

## MODULE FOR STRATEGY 9: EXPRESSION OF UNCERTAINTY AND SUGGESTION

Expression of uncertainty and suggestion are common in the short dialogues. Therefore, we have to become familiar with them. The following is the example of expression of uncertainty.

*From the recording, we hear:*

(Man) It wasn't supposed to rain today.

(Woman) It'll let up, won't it?

(Narrator) What does the woman mean?

In the textbook, we read:

(A) It will rain later.

(B) It's probably not going to rain.

(C) It's raining now, but will probably stop.

(D) The rain has already stopped.

The tag question *won't it* changes a definite statement into a statement that shows uncertainty, so the best answer is one expresses uncertainty. The best answer to this question is answer (C) because the word *probably* express uncertainty. The following is another example of expression of uncertainty.

*From the recording, we hear:*

(Man) I can't decide which of these two articles would be more useful to read.

(Woman) As far as I know, you can't go wrong.

(Narrator) What does the woman mean?

In the textbook, we read:

(A) She thinks both articles are equally useful.

(B) She's not familiar with the articles.

(C) These are the wrong articles.

(D) He could read the longer article.

Here, the expression *as far as I know* changes a definite statement into a statement that shows uncertainty, so the best answer is one expresses uncertainty. Therefore, the best answer to this question is answer (A) because the word *thinks* express uncertainty.

Other expression that is common in the short dialogues is the expression of suggestion.

*On recording, we hear:*

(Man) I can't find a typist to finish my term paper by tomorrow morning.

(Woman) Why not do it yourself?

(Narrator) What does the man mean?

In the textbook, we read:

(A) The man should try another type of paper.

(B) The man should locate a typist tomorrow morning week.

(C) The man should make a tape in the morning.

(D) The man should complete the paper without help.

In this example, the expression *Why not* is an expression of suggestion, so the woman suggests the man to do it alone. In this suggestion, the woman is referring to completing the paper without help. Therefore, the best answer is (D).

The following chart lists common expressions that show uncertainty and suggestion:

<b>EXPRESSIONS OF UNCERTAINTY AND SUGGESTION</b>	
<b>UNCERTAINTY</b>	<b>SUGGESTION</b>
<b>... isn't it (tag)?</b>	Why not ,,,?
<b>As far as I know.</b>	Let's ...
<b>As far as I can tell.</b>	How about if ...?

## TRANSCRIPTED EXERCISES

In this exercise, underline the expression of uncertainty or suggestion in each short dialogue.

Choose the best answer to that question.

1. Man Do you know what time they're leaving for the city/

Woman They have to leave at four o'clock, don't they?

Narrator What does the woman mean?

(A) She's not completely sure when they are leaving.

(B) They are returning from the city at about 4:00.

(C) She knows when they are leaving.

(D) She doesn't have any idea when they are leaving.

2. Woman I'm so thirsty from all this walking.

Man Let's stop and get a drink.

Narrator What does the man suggest?

(A) They should stop drinking.

(B) They should go for a walk.

(C) They should walk thirty miles.

(D) They should take a break and have a drink.



## EXERCISES

Listen to the following dialogs. Decide which choice-(A), (B), (C), or (D)-best answers the question about the dialogs, and mark the appropriate answer.

1. (A) He would like a cigarette.  
(B) The woman can smoke if she likes.  
(C) He doesn't want the woman to smoke.  
(D) The woman sells cigarettes.

2. (A) The man wears it quite often.  
(B) It needs to be cleaned.  
(C) The man should wear it.

- (D) The man doesn't want to wear it.
3. (A) Make more popcorn.  
(B) Go to another theater.  
(C) Buy some popcorn.  
(D) Stay at home
4. (A) She could plan the trip.  
(B) She may not feel well.  
(C) She wants to stay at home.  
(D) She can go on the class trip.
5. (A) He doesn't want more coffee.  
(B) His credit card is over limit.  
(C) He doesn't want to use his credit card.  
(D) He'd like to make coffee.
6. (A) The sky is cloudy.  
(B) She doesn't think it's warm.  
(C) She'll open the window herself.  
(D) She wants the window closed.
7. (A) The soup is more expensive than sandwiches.  
(B) The soup is delicious.  
(C) She doesn't know what kind of soup there is.  
(D) The man might enjoy some soup.
8. (A) The kitchen also needs cleaning.  
(B) The living room doesn't have to be cleaned.  
(C) The man shouldn't do the cleaning.  
(D) The woman will clean the kitchen.
9. (A) Go with her to the registrar's office.  
(B) Help her find her way to the registrar's office.

