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*Instructor's Notes for*  
**Academic Interactions:  
Communicating on Campus**

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## Introduction to the Instructor's Notes for *Academic Interactions: Communicating on Campus*

The tasks in this textbook may not be challenging for most instructors, but in case something is not clear, we have prepared answers to as many of the tasks as possible. Each unit likely contains far more material than can be covered in a semester-long course, so you will probably pick and choose tasks along the way. We don't give lesson plans indicating which exercises must be done or are completely optional. We have assumed that most instructors will probably not need much guidance in this regard. If this is your first experience teaching with transcripts or MICASE, look at the introduction to the textbook, where we have provided some guidance to help you feel comfortable using them.

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### **Readings for Discussion**

Readings are included at the end of the Notes for each unit. These readings can be used to preview the unit or to generate class discussion. We have not included any tasks or questions for the readings, leaving that up to you.

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### **Pronunciation Focus Sections**

We have opted not to include typical pronunciation work that consists of giving rules and having students try to apply those rules as they read words or sentences. That approach can be very problematic given that there is a lot of variation in native speaker pronunciation and trying to find rules that work without exception is impossible. We have therefore taken a "look and see," or perhaps we should say "listen and notice," approach in which students can discover for themselves some guidelines for pronunciation.

In addition to doing the pronunciation tasks, students can collect data from different kinds of speakers or sources. For example, students could first record graduate students and then undergraduate students and then compare the data. Students could go to several news websites and listen to how the same story is presented by the different reporters. By listening to a variety of native speakers, students will begin to be aware of variation as well as the similarities in native-speaker pronunciation.

It is also not necessary for all students to do all Pronunciation Focus sections. You can assign groups of students to different tasks so that students don't get bogged down in doing too much pronunciation homework. This also makes the reporting part of the pronunciation work a bit more inviting. There are, however, some advantages to having several groups do the same task. The groups will likely not all gather the exact same data set; they may come up with different analyses; the students can compare their observations. Comparing observations can lead to some lively discussion, leading to a revision of the rules.

We have provided one Pronunciation Focus per unit in the text, with additional ones in a separate section of the Instructor's Notes.

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## Using the Videos

Transcripts of the video interactions, as well as suggestions for using the videos in the classroom or for homework, can be found at [www.press.umich.edu/elt/tm](http://www.press.umich.edu/elt/tm).

## Instructor's Notes for Unit 1: Names, Places, and Directions

Unit 1 starts with some rather basic but important material on names. Since not knowing how to pronounce someone's name can be a barrier to communicating with that person, we thought this might be a nice place to begin. The latter part of the unit focuses on directions, which most new students need to be able to ask for and understand. We also want our students to have some confidence giving directions.

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### *Task 1 (page 2)*

#### **POPULAR NAMES**

Our students have noticed a number of interesting things. For instance, many of the names for girls end in *a*. The boys' names seem to have some stability, if we consider that *Michael* has remained popular.

Many students have also commented on the fact that many of the names seem to have biblical origins and wonder whether this means that the United States is a very religious country.

Our students also report that names go in and out of fashion in other countries as well, depending on what is going on in the country. A famous singer or actor may be the inspiration for choosing a name regardless of where one lives.

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### *Task 2 (page 2)*

#### **HOW STUDENTS GOT THEIR NAMES**

We can't offer a response here. Instead, we recommend that students view the videos for Unit 1, Names, Scenes 1, 2, 3, in which a few students are talking about how they got their names. Notice how they all use similar vocabulary when talking about their names.

**Task 3 (page 4)**

**COMMON ALTERNATE FORMS OF GIVEN NAMES IN TABLE 1**

Table 1

Male Name 1950	Short Form	Male Name 2007	Short Form
James	Jim	Jacob	Jake
Robert	Bob, Rob, Bobby, Robby	Michael	Mike
John	Jack	Ethan	
Michael	Mike	Joshua	Josh
David	Dave	Daniel	Dan, Danny
William	Will, Willy, Bill	Christopher	Chris
Richard	Rich, Richie, Rick, Ricky, Dick	Anthony	Tony
Thomas	Tom, Tommy	William	Will, Bill, Billy, Willy, Liam
Charles	Chuck	Matthew	Matt
Gary		Andrew	Andy, Drew

Female Name 1950	Short Form	Female Name 2007	Short Form
Linda		Emily	
Mary	Molly	Isabella	Izzy, Belle
Patricia	Pat, Patty, Trish	Emma	
Barbara	Barb, Barbie	Ava	
Susan	Sue	Madison	Maddy
Nancy	Nan	Sophia	
Deborah	Deb, Debbie	Olivia	Libby
Sandra	Sandy	Abigail	Abby
Carol		Hannah	
Kathleen	Kathy, Kate, Katie	Elizabeth	Betsy, Eliza Beth, Liz, Lizzie, Liza

**Task 4 (page 4)**

**EVEN BUSINESSES AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS CAN HAVE NICKNAMES**

McDonald's: Mickey D's

IBM: Big Blue

AT&T: Ma Bell

If your students can't think of other nicknames of businesses, you can consider grocery stores, restaurants, or other stores. In our community some people refer jokingly to the store Target as Tarjay, pronouncing the name as if it were a French name.

**Task 5 (page 4)**

**INTERVIEW OF SOMEONE WHO HAS A NICKNAME AND/OR MIDDLE NAME**

No sample response is possible here, but you could let your students practice formulating questions with you as an interviewee—if you are willing to share this information with your students.



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**Task 6 (page 5)****COMMON SURNAMENES STUDENTS ARE NOT SURE HOW TO PRONOUNCE**

It's hard to know which of the names students will find difficult to pronounce. At our university, most of our students come from Asian countries, and we have very few from Spanish-speaking countries. So for our students, most of the surnames of Spanish origin are hard. In regard to the Spanish surnames, we usually Americanize the pronunciation, rather than pronouncing them as a Spanish speaker would. If we do have Spanish speakers in our classes, we often will have those students pronounce the Spanish names and contrast their pronunciation with ours.

This task can also serve as a springboard for discussing the origins of the U.S. population as suggested by the common surnames. Students generally notice that the top three surnames in 1990 and 2000 are the same, with just a little variation in the top seven. Note that Garcia (#18) and Rodriguez (#22) in 1990 jumped to eighth and ninth respectively in 2000. There are many more surnames of Hispanic origin in the top 30 in the 2000 Census data. For some interesting analysis of surnames in the United States, go to the U.S. Census website. What can students find from the 2010 census?

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**Task 7 (page 5)****NAMES OF PEOPLE STUDENTS INTERACT WITH**

This task can be challenging because students may bring in names that you don't know how to pronounce either. For instance, one student asked about Professor Vimolrat Ngamramvarangul, leaving us no choice but to suggest that the student ask the professor or someone in the department about pronunciation. We don't suggest guiding students only toward names you can pronounce, however. They seem to take some comfort in the fact that we can't pronounce everything either, especially names from other countries or cultures.

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**Task 8 (page 6)****ADDRESSING INSTRUCTORS**

At our university, forms of address vary from College to College and Department to Department. Instructors at our institute are on a first name basis with students. At our Law School, however, students use the title and family name of their professors. In some departments, students will use title and family name until an instructor says the student should call him or her by his or her first name—that is, first names are by invitation only.

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**Task 9 (pages 7–8)****PRONOUNCING NAMES OF CITIES, STREETS, BUILDINGS, AND OTHER IMPORTANT PLACES**

Many years ago one of our students happily announced she was going somewhere for spring break. When asked where, she replied (or more accurately what was heard), "Buh-Follow." She repeated, "Buh-Follow." She realized that no one understood her and then wrote *Buffalo, New York*. The purpose of this task is to help students avoid such frustration and communication breakdowns by having them work on pronouncing important places. We begin with some U.S. cities that students are known to have some difficulty saying. We then move on to other

key locations. We also make sure that students can clearly say their address, phone number, and email address.

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**Task 10 (pages 9–10)**

**CLASSROOM INTERACTION: WHERE TO DROP OFF THE PAPER**

This is the first transcript of the textbook, so the students may be a bit unsure of how to go about reading it. We suggest that you refer to our discussion of how to work with transcripts on pages viii–x in the textbook. We've had success assigning students roles and having them read aloud. If you do so, give the student readers a bit of time to skim over the transcript and ask about pronunciation of some of the words. Note: Ulrich's (a local bookstore) is pronounced Ull-ricks.

1. How would you describe the interaction between the students and the instructor in Turns 1 through 8?

The interaction is very informal. The students are joking a bit (*we're like the core group* in Turn 5 and *we're the good students* in Turn 6). Given that this discussion occurred near the end of the semester, it makes sense that students seem very comfortable with the teacher. Some of our students are comfortable with this kind of talk; others are not.

2. The instructor assumes all of the students know where South University is. What does Student 4 say to indicate that he/she does not know where this street is?

In Turn 14 the student says, *I guess I would have to know where South University is then, right?* The student then laughs. Notice the use of the hypothetical *I would have to know where . . .* that is, *I don't know where . . .* *I guess* also seems to be used to lessen the strength of the point that he/she does not know where South University is. So, in the end, Turn 14 is less direct than Turn 12 where the student directly states that he/she does not know where University Towers is.

3. What kind of help do the students and the instructor give Student 4? Do they actually give directions?

The students don't give directions in the sense of saying find X street and turn right onto Y street. Instead they provide landmarks—places that most students know.

4. How do you give directions? Do you use street names; directions that include north, south, east, and west; landmarks; or something else?

Most people use a variety of strategies, depending on the situation. If we know someone is familiar with the area, we might use landmarks more than streets or directions such as north or south. If the person is unfamiliar with the area, we might use directions more than landmarks, but we would perhaps add a few very noticeable landmarks along the way or the number of streetlights or blocks.

5. In which turn does Student 4 indicate that he/she knows where South University is? What does he/she say?

In Turn 23 he/she says, *Okay, okay I got that street*. The *okay* reveals that he/she now knows where it is.

6. In Turn 27, Student 3 says, *Hill is the cross street*, and in Turn 32, Student 1 notes that the correct cross street is South Forest. What is a *cross street*?

A cross street is a street that intersects another street, usually a main street.

7. Underline the expressions that describe a location. For instance, in Turn 20 the instructor says that Jimmy John's is *at the south end of the quad*.

Turn 9: The paper is due in my mailbox.

My mailbox is in University Towers.

Turn 10: Can we drop it off at the history department?

Turn 13: University Towers is the biggest building on South University, Avenue.

Turn 15: It's by Ulrich's.

Turn 16: South University starts at the Michigan Union . . .

Turn 26: Right next door to Coney Town.

Turn 28: The one is over here on Maynard.

Turn 32: It's on the corner.

Turn 33: And the history department's on the second floor.

8. What is a *quad*? Many campuses have quads but may use other terms to describe these spaces. For instance, Ohio State University has an Oval; Harvard University has a Yard; and the University of Michigan has a Diag as well as a Law Quad.

A *quad* is an open rectangular area that has buildings all around it. On a college or university campus, quads are usually in the center of the main campus area.

9. In Turn 28 the instructor says that one of the buildings is *on Maynard* and, in Turns 29 and 30, Students 1 and 3 don't let the instructor finish the sentence. Do you think this interruption was appropriate? Why or why not?

Given the rapport between the students and the instructor, the interruption seems fine to us. It's another sign that the students are quite at ease with the instructor. Whether interrupting is always acceptable is another matter, of course. Some instructors don't mind being interrupted, but others do.

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**Task 11 (pages 13–14)**

**DIRECTIONS**

1. In Turn 2 the student says, *I'm looking for room sixteen*. What other expressions could he/she have used to ask for direction to Room 16? Write as many as you can.

Ask students to check MICASE to see if the expressions they come up with are there. Keep in mind that many expressions may be fine, even if they are not in the corpus. Here are a few alternatives.

*Can you tell me where Room 16 is?*

*Do you know where Room 16 is?*

*I need to find Room 16.*

2. Student 2 does a very good job of giving feedback to indicate that he/she is following the directions. Write the expressions he/she uses to accomplish this.

The student uses a lot of *okays* and *mmkays*. These are forms of back channeling.

3. What verbs does Student 1 use to direct Student 2 to the room? Which of these verb phrases would work as well?

*take a right*    *walk left*            *go right*

*turn left*        *hang a right*            *stay left/stay to your left*

They all seem fine to us. Students may not realize that *walk left/stay left* and *go left* do not mean the same thing.

4. List the prepositional phrases that Student 1 uses to identify a location (for instance, the rooms are *on the first floor*).

Turn 3: Okay, we're *at the central desk* and all the rooms are *behind us*, kind of.

Turn 5: it'll be *on your right hand side*.

It's *right next to the elevator*.

You might want to talk about *right* in this and other examples. *Right* has a number of meanings that students should be aware of in the context of directions. In addition to *right* as a direction (not left), *right* can also mean "in a straight line or directly" (as in *walk right down this hallway; the elevator is right on your left!*), or even "completely" as in *walk right through the building*.

You may also want to point out the use of the progressive (Turn 7: *You're making a right*). Progressive is used here to enable the listener to imagine actually doing what he/she is being told to do. It's as if the two are walking together and the speaker is narrating as they go.

5. Here are some other common expressions indicating a location. The prepositions have been omitted. Choose a preposition that can complete each expression.
- a. The Modern Language Building is **on/at** the corner of Thayer and Washington streets.
  - b. The International Center is **at** State and Madison Streets.
  - c. The Science Library is **in** the Dow Building **on** Hubbard Road.
  - d. The lecture hall is **on** the 4<sup>th</sup> floor.
  - e. Our classroom is **at** the end of the hallway.
6. In Turn 5 Student 1 says, *You want to go through the double doors and pass the copy room.* Can you think of another expression that could have been used besides *you want to go*?

*Go through the double doors.*

*You should go through the double doors.*

*You need to walk through the double doors.*

7. How does Student 1 respond when Student 2 says *thank you* in Turn 8? What other responses are possible in this turn?

The student says, *sure*. He/she could also have said *no problem* or *you're welcome*. See page 107 in the text for more on *thank you*.

8. Now, look at a map of your town or campus. Describe for your partner the locations of a library and/or health service facility (clinic or hospital). Your partner will describe where to find a post office and a theater or performing arts center.

Answers will vary.

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**Task 12 (page 15)**

**DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCATION OF A FAVORITE RESTAURANT,  
STORE, COFFEE SHOP, OR OTHER PLACE**

We can't give an answer here, but the video (Unit 1: Places and Directions) will give you some material to work with.

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**Task 13 (page 17)**

**ELLIPSIS**

- 1. **Student 1:** I see a bird. I see an American Goldfinch.
- 2. **Student 2:** Where?  
**Missing elements:** Subject and verb  
**Full form:** Where is the bird/it?

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3. **Student 1:** Down there. In that bush over there.  
**Missing elements:** Subject and verb.  
**Full form:** The bird is/It's down there.  
The bird/It's in the bush over there.
4. **Student 2:** Where?  
**Missing elements:** Subject and verb  
**Full form:** Where is the bird/it?
5. **Student 1:** The taller one, the closest. See the um, that that dead branch?  
**Missing elements:** Subject and verb  
**Full form:** The bird/it is in the taller one.  
Do you see that dead branch?
6. **Student 2:** That branch up there? Yeah I see it. To the left of it? I was looking at that bird, but I couldn't . . . I didn't know what that was.  
**Missing elements:** Subject and verb  
**Full form:** Do you mean that branch up there?/Is it/the bird in that branch up there?  
Do you mean to the left of it?

The subject and verb are missing throughout. These elements are considered unnecessary because the speaker believes the listener can supply the missing information. At the beginning, the focus is on the bird so it is not necessary to repeat. For the questions, the listener should know that he/she is being addressed.

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## Reading for Discussion

### Crazy Baby Names?

Not long ago, the *Times of London* created a list of some of the most unusual names that celebrities have chosen for their children. Atypical baby names are not a new phenomenon, nor is choosing an unusual name a practice limited to the rich and famous. In fact, non-celebrities and celebrities probably choose out-of-the-ordinary names with the same frequency. The only difference is that the names chosen by well-known public figures are much more likely to be a focus of media attention. Some of the more extraordinary names are listed.

Apple: chosen by Chris Martin and Gwyneth Paltrow

Brooklyn: chosen by David and Victoria Beckham, who also have children named Romeo and Cruz

Fifi Trixibell: chosen by Bob Geldof and Paula Yates, who also have children named Peaches and Pixie

Hopper: chosen by Sean Penn and Robin Wright

Ireland: chosen by Alec Baldwin and Kim Basinger

Jermajesty: chosen by Jermaine Jackson and Alejandra Genevieve Oaziaza

Moon Unit: chosen by Frank Zappa, whose two other children are Dweezil and Diva Muffin

Sage Moonblood: chosen by Sylvester Stallone and Sasha Czack

Pilot Inspektor: chosen by Jason Lee and Beth Riesgraf

Moxie CrimeFighter: chosen by Penn Jillette, who also has a child named Zolten

(Information from *Times Online* 2007)

## Instructor's Notes for Unit 2: Academic Life: Student and Instructor Roles

The tasks in this unit provide a means for students to learn more about the various academic roles of students and instructors in U.S. colleges and universities through interviews, to share their experiences as students, and to learn more about topics such as emailing instructors, the benefits of complaining, grades, and the role of the advisor.

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### *Task 1 (pages 23–24)*

#### **ONE STUDENT'S EXPERIENCE**

The student in Task 1 attends a private, first-tier university in Chicago, a midwestern U.S. city. To a degree, his experiences are shaped by the institution that he is enrolled in. Students can benefit, however, from exploring how the adjustments he has had to make compare with their own. This warm-up activity works well in small groups.

1. Does it appear that Apratim is adjusting well to university life in Chicago? Why or why not?

Apratim seems to have adjusted well to a faster pace of learning and discussion-oriented classes. The food and the cold Chicago winters may continue to be a problem for him, but he approaches these topics with humor.

2. What clues does Apratim give you about what type of school he attends? What kind of student do you think he is?

He attends a school that sets high standards for students. Apratim enjoys the academic challenges (*serious fun*) and quiriness of his professors. He is awed by the intellectual level of professors. He is likely a bright, hard-working student.

3. Apratim refers to his professor as *this goofy British guy who keeps doing weird stuff in class*. What's his opinion of this professor? How can you tell? What does *goofy* and *weird stuff* mean?

He obviously likes his physics professor. He gives the wheelchair example to illustrate the professor's clever way of introducing the topic of rocket propulsion. In this context, his description of the professor as a *goofy* (kind of silly or crazy) guy who does *weird stuff* (strange, odd things) in class shows a fondness for the professor.



## 4. Give a couple of examples of how this student exaggerates to make a point.

Apratim gives the impression that students in Chicago eat burgers, fries, and pizzas for breakfast, lunch, and dinner every day. While this is an exaggeration, he was likely surprised at the typical diet of some university students or the number of fast food places in his neighborhood. The Indian food he mentions (masalas and achars) is probably unfamiliar to many of his U.S.-born classmates. He also amuses us with his exaggerated description of weather in which *coffee in your hand will freeze* and *polar bears will die* to illustrate how cold the Chicago winters are.

## 5. This student uses a lot of interesting expressions. Explain the expressions in italics.

- life of the mind *blah-blah* is for real
- Think burgers and fries and pizzas *24/7*
- Think salads . . . that *yucky green stuff* your mom forced you to eat
- I'm not involved with any clubs and other activities because *I have enough on my plate* right now.
- The Ratner Athletic Center here has *awesome workout facilities*.
- And don't even try to imagine the cold. . . . *We in India can't fathom it*.

The expressions that Apratim uses are commonly heard on campus. Instructors may wish to expand the discussion by asking students to contribute some expressions that they have frequently heard.

*Blah-blah* often refers to words that the speaker considers boring, redundant, promotional, uninteresting, unimportant, or lengthy. While the term is often used sarcastically, in this case the student's purpose is to advise students not to be dismissive of what they have heard about this school being intellectually challenging.

*24/7* means 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

*Yucky* in *yucky green stuff* means "bad-tasting" or even "disgusting." *Green stuff* likely refers to lettuce or, more generally, raw salads or food at a salad bar. *Stuff*, which is a non-countable noun, and *things*, which is countable, are used in place of a more specific term like *food*, or to refer to several items, like papers, books, and letters on a desk.

*I have enough on my plate* means "I have enough or too many things to do at this point."

*Awesome* means "fantastic," "great," "fabulous" (currently abbreviated to *fab*), "tremendous," or "amazing."

*Fathom* means "grasp," "imagine," or "understand." He is saying that there is no way Indians who have not experienced Chicago weather can understand how really cold it is.

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**Tasks 2 and 3 (pages 25–27)**

**IN-CLASS INTERVIEW**

Answers will vary.

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**Task 4 (pages 27–28)**

**ASKING FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS**

As interviewers, international students tend to work from a fixed set of prepared questions. Follow-up questions are a useful tool to delve into a topic that the interviewer has raised. They also serve to keep a conversation going. Students may wish to discuss follow-up questions they raised during Task 2.

These are some possible follow-up questions to the students' responses.

1. Question: When you first became a university/college student, what was the hardest thing to get used to?

Response: My roommate stayed up later than I did and wanted to keep the light on.

Possible follow-up question: How did you handle that?

2. Question: Can you give me an idea of what one of your instructors is like?

Response: My art instructor seems rather informal. He wears blue jeans to class. We're supposed to call him by his first name.

Possible follow-up questions: In the past, how have instructors you've had dressed? How does the way the art instructor dresses influence your opinion of him?

3. Question: Do you just study or do you also have a job?

Response: I work and study.

Possible follow-up questions: What kind of work do you do? How does working make it harder to keep up with classwork?

4. Question: What was your first day of classes like?

Response: It was really embarrassing. I missed my first class because I got on the wrong bus.

Possible follow-up question: What did you do about missing class? Did you say anything to the instructor?

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**Task 5 (pages 28–30)****DESIGNING YOUR REQUEST FOR AN INTERVIEW**

Some students are reluctant to introduce themselves to a stranger. Practicing with a partner generally helps students feel more confident. Even if they are interviewing their friends, they should explain the assigned task and make a polite request for an interview. They should also practice ending their interview using one of the strategies listed on page 29 in the textbook.

	Purpose
Hi. My name is Adam.	Self-introduction
I'm a first-year student at the university	Status in / connection to the university
and I'm doing an interview on campus life for one of my classes.	Introduction of the assigned interview task
Would you have a couple of minutes to answer some questions for me?	Polite request for an interview

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**Task 6 (page 30)****STUDENT INTERVIEW**

Answers will vary.

