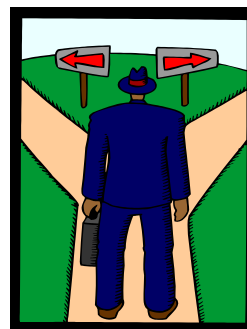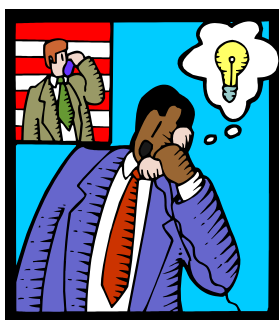| Age group	Adults
Level	2.0 - 2.5
Time needed	50 - 60 min
Learning objective(s)	Meeting Procedure: Making concessions/ difficult decisions
Key skills	Writing & speaking

BUSINESS ENGLISH
MEETING PROCEDURE 06
MAKING CONCESSIONS/MAKING DIFFICULT DECISIONS 03

IN CONTEXT 5-8 min

Making difficult decisions/concessions

Answer:

Do you always agree with the decisions made by your company?

What was a recent decision you agreed with or disagreed with?

Are you always completely convinced or on the contrary disagree entirely with some decisions made by your boss or colleagues?

Match

1. A concession   a. to give (someone) an opinion proposing what should be done

2. A recommendation   b. the act or process to mention or imply as a possibility

3. A suggestion   c. the act or an instance of admitting (as by granting something as a right, accepting something as true, or acknowledging defeat)
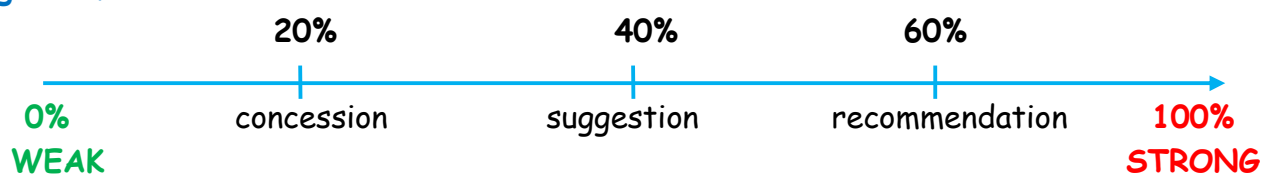
Which is more powerful a suggestion or a recommendation?

Write C for concession, R for recommendation and S for suggestion

Degree of intention / determination

0% WEAK	20% concession	40% suggestion	60% recommendation	100% STRONG

1. _____ Well, I can see your point. You are right in this case.
2. _____ Why don't we…
3. _____ Perhaps we should consider…
4. _____ I admit I didn't see it from this angle.
5. _____ We might want to ….
6. _____ I think the best would be …
7. _____ There isn't another solution concerning …
8. _____ It may in our advantage to ….
9. _____ Hmmmm…. I guess what you propose makes sense.

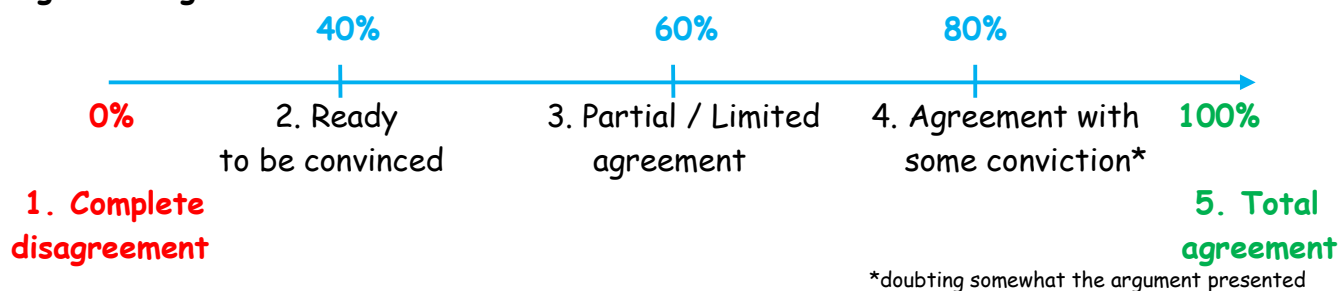Match the phrases 1 to 8 with the degrees of agreement in the table below

Using modal verbs to express degree of agreement

a. I couldn't agree less.

e. It would be a possibility if...

b. You must be joking

f. I couldn't agree more!

c. I may see what you're getting at.

g. I think we might need more time.

d. I should agree, but …

h. OK, I'm with you

Degree of agreement:

40%   60%   80%

0%   2. Ready to be convinced   3. Partial / Limited agreement   4. Agreement with some conviction*   100%

1. Complete disagreement

5. Total agreement

*doubting somewhat the argument presented
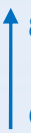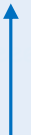
0%	1. Complete disagreement	… …
40%	2. Ready to be convinced	… …
60 %	3. Limited agreement	… …
80%	4. Agreement with some conviction	…
100%	5.Total agreement	…

MODALS MEANINGS and USES
TO EXPRESS AGREEMENT

Modal Verb	Use	Example
Would	**Degree of agreement** ↑ 80% Agreement with some conviction 60% Limited agreement **Also used for** • Conditional* • Intention • Past habit / repeated actions	We **would** go along with you on this! It **would** be a possibility if… - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - If I was here, I **would** do it. * He would drive, but he doesn't have a licence. When I lived in Paris, I **would** always go to the Champs Elysees.
Could	**Degree of agreement** ↑ 100% Total agreement 40% Ready to be convinced (Possibility, low probability) 0% Complete disagreement **Also used for** • Capacity in the past (past of 'can') Polite • permission/request • Suggestion	I **couldn't** agree more I **could** see your point of view. It **could** be the right decision. I **couldn't** agree less - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - I **could** not consider this. **Could** I use your phone please? We **could** discuss it at another time.
May / Might	**Degree of agreement** 40% Ready to be convinced (Possibility, more probable than 'could') - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - **Also used for** • Polite permission/request	I **may** see what you're getting at. I think we **might** need more time. **May** I ask a question? **Might** you be interested in giving your opinion?
Should	**Degree of agreement** ↑ 80% Agreement with some conviction 60% Limited agreement (Rational probability) **Also used for** • Advice	We **should** go ahead on this repairs! I **should** agree, but … You **should** take a decision now.