- (C) She will go to the class alone.
- (D) Tell her where to get her own map.

10. (A) Work on their chemistry homework.
- (B) Go to sleep.
  - (C) Have breakfast.
  - (D) Stop studying for a little while.

In listening, we sometimes find dialogs containing emphatic statements of surprise. We need to be familiar with these. When someone directly becomes surprised, it means that he/she does not expect that something is not true. The following is the example of empathic expressions of surprise.

On recording, you hear:

(Woman) Hope you can make it to the dinner tonight. We're serving fish and salad and some fresh corn from my garden.

(Man) Oh, you **DECIDED** to have fish after all.

(Narrator) What had the man assumed?

In the textbook, you read:

- (A) That the woman had caught the fish herself.
- (B) That he wouldn't be invited to dinner.
- (C) That the woman would not serve fish.
- (D) That the woman did not have her own garden.

In this dialogue the emphatic form *you DECIDED to have fish after all* is used to show the man's surprise that the woman finally decided to cook fish. It can be concluded that the man expected the woman would not cook, so the answer must be (C).

We can learn more about expressing emphatic expressions from the table below:

<b>Emphasized Expressions of surprises</b>			
<b>Verb/Aux</b>	<b>Form</b>	<b>Example</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<b>Be</b>	<i>be</i> , with emphasis	Then she <u>is</u> here!	I thought she was not here.

<b>Modal</b>	<i>modal</i> , with emphasis	Then you <u>can</u> play tennis!	I thought you could not play tennis.
<b>present tense</b>	<i>do(es)</i> , with emphasis	Then you <u>do</u> go swimming!	I thought you did not go swimming.
<b>past tense</b>	<i>did</i> , with emphasis	Then she <u>did</u> read it!	I thought she had not read it.
<b>perfect tense</b>	<i>have</i> , with emphasis	Then she <u>has</u> gone there!	I thought she had not gone there.



## EXERCISES

The audio recording contains some emphatic expressions. Listen carefully to the dialog and select the best answer.

- (A) Greg always comes to parties.

(B) Greg does not want to come to the party.

(C) Greg could not come to the party.

(D) Greg wants to be in the party.
- (A) The woman liked to ride a motorcycle to schools.

(B) The woman was not present to school.

(C) The woman was an expert motorcycle rider.

(D) The woman had no knowledge about riding a motorcycle.
- (A) The man was not a very good cook.

(B) The man never invited friends over for dinner.

(C) The man would never invite him over for the party.

(D) The man was good in serving food.
- (A) The woman had run more than three miles.

(B) The woman always got lots of exercises.

(C) The woman spent three hours running in the morning.

(D) The woman had not done much exercises.
- (A) He had not worked in the library.

- (B) He had done something in the library.
- (C) He did his scientific project.
- (D) He worked to do something for several hours.

6. (A) He moved to a new place.
- (B) He preferred staying in the old place.
  - (C) He did not move to another place.
  - (D) He would live to a new house.

7. (A) The woman did not like desserts.
- (B) The woman ate sweets regularly.
  - (C) The woman would not share her dessert.
  - (D) The woman liked desserts.

8. (A) The man was going to study hard.
- (B) The man already registered for the test.
  - (C) The man had no plan to take the test.
  - (D) The man had already taken the test.

9. (A) She had registered in physics.
- (B) She enjoyed the physics class.
  - (C) She had finished her a physics class.
  - (D) She had not planned to take physics.

- 10 (A) The pipes had not been taken care of.
- (B) The plumber would be late.
  - (C) The pipes had been cleared.
  - (D) The pipes did not need to be cleared.

*(From Deborah Phillips' Longman's Complete Course for TOEF test)*