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**Task 7 (page 31)****OBSERVING THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT**

This group discussion gives students the opportunity to share some general observations about classroom behavior. Some comments we've heard: Students bring food into the classroom, professors sit on the desk, there are homework assignments every day, students call their instructors by their first names, and students speak up in class. Most of our students say that they have trouble participating in class. See Unit 5 for an in-depth look at classroom discussion.

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**Task 8 (page 31)****INTERVIEWS ON CLASSROOM EXPERIENCES**

Answers will vary.

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**Task 9 (page 32)****YOUR INSTRUCTOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES**

Many students think that the main duty of their instructors is to teach. They are generally unaware of the range of activities that instructors are involved in and the ways they collaborate with students and colleagues outside of class. This short task provides a segue to the monologue in Task 10, in which an engineering professor describes his typical non-teaching day.

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**Task 10 (pages 32–34)**

**A PROFESSOR'S DAY**

When comparing their answers in Task 9 to this professor's daily responsibilities, students are surprised at the sheer number of activities he is involved in and the amount of time he spends with students in research-related tasks. Because students may not generally understand the hiring and tenure process or categories of instructors, it is helpful to discuss these topics at this point in the unit.

1. What's your reaction to this professor's account of his typical day? Does anything surprise you?

Our students are often surprised at the number of non-teaching activities this professor is involved in and his rigorous work schedule.

2. On his non-teaching day, what types of contact does he have with students? His colleagues?

On this day, the professor appears to have more involvement with his students than with his colleagues. He has two research group meetings, one during lunch with his student research assistants. He is probably a member of the dissertation committee of one of his students, and attends a review of her dissertation before she has her oral defense. He also meets with his teaching assistants, likely to discuss their participation in the courses he teaches. (While he doesn't mention it, his full-time teaching load is probably about six hours a week. His is a research-centered institution and his major role is as a researcher.) He meets up with his colleagues when he attends a talk by a candidate who has applied for a faculty position and later goes out to dinner with them. He takes an active role in choosing his future colleagues.

3. In Sentence 1, what does the professor mean by a *snapshot* of his daily life?

By *snapshot* of his daily life, he means that he gives us a picture of a particular day to illustrate what his daily activities are generally like.

4. In Sentence 6, the professor says, *I rush to my office, answer email, put out a few fires.* What's another way of saying *put out a few fires*?

*Put out a few fires* means to "resolve a few issues" or "take care of a few problems."

5. In Sentence 6, the professor refers to a *bunch* of reference letters, and in Sentence 9, he talks about having more *stuff* to do. What do *bunch* and *stuff* mean? Is this academic English? Check MICASE to see how common these expressions are.

*Bunch* means "a number of" or "a group of" and *stuff* means "things" or "tasks." These terms are used frequently in spoken academic contexts but not in formal academic writing.

6. In Sentence 6, the professor begins by using the present tense and ends by using the past tense. Why?

He may be using present tense because answering his email and putting out fires are tasks he does regularly. He uses past tense to refer to a task, writing reference letters, that he did on this particular day (*in this case*). Another possible explanation is that speakers sometimes switch from past to present tense as they narrate a sequence of events in English. This use of the historical present serves to make more salient events that occurred in the past.

7. What does *Got that done* mean in Sentence 8? This is an example of ellipsis. What word has been eliminated, and why is it possible to eliminate it? (Further discussion of ellipsis can be found in Units 1 and 5.)

*Got that done* means "I finished it." One common type of ellipsis is the elimination of the subject *I*. When the subject is eliminated in these statements, it means that the speaker is talking about himself or herself. Some other examples are: *Gotta go. Can't wait to see you. Talked to my parents. Finished my term paper.*

8. The professor uses the time expression *right after that* in Sentences 6, 12, and 14. Why does he use that particular expression?

His calendar on this particular day is packed. He likely chooses this expression to emphasize that he finishes one task and then goes right on to another. No doubt the pace of many of his non-teaching days is similar to this one.

9. What does the professor mean when he says faculty candidates *come through* in Sentence 14? Why do they *come through*? In Sentence 15, the professor says *I went and attended that*. What does *that* refer to?

In this case, *comes through* means "makes a campus visit for a job interview." When final candidates for a faculty position are invited to campus, they are expected to give a talk to the members of the department. The professor attends so that he can converse with the candidate about the talk over dinner.

10. In Sentence 21, the professor discusses a telephone call he makes to his wife. What's the purpose of the call? What does he say to her and what is her response?

The professor is aware that he forgot to tell his wife that he wouldn't be home for dinner. But he says, *I think I mentioned this to you but I may have forgotten*, probably to play down his mistake or deflect criticism. She tells him he *sure did* forget, which could indicate that she is annoyed. She may have already prepared dinner or made other plans.

11. The professor discusses *R*s and *W*s in his schedule. What does it tell you about the professor's home life?

The professor spends at least some of his evenings at home working, reading (R) and writing (W). Because of his busy schedule during the day, he has to dedicate time in the evening to keep up with his field and to write up his research. Even though he relaxes (R) and watches (W) TV, his work is a central part of his life. His work seems to impinge on his personal life.

12. Finally, how does the professor organize his presentation?

Chronologically. Narratives like this one are organized as a sequence of events from first to last.

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**Task 11 (page 34)**

**INTERVIEWING AN INSTRUCTOR**

Instead of interviewing their instructors, some students may want to interview their TAs to find out how they juggle their work and studies.

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**Task 12 (pages 35–37)**

**EMAILING YOUR INSTRUCTOR**

Emailing is discussed in detail in Unit 3. This task is aimed at making students aware that email has become an established way to get in touch with instructors but that important guidelines about when and how to communicate via email are determined by the individual instructor.

1. In what circumstances do these instructors suggest students email them?

Five of these instructors encourage their students to email them when they have questions or want input.

Excerpt 1: for questions about the basic math review

Excerpt 2: for questions on the lecture topic

Excerpt 3: for input from the professor about ideas students have (appears to be in reference to an opinion paper assignment requiring students to give evidence to support their point of view)

Excerpt 5: for questions about homework problems

Excerpt 6: for questions about assigned papers

In general, students are encouraged to write their instructors with questions about the homework, including longer paper assignments, and the materials covered in class.

2. What alternatives to email does the instructor suggest in Excerpt 1?

While encouraging students to contact her by email, at the same time she invites them to come to office hours. Instructors are generally willing to see students outside of office hours if they have a time conflict. See Excerpt 5. Students who cannot go to

scheduled office hours should be able to make an appointment with their instructor outside of office hours.

3. What limitations do professors place on emailing in Excerpts 3 and 4? Explain.

In Excerpt 3, the instructor isn't willing to tell the students how to do the assignment but will give students feedback on their ideas.

In Excerpt 4, the instructor makes it clear that he will not provide the assignment to anyone who was absent. Students who were not in class will have to find out the homework from another student.

It is important for students to be aware that most instructors are willing to answer questions via email but may limit the types of questions they will answer.

Questions on page 37.

1. In Excerpt 1, what does the instructor mean by *that* when he says *if you're intimidated by that, don't be*?

The instructor anticipates that some students will be nervous about approaching her with questions and wants to reassure them that she is available.

2. In Excerpt 4, what does the instructor mean by *I suggest you not email me, much less call me*?

The instructor is telling students who miss class not to email him; he feels even more strongly about not wanting students to call him on the phone.

3. In Excerpt 4, what is a *buddy*?

A *buddy* is pal or a partner. A buddy system is an arrangement in which people are paired up to help each other out. The instructor assumes students will have a buddy. But in our experience, international students often don't. Students should be encouraged to get to know at least one person in class.

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**Task 13 (page 38)**

**HOMEWORK DISCUSSION**

Answers will vary. Most of our students are surprised by the amount of homework and the time it takes to complete it.

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**Task 14 (pages 38–40)**

**HOMEWORK STORIES**

1. In Excerpt 1, what appears to be the storyteller's attitude toward homework? How about the storytellers in Excerpt 2?

In Excerpt 1, the student did the homework but, because she was working, didn't have time to review before her classes later in the week, which probably limited her ability to

18 Instructor's Notes, Academic Interactions

participate in class discussion. Because of the high cost of tuition at many universities, it is common for students to both work and study. Attempts to juggle work and classes may lead to lower academic performance. In Excerpt 2, the storytellers both seem to be concerned about being behind in their homework and appear to be trying to catch up with their stats homework by going to office hours.

2. What do you think is the underlying purpose of each story?

In the first excerpt, the narrator illustrates how difficult it is to work and study at the same time. Even though this student was diligent, she could not perform her best in class.

The second narrator tells her account of the forgotten backpack to explain why she is behind in her classwork. The third narrator jumps in to share her story of how an illness also put her behind in her studies. These stories illustrate the important role that homework plays in student life and how unforeseen events can quickly cause students to fall behind in their school work.

3. In the second excerpt, the students are attending office hours. Why? Why do you think the instructor begins the session by asking the student to tell her story about her homework?

The students are likely at office hours because they want additional help. The student has already told the instructor that she is behind in her homework. Maybe the instructor asks her to tell the story because it provides some humor but also because she is sympathetic. In responding to the student who has been sick, she acknowledges that some things happen that are beyond students' control. See Unit 4 for a longer discussion on office hours.

4. In Excerpt 1, what do these expressions mean?

- So, on Friday I'd *hit the books*.

*Hit the books* means "really study hard." Other expressions with a similar meaning include *tackled my homework*, *dove into my homework*.

- *I was a wreck* when I graduated.

Here *I was a wreck* appears to mean "mentally or physically exhausted," "worn out," "in bad physical health." *Wreck* is often used by students to describe how they feel after giving an oral presentation or *pulling an all-nighter* (staying up all night).

In the first story in Excerpt 2, what do these expressions mean?

- I'm the biggest *nerd*. (Turn 2)

A *nerd* is someone who studies all the time and doesn't have much of a social life. Nerds are generally considered to be quite smart but lacking in social skills. In teen movies, stereotypical nerds are generally seen wearing glasses and hanging out with each other.

- You must be *freaking out*. (Turn 4)

To be *freaking out* means "to be in a panic."



There can be more discussion of expressions used by students to talk about their experiences, such as *I was really bummed out about my grade, I bombed that test, I almost flunked the exam, and I aced the final.*

5. In Turn 4 of Excerpt 2, the speaker uses the word *like* a number of times. How is it being used? What does the speaker mean by *so, whatever?*

*Like* is being used as a filler, like *um* or *uh*. Fillers don't provide additional information to the listener. They are ways to fill a space or gap while the speaker pauses before beginning to speak again. Fillers are frequently used in conversations among university students. *So, whatever* is often used as an expression of indifference. Here, however, the speaker seems to be using it to show that she is resigned to her situation (being behind in her classes).

6. Turn 8 has an example of ellipsis. What word is missing? (See Units 1 and 5 for more discussion on ellipsis.)

*Got this stomach infection* is an example of ellipsis in which the subject *I* is eliminated.

7. In Turn 10, why does the group laugh?

It's uncertain. Perhaps his instructor is the opposite sex.

8. In Turn 10, what does Student 3 mean by *it's just one thing after another?*

Here *it's just one thing after another* means that once you solve one problem, another emerges—if it's not one problem it's another.

9. In Turn 12, Student 2 says, *College'll do it to you.* What does she mean by *it?*

She's saying that in college it's hard for students to keep up with their work. *College'll* is a nice example of a contraction using a NOUN + *will*. Other examples of *will do that to you* include *work'll do that to you* (keep you from getting good grades); *studying too much'll do that to you* (turn you into a nerd); *eating dorm food'll do that to you* (make you fat).

10. Some names of course subjects or fields of study are abbreviated in spoken academic English. For example, in Excerpt 2 the students talk about *stats* as a short form for their Statistics class. What about the following classes or units? How could you shorten them?

Economics	econ	Architecture	arch (arc)
Literature	lit	Biology	bio
Chemistry	chem	Anthropology	anthro
Natural sciences	nat sci	Business School	B-school
English Composition	English comp, comp	Calculus	calc

Students may have heard other abbreviations to add to the list. They can also discuss abbreviations of names of buildings on campus.

11. Tell a homework story about yourself to your group or class, or ask a friend or instructor if they have a homework story to tell.

Answers will vary. Many of our students talk about how they underestimated time needed to do homework.

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**Task 15 (page 41)**

**I LOVE HOW**

1. How is the student using the expression *I love how* in this excerpt? Is she happy, critical, angry, ironic, or sarcastic? What kind of facial expression do you imagine she has?

She's pointing out the irony of the situation. She considers herself a procrastinator, but it turns out that she was the only one who got her homework done for class. Maybe she has a look of surprise. *I really like how* can be used in place of *I love how*.

2. How is *I love how* used in these examples?

- a. *I love how* Pat uh um uh Pat comes late to the meetings but then gets mad when someone else is late.

The student is being critical of Pat, who seems to criticize others for the same behavior (being late) that he exhibits. *I love how* has the opposite meaning from what students might expect it to mean.

- b. *I love how* you answered you answered uh that question in class. The instructor was surprised you knew so much about the topic.

In this case, the student is praising the classmate for his or her knowledge of the subject.

- c. *I love how I love how I* I get a good grade one day and then a bad grade the next.

Here the student uses *I love how* to point out her inconsistent behavior. She may be expressing disappointment, irritation, or confusion.

Students can bring examples of conversations in which they hear *I love how*. By paying attention to the speaker's tone and the particular context, they should be able to determine how it is being used.

3. The short excerpt contains fillers (words or sounds that don't provide content), some repetitions, and false starts. What are they?

I love how like (filler), I love how (repetition) I'm like (filler) the only one who read [the assignment], seeing how I usually never (false start), you know (filler) I usually do my homework just right before I come to class.

4. How would you compare your study habits to this student's?

Answers will vary.

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**Task 16 (page 42)**

**DISCUSSING INDIRECT COMPLAINTS**

1. Do you think ICs are common in all cultures?

We think ICs are fairly common across cultures, but the extent to which they are used (publicly or privately) varies.

2. and 3.

Answers will vary.

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**Task 17 (pages 43–45)**

**COMPLAINING ABOUT THE AMOUNT OF HOMEWORK**

1. In Turn 1, Jane begins by asking a question. Does she expect an informative answer?

Jane's complaint that there is too much homework is stated in the form of a question. Nick answers the question rather than acknowledging the complaint. Jane probably expects support for her complaint, especially since students often complain about having too much homework as a way of building rapport.

2. What kind of responses do Nick and Amy make after Jane's initial complaint about the homework? Do they respond in one of the six ways suggested on page 42?

Amy responds by agreeing/commiserating (Turn 7), which is what Jane likely expects. But Nick simply takes Jane's question literally. His response could be considered contradictory (Turn 3) in that he defends the object of the complaint, in this case the instructor. He does join in on the complaining in Turn 5 but later, in Turn 14, points out that the homework isn't as heavy as they had thought and steers the group back to the task at hand in Turn 18. Some may view Nick's initial response to Jane as a lost opportunity at relationship-building with the group members. Others may see it as a desire to avoid responding to the complaint in order to get the homework done.

3. Jane gets two responses. Which one might she prefer, and why?

She probably prefers Amy's response; Amy expresses agreement with her; she even uses the word *torture* to exaggerate her complaint. Nick's answer seems to be unusual since students typically bond by commiserating with each other on topics like the type and quantity of homework and exams. Here, at least initially, he seems to side with the instructor, rather than Jane.

4. How similar (or different) are Nick's and Jane's attitudes toward the homework? How did you decide?

Nick appears to take a more positive attitude toward the homework. However, Jane eventually begins to take the homework seriously. Her complaint about the quantity of homework may not be any indication of how well she is doing in the course.

5. How would you characterize Jane's *I really like how . . .* opening statement in Turn 4? In Turn 4 it is being used as a criticism. It is similar to Example 2a in Task 15.

6. In Turn 6, Jane says something that is transcribed with quotation marks around it. This expression is what is sometimes called a *pseudo-quotative*. What do the quotation marks indicate?

She is mimicking what she thinks her professor's response would be to their complaints. This use of a pseudo-quotative is a means of mocking the instructor. Instructors may wish to say the pseudo-quotative in the tone that Jane likely used so that students can see how it can be said rather sarcastically.

7. At the end of Turn 6, Jane comments, *Yeah, whatever*. What does she mean by *whatever*? Here *yeah, whatever* is being used sarcastically to show the speaker is not in agreement. Students should be informed of the dangers of using *whatever*. A person who is indifferent to a list of choices may respond with *whatever* to show that he or she doesn't have a particular preference for any of the choices. However, *whatever* is currently being said in a more negative tone to indicate that the speaker is expressing disagreement at being expected to go along with a decision, opinion, requirement, etc.

8. In Turn 13, Amy says, *Oh, you've got to be kidding*. What other expressions would have gotten her point across?

Some other expressions are *Oh, I don't believe it*, *Oh, no*, and *That can't be right! You must be joking. Are you serious?!*

9. Would you say that this type of complaining episode is common among undergraduates? It would generally be considered typical. Students can be asked to give more examples of typical complaints they have heard. Many of our students complain about, among other things, the amount of homework they get and the difficulty of keeping up with all of it. Sharing and responding to complaints about academic life with friends is an important aspect of international students' adjustment to a new environment. Notice that exaggeration plays a role in complaining. Amy says the instructor *wants to torture us* and, in Task 1, Apratim exaggerates how cold Chicago winters are. Exaggeration is often intended to be funny.

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### **Task 18 (pages 45–47)**

#### **COMPLAINTS AND RESPONSES**

Complaint: Turn 20, *fun but kind of painful*

Response: Turn 21 (questions—asking for more information), *oh it's just the two of you?*

Complaint: Turn 31, *it's humiliating to have to write for more money*

Responses: Turn 31 (agreement/commiseration), *yeah*; Turn 32 (commiseration), *I just hate having to look for money*; Turn 33 (agreement/commiseration), *I hate applying for summer money*; Turn 33 (agreeing/commiserating), *it's always such a big deal*

Complaint: Turn 34, *I know this sounds sounds really pompous but I just don't wanna work this summer*

Responses: Turn 34 (commiseration/agreement), *Yeah*, Turn 35 (advice/lecture?), *Yeah, that's why I go to Africa . . . I don't actually do anything regarding with books*

Complaint: Turn 36, *I need to read read read. I need to get one of those like boring jobs like nine to five*

Response: Turn 37 (agreement/commiseration), *That's no fun*

Complaint: Turn 38, *Paying stupid rent in this town*

Responses: Turn 39 (agreement/commiseration), *Oh yeah, I know what you mean*; Turn 40 (agreement/commiseration), *mhm*; Turn 41, (complaint and further agreement/commiseration) *Too expensive*; Turn 42, *Yeah it is. (agreeing/commiserating)*; Turn 43, *The beer is expensive too. It's so, it's most annoying*

Complaint: Turn 46, *Most unfortunately*

Responses: Turn 47, (questions—asking for more information), *Well, what happens when you drink it?*; Turn 49 (agreement/commiseration), *That's so unfortunate*

In this task students ask each other to share their plans for the summer. In-class discussion can include examples of how students keep the conversation going by showing enthusiasm and asking questions (Turn 25: *How 'bout you?*) and asking for more details or posing follow-up questions (Turn 13: *Who do you stay with when you go, or where do you stay when you go there?*) The passage is also a nice example of how one topic leads to another. The high cost of rent leads to the high cost of alcohol, which then leads to the discussion of S4's allergy to alcohol. Students are actively engaged in the give and take.

This may be a nice task to refer to at the end of the semester when students are talking about their plans for winter or summer vacation.

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### **Task 19 (page 48)**

#### **HOMEWORK AND GRADES**

1. How will the GSI (TA) assign grades for the discussion section of the course?

The GSI (TA) doesn't say how she will decide the discussion grades, which count 30 percent of the grade for the course. She tells students not to waste their time but does not explain what she means by that. Students should be encouraged to ask the GSI how she plans to decide the discussion grade.

2. The GSI (TA) tells students they should write their own words or make their own diagrams. Does this match her definition of plagiarism?

She tells students that plagiarism is "when you write something and it's not your own ideas or your own words." This definition is broader because it includes "not writing your own ideas," which would mean that students may write the same ideas as another member of their group as long as they word them differently. Again, students should ask for clarification. It's important for them to understand both their instructors' attitudes and university policies regarding plagiarism.

3. and 4.

Answers will vary.

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**Task 20 (pages 49–51)**

**SEEKING ADVICE FROM AN ADVISOR**

1. What does GPA mean?

Grade point average. Students are generally assigned grades and corresponding numbers for each course—for example, A = 4 points. Taking into account the number of credits each course is worth, these numbers are averaged together to arrive at the student's grade point average. It is important for students to be aware of the number values given to their grades by their college or university.

2. Are you familiar with a grading system in another academic culture? Describe the system.

Generally, all international students are familiar with the grading system in their own academic culture. What may be hard for them to determine is how to equate grades in two different systems and the implications of their academic standing. It's interesting to note that the native-speaking student in this task doesn't appear to realize that his GPA would not likely be considered good enough for admission to the business school. Another topic of discussion you may wish to bring up at this point is grade inflation, since it is common in some U.S. universities. Students may be pleased with their A- until they find out that the class average was an A-.

3. What decision does the student need to make? Why?

The student needs to decide whether to drop his math class. He is not doing well and he doesn't want to get a grade that would hurt his GPA.

4. While the student is speaking, what feedback cues does the advisor give? In other words, how does the advisor indicate that she is listening? When the advisor is speaking, how does the student indicate he is listening?

In Turns 4 and 10, the advisor shows she is listening by saying *mhm*. In Turn 8, she responds positively to the student's new homework strategy by saying *which helps*. The student shows that he is listening by saying *right* throughout the conversation (Turns 3, 13, 15, 18). He also uses *yeah* in Turns 8 and 10 to let the advisor know that she is correct.

5. In Turn 3, how does the advisor approach the problem?

The advisor listens to the student's story and gathers information that might help the student evaluate how he is currently doing in the class (Turn 3). She also asks for clarification (Turn 5). She summarizes what the student has said about his initial inability to figure out how to study for the course but points out that he now has a better idea of

what strategies to use to *keep on track* (Turn 13, *I'm hearing a couple of things*). She also shows she is listening by back-channeling (Turn 4).

6. How does the advisor approach the issue of homework and the student's apparent failure to do the homework in the past? Is she critical of him or does she respond more supportively? Does she directly offer any advice?