* Conditional 1: If + present simple, will + verb => If I can talk to her, I'll tell her to come.
Conditional 2: If + past simple, **would** + verb => I **would** go with you if I didn't have to work.
Conditional 3: If + past perfect, **would** have + past participle => If I had known, I **would** have gone with you.

Choose the correct phrase.

1. *I'm really not sure about this.*
   a. It may not be the solution.
   b. It would be a solution.

2. *We do not accept these new work conditions!*
   a. Our team could agree with the new company policies.
   b. Our team could not agree less regarding the new company policies.

3. *Considering the information given, I'd rather support your argument.*
   a. I think you could not have a good argument here.
   b. I would think you have a good argument here.

4. *In my opinion, it's a good idea to accept their offer.*
   a. We should accept these conditions to seal the offer.
   b. These conditions would probably be an advantage for us.

5. *What you propose may have some negative impact financially.*
   a. Your decision would be a threat to the company financial well-being.
   b. Your decision could be a threat to the company financial well-being.

6. *I really think that this is beneficial for the company staff and our business.*
   a. My boss couldn't agree more about this process.
   b. My boss could agree less about this process.

Rewrite these sentences, using would, could, should, may or might.

1. To reduce cost on controlling our product quality is certainly the only option to save jobs.
_____

2. We've all been overwhelmed with a surcharge of work. It's time to hire additional staff.
_____

3. I'm uncertain regarding the effectiveness of this new method for us.
_____

4. I think it sounds like the production ratio per hour has decreased lately.
_____

Write your opinion in each dialog respecting the instruction given.

CONVERSATION 1:

a. Express your total agreement

- Quality control is essential and budget cut is not an option.
- _____

b. Express your limited agreement

- Quality control is essential and budget cut is not an option.
- _____

CONVERSATION 2:

a. Express in your opinion that you are ready to be convinced.

- We should sell some of our research data to generate revenue.
- _____

b. Express your complete disagreement.

- We should sell some of our research data to generate revenue.
- _____

CONVERSATION 3:

a. Express your agreement with some conviction.

- The marketing department proposed a promotional campaign to target young adults to expand our clientele.
- _____

Role-play:
MAKING DIFFICULT DECISIONS

The CEO of your company has a new project. He / She decided to change your company image to a more dynamic and trendy one.

Some propositions have been discussed to start generating ideas on how to proceed to effectively convince the public that your company is the best one among your competitors.

a. With your instructor, think of three possible ways to improve your company image.

b. Your instructor is your company CEO (speaker A) and you are the CEO best advisor (speaker B). Follow the role play instructions to practice making difficult decisions.

SPEAKER A: CEO

Announce your new project &
offer one possible solution.

SPEAKER B: CEO advisor

Express limited agreement
and offer another solution.

Completely disagree and offer the
last solution.

Express agreement with some
conviction

Respond positively and convince with
a strong argument

Express total agreement!

Classify

1. We should think about this further too make an appropriate decision.
2. May I ask you why you are so sure about this?
3. What you've just proposed would make sense only if…
4. It should be discussed!
5. I couldn't agree more.
6. Out of the question! This would not be a viable solution. Let me explain ….

0%	a. Complete disagreement	… …
40%	b. Ready to be convinced	… …
60 %	c. Limited agreement	… …
80%	d. Agreement with some conviction	…
100%	e. Total agreement	…

Select the correct phrase

1. *I think that the marketing team should take on the project and get back to us.*
   a. It is strongly advised that the marketing team leads and is responsible for the project.
   b. It is recommended that the marketing team takes care of the project.

2. *I' m not convinced about this work method! In fact, it doesn't work for me. Humm… it could be suitable for others …*
   a. This method might be a solution.
   b. It should be the right method.

3. *Perhaps we could look at cheaper transportation options to reduce the cost of the trip.*
   a. There are few alternatives for better priced transportations.
   b. I wish we'd search for other less expensive transportations methods.

4. *I'm not against it, but women make better planners as their projection in time is usually longer than men.*
   a. Well… I might see where you are getting at. However women leaders have a vision in business affairs further projected in time than men usually have.
   b. I understand you. That would be suitable for efficient leaders no matter if they are men or women.

Complete the dialogs with the phrases above in *italic*.

1. *Perhaps we could look at cheaper transportation options to reduce the cost of the trip.*

2. *I'm not convinced about this work method! In fact, it doesn't work for me. Humm… it could be suitable for others …*

3. *I'm not against it, but women make better planners as their projection in time is usually longer than men.*

4. *I think that the marketing team should take on the project and get back to us.*

DIALOGS:

Dialog A.
- _____
- Yes, we need assistance from them.

Dialog B.
– This is an innovative learning process.
- _____

Dialog C.
- _____
- That seems a good idea. What do you all think?

Dialog D.
– We need to hire new staff for our middle management positions.
- _____