

Hedging

Hedging is the use of cautious or tentative language. It is commonly used in academic writing, particularly scientific writing, to avoid over-generalisation and soften the tone to make it less absolute.

Verbs

e.g. | appear to
 | seem to
 | tend to
 | think

Example:

Identical twins **tend to** have similar personalities.

Adverbs

e.g. | arguably probably
 | maybe possibly
 | perhaps seemingly
 | presumably

Example:

The failure was **possibly** caused by human mistakes.

Nouns

e.g. | assumption possibility
 | indication probability
 | likelihood tendency

Example:

There is a **tendency** for people in cities to marry later than those in rural areas.

Modal Verbs

e.g. | can may
 | could might

Example:

Housing sales **may** see a gentle rise in the next quarter.

Adjectives

e.g. | likely doubtful
 | possible uncertain
 | probable unlikely

Example:

It is **likely** that online learning will become one of the major learning modes in the future.

Other Phrases

e.g. | commonly often
 | frequently sometimes
 | generally somewhat

Example:

It is **generally** agreed that more funding is needed for education.