The advisor is careful not to criticize the student. In Turn 7, however, she does say, *You were supposed to keep on it yourself. Okay*. Here she doesn't restate what the student says but instead points out what the instructor expected students to do, what responsibilities students had as course participants. In Turn 13 she is careful to repeat what the student has said about his initial failure to figure out how to study for the class (*I'm hearing a couple of things*). The only direct advice she gives him is in Turn 13. She suggests that he get help from his GSI (TA) before the test rather than afterward. There's an implication, however, that the student would have had to work through his homework in order to know what help he needs, as in Turn 9, when she verifies that he is working with a friend *before the test* rather than after. In Turn 11, she doesn't actually say that a D+ is a bad grade, but instead agrees with the student by saying that nobody *would want it*. She uses only *a little better* to answer the student's question about whether a C- is *equally as bad* as a D+. (He notices this and laughs.)

7. The advisor mentions that the student is interested in going to the business school. Why is this an important topic?

Undergraduate students wanting to transfer to the business school have to have high grades. This student isn't doing well in math. If he hasn't done well in some of his other courses, he may not have a high enough GPA. This may cause him to rethink his major and career goals.

8. What is the advisor doing in Turn 15? Do you think this is important?

The advisor gives the student a clear assessment of his situation and the implications of the decision to drop/not drop the course. If he drops the course, he has to defer admission to the business school until he takes it. If he gets a low grade, then he needs to be doing well in his other classes and other things. She doesn't explain what *other things* refers to, but it could include the student's involvement in extra-curricular activities and on-campus work.

9. In Turn 15, the advisor begins to consider the implications of the student's decision. How does she express the various conditionals?

Point out the use of conditionals beginning with *if* in Turns 13 and 15. In our experience, students find conditionals difficult to produce and understand. So, you might want to spend some time discussing these.

10. In Turn 16, the student asks *what is the quasi-definition of that?* What is he referring to?

He wonders what GPA he needs to be *doing well*. He is also trying to find out whether his understanding of *doing well* is the same as hers.

11. How is *well* being used in Turns 15–21?

It's being used in different ways here. One way is to mean "good" or "without problems" or "to a high standard." It's hard to know what's exactly behind the use of *well* in Turns 16 (first use), 17, 18, and 21, but some possibilities are to indicate transitions, pauses, doubt, or hesitation.

12. Does the advisor give the student any indication that he will eventually be admitted to the B-School?

In Turn 21 the advisor says, *Okay well, the B-school is a little more rigorous*. Here she is explaining to the student that the business school has higher standards than the student has imagined. She doesn't tell him outright that his chances of transferring are low, but he is now aware that he will have to rethink his academic plan.

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**Task 21 (pages 51–52)**

**COLLECTING INFORMATION ABOUT A SERVICE ON CAMPUS**

Our students really enjoy doing this task because they learn important and useful information. Students often put a lot of effort into this task, coming to class with pamphlets, posters, maps, and other visual aids. We've also been impressed by the students' interviewing skills as revealed by the information they bring to class.

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## Reading for Discussion

### International Students Begin a New Adventure

According to the International Center website, more than 3,500 international students will be arriving on campus this fall semester. Like other students, no doubt they're looking forward to the start of classes with great anticipation. But for them, mixed with that anticipation is perhaps a bit of anxiety as they begin their adventures as university students in the United States.

Songhee Park, a first-year student in Biology, arrived just days ago from Korea. Ipek Demir left her native Turkey a month ago to start her master's degree in Economics. Satoko Nakamura from Japan is eager to begin her PhD program in Linguistics.

"I've been thinking about coming to the United States to study since I was in grade school," said Park. "I can't believe I'm actually here." Demir and Nakamura were equally excited. Demir said she spent one year in the United States as a high school exchange student. "I've wanted to come back for so long. I feel right at



home. Well, sort of.” And Nakamura shyly admitted, “Almost everything I know about the United States I learned from the television or YouTube. I have so much to learn, but I’m ready. I think so.”

Despite the enthusiasm, international students have a lot to get used to in their first semesters. Grades, papers, and exams are nothing like they’re used to. And certainly there is a lot of pressure to get used to the culture as well.

Gemma Kanaway, senior academic advisor at the International Center, said, “Studying in the United States will be a life-changing experience. These students will really broaden their perspectives.” At the same time, studying here will be a challenge. “Language is one issue, but just knowing how we do things can really be a source of frustration,” Kanaway said. “Like, where do you get your books? How do you order a pizza?”

Culture shock is an inevitable part of the adjustment process, but most students do just fine, according to Kanaway. “The best thing is for international students to keep an open mind. And not get too stressed. There’s a lot of support on campus,” Kanaway added. “But Americans don’t tend to seek out international students, so it’s important to take the initiative.”

Roberto DeNisi, an architecture student from Italy who has been on campus for two years, offered some advice as well. “Don’t isolate yourself. Be part of a network. Have some fun.”

The International Center is hosting a number of social events, ranging from barbecues to apple picking, designed to bring American students and international students together. Kanaway said, “We really want to have more activities to bring cultures together.” With all the fun activities planned, the Center is doing its part to help students get accustomed to their new environment. To join the fun, check the International Center website.

## Instructor's Notes for Unit 3: Communicating by Email

Even though we focus on spoken genres in the student text, we have included a unit on email both because it has become an important supplement to face-to-face conversation in academia and because it has features of both spoken and written communication. A few speaking options have been included in the unit.

### *Task 1 (pages 58–59)*

#### THE SPOKEN AND WRITTEN NATURE OF EMAIL

These are some of the ways emails are like spoken and written English. You can add your own.

Features of Spoken English	Also in Email?	Features of Formal Written English	Also in Email?
not always planned	✓	edited and polished	maybe
may not be well organized		organized	usually
can't go back and listen to what was said again		can be reread, more permanent	✓
get immediate response to questions		standard spelling and punctuation	maybe
speech may overlap		more formal use of vocabulary	maybe
use of contractions	✓	not so many contractions	maybe
lots of idiomatic expressions, slang	✓	no visual cues to show if you've been understood	✓
some spoken abbreviations (like ASAP, FYI)	✓		
you know who you are talking to (except sometimes not on the phone)	maybe		
there are visual cues to show if you were understood	✓		

1. 2. and 3.

Answers will vary.

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**Task 2 (page 60)**

**GRICE'S MAXIMS**

Which, if any, of Grice's principles do you think clearly apply to email? Why? Discuss with a partner.

We think all of them should apply to ensure successful communication. Of course, there may be times when you intentionally choose to violate one of the principles—for example, you may be ambiguous on purpose, so as to not hurt someone's feelings.

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**Task 3 (page 60)**

**STUDENT CONCERNS, OBSERVATIONS, AND EXPECTATIONS**

**ABOUT EMAIL COMMUNICATION**

1. What are some reasons you email your instructor? What do you worry about most when writing email in an academic setting?

Some reasons our students have given for writing their professors are to get advice about a course, set up an appointment, get clarification about a homework assignment, or ask for an extension on an assignment. Our students have especially expressed concern about using polite greetings, closings, and request forms when writing to their instructors.

2. Have you noticed any cultural differences in email communication?

One cultural difference our students often mention is they do not generally correspond with faculty via email in their country.

3. What do you think is a reasonable amount of time to expect a reply from a spouse or family member? A close friend? Your department secretary? Your instructors? What would you do if you sent an email message to your instructor but didn't get a response?

Student opinions vary on when they should expect replies. Some expect a response within a few hours while others expect to hear back in a day or two. Other students express frustration at not receiving any answer from their instructors and are uncertain what to do.

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**Task 4 (page 61)**

**SUBJECT HEADINGS**

1. Situation: The student is having trouble with a homework assignment.

Both *I need help with Chemistry homework* and *Question abt hwk* state the purpose of the student's email. These subject headings could be even clearer if the name of the course or the course number (e.g., *Chem 302* or *Organic Chemistry*) were included. *Question abt hwk* uses standard abbreviations, which would likely be considered appropriate in a subject heading. Standard abbreviations can be found in some dictionaries.

The other three choices—*Please help me*, *Any time to help?* and *Help*—would generally be considered ineffective because the purpose of the email is not clear. In addition, the use of *Please help me* and *Help* likely exaggerate the importance of the email. These students appear to be begging for or maybe even insisting on getting help. It should be mentioned that even though *Any time to help?* does not clearly state the purpose of the email, it does at least acknowledge that the instructor's schedule may be full.

2. Situation: The student has to miss class.

*I'll be absent Weds.* states the reason for the email. From the subject heading *I'm sick*, the instructor may infer that the student will miss class; opinions vary as to whether it's an effective subject heading or not. *Sorry about absence* is not as precise as *I'll be absent Weds.*, but does express regret about missing class.

The students who wrote *Take one day off* and *Ask for leave* haven't clearly stated the purpose of their email. They probably don't realize that their subject headings are ambiguous. Instructors may either be somewhat amused by an email that says *Take one day off*, or they may be concerned about why a student has decided to take a one-day vacation. The noun *leave* implies a long period of absence, and it is not clear who the message is in reference to. Some students report that dictionary translations from their native language indicate that *Ask for leave* is appropriate.

3. Situation: The student is sending his homework to the instructor in an attachment.

*Homework for Academic Writing* and *Homework 2* come the closest to expressing the general content of the email but do not indicate that there is an attachment. A clearer subject heading might be *Ac. Writ. hwk. attached*; or in our case *ELI 320 hwk. attached*. The subject *Paper* would be vague.

It is worth pointing out that *Revise* could be viewed by the instructor as a command and therefore would be considered inappropriate.

4. Situation: You want to email your instructor to ask for help finding a topic for your psychology paper. What subject heading would you write?

Possible answers: *I need psych paper topic help*, *Requesting paper topic help*, *Help on term paper topic*.

5. Situation: You want to email your instructor to explain your absence from the previous class.

Possible answers: *Explanation for absence Mon., Reason for yesterday's absence, My absence last Monday.*

6. Situation: You want to email the first draft of your paper to your instructor in an attachment.

Possible answers: *ELI 320 draft attached or First draft attached.*

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**Task 5 (pages 62–63)**

**EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE: OPENINGS AND CLOSINGS**

1. One study found that 41 percent of native speakers of English did not put a greeting in their email to their instructor while 76 percent of non-native speakers did not use one (Biesenbach-Lucas 2005). What is your opinion about beginning an email message to your instructor with a greeting?

Generally, our students say they would feel uncomfortable omitting a greeting in an email message to their instructor. They are probably wise to use one because there is still a general expectation that at least the first email in a series should begin with a greeting.

2. What are some greetings that you could use?

When writing their instructors, our students have some apprehension about choosing a greeting. They are uncertain if *hi* is too informal; some wonder if *dear* is too formal. Some have suggested *hello*, which is common for telephone calls but not generally used by native speakers, at least not so far. A number of students initially choose to use a formal greeting like *Dear Professor Milton* or *Professor Milton*, which we think are safe choices.

3. Would you identify yourself? If so, how?

Students often say they use *This is + name* to identify themselves at the beginning of the message. Some use *I am + name* instead. These short statements seem awkward to us. Then they repeat their name at the end of the message.

4. What are some ways you could close your message?

Our students are sometimes uncertain about an appropriate closing. Common answers to this question are *Sincerely yours, Have a good day, Regards, Cheers, All the best, and Best.*

5. If the correspondence involves several messages back and forth to your instructor on the same topic, would you advise including a greeting each time? If you do include a greeting in a series of messages, would you use the same one throughout or a different one?

Students often say that they use the same greeting each time; others don't always use a greeting after the first message. Some suggest checking to see what the instructor does.

6. What do you think of the following greetings, identifying sentences, and closings? Place a check (✓) next to the ones that seem appropriate. With your partner or group, discuss which options you chose and why.

*Greetings:* Students sometimes use the first and third greeting types, *Dear McDonald* and *Dr. Jim*, when they write us. Both would be considered inappropriate greetings because it is uncommon to use a title with someone's first name only, or no title with someone's last name only. *Dear Madam* (or *Dear Sir* or *Madam*) is sometimes used in formal situations if the sender does not know the recipient's name. However, it is infrequently used in U.S. university settings and students should be discouraged from using it. One option is to use the person's title, such as *Dear Foreign Admissions Officer*. But an even better option would be to try to find out the name of the person that the message is intended for.

*Identification:* Students often identify themselves at the beginning of their emails, which isn't necessary because they generally sign their name at the end. However, on some occasions we may wish to formally introduce ourselves using *My name is*. (See Task 10, Message 4, on page 70.) It is also helpful for students to mention their relationship to the instructor, such as, *I'm a student in your ELI 330 class* or *You have been assigned as my advisor*.

*Closing:* If the email included a request, then *Thanks a lot* would be an appropriate closing. If you communicate with someone regularly, *All the best* or *Best of Luck* might seem odd. While *Love* is often used in personal communications to friends, it would be inappropriate in an academic context. The use of *love* could indicate that the student had more than an academic interest in the instructor. As for the closing, *Regards, Wei Chemistry 258*, the student is smart to include the class he is in, if he hasn't already done so. *Regards* would generally be considered appropriate. Some students may not use a closing; they just put their names, which would be in keeping with the informality and brevity that characterize email.

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### **Task 6 (page 64)**

#### **ELECTRONIC SIGNATURES**

We think all four are appropriate for our university context; we hear or read these kinds of sentiments in other contexts. However, this could be very different in your academic environment.

These are actually used by some of our colleagues and seem to fit their personalities.

1. "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle"  
This person is environmentally aware, likes to recycle.
2. "Chance favors the prepared mind." Louis Pasteur  
This person is a lover of research.
3. "All we are saying is give peace a chance." John Lennon  
This person likes compromise and loves the Beatles.
4. "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." Martin Luther King, Jr.  
This person has a strong sense of social justice.

What would you think about quotes from religious books? Movies or television? Fiction or poetry? Politicians?

Just as the quotes reflect the user's views or personality, any quote from these other contexts will do the same. The main reason we bring this up is to raise awareness of what impression any signature might give. Students are often unaware of this. For example, if an electronic signature used profanity or expressed an unpopular view, it could offend some readers.

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### **Task 7 (pages 64–65)**

#### **EMAIL ANALYSIS**

The purpose of both email messages is to make a request. In addition to the subject heading, greeting, and closing, both follow the typical features listed after Message 2 on page 65 in the text. Each provides additional details that anticipate what information the recipient might need to grant/expedite the requests (e.g., *The deadline for the letter is in 3 weeks; I'm free Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoon*). Note in Message 1 the friendly use of *muchas gracias* as a closing, which in this context seems very appropriate because it's a Spanish class.

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### **Task 8 (pages 66–68)**

#### **POLITE REQUESTS**

Students will probably hear or read all of these. The first three might lead students to believe there is a serious or urgent problem. The use of *see me* seems more serious than *meet me*. The last two don't raise a cause for concern. In fact, the last one shows real concern for the student but isn't pushy.

If the roles were reversed, it seems to us the fourth choice is the best choice. A student using *see me* to the instructor would be inappropriate in our opinion. The last choice clearly would not work.

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### **Task 9 (page 68)**

#### **REQUESTS—APPROPRIATE OR DEMANDING?**

In the first request *Just send me the feedback via an attachment*, *just* is being used to soften the request. Depending on the circumstances, it could be considered appropriate. For example, the sender may be suggesting a way to expedite a routine request. Otherwise, it might seem somewhat demanding.

*Would you send me the feedback via an attachment* is likely to be viewed as more demanding than a question using the modals *could* or *can*.

*Could you please send me the feedback via an attachment?* would generally be considered an appropriate request. *Could* is often used in English to soften the request. The use of *please* in some contexts may convey insistence on the part of the sender. If it were placed at the end of this request, it may seem less demanding to the recipient.

*How about sending me the feedback via an attachment* seems more like a suggestion than a polite request and might be viewed as flippant, or just strange. Students should be discouraged from using this form in messages to their instructors or advisors.

*You had better* can be perceived as a warning or threat to the recipient rather than a polite request. Sometimes our students use *you had (you'd) better* as a suggestion. However, it would only be appropriate in certain cases, such as when the consequences of not following the suggestion could be serious or cause offense.

The last request in the list, *I was wondering if you could send me the feedback via an attachment*, would be considered very appropriate. Both *I was wondering* and *could* are being used to soften the request. Note the backshifting of tense.

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**Task 10 (pages 69–71)**

**EMAIL ANALYSIS**

1. Do any of the requests appear to be unreasonable?

Message 2: PLEASE CAN YOU EMAIL ME TODAY may seem unreasonable. The student appears to think that the instructor has time today to read the email. The use of *please* and all caps (capital letters) makes the request seem more demanding or urgent, which may show a lack of consideration for the instructor's time.

Message 3: *Please send me back no later than Thursday* may appear to be unreasonable or demanding because of the use of *please* + a command form. The use of *no later than Thursday* is also demanding. A better choice would be *could you get it back to me by Thursday?*

2. Do you think the greetings and closings are appropriate? If not, how would you change them?

Message 1: While it may be appropriate in other cultural settings, in a North American context, *My dear Advisor* is not generally used as a greeting. The student should be advised to use *Dear Professor Wilson* or *Professor Wilson* instead.

Message 2: *Dear Henderson* is inappropriate if the last name of the instructor is *Henderson*. Also, since the student is making a request, *Thanks* or *Thank you very much* would be appropriate not only as a closing but also as a way of softening the request.

Message 3: It appears the student has permission to address the instructor by his or her first name. It would therefore be appropriate to do so.

Message 4: If the student knows the name of the recipient, it would be more appropriate to use that person's name. If the student isn't sure whether the person is a man or a woman, both names could be included, such as *Dear Terry Simpson*. If the student knows the title but not the name of the recipient, he or she could replace *Dear Sir* with the title, such as *Dear Student Advisor* since *Dear Sir* implies that the recipient is a man. *To whom it may concern* may also be used, but it's very impersonal.

Message 5: A closing that includes *Thank you* and the person's name would be considered more appropriate.



3. In which messages do you think the writer appears to have made an overly direct or demanding request? What changes would you make? Does the wording of any of the requests seem awkward?

Message 2: The request PLEASE CAN YOU EMAIL ME TODAY? seems overly direct or demanding. It doesn't appear from the request that the instructor has office hours tomorrow. Moreover, the student assumes that the professor has time to read over the draft by the next day. However, the student does use a polite request form, *I was wondering if I could make an appointment with you*, to ask for the appointment.

Message 3: The student appears to be under a deadline and it is likely that the instructor is already aware of it. The student's use of the imperative *send* makes the message seem overly demanding. The sender likely used *please* to attempt to soften the request, but it may not work in this case because in English *please* can make the request seem even more insistent. Some possible alternatives are (1) *Could you send me the corrections by Thursday? That way I'll have time to make changes before the Friday deadline* or (2) *As I mentioned, the application is due Friday. If you could send me the corrections by Thursday, I would really appreciate it*. In the first example, *could* is used to soften the request. *That way I'll have time to make changes before the Friday deadline* reminds the instructor of the deadline and the student's need to make corrections before then. In the second example, the first sentence is used to remind the instructor of the deadline; the second sentence includes the *if* clause and the polite *I would really appreciate it* to ask for the CV a day early. The reason for asking for the CV a day early can be inferred.

Message 4: Assuming that another exam is/can be scheduled for tomorrow, the student's use of *I want you schedule a time* would be considered demanding. *I was wondering if/Could you could schedule me for the test tomorrow* would be far more appropriate. The student's use of *please* in *please schedule some other time* might be seen as demanding; at the same time, however, the student shows flexibility in inviting the test scheduler to choose the time.

4. Which messages take into account the instructor's situation?

Message 1: The student acknowledges that the recipient is a busy person—*Could you kindly squeeze (in) some time to help me?*

Message 5: The student is aware that the instructor may not be able to honor the request—*If you don't have time . . .* However, he or she compliments the instructor—*you are the best reviser*—and provides the file and possible meeting times, which makes it harder for the instructor to say no.

5. What message do you think is the most successful? Least successful? Why? Does your choice have to do with the student's grammatical, spelling, or vocabulary errors? How important are these types of errors?

While all the messages have features of a good email message, Messages 1 and 5 appear to be the most successful for the reasons already discussed. To maintain a good

working relationship with their instructors, students should consider that grammar, spelling, and vocabulary are less important than (1) weighing whether the request itself is inappropriate, (2) acknowledging their instructor's other duties, and (3) using appropriate request forms.

### ***Further Comments***

Commas are generally used after both the greeting and closing. In letter and email writing, colons may still be used after the greeting, especially if a more formal or unequal relationship exists between the parties, or if the parties are not familiar with each other.

It is useful to point out that *Would you mind if you give me feedback* in Message 2 should be written *Would you mind giving (V+ing)* . . . . *Would you mind* can also be followed by *I*, as in *Would you mind if I hand(ed) in my paper late*. The expression *Would you mind* is generally used when the sender feels that the recipient might be inconvenienced. If the recipient has already indicated a willingness to help the student or if the instructor would view the request as simply part of his daily responsibilities (*Would you mind telling us what day the final exam is on?*), then *would you* would not generally be used.

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### ***Task 11 (page 72)***

#### **REQUESTS FOR APPOINTMENTS**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Hello Professor, How are you? It's such a lovely day. I have been enjoying the wonderful sunshine. How about you? I would like to talk to you about the paper I'm writing for your class.

A number of our students use expressions like *How are you* and comment on the weather before getting to the purpose of their email. Academic email messages in the United States generally go right to the point of the email unless they have some specific reason to do otherwise. (Those of us who live in Michigan may well understand this student's comment on the weather.) This student should probably include a request with specific times that he or she is available. The message overall is polite.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. I hope that we can make the appointment tomorrow. I just don't know what to do to prepare. Without your excellent advice I will surely fail the exam. I would appreciate it very much if you could understand my situation.

While the message is not impolite, the student comes across as lacking initiative or being overly dependent on the professor. Good advice for this student would be to prepare specific questions about what problems he or she has in reviewing the material that will be covered on the exam. Or, if the student has never taken a university exam, he or she may prefer to discuss the types of questions on the exam and exam strategies.

\_\_\_\_\_ 3. I have a question about the homework. I've done everything but Part 4, and this is what I'd like to discuss. So, can we meet sometime this week?

This message would be considered polite. The student has worked through most of the homework on his or her own and only requests help on one section. However, the student should provide times that he or she is available so that the instructor can set a convenient time for both of them.

\_\_\_\_\_ 4. I am in the middle of writing my paper and I need to talk to you. You are my advisor and the only one that can help me. My paper will be so much better with your input. I will stop by your office tomorrow at 1:00.

This student appears overly dependent on the advisor, who may feel put upon, especially if the student is not taking advantage of other sources of help. In addition, the student is vague about what input he or she needs. Our recommendation is that the student prepare a specific list of questions for the advisor and formulate the request in such a way that the advisor will know that the student has put effort into the project. If the instructor does not have office hours at 1:00 tomorrow, the student should propose several meeting times rather than select a time. This message would not be considered polite.

\_\_\_\_\_ 5. I know you have many other important things that you are busy with, but could you spare me some of your precious time? I think if you have 5 minutes that will be enough.

