complete the following sentences with the vocabulary from Part A.

1. He always looks so serious; it's difficult to _____ what he is thinking.
2. I saw my _____ Science teacher in town yesterday. He used to put the fear of God into us as children.
3. She's a deeply _____ employee and I think will be very successful in the future.
4. If they offer me the job, I'll accept it without _____. It looks amazing!
5. In many places in the world, there's still a lot of _____ attached to women who don't want to have children. However, attitudes are slowly changing.
6. The wedding was a nightmare. At dinner, they had to _____ me together with all the grandparents because there weren't enough places. We had nothing in common to talk about.
7. At lunch, my boss asked me this _____ innocent question about my plans for the weekend, but I know he's planning to ask me to work.
8. It was so embarrassing! My brother made this smart remark that the guy should check his facts, and then it turned out he's a _____ scientist.

Now in pairs, answer the following questions.

1. How do you usually **gauge** what people are thinking or feeling?
2. Were you a **conscientious** student when you were younger? Or not? Why?
3. In your country, who is **renowned** for improving people's lives?
4. In your country, is there any **stigma** attached to two people living together if they're not married? Or not? Why?
5. What were your most **dreaded** subjects when you were at school? Why?
6. Do you usually make decisions without any **hesitation**, or do you spend a lot of time thinking things through?



3

Listening for details

Listen to the first part of the video (0:00 - 1:08) and answer the following questions.



1. In which languages did ancient texts warn us against using hesitations?
 - a. Latin and Greek
 - b. Chinese and Latin
 - c. Arabic and Greek
2. How did Noam Chomsky describe hesitations?
 - a. As "errors"
 - b. As "functions"
 - c. As "components"
3. What word is used to describe "linguistic fillers which distract from useful speech"?
 - a. Influences
 - b. Fluencies
 - c. Disfluencies
4. How often do hesitations occur in natural speech?
 - a. 3 to 5 times per minute
 - b. 2 to 3 times per minute
 - c. 4 to 6 times per minute
5. Do people use hesitations in sign language?
 - a. Yes, they do.
 - b. No, they don't.
 - c. Only in specific situations.



4

Comprehension

Now listen to the rest of the recording (1:09 - 5:13). Read the following statements and decide if they are True or False.



1. If we compare hesitations to other spoken words we use daily, it can help us to decide if they have more meaning than it appears at first.
2. It's only the tone of someone's voice that gives hesitations any kind of meaning.
3. Linguists refer to hesitations as "filled hesitations".
4. Hesitations can communicate to listeners that significant information is about to be given.
5. Thoughtful speakers use discourse markers, such as "Firstly" and "For instance...", to aid listeners to fully understand what is being said.
6. The way the word "like" is used is very limited in practice.
7. A 2011 study showed that toddlers were confused by instructions containing hesitations.
8. As people become better at using a new language, the number of hesitations they use when speaking reduces.

5

Rephrasing

Read the sentence and choose the best option which means the same thing.

1. I love the film because it has so many layers of meaning.
 - a. I love the film because it can be watched repeatedly.
 - b. I love the film because it can be interpreted in many different ways.
 - c. I love the film because it is important to me.
2. As a young lawyer, Stacy had been imbued with a desire for justice.
 - a. As a young lawyer, Stacy had been interested in working for justice.
 - b. As a young lawyer, Stacy was indifferent to the need for justice.
 - c. As a young lawyer, Stacy used to be filled with a desire for justice.
3. I'm going to the lakes this weekend; I need some time to catch up with myself.
 - a. I'm going to the lakes this weekend; I need to stop thinking so much.
 - b. I'm going to the lakes this weekend; I need some time to think.
 - c. I'm going to the lakes this weekend; I need to finish some tasks I've missed.



4. I see they fished a stolen car out of the river this morning.
 - a. I see they found a stolen car in the river this morning.
 - b. I see they lost a stolen car in the river this morning.
 - c. I see they pulled a stolen car out of the river this morning.
5. Due to the Internet, we're constantly aware of new cultural phenomena entering our lives.
 - a. Due to the Internet, we're constantly aware of new cultural fashions that everyone knows entering our lives.
 - b. Due to the Internet, we're constantly aware of new cultural events that we don't fully understand entering our lives.
 - c. Due to the Internet, we're constantly aware of new cultural dance crazes entering our lives.
6. You said earlier that you have a lot of experience in sales. Can you elaborate for me?
 - a. You said earlier that you have a lot of experience in sales. Can you give me more details?
 - b. You said earlier that you have a lot of experience in sales. Can you give me a definition?
 - c. You said earlier that you have a lot of experience in sales. Can you give me an example?
7. Can you cue the team when you want them to come in?
 - a. Can you phone the team when you want them to come in?
 - b. Can you text the team when you want them to come in?
 - c. Can you signal to the team when you want them to come in?
8. There were some miscommunications to begin with, but I think we've managed to smooth it out.
 - a. There were some miscommunications to begin with, but I think we know why they happened.
 - b. There were some miscommunications to begin with, but I think we can communicate now.
 - c. There were some miscommunications to begin with, but I think we resolved any problems.

Now in pairs, answer the following questions.

1. Which films or books that you've enjoyed have had many layers of meaning?
2. What do you do when you need to catch up with yourself?
3. If someone asked you to elaborate on your experience at school, what would you say?
4. Have you ever had to smooth out a situation? What happened?



6

Talking point

You've been watching a video about how people use "hesitations" naturally in speech and how they can have meaning. In pairs, take it in turns to ask and answer the following sets of questions. For Set A, try your best not to use any hesitations at all. For Set B, use hesitations as you normally would.

Set A

- What is your earliest memory?
- If you could live in any country except your own, where would you live and why?
- Who is the person you most admire and why?
- Which famous person, living or dead, would you most want to have dinner with? Why?

Set B

- You unexpectedly receive \$1 million. What would you do with the money?
- What would your dream job be? Why?
- What is your happiest memory?
- Who is your favourite person? Why?

When you have finished discussing those, answer the following questions.

1. What did you notice about not using hesitations? Was it easy? Harder? What did you do to stop yourself from using them?
2. Was it easier or harder to follow your partner's answer when they used hesitations? Why do you think that is?
3. How much do you think you use hesitations in your natural speech? Too much? Too little? Why is that?

7

Extended activity/homework

Now answer the following questions about the video.

1. In the video, it said that hesitation words can take on layers of meaning. What kind of meaning can you give 'erm' by saying it in different ways? Find as many examples as you can.
2. In the video, it said that people are more likely to remember a word if it comes after a hesitation. Why do you think that is?
3. Think of a story that happened to you in your life. If you were going to tell the story to someone, what discourse markers would you use to help you improve the story?
4. In the video, it said "the dreaded 'like' ...". Why do you think they used the word 'dreaded'?
5. What stigma can using hesitations carry? What do you think of someone when you hear them using a lot of frequent hesitations when they talk?