The student graciously acknowledges that the instructor is busy. But because this student only needs a five-minute appointment, some instructors may view the use of *your precious time* as an embellishment. Instructors' responsibilities include meeting with students. They generally set up office hours and/or meetings by appointment and encourage students to visit them. If the student had stated the purpose of the meeting, the instructor may have been able to discuss the situation via email. (See Unit 2, Task 12.) Students can accommodate busy instructors by giving them various options for meeting times. This message as written is polite. The request, however, needs to be reformulated. One suggestion would be: *I know that you have a busy schedule, but I was wondering if you could spare me 5 minutes of your time to ask you a question about X.*

\_\_\_\_\_ 6. I think you didn't grade my exam properly and took too many points off of question 4. My friend only lost 1 point, but I lost 3 for the same response. I need you to explain why. Can I see you after class tomorrow?

The student has a point. Instructors are not immune from making mistakes. However, the message seems impolite because of the somewhat accusatory opening (*I think you didn't grade my exam properly*) and demanding tone (*I need you to explain why*). The student needs a more effective way to present the request. For example, he or she could first hedge and then make a polite request, such as *I'm not sure, but I think you deducted too many points on one of the exam problems. I was wondering if I could talk to you about this.*

\_\_\_\_\_ 7. I was wondering whether I could meet you after class tomorrow. I have a question about my score on the last quiz.

Here the student doesn't say what the question about the score is. He may have reasonably decided not to bring up the specific issue before meeting face-to-face with the instructor. One disadvantage in talking to the instructor after class is that sometimes other students are also waiting to see the instructor. Nevertheless, this message would be considered polite because of the use of the softener *I was wondering whether* and also states the purpose of the request.

\_\_\_\_\_ 8. I'm confused about the concepts you covered in class today. Would it be possible to see you some time Thursday or Friday afternoon?

This seems like a valid reason to see the instructor, especially if consulting with other classmates and/or the text doesn't seem to resolve the students' issue. If the student has never gone to an office hour, it provides a first opportunity. The student uses a polite request form, *Would it be possible*, when making the request, and also gives the professor options for meeting times.

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### **Task 12 (page 73)**

#### **EMAIL ASSIGNMENT FOR REQUESTS**

We have included a speaking option for instructors who would like to add a speaking task involving requests.

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### **Task 13 (pages 74–75)**

#### **REMINDER MESSAGES**

1. What politeness strategies do these students use in their reminder messages to their instructors?

Message 1: The student is willing to consider that he may have been mistaken even though he probably doubts that he was. He offers options for rescheduling. He is cautious about suggesting that the professor forgot the appointment (especially since the student doesn't know the circumstances).

Message 2: The student uses *I think* as a softener. He knows that the instructor forgot to attach the message but is being less direct about saying this. He is aware that this often happens.

Message 3: Rather than getting angry, the student gives the instructor the benefit of the doubt. Sometimes email messages don't arrive.

Message 4: The instructor may have waited until the last minute to write the letter of recommendation. The student politely reminds the instructor but emphasizes the urgency of the request. Even though she probably feels disappointed that the instructor has not written the recommendation, she acknowledges the instructor's busy schedule and graciously thanks the instructor. After all, she wants a good recommendation.

2. In Messages 3 and 4, what strategies do the students use to encourage their instructors to respond to their request?

In Message 3, the student offers the instructor a choice of times he's available and also lets the instructor know that he wants to spend the weekend on the paper. He presents himself as a diligent student.

In Message 4, the student reminds the instructor that the letter is due in two days and uses the expression *as soon as possible* when making her request. She may have to be more assertive by specifically asking the instructor to finish the recommendation before the deadline.

3. What subject heading could you use with each of these reminders?

Suggestions:

Message 1: *Possible appointment mix-up*

Message 2: The student probably doesn't have to change the original subject heading. Other options are, *Can you send attachment; I didn't get attachment; Attachment missing.*

Message 3: *Meeting this week; Can you meet Thursday or Friday; Meeting to discuss paper*

Message 4: *Letter of recommendation due; Deadline reminder*

4. How might you deal with these situations in a face-to-face interaction? With your partner, choose one, write a short dialogue, and be prepared to present it to your class or a small group.

In face-to-face interactions students may use additional politeness strategies when reminding someone about something—for instance, using more hedging. Notice how body language and facial expressions come into play. The more awkward the situation the more polite we tend to be.

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**Task 14 (page 75)**

**EMAIL ASSIGNMENT FOR REMINDER MESSAGES**

We have included a speaking option for instructors who would like to add a speaking task involving politeness strategies in awkward encounters with an instructor.

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**Task 15 (pages 77–78)**

**APOLOGIES**

Situation 1. You turned in the homework late.

I'm sorry about handing in my homework late.

I'm sorry I handed in my homework late.

I apologize for handing in my homework late.

Situation 2. You did the wrong homework assignment.

I'm sorry about doing the wrong assignment.

I'm sorry (that) I did the wrong assignment.

I apologize for doing the wrong assignment.

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**Task 16 (pages 78–79)**

**APPROPRIATENESS IN EMAIL APOLOGIES**

1. Do you think the greetings and closings are appropriate? If not, how would you change them?

Message 1: Both seem fine, but is the instructor's name really "Kart"?

Message 2: In an email greeting to an instructor, a comma, rather than an exclamation mark, would be considered appropriate. (However, the exclamation mark would definitely get the instructor's attention.) Exclamation marks are used to represent emotions such as surprise, desperation, and good news; in this case, an exclamation mark is not necessary.

Messages 3 and 4: We recommend that students learn and use their instructor's name.

Message 3: The student should identify himself or herself.

Message 5: While *hi* would generally be considered appropriate, the message as a whole seems to show a lack of deference toward the instructor. There is no apology for missing class. The use of emoticons is generally reserved for friends and is rarely used in an academic context.

2. Underline the language used to make the apology. Could any of them be improved?

Message 1: *I'm sorry for not being able to hand in my assignment on time* is a polite way of expressing an apology.

Message 2: *I would like to apologize for not handing in the homework for today and I am really sorry about not having the assignment* are appropriate, although two apologies may be considered redundant.

Message 3: *I would like to apologize for being absent at your class today* is appropriate despite the grammatical mistake (*absence* for *absent*). *I am really sorry about that* is also appropriate.

Message 4: *I regret to inform you that I won't be in class tomorrow* is a formal means of delivering bad news, especially in bad news letters, and would not be correct here. It appears that the student doesn't feel the need to apologize for being absent on a religious holiday, but would only like to inform the instructor of the reason for the absence. We might suggest *I just wanted to let you know that I won't be in class tomorrow because of a religious holiday*.

Message 5: *It's too bad I couldn't show up to class today* and the emoticon that follows are inappropriate. *It's too bad* wouldn't be considered an apology but rather a comment on an unfortunate situation that the student had no control over. *Show up*, for *come*, can be used when someone was irresponsible and failed to arrive. In other contexts it is used as an idiomatic expression meaning *arrive*, as in *When should we show up for the party?*

### 3. Do the apologies seem sincere and the explanations/excuses acceptable?

Message 1: The apology seems sincere. The student had three important exams in one week and made an attempt to get the homework done but couldn't.

Message 2: The apology seems sincere. The student made an earnest attempt to hand in the homework on time. He or she seems to have made a wise decision to go to class rather than try to retrieve it. While he or she may have been able to print it out earlier, the student didn't appear to wait until the last minute.

Message 3: Our students miss class from time to time to pick up people at the airport. In some cultures it would be unacceptable not to meet friends and family at the airport. In this example, the parents may not speak English or they've never been to the United States before; understandably, they need assistance. What doesn't seem sincere, however, is the student's apology for not making the 3-minute presentation. The instructor should have been informed before rather than after the class in order to adjust the lesson plan.

Message 4: There is no reason to apologize.

Message 5: The student gives no apology. The explanation may have been more acceptable if the student had apologized and it appeared that there was no other option but to miss class. The use of the smiley face emoticon is normally limited to friends and family. (See the discussion on emoticons on pages 82 and 83 in the text.)

### 4. What action plans seem adequate?

Message 1: If the instructor is willing to take late assignments, the action plan seems adequate.

Message 2: If the student has actually finished the homework, it is uncertain why he or she may not send it until tomorrow rather than right after class or at least the same day. This needs to be explained.

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Message 3: The instructor may not be happy about not being warned about the absence in advance and may have already designed the next few lesson plans. So it may be too late for an action plan.

Message 4: The student has made a clear action plan that doesn't involve additional work for the professor.

Message 5: There is no action plan. In addition, *Did I miss anything important?* seems to express the student's lack of interest in the class or appreciation for the instructor. The student would have been wise not to send a message at all or send a message without giving the reason for the absence.

5. In what messages do you think the writer could have shortened the excuse?

Message 2 is long and could be shortened. It does show the student's frustration with the server and his or her various attempts to solve the problem. We can certainly commiserate. The student could summarize by saying *the server was down and I couldn't retrieve my homework*.

6. Does it appear that the email messages have been checked for vocabulary and spelling errors as well as other typos? Does it seem the names of the recipients are spelled correctly?

In general, it seems that the students checked for errors. In Message 1, the student may have meant *Kurt* or *Karl* instead of *Kart*.

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**Task 17 (pages 80–81)**

**ELIMINATING WORDINESS AND EXCESSIVE DETAIL IN EMAIL**

Suggestions are provided for eliminating repetitive or overly detailed explanations. However, there are no "correct" answers here. In the first message, for example, the student tells the professor that he thinks he did well on the oral exams. The professor might want to know this, especially if he or she is well acquainted with the student.

**Message 1**

Subject: missed Tuesday's class

Dear Professor Jacobson,

I would like to apologize for missing class on Tuesday. I know I should have told you in advance but I was just so busy preparing for my oral exams that I couldn't think about anything else. ~~These exams are really important for me and I was worried about how difficult they might be. So I spent the whole past week studying for them and missed my regular classes, including yours. So now the exams are over. I think I did pretty well, actually. And I will start to concentrate again on this class.~~ I will come to your office hour tomorrow to see what I missed.

Again my apologies,

Richard



**Message 2**

Subject: I was sick

Dear Sarah,

Sorry I had to miss class last week. As you know a lot of students are sick these days because of the flu and I got it too. I went to the Health Services and the doctor ordered me to rest in bed and not be around too many other people, or I might get them sick. The flu is really contagious he said. So I'm taking medicine and now I feel better but still I am pretty weak. I think I will be strong enough to come to class this week, so don't worry. I will ask my classmate about what I missed. Is it OK if I come to your office hour too? Thank you for your understanding.

Sincerely yours,

Sri

**Message 3**

Subject: Conflict with class

Hi,

I thought I could make it to class in time but I had another commitment that took longer than I thought it would. The guys from Best Buy were delivering my new home theater system and said they'd come in the morning. I thought that meant like before 10 but they came at noon almost. So I missed class because I had to wait for them to get to my house and install it. I couldn't just let them leave it on the porch! Well, you know how it goes so I hope that's ok.

Thanks,

Peter R.

The excuses in Messages 1 and 2 seem acceptable. The student in Message 3 doesn't have to explain what the commitment is; by giving the real reason (waiting for delivery) he may sound irresponsible. He should have scheduled delivery for a different day. He may want to offer only an apology and/or action plan. Students should not feel the obligation to explain their absence, especially when it concerns a private matter. Nor do all instructors expect their students to apologize for not coming to class, especially in larger classes where attendance isn't taken.

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**Task 18 (page 82)**

**EMAIL ASSIGNMENT FOR APOLOGIES AND EXPLANATIONS**

We have included a speaking option for instructors who would like to add a speaking task involving polite apologies.

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**Task 19 (page 83)**

**EMOTICONS**

With a partner or partners, discuss whether you should use emoticons or abbreviations in your email messages to: your instructors, your friends, a potential supervisor, and an instructor that you do not know.

As we explain in the text, students are advised to avoid emoticons in their academic emails. They should also be cautious about using emoticons when job-seeking. Emoticons may send a signal to the potential employer that the sender does not clearly understand the differences between formal and informal writing.

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**Reading for Discussion**

**Email to Profs on the Increase**

A recent study on campus has produced some surprising results. In some classes the amount of email sent to instructors has been skyrocketing. But ask instructors how much of that email is relevant, and you'll get an earful. Erich Smuda, professor and chair of the university's Technology in the Classroom committee, has been investigating the email habits of both undergraduate and graduate students. He found that, although office hours are still popular, students often email professors about things they would never go talk to them about during office hours.

"I get email at every hour of the day. You can see when those messages are sent. They're coming in at 3:00, 4:00 in the morning. Don't these students sleep?" said Virginia Eber. "But, I suppose if that's when they're doing homework, then I'm glad they are checking in with me when they have questions. Some messages are a bit silly, though. Like just last week. One student emailed wanting to know whether students should have three-ring binders or pocket folders."

Assistant Dean Roger Kimpe, who teaches one course a year on computer-human interaction, said he, too, has noticed incredible increases in email traffic. "Students have such easy access to us via email. There's no barrier to getting in touch. It's great students can ask questions—even in the middle of the night." Asked about how relevant the messages are he said, "Well, not all of them are really necessary. I mean, one student this semester emailed me about whether to buy a new or used book. How can I answer that? I don't know. Why would someone need to email me about that?"

Other professors also grumble about the lack of thought behind some messages. “My favorite ones are those where the student wants to know whether I’m doing anything important in class. What should I say? It’s class. Everything’s important in my opinion. But obviously some students would disagree,” said Ann Russ, assistant professor in Accounting.

In all fairness, not all students email their instructors without thinking about the relevance of their questions. Second-year graduate student Madeleine Miodek said, “I don’t want to send a message about something I can figure out myself. It takes time for professors to deal with all the email they get. I don’t want to seem helpless. I think first and email later.”

Smuda’s committee is now in the process of creating a list of email dos and don’ts, to encourage students to think about their messages to their instructors. “We just want to make sure that students use email wisely. After all, email messages do reveal a bit about the sender and we want students to make a good impression.”

## Instructor's Notes for Unit 4: Interacting with Instructors and Advisors: Office Hours and Appointments

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### *Task 1 (page 88)*

#### **GENERAL DISCUSSION ON STUDENT INSTRUCTOR INTERACTION**

Answers to these questions will vary based on students' personal experiences with office hours and their own opinions.

1. Do you think the percentages given indicate a lot of or little student-instructor interaction outside of class?

It is likely students will think 68 percent is a lot of interaction, but note that over one-fourth of the interactions were via email instead of face-to-face.

2. Why do you suppose 28 percent of the students used email to interact with their instructors?

As we suggest in Unit 3, students may choose email for convenience—it's available any time, all day, all night so it's easy for students to use. Also, an instructor's office may not be nearby, so some students don't want to go out of their way to get there. Some students might feel shy or hesitant to meet a professor in person at first, so using email provides a safe and comfortable way to interact.

3. Why do you think nearly 30 percent of students had no interactions with their instructors?

The fact that nearly one-third of the students had no interaction with their instructors is a bit surprising to us, but for our international students the percentage is likely higher. Students may not interact with instructors because they feel completely sure about the course and its content; they are afraid or worried about talking to their instructor; the instructor is not be very approachable; they don't know office hour interactions are expected by some instructors.

4. Have you ever gone to an instructor's office hours? Why or why not? If you have gone, describe your experience. Do you think your visit was successful? Why or why not?

Answers will depend on individual experience. Students who have gone to office hours are usually happy to talk about their experiences. Most report success and are planning to go to office hours regularly. Those that report a lack of success often describe not being able to clarify questions and not being able to understand responses during the office hour.

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**Task 2 (page 89)**

**PERCEPTIONS AFFECTING DECISIONS TO GO TO OFFICE HOURS**

Answers will vary depending on student opinion, but most of our students agree with 2, 3, 5, and 6.

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**Task 3 (page 90)**

**WHY STUDENTS GO TO OFFICE HOURS**

In fact, all situations given are reasons a student might go to office hours. This task is to help raise awareness of the wide variety of reasons students have for doing so. Many of our students tend to think office hours are only for talking about exams or grades.

Some other possible reasons to visit office hours include:

- seeking advice on future career options
- asking for a letter of recommendation
- personal issues related to school such as being overwhelmed with classes, or failing many classes
- personal issues related to friends or family such as trouble with roommates, relationships (boyfriend/girlfriend), illness, major problems at home (divorce), homesickness, or adjusting to a new culture.

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**Task 4 (page 91)**

**MORE ON WHY STUDENTS GO TO OFFICE HOURS**

Answers will depend on the student interviews, but some of our students think that a major reason to go to office hours is to get a good grade.

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**Task 5 (pages 92–93)**

**SETTING UP A TIME TO MEET**

1. It helps to be prepared for an interaction such as this one by having options of times you can meet. Notice how in Turn 4 the instructor wants the student to suggest a time. Which of the options on page 48 (Instructor's Notes) would be good alternatives to the student's response of *Monday maybe?* in Turn 5?

What about Monday?	good
Would Monday work?	good
I have to see you Monday.	not good; too demanding
Monday is good for me.	good
Monday.	not good; leaves no options; but if spoken with a rising question intonation it could be okay
What's best for you?	good

Can you think of another response?

Possibly give an option, such as *Would Monday or Tuesday be okay?*

2. Why does the student say *maybe* in Turn 5?

He could be unsure of his own schedule, or wants to show he is open to other options. *Maybe* also makes it easier for the instructor to suggest another time.

3. What does *whoa* mean in Turn 7?

*Wait a second, hold on a minute.*

Why does the student say this?

He just remembered he has an exam and needs to consider this before setting up a meeting time. Students might be interested in knowing the origins of *whoa* (a command for a horse to stop).

4. In Turn 9, notice how the student responds to a question with a question and then indicates that the time will work. What are some other options besides *perfect* for Turn 9?

*Okay. That's fine. Sure. Uhuh.*

5. How willing does the instructor seem to set up an appointment with the student?

Pretty willing and accommodating. Note how he/she is willing to meet despite planning on being in the lab most of the day.

6. How many of the turns consist of fully grammatical sentences?

Turns 1, 3, part of 7, part of 8.

What elements are missing from Turns 10 and 11?

The subject and verb (e.g., *I am in 1156; Is that your office?*)

Is any meaning lost because of ellipsis (see Units 1 and 5)?

No. The words that are there convey enough meaning in context.

7. What does *schedule conflict* mean?

The student has other things scheduled (like classes or work) at the same time as the office hour.

Now finish this dialogue with the instructor where the student wants to schedule a special time to meet.

Answers will vary but one option for finishing the dialogue is given here.

**Student 1:** Uh, Professor Becker, do you have a minute? I have a question about office hours . . . .

**Instructor:** Yeah, sure.

**Student 1:** Um I have a schedule conflict with your office hour times so I'm wondering if we could meet some other time?

**Instructor:** Absolutely. Do you wanna talk now? I have some time . . . .

**Student 1:** Well I have another class right now. Are you free after 3?

**Instructor:** Mmhm, at 3:30.

**Student 1:** Okay, see you then.

**Instructor:** Okay, you remember where my office is?

**Student 1:** Yep.

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**Task 6 (page 94)**

**PRODUCTIVE USE OF TIME DURING AN OFFICE HOUR**

Here are some examples of questions that can lead to a productive use of time in the office hour. Why are these better than a question like, *How do I do this problem?*

Generally, all of these examples show the student has done something first, made an effort, put some thought in prior to the office hour meeting. This way, even if a student is confused, the instructor can see it's not for lack of trying. Notice in Example 4 how this kind of question engages the student and instructor in an intelligent conversation about the topic; it's not just asking for a straightforward answer.

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**Task 7 (pages 95–97)**

**ANALYSIS OF INTERACTIONS DURING AN OFFICE HOUR**

1. Discuss the apparent reason that each student went to the instructor's office hour.

In Interaction 1, the student goes to tell the instructor he/she will miss class but also wants to find out what will be on the exam. In Interaction 2, he/she doesn't know what homework problems to do, or can't find the assignment. In Interaction 3, he/she is confused about an answer to the homework.

Do you think each of the students really needed to talk with the instructor?

In Interaction 1, it was probably a good idea that the student let the instructor know about missing class on Friday, and it seems okay to try to find out what will be missed in class and what will be on the exam. In Interaction 2, the student could have asked a friend for this information. In Interaction 3, the student could have checked with a friend, but it seems okay to confirm answers with the instructor.

Would you go to an instructor's office hour if you had the same concerns as the students? Why or why not?

Answers depend on student opinion. Most of our students say no. They would prefer to ask friends for help or information.

2. Do the students in each of the three interactions seem prepared for the office hour visit? Explain your opinion.

Our students often disagree with us on this, but here is what we think. In Interaction 1, the student doesn't seem very well prepared but he/she is planning ahead; he/she wants quick answers on how to prepare for the exam. In Interaction 2, the student does not seem very prepared; the instructor's suggestions of how to find the homework assignment show the student may not have been paying attention in class or to email. The student seems a bit helpless. In addition the student could have found this information out from a classmate. In Interaction 3, the student seems a bit more prepared as she appears to have been working on a problem and wants to check it.

3. Do you think the language of the interactions is formal or informal? Explain.

It seems informal. Notice the frequent use of *mhm*, *yep*, *okay*.

4. In Interaction 1 during Turn 1, the instructor says *mhm*? What is the function of *mhm* here?

It shows the instructor is listening, and encourages the student to continue speaking; it's a way of saying "go on." As an active listening strategy, the use of back-channel cues like *mhm*, *yeah*, *uhuh*, *okay* are discussed further in Unit 6.

Does *mhm* have the same function in Turn 6 of this same interaction?

No, in Turn 6 it is another way to say *yes*.

5. In Interaction 2, Turn 8; what does *oops* mean? Why do you suppose the student said this?

It means *I made a mistake* or *I didn't look where I was supposed to*. The student uses this to show he recognizes it was his mistake.

Are there any other expressions besides *oops* that the student could have used?

*I goofed*. *My mistake*. *Sorry*. Undergraduates often add *My bad*.



6. In Interaction 3, Turn 1, the student asks the instructor, *Do you have a minute?* What other ways can you ask someone whether he/she has time for you? List them.

*Got a sec? Are you free now? Do you have some time now?*

7. In Interaction 3, Turn 4, the instructor says both *alright* and *alrighty*. *Alright* is an alternative spelling of *all right*. Often *alright* is used to describe something that is good, but not exceptionally good or great: *The class was alright*. *Alright* is also used as an expression of great pleasure: *I got an A on my exam! Alright!* Does *alright* have one of these meanings here?

No, here it is used to reinforce the confirming *Okay?* right before it; or it could be used to indicate a transition.

Why do you suppose the instructor says *alrighty* the second time rather than *alright*?

We don't really know why he uses this form, but maybe it's to be more friendly.

8. In Interaction 3, Turn 6, what does *yep* mean?

This should be obvious, but on occasion we have students who don't know the variations on *yes* and *no* (*yep, yup, nope*; see next question).

Have you heard any other alternatives to *yes* and *no*?

*Yeah; Yup; Sure; Uhuh. Nope; Uh-uh; Naw.*

9. In Interaction 2, Turn 2, the student says, *I'm confused about the homework*. Place a check (✓) next to those items that you might use to indicate confusion or a lack of understanding.

Students could potentially choose any of these. If students say they might use silence or *what* or *huh*, discuss what each of them might imply to the listener—for example, could it seem rude, or inappropriate, or abrupt? Silence is a typical response among our students. They should be aware that silence *could* show they don't understand anything but also could mean they are upset or angry. Silence can be hard to interpret, and can lead to the instructor becoming frustrated in the interaction. You may want to demonstrate how using different stress and intonation for the choices listed can make a difference.

10. In Interaction 2, in the middle of Turn 4, the instructor says, *Okay, okay, okay, okay*. What, if anything, does this repetition of *okay* indicate about how the instructor feels about the student's problem?

It seems to indicate some impatience; the instructor may be thinking "Enough already, I get it" or "Stop giving more explanation."

11. In Interaction 1, the student is very obvious about wanting to get some information about the upcoming test. However, many students may not want to reveal such a hidden agenda. What do you think is better? Should students be clear about wanting

information about an exam or should they be more subtle? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each strategy?

Most of our students say they'd like to get some insider information but are hesitant to do so. They are aware that U.S. students may indeed try to get more information and as a result may have an advantage.

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**Task 8 (page 98)**

**STUDENT AND ADVISOR INTERACTION**

Which of the responses do you think would be the best for Turn 6?

Our preference is b, c, or d since they show the student has given some prior thought and at least has narrowed the possibilities to an area of interest.

Which of the responses suggests that the student has not really thought about his or her schedule?

a, c, e, f, g

a—makes the student appear helpless

c—the student could have checked on the prerequisites

e—the student seems clueless

f—the student seems to be just tossing out an idea

g—the suggestion is just too broad

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**Task 9 (pages 100–1)**

**ANALYSIS OF AN OFFICE HOUR**

1. To what extent does this interaction follow the typical organization discussed on page 99. Try to label the office hour in terms of pre-interaction, greeting, explanation for the visit, discussion, close, and raising of new issue.

Turn 1 greeting and explanation for visit

Turns 2–10 discussion

Turns 10–14 close

Turns 15–24 raising new issue, discussion

Turn 24–25 close

Notice part of Turn 24 is finishing up the discussion (*Okay. Sure.*) then moves into closing (*Later.*).

2. Who seems to be managing the topics of discussion here? The student or the instructor?

The student starts by stating his paper will be late, but then the instructor seems to be directing the next section of discussion by asking questions and offering advice about applying for grad school. Notice how in Turn 13 the student reminds the instructor that

the paper will be late, trying to get back to his original topic. So in a sense they both seem to be directing the conversation.

Would you be comfortable managing the topic of discussion? Why or why not?

Answers depend on student opinion. Many of our students are not comfortable because they think the instructor should manage the discussion.

3. In Turn 15, does *oh* seem to convey any particular meaning? If so, what?

The meaning here is like saying *and*; it conveys the fact that the student wants to add something else. Using *oh* to mean *I forgot about this and now I'm going to bring it up* is quite common.

4. In Turn 16, what does the instructor mean by *alright go*?

He means, *go ahead, tell me*.

5. In Turns 1 and 17, how polite are the student's requests? Can you think of any other ways to make a polite request? List them.

The requests are polite; notice the use of *I was wondering* and *Would you mind*. Refer to the discussion of polite requests in Unit 3 for more polite request forms.

6. Are there any expressions or vocabulary in the interaction that you find interesting or potentially useful? Do you have any questions about these?

Answers depend on student choices, but they may notice the use of *cool* in Turn 21 as a way to agree, or the frequency of words like *alright* and *okay*.

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**Task 10 (page 102)**

**LEAVE-TAKING**

1. What do you think of the instructor's announcement that he/she had only five more minutes to spend with the person in the office? Would you be so direct?

Answers will vary; as an instructor it seems to be a reasonable strategy to warn the student about time; students could find it helpful so they can know what they need to do in the last five minutes, or they could find it a bit abrupt, as if the instructor wants to get rid of them. It all depends on how it is said.

2. Is the instructor's non-verbal cue of standing up to send the message that time was up polite? Why or why not?

It may not be all that polite but it seems that at that point in the interaction it was a necessary cue, as previous verbal cues were missed. We're not sure anything else would have worked better.

3. What are some non-verbal cues that you think indicate that it's time for a person to leave? For example, if your instructor started tapping his or her fingers on the desk, would you consider this to be a signal to leave?

Tapping could signal time to leave, or could be a nervous habit. Other cues could be looking at a wristwatch or clock in the office, closing up a book, or gathering papers.

4. What can you do as a student to indicate that you need to leave?

Usually the same cues as listed in Question 3 (tapping, though, may not be okay). Both verbal and non-verbal cues will work.

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**Task 11 (pages 103–5)**

**LEAVE-TAKING**

**Leave-Taking 1**

1. In Turn 4, it seems like the interaction is over, but then in Turn 6, the student raises a question about a quiz. And in Turn 10 the student asks a more general question about quizzes. Why does the student continue to ask questions when it seemed the interaction was finished?

It's possible the student just forgot something he wanted to ask, or it was something that just occurred to him, or the leave-taking is just awkward and the student isn't so sure how to end. It's a good example of how it's not so easy to end spoken interactions.

2. Who seems to be keeping the interaction going? The student, the instructor, or both?

Both. Notice how the instructor continues to add information to his answers, rather than just answering yes or no to the questions, thus keeping the conversation going.

3. How long are each of the turns here? Do you think this is typical when an interaction is winding down?

Turns are quite short, and this is typical of leave-taking.

4. In Turn 9, why does the instructor say, *I'm sorry*?

He is not sure about his answer; he can't give a definite answer, so apologizes for that. It's also possible to use *I'm sorry?* or just *Sorry?* with question intonation to indicate you didn't hear something.

5. In Turn 12, what does *I was gonna say* indicate? Can you guess what the student was thinking?

*I was gonna say* indicates that the student was worried about the previous information (having two quizzes). The student is wondering why the instructor would give two quizzes in one week because that's not usual and because the student is also concerned about it if it is the case.

6. What, if anything, is accomplished during the turns after the student indicates that they are done? Did the student gain anything?

The extended leave-taking provides more contact time, and may strengthen the connections between the speakers; the student did in fact gain some more information about what's ahead in class.

### **Leave-Taking 2**

1. At what point during the interaction does it seem that the student and the advisor have finished what they needed to do?

At the end of Turn 3.

2. For how many more turns does the interaction continue beyond the point you identified in Question 1?

Fifteen more turns. From our students' perspective, that's a lot.

3. Who is keeping the interaction going? The student, the advisor, or both?

At first the advisor, then in Turn 7 the student brings up a new topic. Then they both keep the interaction going; by Turn 11 they start to close.

4. Why do you suppose there are so many turns before the student leaves? What is going on in the additional turns?

The extended leave-taking establishes rapport, connections. It also seems the instructor is being supportive and encouraging to the student, as it's near the end of the semester, which can be a very stressful time.

5. What is your preference? To leave the moment you have finished your business with your instructor or advisor or linger a little bit? Why?

Answers will vary.

6. Are the leave-taking turns long or short in your opinion? Do you think this length of turn is typical when an interaction is winding down?

Turns are relatively short; this is typical. Notice similar turn length in Leave-Taking 1.

7. What does *all set* in Turn 2 mean?

It means we're all done, or all finished.

8. Note how many times the word *okay* is used in each of the two excerpts. What do you suppose the function of *okay* is in these interactions?

Usually it is used as a transition word (as in Turn 2, 6, or 11 in the second excerpt) or to show agreement (as in Turn 3 and 9 in the second excerpt).

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**Task 12 (pages 105–6)**

**DISCUSSION ABOUT A STUDENT PAPER**

The student has to get to a class and doesn't have much time. What should he/she say next?

One possible answer is given here.

7. **Instructor:** Okay good.

8. **Student:** Thanks a lot, I gotta get to class now. See ya.

Which of the these seem appropriate for ending the interaction? Place a check (✓) by those that do.

These two seem most appropriate.

*I have to run to class. Thanks for your help.*

*Okay, thanks. Bye.*

This one sounds a bit formal; it may also sound abrupt and could cut short the interaction.

*Thank you. Good-bye.*

These need some version of a *thank you*, and some hedging could help; without it they sound abrupt.

*I have to be somewhere, so I gotta go. (better: Oh, sorry, I have to be somewhere now, so I gotta go. But thanks for your help.)*

*Well that's all. I'm going to go. (better: Well, I guess that's all. Thanks. I think I'd better go, I have class soon.)*

This sounds abrupt and somewhat rude.

*I have to go now.*

Does it seem like the instructor and the student accomplished something? What?

Yes; the student understands what he/she needs to do next to improve the paper.

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**Task 13 (pages 107–9)**

**THANK YOU**

1. Which of the following have you heard in response to an expression of thanks? Place a check (✓) by the expressions you have heard.

Answers will vary. It's likely the students have heard all of them and they're wondering why *you're welcome* is not as common as other responses. To our surprise, some students think the response *sure* is rude. To them, it seems that *sure* means "sure, of course; you should be appreciative of my help."

2. Read each of the interactions, and underline all of the expressions of thanks as well as the responses to them.

***End of an Office Hour***

1. **Student:** Great. Thanks for your time.
2. **Professor:** Good. Well, I'll see you tomorrow morning then.
3. **Student:** Alright, thank you.
4. **Professor:** It was very nice meeting with you.
5. **Student:** You too.
6. **Professor:** Okay.
7. **Student:** Bye.
8. **Professor:** Bye bye now.

***End of a MICASE Recording Session***

1. **Student:** Thanks for the pizza. It's wonderful.
2. **Research Assistant:** Oh, sure. Good . . . thank you for being recorded.
3. **Student:** No problem. We'll do anything for free food, right?

***A Service Encounter***

1. **Student:** Hi.
  2. **Student at Service Desk:** Hi.
  3. **Student:** Here's the key. Can I get my license back? It's like, all I have right now. *<laugh>* Thank you very much.
  4. **Student at Service Desk:** You're welcome. No problem. Have a good day.
  5. **Student:** Thank you.
  6. **Student at Service Desk:** Sure.
3. William Safire, in his "On Language" column for *The New York Times Magazine*, has argued that *you're welcome* "is rapidly disappearing from the language of civility." Another perspective on *you're welcome* is that in many instances where people are thanked, no one has actually done a favor and so *you're welcome* would not be appropriate. For example, if someone is simply performing his or her job duties, then a *you're welcome* may seem unnecessary. Do you agree with either of these two points of view? Why do you think speakers don't use *you're welcome* and instead choose other expressions to respond?

Answers will vary. In our experience, *you're welcome* is becoming rarer, but we find some students expect it, and sometimes even seem to wait for us to use it as a reply to their *thank you*. Some students think that anything but *you're welcome* is not very friendly. It's possible speakers use other forms instead of *you're welcome* to diminish the focus on whatever one is being thanked for, or to equalize the status of the speakers. It also seems too formal for many routine situations.

4. How would you say *thank you* for the following?
- a. Your advisor has given you some ideas about good courses to take.  
Thanks for the good ideas.  
Thanks for giving me some good ideas.
  - b. Your instructor looked over a paper for you and made some helpful comments on it.  
Thanks for your help.  
Thanks for giving me such helpful comments.
  - c. Your instructor has let you borrow a couple of books.  
Thanks for the books.  
Thanks for lending me the books.
  - d. Your instructor said that he/she would be able to write a letter of recommendation for you.  
Thanks for agreeing to write a letter for me.  
Thanks for writing a letter for me.  
Thanks for the letter. (This is appropriate at the point when the letter is written and given to the student, but not used if the instructor has only agreed to do it.)
  - e. Your instructor has said it would be okay if you turned in an assignment late.  
Thanks for the extra time.  
Thanks for letting me have some extra time.  
Thanks for letting me turn it in late.

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**Task 14 (pages 110–11)**

**ADVICE AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. How do the two responses to the student questions differ?

In both examples, the instructor's first response is a command, while the second response is phrased more like a suggestion. It is interesting to note that even though the advice is offered as a suggestion, it's important for students to recognize this as something the instructor really thinks will help and the student should follow up on it.



2. Rank the following in terms of strongest (1) to weakest (6)

- 5 Maybe you should think about . . .
- 1 You had better . . . (You'd better)
- 4 You could . . .
- 6 You might want to . . . (You might wanna)
- 3 You should . . .
- 2 You need to . . .

We find that students incorrectly believe that *had better* is rather weak.

Would your rankings be the same regardless of whether the advice came from an instructor or a friend?

Yes.

Keep in mind that intonation is important for understanding the strength of any recommendation. This is a good place to demonstrate these examples with varied stress and intonation and have the students see if they can tell any differences. The students can also practice saying the phrases with different stress and intonation.

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**Task 15 (page 111)**

**ADVICE AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Answers will vary. *You might want to* or *You might wanna* are the most common. Students often think that *I recommend* would be most common. Have students do a MICASE search for some of these phrases.

**Task 16 (pages 114–15)**

**ADVICE**

In the three office hour interactions, a student has gone to the advisor or instructor for advice. Some of the language used to give advice is in bold. As you read the interaction, list in the chart any other expressions used to give advice. What kind of advice was the student looking for in each example? In your opinion, has the advisor or instructor has been helpful or unhelpful?

	<b>Expressions Used to Give Advice</b>	<b>Kind of Advice Being Sought by Student</b>
<b>Interaction 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• you might wanna</li> <li>• you know something like that</li> <li>• then you could use that</li> <li>• if you decide . . . then you take</li> </ul>	what class to register for
<b>Interaction 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• you might wanna</li> <li>• a lot of professors think you should do</li> <li>• You know first</li> <li>• go talk to your friends, go to talk to your instructor, go bother people</li> <li>• Do it before</li> <li>• you need to say</li> <li>• this is probably something that you should do</li> <li>• I don't think you should try to</li> <li>• I don't think people</li> <li>• if you could do</li> </ul>	strategies for studying
<b>Interaction 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well I wouldn't do that</li> <li>• You could do that, but you have to consider</li> </ul>	how to do a calculation

The advice seems helpful in all three examples.

Notice at the end of Turn 5 in the first example, the advisor gives advice with the negative *I don't think you should* and *I don't think people learn real well that way*.

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*Task 17 (pages 116–17)*

**ACCEPTING AND REJECTING ADVICE, RECOMMENDATIONS, OR SUGGESTIONS**

**INTERACTION 1**

Notice how the student comments on the advice in Turn 6 (Right, okay).

**INTERACTION 2**

How likely is it that the student will indeed talk to the roommate? In other words, how strong is the acceptance of the advice?

It doesn't seem so likely the student will talk to the roommate. The acceptance of the advice is not very strong.

**INTERACTION 3**

The student really does not want to take Econ 620. What should he/she say next?

The student could say, *Yes, but I think I can do 620 after the exams, if at all. I'm just not sure if my research focus really fits with what they do in 620.*

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**Reading for Discussion**

**A Graduating Student Looks Back on Office Hours**

If you are asked to picture a typical North American college instructor, you probably imagine someone standing in front of class talking from recently prepared handouts; or perhaps someone who practically writes a book on the blackboards during class; or perhaps you think of an instructor clicking through a seemingly endless file of PowerPoint slides. Our first image almost always involves a classroom. But apart from this very public teaching time, instructors also do a lot of one-on-one teaching during their office hours. Thinking back on the past four years as a student, I'd say my office hour visits were sometimes more important than a full semester of classes.

Just as classroom teaching styles vary, how instructors handle their office hours varies as well. I've had instructors who were early birds, preferring to schedule office hours before 10:00 AM, when most of us are not even thinking of getting out of bed, let alone ready to have an intelligent conversation about a course.

Some of my other instructors are in departments with a closed-door policy. When you walk into those departments, an open door is nowhere to be found

(think second floor of Angell Hall). Those “closed door” professors may not realize that a closed door can discourage us from going to office hours. My first year I used to worry that if I knocked on the door, I would somehow be interrupting. I couldn't tell if there was another student there or a meeting. Regardless, I knocked and was welcomed.

Unlike the closed-door instructors, open-door professors leave their office doors open as wide as possible. They look forward to the possibility of a student actually stopping by—even without an appointment. The open-door instructors make it easy for a student to just drop in.

But whether your instructors are early birds or have an open- or a closed-door policy, they all know that some of their best teaching happens during their office hours. I didn't figure that out until after my first year. I now know that office hours are a time when instructors connect with their students and students with their instructors. It's a time where some of your most intense learning will take place. It's something you don't want to miss. So, go open that door—even if it is at 8 o'clock in the morning.

(Information from *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 2003)

## Instructor's Notes for Unit 5: Classroom Interactions

When we ask our students about some of the major challenges in their degree programs, class participation ranks high on their list. Many of our students come from cultures where there simply is no class participation. As a result, when they are expected to talk in class, it's very uncomfortable for them, regardless of their proficiency in English. Even if students are willing to try to speak in class, they say they are still worried about saying something wrong or off the point. They also report being too late to make a contribution—by the time they know what they want to say, the discussion has already moved in another direction and their point no longer fits.

It's important for students to realize that not all North American students feel comfortable talking in class. Some really like to talk; others will talk only if called on. Some students are in the middle. They'll talk depending on a number of factors, such as the students attending for the day or the amount of preparation they have done. We always tell students that the first time you speak in class may be the most difficult and that it gets easier the more often you speak. We hope that this unit can influence the likelihood that a student will indeed gather the courage to speak in a class other than his or her speaking class.

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### *Task 1 (page 120)*

#### **GENERAL QUESTIONS ON CLASS PARTICIPATION**

We can't provide specific answers because the answers very much depend on the individual. What we can say here is that most of our international students report that they never talk in class. Some wish they would talk in class; others don't think there is anything to be gained by talking in class. Many students say they can't participate because the class discussion goes by too fast—by the time they have formulated their thoughts the discussion has already moved to another topic, rendering their comments irrelevant. Some students who say they don't participate say that they will at least give clear nonverbal feedback that they are listening and trying to follow along. Even our most proficient students tend to remain silent in class. Very proficient speakers often say they worry that they will say something trivial and so they prefer to talk to their instructors during office hours or after class. When asked whether their U.S. counterparts seem to worry whether they have anything interesting or relevant to say, they generally say, *No!*

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*Task 2 (pages 121–22)*

**INSTRUCTORS' GUIDELINES TO STUDENTS WHO WANT TO ASK A QUESTION OR GET CLARIFICATION IN CLASS**

1. In Excerpts 1–4, what do the instructors want their students to do if they want to ask a question or get clarification in class?

Each of the instructors wants the students to interrupt. (Students need to observe the classroom dynamics to know whether and how to interrupt, of course.) Notice the four long pauses in Excerpt 4. Possible reasons for these are: emphasis, time for students to respond, time to take notes, time for thinking. Be sure to discuss the pausing with your students.

2. Why does the instructor in Excerpt 5 want students to participate in class?

The instructor wants students to be actively engaged in the class and not just accept everything as something that has to be learned. The instructor wants students to think about what is being said.

3. In Excerpt 5, what does *back and forth* mean? What does *scribbling* mean? What does *heads just bob up and down* mean?

*Back and forth* indicates that the instructor wants there to be discussion: the instructor speaks, then a student speaks, and then the instructor again. *Scribbling* here suggests quickly writing something down without really thinking. Things that are scribbled are usually poorly done; they are done without care. *Heads bobbing up and down* means that the instructor does not want the students to just mindlessly react to or agree with what is being said in class. Perhaps this is a reference to the action of a bobblehead doll, which has an oversized head attached to a body by a spring. When the head is touched, it moves back and forth; it bobbles. Perhaps the right image is of an object floating in the water and moved by the motion of the water. Either way, it's not what the instructor wants.

4. What does the instructor in Excerpt 5 mean when he/she says, *So, um, don't let me get away with something you disagree with*.

The instructor wants students to really listen to what is being said and when he/she says something that makes students wonder, they should challenge him/her to clarify, explain, or provide support.

5. What will the Instructor in Excerpt 5 do if students do not voluntarily participate? Do you think this is fair? Would you be comfortable with this?

The instructor will choose a student to talk. Some students would argue that this is not fair. Most students dread this approach to getting students to talk since they never know whether they will be called on. This may encourage them to always be prepared, but it also increases stress levels.

6. What does the instructor in Excerpt 5 mean about students being *fair game*?

It is possible for anyone to be called on.

7. Would you feel comfortable disagreeing with (challenging) your instructors as the instructor in Excerpt 5 advises students to?

Most of our students would feel very uncomfortable challenging their instructors; they feel that this would be disrespectful. Cultural differences certainly come into play.

### Student Questions

You could probably send students to the MICASE website to look for other examples or other language that could be used. Also, you could have students evaluate the appropriateness of the phrases preceding the actual questions. For example, is it possible that *you lost me there* is a criticism?

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### Task 3 (page 125)

#### RESPONDING TO QUESTIONS

1. Can you tell whether the instructors did or did not want (or expect) anyone to respond to the questions? How?

In neither of the excerpts did the instructor ask questions that he/she expected students to answer. The transcript does not indicate that there was a pause in A after the instructor asks if there are any questions. Had Instructor A really wanted an answer, he or she would have waited a few seconds to give someone a chance to ask a question. In B, the question beginning with *so* appears to give students an opportunity to think about soil depletion, but there is no time given for students to respond. It seems to be a rhetorical question.

2. Imagine you are a student in Class A. What would you do if you really did have a question about why milk prices are higher? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each of these possibilities?

- a. Interrupt the instructor and ask your question.

It might be awkward to interrupt because there does not appear to be a break in the instructor's lecture that would allow a student to easily ask.

- b. Ask another student.

Perhaps, if it's likely another student will know the answers.

- c. Forget about your question, assuming it probably does not matter.

Perhaps, but only if it's clear that the point is not central to the course content.

- d. Email the instructor with your question.

Email is always an option.

- e. Go to the instructor's office hours to ask your question.

This is a good option.

If you wanted to interrupt the professor to ask your question, what would you say? Students will likely think about expressions such as *excuse me* or *pardon me*. Perhaps they will come up with *can I ask a question*. Take a look at MICASE.

In this task, you can also ask your students why milk prices are increasing. They could work a bit on hedging and careful speech.

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**Task 4 (pages 126–27)**

**BIOLOGY LECTURE AND A FOCUS ON QUESTIONS**

1. Read the instructor's questions in Turn 1. How confident is he/she that the students might have an answer?

The instructor is rather sure someone will have an answer of some kind. He/she is encouraging the class to take a chance and offer an answer.

2. How likely would you be to respond to the instructor's question? Why?

No answer is possible here, but to us it seems like there would be nothing to lose by attempting an answer.

3. How does Rebecca respond to the instructor's question? How confident is she? How can you tell?

She's not exactly sure. She answers a question with a question.

4. How does the instructor respond to Rebecca's answer? Does the instructor seem supportive of the student's effort to say something? Why?

The instructor responds positively with a *yeah* and then elaborates. This seems very supportive because the elaboration confirms that Rebecca was on target.

5. How do you think the instructor might have responded if the student had given an answer that was completely incorrect?

It's hard to say, but since it seems to us that the instructor is rather supportive, perhaps he/she would say something like the following,

That's a good guess, but . . . .

Well not quite. Can you think of something else like . . . .

At any rate, we think the instructor would say something to keep the student guessing and not feel bad about an incorrect answer.

6. How confident does John seem in his comment? Does the instructor's answer seem supportive of him?

John seems to be having a little trouble making his point, but he is trying. He shows he's looked at the reading and is attempting to make a connection to what has been said. This is a nice example of the *back and forth* mentioned in Task 2.



7. Why does the instructor mention his son? Many North American instructors do reveal a bit about themselves or their families in class. Does getting some of this personal information influence your attitude toward an instructor?

There is this belief that teenage boys are voracious eaters, so maybe the instructor thinks the analogy will help students get a sense of what a bottom feeder is like. The instructor does not elaborate; the mere mention of the son seems to be enough.

We can't really describe the effect of revealing a bit of one's private life, but we've noticed students seem to enjoy seeing their instructors as real people.

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**Task 5 (pages 129–30)**

**LANGUAGE USED TO ADJUST THE STRENGTH OF THE OPINIONS**

1. **Instructor:** Alright, can I get your attention please? . . . So what sorts of ideas have you come up with what sorts of uh, what sorts of things might, might Brenda Cooper do as the regional manager to reconfigure the the reward system? To get salespeople to sell more. Whatta you think, whatta you think she might do? Kirk?
2. **Kirk:** Um, well, I guess instead of basing, um your salary, on how you do compared to the plan, they might wanna base salary on a percent, of your sales. So, that gives you more incentive to, to, keep, selling, um, . . . it's you know there's a positive reinforcement.
3. **Instructor:** Okay so you're not punished for, increasing the quota. But, you're in fact rewarded for it. Other ideas? Mike?
4. **Mike:** We kind of like thought that you should think in the short term, and then in the long term. Like, in the long term there's a lot of better alternatives . . . you know, stock options. But in the short term . . . they could think about rewarding the entire sales region. Therefore they might have better sales and one district might be more prone to like, share their ideas because if someone's not working hard in their district then, they're gonna actually be hurt. It may have a negative side, but I would think as a whole it might stimulate sales.
5. **Instructor:** And how would you do that? Any of the groups have thoughts about how you would do that? H- how might you do it? How might you, do that so you get the whole region . . . you reward performance in the whole region? Any, any thoughts about how you might do that? Kurt?
6. **Kurt:** You could have little bonuses for the whole region instead of specific districts. Say the whole, region meets their sales quota then, everybody in the region gets a bonus, but if the region doesn't meet the sales goal, then nobody gets a bonus.
7. **Instructor:** So, therefore, if my district figures out, that there's a market for baby food among the elderly, maybe we won't keep that information to ourselves because if the whole region increases in sales, we get a bigger bonus. Other thoughts? What else might you do for the bonus system? Good, Jessica?

8. **Jessica:** Centralize the paperwork? Then they could sell more, without feeling that they were spending more time selling. Because the sales force said oh we have to do the paperwork so we can't sell. Well, if paperwork is centralized, they'd spend less time on paperwork and more time selling. They'd be working the same amount of time but could still sell more, and could get a bonus also.
9. **Instructor:** Okay, that's another approach. Anyone else? Jessica?
10. **Jessica:** I just wanted to ask if . . . well uh maybe you could have another kind of reward that isn't connected uh uh connected to money? I mean, what if you offered to upgrade office space when the sales goals are met? You know, make the environment better. Like have a really amazing space where people could have lunch and relax.

(Based on MICASE. Behavior Theory Management Lecture, File ID: LEL185SU066)

This excerpt provides yet another great example of the back and forth that the instructor in Task 2 was hoping for. Ask your students to look at all of the expressions used by the instructor to keep the students talking. Also, discuss the feedback given by the instructor to help the students see whether they are on target or not.

It's very likely that the instructor featured in Task 5 used some gestures while speaking. We have found that students are unclear about the meaning of many common gestures, most notably the "scare quote."

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### **Task 6 (pages 131–32)**

#### **MORE ON QUESTIONS AND THEIR PURPOSE**

1. **Instructor:** Right next to your house, is a very common place, for trees to start to grow, ironically enough, and why is that? *<pause: 8 seconds>* Anybody have an idea, why trees start to grow, spontaneously right where we don't want them?

(Purpose: To get the discussion going in a non-threatening manner. No one is called on directly.)

2. **Jonathan:** Is it because there's more shelter right next to a house?
3. **Instructor:** Sounds like a good idea. Can you explain?

(Purpose: To encourage to think more about his response, perhaps with a view toward helping him find a better, more precise response. This also seems rather non-threatening to us because the instructor indicates the student is thinking about the question in the right way.)

4. **Jonathan:** Is it because there's more shelter, for the seeds?
5. **Instructor:** Let's think for a second. Is there more shelter of a very special kind? *<pause: 9 seconds>*

(Purpose: To encourage to think more about his response, perhaps with a view toward helping him find a better, more precise response. The long pause indicates that the instructor is willing to give the student time to think. This also seems rather non-threatening to us because the instructor indicates the student is still thinking about the question in the right way.)

6. **Jonathan:** Is it protection from the wind?

7. **Instructor:** Perhaps a little protection of the wind, but I have something else in mind. What's out there in your yard that might not be good for a tree?

(Purpose: At this point, it's clear Jonathan is not going to give the answer the instructor wants, but rather than dismiss the response, the instructor acknowledges it before throwing the question out to the class again. The question here is intended to get the students thinking again based on what they have heard so far.)

8. **Lauren:** Protection from lawn mowers?

9. **Instructor:** Protection from your . . . , Lauren?

(Purpose: To have the student repeat her answer perhaps so the entire class can hear it.)

10. **Lauren:** Lawn mower.

11. **Instructor:** Lawn mower. Yes, protection from your lawn mower. Tree seedlings, really, don't like, to be mown. And in fact, what keeps your lawn a lawn, and not, a forest, is because you mow it. If you didn't mow your lawn, and you looked at it in twenty years, it'd be covered with trees. That's because we live in an eastern hardwood forest, where the potential vegetation is a hardwood forest. That means if we stop doing anything, and let nature take its course, it ultimately reverts back to, goes back to, the eastern hardwood forest.

(Based on MICASE. Practical Botany Lecture, File ID: LEL175JU086)

1. **Why do you suppose the instructor is asking so many questions?**

Again, this is a good example of the kind of interaction that many U.S. instructors want in their classrooms. The instructor is asking questions to get the students to think and remain engaged.

2. **Are the questions in Turn 1 directed at a particular student? How can you tell?**

In asking, *Anybody have an idea?* the instructor is directing the question at the whole class. Note the ellipsis in the question—*does* is missing.

3. **Do you think the students needed to raise their hands to answer?**

Probably not, since the students seem to be offering ideas as they think of them. The instructor gives students time to think about the questions and is willing to wait to see who comes up with an answer.

4. **How does the instructor attempt to draw out answers from the students?**

The instructor gives hints in the follow-up questions. For example, in Turn 5 the instructor asks, *Is there more shelter of a very special kind?* This question confirms that shelter connected with the house is generally right, but suggests that the students need to think more narrowly about the kind of protection that being next to a house can offer. Also notice that in Turn 9 the instructor knows that Lauren has said something, but perhaps very quietly, and asks her to repeat what she had said. We don't know if the instructor

heard her or not; regardless, her answer was important enough for him/her to ask Lauren to give it again.

5. How does the instructor react to the answers that are not quite right?

The instructor indicates that *wind* is not a bad answer by saying that to some extent this is correct. However, wind protection was not the answer he/she had had in mind. The instructor's response is focused on him- or herself, not on the student.

6. What do you think is the effect of this kind of response on the students? How comfortable are the students responding to questions?

The response is one that would not make the students feel bad or embarrassed.

7. In Turn 1, the instructor waits eight seconds before repeating his questions. In Turn 5 there is another pause of nine seconds. Why? What is the effect of pausing or wait time?

Pauses give students time to think and invite students to talk. In normal conversation, we know we can take a turn when there is a break in the conversation. If we speak before there is a break or pause, it might be inappropriate.

8. Can you identify any instances of hedging?

Turns 4, 6, and 8, in which the students respond to a question with a question.

Turn 7: *Perhaps a little*

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### Wh-Clefts (page 132)

There is a lot more to be said on clefts than we can discuss in this unit. You may want to also spend some time on *it*-clefts:

It was John who was supposed to make the slides.

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### Task 7 (pages 132–33)

Read this excerpt from a discussion in a class on politics of higher education, and underline all the *wh*-clefts.

1. **Instructor:** OK. Let's talk about the papers for this week. Jeremy, why don't you start and, tell us what your, thoughts were about this.
2. **Jeremy:** Um, what I focused on, I'm trying to remember what *<laugh>*, was that distance learning, and uh about these virtual universities, are basically not giving someone the same education. And, uh, what I wrote about is that there are drawbacks to distance learning and, I don't have a hard copy here because my, my printer's broken, but uh . . .
3. **Instructor:** So what are the drawbacks?

4. **Jeremy:** Well, what the main drawback of distance learning is the uh, that you, lose out on the experience of um the me- maturation process which occurs from, sitting in classrooms even if you're a commuting student. Um, from having, you know the professor, in front of the room saying this is due on Tuesday or whatever. Being in the classroom forces you to think uh, it makes it more concrete, as opposed to if you see it online.
5. **Instructor:** What if I just show a video?
6. **Jeremy:** If you're in the classroom setting still with other students, it's uh, there's still the the academia feeling, and uh, [**Instructor:** It's a different feeling.] right. And uh, specifically with going away to school there there's such a change that students go through. If, someone was to, um, do their courses online they wouldn't be able to experience the, change overall, as a person that, one gains from going away to school. um, but I did, write about that I, recognized the fact that there are people who can't, go away to um, I forget specifically what I wrote about I I went into more detail and I, cited some stuff but it's been a while since I, <**Instructor:** *laugh*> read my own my own piece <*laugh*> um (it.) But, what you need to think about is that there is an interaction part of the class that's important.
7. **Instructor:** OK. Yeah, that's good. Who else wants to contribute besides Jeremy? Aw, c'mon who else? Everybody else in here. Somebody must be missing because I think I had uh <*pause:06 sec*> let's see, is uh, let's see . . . Stephanie.
8. **Stephanie:** OK, yeah . . . What Jeremy just said makes sense. I mean we couldn't have this same discussion in an online course, could we? . . .

(The *wh*-clause is not a cleft. It's simply fronted information.)

(Based on MICASE. Politics of Higher Education, File ID: SEM495SU111)

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### Task 8 (pages 133–34)

#### Wh-CLEFTS

Choose the *wh*-clauses that can reasonably complete the sentences in the transcript. For some sentences, more than one *wh*-clause will work.

*What I mean is*

*What I've noticed looking back at my last few years here is*

*What I'm saying is*

*What it seems like to me is*

*What you need to do is*

- Instructor:** What do you know about, other cultures? Did anyone encounter new cultures when they came to Michigan?
- S1:** Yes
- S2:** Yeah
- Instructor:** And so what do you do with that new information? John?

5. **S1:** Well um (1) *What I've noticed looking back at my last few years here is/ What it seems like to me is* that lot of people know only superficial things about other cultures. [**Instructor:** mhm] It's based on what they see other people doing or what they hear through media or through, school or through their family. But if you don't, if you don't live, like that culture lives or like that race lives or, that religion then, you're not gonna see you're not gonna understand what, goes on in, in that culture . . .
6. **Instructor:** Do we tend to have real nice things to say about people who are different than us? [**S2:** No] just generally speaking? What do you think? We as Americans do we generally have nice things to say about people who are not like us?
7. **S2:** (2) *What it seems like to me is* is that people do all sorts of things, (3) *What I mean is/What I'm saying is* that we can't make a broad-based generalization like that.
8. **Instructor:** You don't think so? [**S2:** I don't think so] How's that?
9. **S2:** <Laugh> I, I just don't think we can. (4) *What I mean is/ What I'm saying is* that America is made up of many different types of people and some people are very accepting and others aren't, and, that's reality. And so some people have nice things to say or even if they don't have nice things they don't know enough. But I I don't think that you, I don't think that you could classify it. (5) *What you need to do is* you should do a survey about how people feel about the people that are different.

(Based on MICASE. Intro to American Politics Discussion Section, File ID: DIS495JU119)

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**Task 9 (page 134)**

Go to the MICASE website, and look for examples of *wh*-clefts. You can begin by looking for some of the following expressions.

What I think was/is . . .

What I found was/is . . .

Answers will vary.

We know that there is a lot on ellipsis in this unit and maybe more than you would like to cover. We have found, however, that students like these exercises because they often think that their listening comprehension is poor and they are not hearing what they should. It's a bit of a relief for them to find out that certain parts of utterances are in fact not there.

**Task 10 (page 138)**

**ELLIPSIS**

Read these short examples, and write the elements in the blank, if any have been omitted.

**A:** Going to the game this weekend? *Are you going to the game this weekend?*  
**B:** Depends on the weather. *It depends on the weather.*  
**A:** Same with me. *It's the same with me.*

**A:** You going to the lecture this afternoon? *Are you going to the lecture this afternoon?*  
**B:** Probably. It sounds interesting. *I will probably go. It sounds interesting.*  
**A:** Yeah, might be kind of interesting. *Yeah, it might be kind of interesting.*

**A:** You okay? *Are you okay?*  
**B:** Yeah, just a bit tired. *Yeah, I'm just a bit tired.*  
**A:** It's been a tough week. Too much homework. *It's been a tough week. I've had too much homework.*  
**B:** No doubt about it. *There's no doubt about it.*

**Task 11 (page 139)**

**MORE ON ELLIPSIS**

Conversation Full Sentences	Ellipsis
A: Are you going to math class?	You going to math class?
B: Yes, I am going. Are you going?	Yeah. You?
A: I am probably not going. I have to finish my psychology paper today. I haven't even started.	Probably not. I have to finish my psychology paper today. Haven't even started.
B: It's due today? Are you gonna manage okay?	Today? You gonna manage okay?
A: I hope so. Do you know anything about children and TV violence?	Hope so. You know anything about children and TV violence?
B: I know a little about children and TV violence. But I don't know enough to help you write a paper.	A little, but not enough to help you.
A: Oh well. I guess I'm on my own.	Oh well. Guess I'm on my own.

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**Task 12 (page 140)**

**LECTURE WITH ELLIPSIS**

One interesting aspect of Turn 2 is the author's use of *though* at the end of the third sentence. Our students are often unaware that we often place *though* and some other connectors at the end of the sentence in speaking, but in writing, sentence connectors (such as *for example*, *therefore*, and *however*) nearly always occur at the beginning of a sentence. Full forms are in brackets.

1. **Student 1:** We having a quiz today?  
[Are we having a quiz today?]
2. **Instructor:** Yeah. actually. <laugh> Wouldn't want you to get out of shape. <laugh>  
Real short one, though. Multiple choice. Real easy.  
[Yeah, actually we are having a quiz today. I wouldn't want you to get out of shape. It's a real short one, though. It's multiple choice. It's real easy.]
3. **Student 2:** The last one was multiple choice too, but it was, twelve, multiple choices.  
This a real multiple choice?  
[Is this a real multiple choice quiz?]
4. **Instructor:** Well this is only three. You got a better shot at this one.
5. **Student 3:** Is it based on the reading or the notes?
6. **Instructor:** The reading. You do the reading?  
[It (The quiz) is based on the reading. Did you do the reading?]
7. **Student 3:** Didn't have time.  
[I didn't have time.]
8. **Instructor:** <laugh> It's comparatively easy . . . and remember it doesn't count against you. Just a chance to, make some points.  
[The quiz is just a chance to make some points.]
9. **Student 4:** Counts against you if everybody else does well.  
[The quiz counts against you if everyone else does well.]
10. **Instructor:** Yeah, well. Maybe. You plan on not doing well? Anyone else?  
[Yeah, well maybe it does. Are you planning on not doing well? Is anyone else planning on not doing well?]

(Based on MICASE. Intro Oceanography Lecture, File ID: LEL305JU092)



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**Task 13 (pages 142–44)**

The transcript of the personal narrative is quite long, but we thought it was such a great story that we wanted to include it. We also thought that many students would have a fond memory of a relative that they might be willing to share.

**PERSONAL NARRATIVE: MY GRANDMOTHER'S POTATOES**

1. At what point does the instructor start his personal narrative? Underline the words that signal this.

The story begins in Turn 5 when the instructor says, *So maybe this is one of those ones that that you keep coming back to. I also feel kind of a, a special relationship to this book because of my grandma Mahler, um, my father's mother. I remember this quite vividly. When I was a little boy, um and I mean little like, three . . . .*

2. What is the story about?

The instructor is telling the class about a very fond memory he has of his grandmother having an endless amount of potatoes for him to eat and his amazement at how she accomplished this. He offers a very vivid description of sitting at the table and having the potatoes magically appear. He also reveals a bit about the precarious nature of his parents' marriage.

3. How does he make a connection back to the content of the lecture? Underline where the transition occurs.

He says, *And every time I have read this book or seen this movie, I'm always reminded of my grandmother, with this endless supply of potatoes. And it reminds me that there's something going on here. It's it goes right back to the fairy tale roots that we talked about the first week of class.*

4. Can you think of any classes you've had where the instructor or another student has used a personal narrative? If yes, describe the situation and the story as best you can remember.

U.S. instructors often tell stories, so we're sure someone will have been in a class where this has occurred.

5. If you were a member of this class, would you want to contribute to the discussion? How? Would you perhaps tell a story?

We would be tempted to, but how we would do this would depend on the class.

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**Task 14 (page 144)**

**SHARING A STORY**

Perhaps you can tell your class a short personal narrative or story about a memorable experience.

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## Reading for Discussion

### Why Not Ask?

Are you the kind of student who never asks questions in class? Have you ever thought about what's stopping you?

If it's because you understand everything so well that you don't *have* any questions, maybe you don't need to be in that class. If it's because you are so lost that you don't understand *anything* and don't even know what questions to start with, maybe you shouldn't be in that class.

But if it's because you are worried about asking a question because it might be embarrassing, make it seem like you aren't very smart, or slow down the class, then consider reconsidering.

Feeling embarrassed is in fact extremely common, but there's no need to feel that way. Let's think how teachers handle questions in class—most welcome them, and a good teacher uses student questions to gauge how well their material is being understood. A good teacher also will adjust lessons in response to questions. Additionally, student questions usually benefit many others in class—it's rare that you are the *only* one with a particular question. Student questions might bring up a new perspective that the teacher can learn from, or even point out an error the teacher made. It's true, teachers *do* make mistakes, and can still learn from their students!

So, what are your reasons for *not* asking questions?

You think you will embarrass yourself in front of the teacher and/or other classmates. Forget about that. After all, didn't a lot of your instructors say, "There are no stupid questions?" They mean it. Really. Remember that teachers are more understanding than you might imagine, and your classmates may thank you for being brave enough to ask something *they* were too afraid to ask.

You might feel you are wasting your classmates' time, or taking time away from more important things. Again, don't worry about it. If the question is relevant the teacher can answer in a way that makes more information available to all the students. And if it is something that the teacher doesn't feel she can answer right then, it opens the door to continue talking about it after class or in office hours.

So, take time in class and ask away! You might be surprised at how it will enhance your classroom experience.

## Instructor's Notes for Unit 6: Discussions and Panel Presentations in the Classroom

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### *Task 1 (page 150)*

#### **DISCUSSION ROLES**

Answers will vary; the purpose here is to get students thinking about what roles they will have in a discussion. The roles are discussed in more detail after Task 1.

**About the discussion assignment:** The actual discussion assignment is outlined in Task 11 on page 169. Tasks 2–10 introduce the skills needed to do the discussions. You may want to have students look at Task 11 before starting Task 2, and remind them that this is the task they are preparing for. It makes more sense to have the students work through Tasks 2–10 with the final discussion in mind, thus giving a real context to the different preparation steps. For example, after doing Tasks 2 and 3 about choosing topics, students can begin searching for possible topics and for short articles on those topics to bring to class. Those articles could then be used in the summarizing practice in Task 6. Note that Task 8 asks the students to find the actual article or reading they will use for the discussion.

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### *Task 2 (page 151)*

#### **DISCUSSION TOPICS**

1. What are some current topics of interest that could be used in a discussion?

Answers will vary depending on current events, local events (in your town or on your campus), and student interests. Students can also start thinking about what topics might be relevant to their audience (their classmates). We suggest that students think about the consequences of highly charged topics and reasons to avoid them.

2. What are some sources for topic ideas? Where can you find topics of interest?

Answers will vary, but possible sources include Internet resources, newspapers, magazines, journals, or articles from other classes; ideas can also come from TV or radio shows.

**About topic choices:** Students will often come up with topics that are interesting but are not really good for discussion. Encourage them to find topics that may generate differing views, or issues that people can disagree about. Short readings on general interest topics from newspapers, magazines, or even websites work well. Unless your class is homogenous (all engineers, for example), try to avoid highly technical or specialized topics for the discussions. If you do have a group or subgroups from similar disciplines, then a discipline-specific topic for their discussion can be highly engaging for them. We also encourage students to avoid topics that are highly charged and can evoke strong responses, such as abortion or political issues. While in some classes or contexts these topics may be appropriate, we have found they do not work well in our context. You might establish a list of topics to avoid. After many years of teaching discussion, there are some topics we just “ban” (e.g., death penalty, gun control) because we are tired of them!

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**Task 3 (page 151)**

**DISCUSSION TOPICS**

*Recycling should be mandatory on college campuses*—could work but could use some focus, such as recycling by students in dorms or by departments; or type of recycling (e.g., paper).

*Students should not be allowed to record lecture classes*—could be okay; or could use more focus, such as: What types of lecture classes? What kind of recording (audio, video)?

*Cell phone use while driving should be illegal*—Okay

*High school students must do volunteer work as a graduation requirement*—Okay, but could have more focus, such as how much volunteering, what types.

Would any of these topics be too controversial to use for a class discussion?

Not really.

Feel free to substitute other topics or add to the list if your students need more practice.

Students are asked to bring in articles that could work for discussion. These will be used for the summarizing practice in Task 6. They do not have to be the final choice for the discussions (see Task 8). You may need to warn students against bringing in articles that are too difficult or technical for the audience (or even for themselves—we’ve seen students bring in something that they cannot summarize).

**About transcripts in this section:** The main transcript used to illustrate points throughout this part of the unit is not part of MICASE but is from an actual class discussion at the University of Michigan recorded and transcribed in much the same way as MICASE data. Language was edited for clarity. The class consisted of all graduate students in architecture or urban planning, so while the topic of ecological architecture is somewhat specialized, it is reasonably accessible. The main points being illustrated in this unit should be clear to the students even if they cannot completely follow the content. The names of the students have been changed but do reflect the nationality of the original speakers (e.g., Korean and Chinese speakers).

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**Task 4 (pages 153–55)****REFERRING TO ARTICLES AND AUTHORS**

The language used to refer to an article, a reading, or what an author said is underlined in the examples. Students can underline, circle, or mark up the transcripts however they want, but then they should fill in the chart that follows Excerpt 6. The language that is underlined in the examples can be added to the table as well.

We find that our students are surprised that in English we can say an article “does” something, such as the article argues/says/criticizes. Such constructions are not always possible in other languages.

Throughout the text there are tasks encouraging students to search MICASE. Task 4 asks students to go to MICASE and look for some of the words/phrases they compiled in the chart. If you choose to have your students do this, you may need to talk first about how to search MICASE (if you haven’t done it already). If your classroom is equipped with a computer, Internet access, and projection, students can benefit from an in-class demonstration. You could have students pick one or two different phrases to search and then ask students to bring their results to class to share with the group. You might need to demonstrate how you can modify a search if you don’t find something. For example, you might not find *she argues*, but you will find *he argues*; thus, beware of searches that are too specific. It may also be helpful to remind students that some phrases that are used may not appear in MICASE; however, they are still perfectly fine to use. Students may need some help deciding how much of the transcript to bring to class as well as deciding the relevance of the search output. *The MICASE Handbook* (Simpson-Vlach and Leicher 2006) is an excellent resource on using MICASE.

**EXCERPT 1**

**Jaemin:** Yeah, this article is about technology and um the author says technology has two faces or characteristics and one is to build something, the other is destroy something. Our environment ah has been long been influenced by the technology so the author mentions that we can change our environmental architecture by using the technology.

(Based on Academic Speaking and Writing for Architects. Class Discussion)

**EXCERPT 2**

**Yi:** Ah the article talks about the urban future. He says the increase in recent years of the Internet or telecommunications, ICT technologies, we think we work less, use our cars less if we telecommute, and we can have more leisure time so we can be in a more natural environment outside our offices. But in this article it says actually people work more than before because of the Internet we spend more time in front of the computer. Uh so the article also says it’s uh it’s true we spend more time than before in office buildings so maybe we should concentrate

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more on how to design the skyscraper or how to uh make a modern building more humane or environmental . . . .

(Based on Academic Speaking and Writing for Architects. Class Discussion)

**EXCERPT 3**

**Steve:** Uh, last week, the *New York Times*, ran an article about mathematics, with the title "Math Emerges Blinking into the Glare of the Pop World." This article describes a new booming market for popular math books. Uh it quotes an editorial claiming that the present time is a golden age for popularization of mathematics. It attributes a surge in interest to mathematics to the British mathematician Andrew Wiles, who made, mathematics headlines around the world, uh for solving, the most famous problem in the history of mathematics . . . .

(Based on MICASE. Public Math Colloquium, File ID: COL385MU054)

**EXCERPT 4**

**Jonathan:** Okay this is one thing I would like to end with which I thought was really interesting there's this article by Michael Silverstein. Um, and let me tell you a little bit of this article, if I can find it here. Okay this article is in um the *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* and he has an article "Encountering Language and Language of Encounter in North American Ethnohistory." And one of the things he says is that if you're gonna look at a language contact phenomenon in native North America or the Americas when dealing with uh Indian languages . . . .

(Based on MICASE. Bilingualism Student Presentations, File ID: STP355MG011)

**EXCERPT 5**

**Barb:** . . . alright in uh, Dr Duderstadt's, Duder- I can't pronounce [**Sarah:** Duderstadt] Duderstadt [**Sarah:** Yup] uh article he focused on a change from, um, the need to change, uh the social construct between the university and the community in general . . . . There're, I think five themes that he concentrated on that would be like significant in the future discussion of higher education and the three of them I discussed were diversity, uh interactive and collaborative methodology or pedagog- pedagogy, and then uh, becoming more a learning center. In regards to diversity, he made a good argument for diversity and why it's important to the university . . . .

(Based on MICASE. Politics of Higher Education Seminar, File ID: SEM495SU111)

**EXCERPT 6**

**Pamela:** . . . because um in the article that we read um it says that even very proficient second language learners still have problems with pragmatic concepts so we would like to see how they are really different.

(Based on MICASE. Second Lang. Acquisition Student Presentations, File ID: STP355SU011)

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**Task 5 (page 156)**

**TENSES**

What tense is used?

Generally we use the present tense when summarizing a current reading or article. Notice in Excerpt 5 that the past tense is used (*focused, concentrated, made*).

List the verbs:

argues	mentions	focused (on)
maintains	talks (about)	concentrated (on)
gives	describes	made
is (about)	says	
quotes	attributes	

What other verbs could you use in summarizing?

Answers will vary but may include *reports, discusses, suggests, concludes, supports, addresses*.

---

**Task 6 (page 156)**

**SUMMARIES**

Before the students do Task 6, it may be helpful to model the task for the full class. Depending on the skill level of your class, you may need to spend more time on summarizing or finding main ideas. Bring in an article for the class to read and then together discuss the main ideas, location of main ideas, and supporting detail.

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**Task 7 (pages 157–58)**

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

**EXCERPT 1**

**Yi:** Actually I'm more curious about ecological architecture, but I'm curious about how much, maybe the author has talked about it but does anyone know how much energy is wasted in buildings? I mean I mean uh how can the authors so emphasize ecological architecture? Do they know that the buildings waste a lot of energy? Do they have this kind of information?

(Based on Academic Speaking and Writing for Architects. Class Discussion)

#### EXCERPT 2

**Kwanghee:** Environmentally sound buildings are not usually, I think, in my opinion usually are not appreciated by architecture schools, we just build these amazing buildings. Do you think, do you believe these trends can be changed?

**Aidan:** Didn't one of the readings talk about that?

(Based on Academic Speaking and Writing for Architects. Class Discussion)

#### EXCERPT 3

**Aidan:** Doesn't, wasn't, I thought in this reading "Taking Shape" reading the first couple pages where she talks about Frank Gehry and Peter Eisenman for a little bit, not saying that *they're* making ecological buildings but she says that their sense of design might be the future of ecological design. Don't you think. I mean we're talking about the cost of materials right now and but we're not developing materials usually but we're deciding how to put them together, so isn't that where, that's where we can make ecology affordable, through good design?  
<pause> Anybody wanna challenge me on that?

(Based on Academic Speaking and Writing for Architects. Class Discussion)

#### EXCERPT 4

**Aidan:** If if if every person in Korea today said they wanted a traditional house would there be enough trees?

**Kwanghee:** No.

**Taechun:** But we could choose to use the good features of traditional architecture and get rid of the bad . . . .

(Based on Academic Speaking and Writing for Architects. Class Discussion)

#### EXCERPT 5

**Youngchul:** If we choose to live in traditional Korean houses . . . then we don't need to use up energy for heating or cooling. We should live like they did in the past.

**Kwanghee:** That can't be accepted by modern Korean people

**Aidan:** Really? [**Jaemin:** <laughs>] [**Aidan:** No air conditioning?] [**Mindy:** No air conditioning]



**Robert:** Jaemin, what do you think about that?

**Jaemin:** Uh I think choosing material and structure seems to be depend not only on economic or ecological issues but also the notion of aesthetics, and variation of aesthetics of ordinary people, I mean.

(Based on Academic Speaking and Writing for Architects. Class Discussion)

#### EXCERPT 6

**Jaemin:** Are there any rules or regulations about ecological building in the U.S.?

**Stephen:** Right now it's all voluntary isn't it?

**Mindy:** You get rewards for it, so you have like tax free, depending on what percent of sustainability you have you can get tax breaks.

**Stephen:** And also there's a lot of government initiatives right now. Is it like that in Korea, do you have initiatives like that?

(Based on Academic Speaking and Writing for Architects. Class Discussion)

1. For each excerpt, underline the questions and discuss whether the question would be likely to encourage discussion or not.

Questions in Excerpts 1, 2 (Kwanghee's question), 3, and 5 would probably encourage discussion. Questions in Excerpts 4 and 6 may encourage discussion, if follow-up questions were used.

2. Find examples of yes/no questions. Can you think of a follow-up question for them? See Excerpts 2, 4, 6. Follow-up questions will vary.
3. In Excerpts 2 and 6, a question is answered with another question. Why do you suppose this is?

It could be the second speaker wants to agree with the first but is not so sure of the answer, so asks another question, or the second speaker has a similar question and asks it in a different way.

4. In Excerpt 3, after a pause and no one offers an answer, the speaker asks if anyone wants to challenge him. Why?

It could be that the silence meant everyone agrees, and Aidan feels what he said needs more discussion or debate. He asks for challengers as a way to prompt more discussion.

5. In Excerpt 5, the discussion leader, Robert, starts his question by calling on a specific student. Do you think this is a good strategy? Why?

Yes. It is one way to include someone who hasn't had a chance to speak yet, or someone who might be very quiet, shy, or afraid to contribute. As the leader, Robert noticed that that particular student had not had a chance to add an opinion so he helped facilitate that.

***About or questions (page 159)***

It is not uncommon for students to miss the *or* in questions, and just answer yes or no. We've seen this make the person asking the question quite annoyed, causing communication to start to break down. In other cases it may be more amusing, as in Excerpt 3. So, this may be something to practice with your students, for example by going around the room asking simple yes/no and *or* questions (mixed up). This gives extra listening practice as well as practice in answering correctly.

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***Task 8 (pages 160–61)***

**DISCUSSION ARTICLES, SUMMARIES, AND QUESTIONS**

At this point, your students should focus on the article they want to use for their final discussion. Even if not every student will lead a discussion, the task is still beneficial in its focus on summarizing skills and questions. As students often struggle with question formation, it is usually a good idea to have them give you a copy of their questions so you can see what needs work. There are many ways to proceed with this task. Students can exchange papers and evaluate each other's questions; you can collect all the questions and offer suggestions; you can have volunteers put some questions on overheads or the board and then talk about and revise them as a class. We find this last way generates a lot of discussion and gives students more chances to speak. The class examples can provide information for the students so they can re-evaluate their own questions. What typically happens is that there are many yes/no questions, with no follow-ups. Questions and follow-ups were discussed in Unit 2; you might want to refer back to that section.

This is also the point where we usually "approve" the topic/reading that students brought to class. If it is not appropriate, we ask them to find something else.

---

***Task 9 (pages 162–66)***

**USEFUL PHRASES FOR DISCUSSION**

For the first part of this task (filling in Chart A) students might need some prompting or hints, but usually they come up with quite a variety of options. After they have some ideas, you can compare what each group or pair wrote by consolidating the information on the board or on an overhead.

Homework asking students to search MICASE can be assigned. See notes on Task 4.

The next excerpts from the architecture class discussion are long, but necessary to illustrate the language features in context. An example of a completed Chart B is given.

B

Examples of Language for	Example from Architecture Class Discussion	Examples in MICASE?
<b>Interrupting</b>	but so are you yeah (several times) and what	
<b>Agreement</b>	yeah (several times) right, so it's a good point but (partial agreement)	
<b>Disagreement</b>	but but I thought but I don't think so but can we I'm going to play devil's advocate I'm going to argue X is not the only factor but in fact	
<b>Giving an opinion</b>	I think (many times) I thought So I just thought In my opinion We should He thinks I think the point is	
<b>Restating or clarifying</b>	So are you saying . . . ? So I mean You're saying . . . ? Or he's saying . . . ? Are you saying . . . ?	
<b>Hedging</b>	I'm not sure I think (thought) that I'm not really sure either I just thought that was I guess I thought what the article was I don't know saying was	

***About the Transcript Illustrating Hedging (pages 166–67)***

This excerpt from a Graduate Public Policy Seminar is a particularly good example of just how rich the MICASE data is. The excerpt in the textbook has been edited for length and to keep the students focused on the use of hedging. But in this short excerpt there are wonderful examples of many other features of spoken language. We encourage teachers who have the time and interest in doing so to dig further into some of these transcripts, by going to the original versions and looking at the possibilities for other teaching opportunities. In this one, there are examples of giving opinions, getting students involved, organizational language, agreeing/disagreeing, fast speech, and contractions, in addition to the hedging we highlight.

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***Task 10 (page 169)***

**EXCHANGING OPINIONS**

For this task feel free to pick other topics that may be more appropriate for your class, or have the students add topics they have opinions about. This task works well if each “set” is relatively short, with brief summarizing opportunities interspersed. We recommend having the students switch partners after each topic.

---

***Task 11 (page 169)***

**DISCUSSION**

You may want to set up this task so each student can lead a short discussion. This of course will depend on class size and time constraints. We have done this task in different ways. If the class is large, sometimes we break the class into smaller groups (about six students per group) and schedule extra sessions. Having the smaller groups allows students to have more practice participating. If you have a very large class and not a lot of class time, it might not be feasible to use the small group arrangement in which more than one discussion is taking place at a time. Another option is to have pairs of students be responsible for leading the discussion. Timing can also be adjusted, from 20 minutes per group to 45 minutes. We've found the group needs at least 20 minutes to accomplish all the things they have learned about leading and participating in a discussion.

Even if every student will not be a discussion leader, good follow-up feedback and evaluation of the discussion will be beneficial for all students.

If videotaping is an option, you could run simultaneous sessions and tape them, then later review the tapes. Students could also watch the discussion and use it for self-evaluation.

***About Discussion Feedback (page 170)***

Feedback is often a matter of personal preference. We offer several different options, but any manner of giving feedback that suits your particular class will do. We feel the process of giving feedback is valuable; the form it takes is certainly flexible. We've included a form you can use to give feedback specifically to the leader, a self-evaluation for the leader, and self-evaluations for the participants. Feel free to modify these feedback forms to fit your needs. If your class is set up so you have time to give verbal feedback after discussions, while the event is still fresh, it can be really helpful for students to think about how well the discussion went, what strengths they had, and how they could improve.

---

## Discussion Evaluation for Participants

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

	Yes	No	I'm not sure
1. Did you ask a question?			
2. Did you interrupt?			
3. Did you have a chance to give your opinion?			
4. Did the leader call on you directly?			
5. Did you talk too much?			
6. Did you listen carefully to what others had to say, then respond appropriately?			
7. Do you think the topic was appropriate/well chosen?			
8. Did you use active listening to show you were involved in the discussion?			

How would you evaluate your participation in the discussion?

What were your strengths and weaknesses?

What could you have done to improve your participation?

---

### Discussion Evaluation for the Discussion Leader

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

	Yes	No	I'm not sure
1. Did you choose a good topic?			
2. Did you provide enough materials to members of the group?			
3. Did you anticipate what the group members might think about the topic?			
4. Do you think the group understood the focus of your discussion?			
5. Did you talk too much?			
6. Did you listen carefully to what others had to say, then respond appropriately?			
7. Did you ask follow-up questions?			
8. Did you involve everyone in the group?			
9. Did you ask questions when you did not understand what someone was saying?			
10. Did you pronounce key words correctly?			
11. Did you make good eye contact with all group members?			

How would you evaluate your discussion overall?

What were your strengths and weaknesses?

What could you have done to improve your discussion?

---

## Instructor Feedback for Discussion Leaders

Leader: \_\_\_\_\_ Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic choice and preparation

Sufficient background/context and summary

Questions

used a variety of questions

had follow-up questions

asked clarifying questions as needed

Group management

made sure everyone participated

called on people by name

kept speakers on topic

Concluded/ended on time

Language/pronunciation/fluency/non-verbals

Main strengths

Areas to improve

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## Panel Presentations in the Classroom

**About the Panel Presentation Assignment:** The actual assignment is outlined in Task 26. As with the discussion assignment in the first half of this unit, you may want to introduce Task 26 before beginning Task 12. Tasks 12 through 25 all lead up to the final presentation, so it makes sense to work through the unit with the final project in mind.

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### *Task 12 (pages 172–73)*

#### **PANEL TOPICS/ROLES**

Answers will vary; see the next section in the text for an example of how the panel could be set up. Some students may take a problem-solution approach—that is, discuss how universities deal with the problem.

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### *Task 13 (page 174)*

#### **TOPICS AND ORGANIZATION**

Some topics lend themselves to more than one organizational scheme. Students may have differing opinions here, so having them explain and defend their choice provides a good opportunity for more speaking.

Topic	Possible Organizational Scheme
Global warming	Cause/effect
Approaches to health care in the U.S. and Indonesia	Compare/contrast
The impact of the iPod	Chronological
Energy efficient buildings	Classification
Drunk driving	Problem/solution Cause/effect
School uniform policies	Advantages/disadvantages Problem/solution



**Task 14 (page 175)****TOPICS**

Answers will vary, depending on the topic chosen. We provide an example in the chart.

<b>1. Topic and Evaluation:</b> Severe Weather; it's interesting for us because we live in Michigan and we often have severe weather (blizzards, ice, tornados). We should narrow the topic maybe to our own region, or state. It might be helpful information for our class to know what to do in severe weather, as most of us are new here.	
<b>2. Presenter Roles and Subtopics:</b>	
<b>Presenter #1</b>	Define severe weather Focus on tornados Give statistics (U.S., Michigan)
<b>Presenter #2</b>	Meteorological explanation Describe how tornados form What they look like, different kinds
<b>Presenter #3</b>	Describe the warning systems Describe the different categories of storms/damage
<b>Presenter #4</b>	Talk about how to prepare, to be safe What to do if you are in certain situations
<b>Presenter #1</b>	Summarize
<b>3. Organizational Strategy:</b> Maybe cause and effect?	

**Task 15 (pages 176–77)****NEGOTIATING PANEL TOPICS AND ROLES**

1 and 2: Phrases to suggest a topic are underlined; phrases to indicate agreement or disagreement are italicized (students are asked to circle). Notice the use of partial agreement, such as in Turn 2 (*yeah, maybe but*) and Turn 3 (*I like that but*).

- Miriam:** So, we have to talk about some current health related issue for students, and um I was thinking what about stress, you know, everyone experiences stress and,
- Eric:** Hmm, *yeah, maybe, but* isn't that kinda a big topic, I mean, I don't know, it's pretty broad. Um, how about underage drinking on campus? That's really common.
- Tom:** *Yeah, I like that but* uh is it enough for 30 minutes?
- Eric:** Hmm. Then how about alcohol abuse on campus? That could include underage drinking, cuz alcohol abuse is a problem even if you're legal, so it might be more better to talk about, and we can still talk about underage drinking.
- Miriam:** *Yeah and um,* maybe we can talk about any connections between stress and drinking.

6. **Maria:** *Mkay with me*, I don't really care either way.

7. **Miriam:** So, everyone okay with it? [Eric: *Yeah*] we'll do alcohol abuse on campus?

8. **Tom:** *Mhm* [**Maria:** *Okay with me*] *I can live with it.*

3. Do you think Miriam is okay that her first topic suggestion was not taken? How do you know (what language does she use to indicate how she feels)?

She's probably okay with it, as she agrees in Turn 5 (*yeah*) and then suggests how she can connect her first topic to the new one. Then in Turn 7 she asks if everyone is okay with the plan.

4. What does Tom mean in Turn 8 when he says, *I can live with it*?

It's okay with him.

5 and 6: Phrases that indicate the students are showing a preference for the order they will present in or a preference of topic are underlined; phrases that indicate what a student does NOT want to do are italicized (students are asked to circle).

9. **Eric:** Who wants to go, who wants to start? *I don't wanna go first.*

10. **Tom:** I do. I wanna go first.

11. **Maria:** You do? [**Tom:** *Yeah*] Really?

12. **Eric:** Okay, I'm okay going second. And I can do something about drunk driving. I know someone who was arrested for that and I could give that as an example. I mean it was really awful what happened, but at least no one got hurt but it made a big impression on my friend and on all of us, really. So I'd like to do that.

13. **Miriam:** Sounds fine with me.

14. **Maria:** Uh, Miriam do you wanna go third, or last? Does it matter to you?

15. **Miriam:** I dunno, could I go third? *I just don't want to be last.*

16. **Maria:** Whatever you want.

17. **Eric:** Okay, so it'll be like this, me, then Tom, then Miriam, then Maria. Okay?

18. **Maria, Miriam:** *Mhm <nodding>*

19. **Tom:** Yep. And before we meet next class let's all get more information you know, besides Eric doing drunk driving . . .

20. **Miriam:** And I still wanna do something about stress. If no one minds.

21. **Tom:** Okay then let's all bring stuff to our next class and then we can decide what exactly to include. Okay?

22. **Eric:** Uhuh. When exactly is the presentation? Did he say? Like do we have a couple weeks to get ready or not that much time?

7. How would you characterize the negotiations? Did everyone end up with what they wanted?

Pretty friendly and accommodating; everyone seems reasonably happy with what they ended up with.

8. Who seems to be in charge? How can you tell?

Eric and Tom seem to share this responsibility; Eric's turns 9, 12, and 17 show he is in control when setting up what the group wants to do, but Tom in turns 19 and 21 takes the lead and tells (or orders) the others what to do next.

9. What could you do or say if someone in the group does not agree with any suggestions? *What if after Miriam says, I still wanna do something about stress, if no one minds, one of the other students says, you know I just don't think that fits; there are other better things to include? If you were Miriam, how could you respond to that?*

It would depend on how much Miriam wanted to pursue her topic choice; she could question the statement (e.g., *Why won't it fit?*) or she could push harder for her idea and provide more reasons why it would work (e.g., *Well I really think stress would be interesting and would fit in really well if I did . . .*). She could also challenge the idea, by saying, *Like what?* and force the others to come up with something better. She could also just concede, if it really didn't matter that much (e.g., *Well, ok then but what would be better?*).

### Useful Phrases for Negotiating (page 178)

Can you think of any other phrases? How does intonation affect these phrases?

Students can add phrases from the excerpts and some of their own to the chart. You would need to demonstrate different intonation patterns to illustrate how some phrases could sound more or less polite.

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### Task 16 (pages 179–80)

#### STARTING PANEL PRESENTATIONS

Examples of language to indicate organization (Question 6) are underlined below.

#### INTRODUCTION 1

**David:** Okay um I'm gonna start us off. I'm gonna basically provide a kinda introduction uh to our arguments, um then I'll turn it over to the two of them. I'd like to start out with some statistics, actually just to get us thinking about some of the issues involved in the war on drugs. . . .

(Based on MICASE. Graduate Public Policy Seminar, File ID: SEM340JG072)

## INTRODUCTION 2

**Lucy:** Okay I'm gonna start um I'm gonna start just by giving a little overview of the justification of the drug war, explain why it's necessary, then Bob will be talking about how crack and cocaine in particular causes crime, or contributes to crime, and then John will go into a little more about the sentencing um of crack versus cocaine. So, as we all know just from watching the news, drugs are a very serious problem in the U.S. . . .

(Based on MICASE. Graduate Public Policy Seminar, File ID: SEM340JG072)

## INTRODUCTION 3

**Aaron:** Alright, um our topic is Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. Today we're gonna look at what it is, how somebody gets it, biochemically we're gonna look at the effects of alcohol on the developing fetus, the symptoms, uh the prevention and then you're gonna get a brief summary at the end. Uh basically, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome is . . .

(Based on MICASE. Teaching Biochemistry Student Presentations, File ID: STP175SU141)

## INTRODUCTION 4

**Lisa:** Hi I'm Lisa Webster We're gonna be talking about stress and cortisol today, and um all the negative effects of that. This is a little, uh it's just a brief outline of what we're talking about first we'll go into a little bit about stress, uh and the different types of it the symptoms, then we'll talk more about cortisol and then we'll debate the two. Um okay, stress is just basically defined as . . .

(Based on MICASE. Teaching Biochemistry Student Presentations, File ID: STP175SU141)

### 1. What role does the first speaker in a panel or group have?

Introduces the topic, gives an overview of what will happen (an outline or roadmap), and then possibly defines key terms of the presentation.

### 2. Look more closely at David's introduction.

#### a. What is the group's topic?

War on drugs

#### b. What does David mean by *our arguments*?

We're not sure at first, as he hasn't even mentioned a topic yet.

c. When he says, *I'll turn it over to the two of them*, who is he talking about?

We don't exactly know as he hasn't introduced anyone else, but of course we understand it's the other two members of his group.

d. What are they going to do?

He doesn't say.

3. Look more closely at Lucy's introduction.

a. How is the word *Okay* used?

To start, to get the attention of the audience, to indicate she is ready.

b. What does the phrase *John will go into* mean?

John will discuss in more depth (or cover) that particular topic

c. How does she indicate a transition from the overview to starting her part?

With the word *so*.

4. Which introduction is stronger, David's or Lucy's? Why?

Lucy's is more explicit and provides a better overview; she states the topic right away and indicates who her group members are, by name, and what they will do.

5. Notice the use of *we* vs. *I* in all four introductions. What effect does this have on the audience?

*We* feels more inclusive and can make audience members feel they are more a part of the presentation. It also can reflect that these are group presentations.

6. In all four introductions, underline examples of the language used to indicate organization.

Underlined in excerpts, pages 93–94 (Instructor's Notes).

7. What benefit does giving an overview or "roadmap" in the introduction have for the audience? For the presenters?

For the audience, it sets up the scope of the presentation and gives the audience an idea of what to expect; it can also create interest. For the presenters, it sets up an organization to follow.

Notice how frequently the speakers use the word *gonna* in their introductions. Find examples of the word *gonna* in the excerpts and underline them. How is this word used?

*Gonna* is the phrase *going to* spoken in fast, connected speech. You could use this as an opportunity to bring up other words like this (e.g., *wanna*, *hafta*, *shoul'da*, *kinda*, etc.). You will find many examples of these forms throughout the transcripts in the text.

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*Task 17 (page 181)*

**PANEL INTRODUCTIONS**

Answers to these will vary; encourage students to be creative.

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*Task 18 (pages 182–83)*

**TRANSITIONS AND REFERRING TO SPEAKERS**

Underlined phrases refer to other speakers (Question 3).

**David:** Okay um I'm gonna start us off. I'm gonna basically provide a kinda introduction uh to our arguments, um then I'll turn it over to the two of them. I'd like to start out with some statistics, actually just to get us thinking about some of the issues involved in the war on drugs. . . .

*[end]* . . . so, that's the second theme, and so I'll turn it over to Ann now.

**Ann:** Okay um the first question that I would like to ask is whether the successes of the drug war are balanced with . . . .

*[middle]* . . . um, the other costs, David already touched upon some of them um including the harsher penalties and . . . .

*[end]* . . . I think that that is something which is really does raise I think a very valid moral questions and something that we need to consider. Um and I'll turn it over to Mary.

**Mary:** Okay, I'm going to talk about the uh sort of what David talked about in the intro the two pronged approach that we think should be taken to reforming the war on drugs.

*[middle]* . . . uh, first is fifty-fifty, even treatment, like David said our current spending is . . . and I guess that the three of us think that this loss of money could be acceptable if results were being produced, but they're not. As Ann and David talked about we have exploding prison populations which are costly in and of themselves, huge racial disparities. . . . Second thing that we want to talk about is reform of sentencing laws, uh, like David touched on in the early seventies, . . . I think a lot of the things that John discussed are things which are reasonable if there's more crime being associated with the trade if someone gets killed during the trade uh of a of a drug. . . . and the reason why we think why think is because and John did quote a little bit from the Sentencing Commission um

Study well I just wanna finish their thought, that there aren't a lot of studies which prove . . . .

[end] . . . we should look at the severity of the crime and look at other factors involved when you determine sentencing. And that's it.

(Based on MICASE. Graduate Public Policy Seminar, File ID: SEM340JG072)

1. What does David say to indicate that it is the next speaker's turn? What does Ann say?

They both use the phrase *I'll turn it over to* (name).

2. Here are a few more ways to make a smooth transition to the next speaker. Can you add some of your own?

(name)

*Now, (name) will continue with her part on* (topic)

*Now (name) will give you more information about* (topic)

3. Underline the words or phrases used to refer to a previous speaker. List the verbs used.

Underlined in excerpts, page 96 (Instructor's Notes). Verbs:

*touched upon*

*said*

*discussed*

*did quote*

4. Do you think that referring to a previous speaker is a good strategy? Why?

Yes, as it provides continuity; it also shows a level of preparation and conveys the sense that the group really is working as a group.

5. Mary uses extensive references to previous speakers in her part of the presentation. Why do you think this is?

It could be because she is the final speaker so she can refer to all of the previous speakers (unlike the first speaker). It also could be she has the role of summarizing or bringing all the parts together to conclude.

6. There are more examples in MICASE from other presentations of how speakers refer to other speakers or ideas. Can you think of any others?

Answers will vary.

---

**Task 19 (page 184)**

**UNEXPECTED SITUATIONS IN PANELS**

Answers will vary. Our suggestions follow.

**Scenario 1**

As you are listening to the presenter before you, you hear him covering some of what you are planning to say. What can you do when it is your turn?

It's important not to just repeat the same information, even though it was what you had planned. If there is more detail to add, then add it after making a brief recap (maybe one or two sentences) of the information that was already given, then move on.

**Scenario 2**

The presenter before you was supposed to talk about some specific examples that would lead into your part of the presentation. You practiced your part knowing it would follow these specific examples. But she didn't include the examples. What can you do when it is your turn?

You could start with the examples that were omitted. For example you could say, *Before I tell you about (topic) let me give you some examples.*

---

**Task 20 (page 185)**

**CONCLUDING**

Answers will vary based on student's personal preferences.

**About Question-and-Answer Sessions (page 186)**

The question-answer strategies discussed in this section can apply to individual presentations as well. If you have students who will have to present something individually, such as at a conference or department function, it is useful to point out how they can apply these strategies in those contexts.

Which of these seem most formal? Most informal? Why? Can you guess in what type of presentation these were used?

Generally the forms that are more complete (with subject/verb, no ellipsis) tend to be more formal. The informal versions are more likely from student presentations in the classroom; the more formal ones could be from lectures or presentations outside of the classroom.

*Do you have any questions?* Formal

*Does anybody have any questions?* Formal

*Are there any questions?* Formal

*So do you guys have any questions?* Informal

*Alright, any questions?* Informal

*Does anyone have any questions?* Formal



*I will entertain questions.* Formal  
*I think we have 10 minutes for questions.* Formal  
*Any more questions?* Informal

---

**Task 21 (page 187)**

**QUESTIONS IN PANELS**

To increase speaking practice opportunities, each group can focus on just one or two situations, then report their answers to the whole class. By presenting their phrases on an overhead (you provide transparencies and pens), they can also practice the strategies we discuss a bit later in the sections on using visuals (page 190 in the text). Answers can be written on the chalkboard, and presented from there if no overhead is available. While students may struggle with grammatical forms or appropriate levels of hedging, the answers generated provide good material for discussion. Plan time to offer corrections.

Answers will vary; some possible answers follow.

1. Someone interrupts you during the presentation with a question, but it is something you (or your group member) will talk about next—you need to defer answering.

*Good question. I'm going to get to that in a minute.*

*Actually, (name) will cover that in a moment.*

2. You didn't understand the question—you need to ask for clarification.

*I'm sorry, I'm not following.*

*Do you mean (restate what you think you heard)?*

3. You didn't hear the question—the speaker's voice was too quiet.

*I'm sorry, it's hard to hear you. Can you repeat that?*

4. You don't know the answer to the question being asked.

*Hmm, that's a good question. I'm afraid I don't know but . . .*

*Well, my research didn't really cover that aspect of (topic) so I'm not sure.*

Note: Number 4 usually generates discussion because it is the situation that we all dread might happen. You can talk about how sometimes questions really are “off topic” or only tangentially related to what is being presented and that it really is okay to not be able to answer. A strategy is often to admit not knowing and to continue with something you do know. In some contexts, presenters might throw the question back to the wider audience.

5. You have answered a question and want to confirm that you have answered it sufficiently.

*Does that answer your question?*

*Did that cover it?*

6. There is no more time for questions—you need to conclude the session.

*Well, looks like our time is up. Thank you.*

*I think I need to wrap up now.*

*It seems we are out of time. Thank you.*

Note how the very end of the presentation is often a thank you.

---

**Task 22 (pages 187–89)**

**Q&A**

*Questions:*

1. In your opinion, how successful was this Q & A session? Give an example of something that made it successful or not successful.

In our opinion, it was quite successful; Jiani showed she was in control of the Q&A.

2. Find examples of the specific language the speaker uses in her Q&A, and list them in the chart.

Q&A Strategies	Examples
Asks for questions from the audience	<i>Does anyone have any questions? Any more questions?</i>
Confirms whether the answer given was understood	<i>Did I answer your question?</i>
Asks for clarification	<i>Do you mean? Any what?</i>
Rephrases a question	<i>Do you mean . . .</i>
Indicates inability to answer	<i>I think I didn't answer the question you asked. Maybe we have another expert here.</i>
Defers further discussion	<i>We can discuss this later.</i>
Indicates closing	<i>Time is up.</i>

How do these examples compare to your examples from Task 21? Can you add any more examples in any category?

No answer given.

3. What can you do if an audience member starts to monopolize the Q&A, or who asks an irrelevant question?

This can be a very tricky situation to handle; let students know it's okay to politely cut someone off and move on. If someone is monopolizing, it's okay to interrupt and mention that time is up, or time is running out. If there is an irrelevant question, it's okay to offer to discuss that question later, after the presentation.

---

**Task 23 (page 191)**

**EVALUATING VISUALS/SLIDES**

Encourage students to be critical and really evaluate the examples. Certainly you can bring in other examples of PowerPoint or other slides to use in addition to or instead of the examples we provide. You can find many examples (both good and bad) on the Internet. You could also ask for students to volunteer to provide slides used in other classes (with the warning that you will be evaluating the slides).

One way to do this task is to divide the class so not all students evaluate all examples. Assign one example per group, then each group can share their evaluation with the other groups and/or discuss their comments as a whole class, thus providing more speaking practice.

This same task can be done by evaluating other visuals, such as single overhead slides instead of an entire slide show. Students can be asked to bring in a visual that they could use in their presentation as a handout, on paper. These can be taped up in the room and students in small groups can gather around them and evaluate them. Then they can take turns presenting their evaluation of the visual to the whole group. Taping the visual to a wall allows the presenter to stand up and face the group in order to talk about it. You can also provide (or create) a variety of visuals (perhaps collected over years of teaching) that illustrate good and bad features of visuals for this task. Having "bad" examples is very helpful in that it gives the students a chance to offer suggestions for improvement in addition to their evaluation.

Another option: If the panel groups are already formed, groups could mix up to get feedback from other groups on their visuals and then reconvene with their original group to share what they got from others.

This task can be combined with the practice in Task 25 on appropriate body language when using visuals.

---

**Task 24 (pages 194–95)**

**REFERRING TO VISUALS**

Answers are underlined.

**Example 1:** The anthropology professor is describing the locations on a map where the African language, Maa, is spoken.

**Instructor:** So the Maa speakers <pause> as you can see uh this is a map of Kenya, and then down below is Tanzania, and the Maa speakers are the Ariaal you see them in the middle, the Ariaal, the Samburu, the Masai you see the

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Masai come all the way down into Tanzania. Um, and these are the communities that speak the Maa language. So it's spread over a wide area.

(Based on MICASE. Intro Anthropology Lecture, File ID: LEL115JU090)

**Example 2:** The physics professor is showing slides about the development of a particle accelerator.

**Professor:** Now in this slide you see we started off as a little accelerator there in nineteen sixty-one, and gradually it became this one here . . . let's try to trace what happened going from there, to there. And the last thing I will say in this lecture will be about what happened using that machine. Okay? Now the next slide will show you what you see underground, . . .

(Based on MICASE. Nobel Laureate Physics Lecture, File ID: COL485MX069)

**Example 3:** The ecology professor, moving quickly through many slides, is describing a farm.

**Professor:** . . . the next slide shows a slide from inside here. Uh and as you can see, there's a coconut tree here, there's uh, this is actually a a timber tree that was planted. Another timber tree that was planted there's fruit trees all over the place next slide shows a component of this system. This is the owner of the farm . . . next slide, shows a piece of the farm . . .

(Based on MICASE. Ecological Agriculture Colloquium, File ID: COL425MX075)

**Example 4:** A natural sciences instructor is showing a picture of the area around the Huron River.

**Instructor:** Okay this shows a picture of the Huron watershed, and, all of these other, divisions are actually just sub-basins within this larger drainage basin, called the Huron watershed. And, I have another picture showing the particular outlet . . . so here we have every drop of water that falls within this area, gets drained out to this outlet right here.

(Based on MICASE. Spring Ecosystems Lecture, File ID: LES425SU093)

**Example 5:** An art history instructor is describing historic photographs of a city.

**Instructor:** They were supposed to be tearing down unsanitary parts of the city. Um, and then instead putting in, wide new boulevards, like the one we see here lined with buildings in a uniform style, buildings that contain shops and apartment houses, um the streetscape was changing . . .

(Based on MICASE. Renaissance to Modern Art History Lecture, File ID: LEL320JU143)

Add to this list of useful phrases for describing visuals:

as you can see	this is / this	the map shows
you see	that is /that	what the map shows
here you have	this indicates	
what you see here	I'd like to point out	on this left side, there is a
what you're seeing here is		
what we have here is		

---

### **Task 25 (page 196)**

#### **PRACTICE WITH VISUALS**

Students can bring in any kind of visual or you can provide some. One way we have done this is to draw very simple geometric designs on large easel-sized paper (flip-chart-size paper) and then tape or pin these up around the room. In small groups (two to three per sheet) students spend a few minutes talking about the shapes to be sure they can describe what is there (this is really good practice for vocabulary and word stress practice). Then, each student describes the design to the class, focusing on body language, eye contact, and voice volume. Because the content is "simple," the focus can be on their "stage presence." We go around the room until everyone has presented (this goes quickly—each person talks about one minute with immediate follow-up and feedback; for example, you could ask the class, *how was (name)'s eye contact?*).

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### **Task 26 (page 197)**

#### **PANEL PRESENTATIONS**

As with the discussion, how you choose to set up the panels really depends on your own situation, class size, and time constraints. Be sure to include time for the Q&A when arranging schedules.

Option for the Q&A: For more practice speaking in the Q&A, instead of the whole panel taking questions from the whole audience, each panel member forms a small group with part of the audience (so if there are four panel members, form four groups). Then each panel member takes questions from his or her small group, giving more chance to work on answering questions.

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***Task 27 (page 199)***

**ANTICIPATING QUESTIONS**

This task should be done after the panel groups are set up and students have pretty much prepared their own parts. The advantage of doing it as a group, perhaps right after a dry run, is that students can help each other anticipate questions.

**About Panel Presentation Feedback**

Feedback forms are often a matter of personal preference—we offer here several options, but any manner of giving feedback that suits your particular class will do. For example, for the instructor feedback form, you may have a preference for giving feedback to the panel as a group or to each individual on the panel. Feel free to modify these examples of feedback forms to fit your needs. We feel the process of giving feedback is what is valuable; the form it takes is certainly flexible.

---

### Instructor Feedback Form

Panel Topic: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Presenters: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic choice Overall and individual timing

Organization Handling questions

Content Language/pronunciation/fluency/  
non-verbals (for each individual)

Visuals Comments for each Speaker

Speaker 1	
Speaker 2	
Speaker 3	
Speaker 4	

---

## **Audience/Peer Feedback Form**

After the presentation, take a few moments to fill out this feedback form. You can remain anonymous. Your feedback is important. Please give specific examples. Your instructor will collect these after each panel presentation.

Title of Panel: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Did the panel seem prepared? Why or why not?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What were the strengths of the panel?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What were the weaknesses? What could the panel improve on?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. How well did the panel handle audience questions?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What did you learn from this presentation?



---

## Post-Presentation Discussion

Your instructor will give you the forms that were collected after your presentation. Get together to review the feedback given to your group. Use the following questions to guide your discussion. Fill out this form as a group and give it to your instructor after you have met.

Names of presenters: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Was the feedback largely positive or negative?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What was the most frequent negative criticism? Do you think it was a fair criticism? Why?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What was the most frequent positive comment? Do you think it is an accurate observation?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Now that you have seen the feedback, if you could do the presentation again, what would you do differently?

---

## Group Reflection on the Panel Presentation

If your instructor was able to videotape your presentations, get together with your group and watch the tape. Here are some questions to guide your viewing.

1. For each individual speaker comment on:

pronunciation

speech volume

fluency

body language

eye contact

gestures

2. Listen for the transitions between speakers. Were you successful?

3. Were the visuals used appropriately?

4. How did you handle the question and answer period? What could be improved?

5. Overall, was the timing good? Did each person keep to his or her time limit?

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## Reading for Discussion

### Talking in Class—A Lesson for the Real World

It is well known that many students dislike and may in fact dread classes that expect a certain level of class participation. Many students believe that there is nothing to be gained by requiring class participation or listening to that non-stop talker in the back of the room. How many of you have grown weary of hearing students say things that don't really seem to matter? Why would any professor ever think that listening to other students' opinions enhances the quality of learning?

Peter Bowal, a University of Minnesota professor of law, thinks that class participation is "one of the most misunderstood aspects of university courses." So, the next time you roll your eyes at that student who can't wait for a chance to talk, think about why you should shake that negative attitude and get involved.

Consider the fact that you can get feedback on comments made in class. You can see where you are in relation to the professor's expectations and in relation to others in the class. You might even find that, because of that feedback, participating in class becomes easier each time you contribute.

Consider the fact that if you are expected to be engaged in class discussion you will likely pay more attention to what is happening in class. You can't fall asleep. If you are actively involved, you will likely learn more. And the more you learn, the more you can contribute.

Finally, consider the fact that you might actually become better at communicating your ideas. When you talk in class you gain experience speaking on a topic without preparation, which is something you will need to do your whole life. There's no chance to rehearse. After all, when you have a job, you may need to participate in meetings and be a quick thinker and contribute. You are not likely to get far if you stay silent during meetings, leave, and then submit a written summary of your ideas. That might work for a class, but in the workplace it's all about interaction.

So, the next time you complain about a class participation grade, think about what you will gain in the long run—beyond the grade. You may just find that by taking part you're getting more prepared for the real world than you ever thought before.

## Pronunciation Focus: Contractions

Contractions, such as *don't*, *can't*, and *it'll*, to name a few, are very common in spoken and informal written English. You do not need to use contractions when you are speaking; however, if you do not, your speech will seem rather formal. While formality is important on some occasions, on a day-to-day basis, speakers typically tend toward the informal.

Although whether to use contractions is entirely your choice, you cannot avoid contractions entirely when you interact with others. People will use them when speaking with you. Therefore, this focus section centers on these very important words. Specifically, we will draw your attention to contractions that in part consist of an auxiliary word (*be*, *do*, *have*, and modals).

Let's look at some sentences containing contractions.

1. Don't worry about the exam.
2. Isn't that great?
3. They said they'll be late to the meeting.
4. I hope there'll be enough time.

In the first two sentences, the /t/ in the contractions is usually not pronounced. Why do you suppose this is?

In Sentence 3, how is *they'll* pronounced? Is the vowel sound in *they* the same as that in *they'll*? If no, why do you suppose this is?

In Sentence 4, how is *there'll* pronounced? Do you have to pronounce both the /r/ and /l/? If yes, is the sequence difficult to pronounce? If you think you do not need to pronounce both the /r/ and /l/, why not?

### Data Collection and Analysis

#### *Part 1: Transcription*

With one or two partners, listen to the video for Unit 4, Office Hour Appointments, Scene 4, and then choose one to two minutes of speech to transcribe. Each of you should transcribe what you hear, listening as many times as you need. You can listen together or individually. Once everyone is done transcribing, compare your transcriptions, and try to create a complete transcript of the section you chose. Listen to the video again if necessary. Indicate any places in the recording where you cannot figure out what is being said, and ask your instructor for some assistance.

***Part 2: Analysis***

With your partners, mark each contraction, as well as the pauses. Write your observations on how the contractions are pronounced.

***Part 3: Report to the class***

Your report should provide the following information:

1. Remind your listeners of the focus of your investigation.
2. What, if anything, made it difficult to identify the contractions? Was it the vocabulary or grammar? The recording? The speakers' rates of speaking? Characteristics of the speakers' pronunciations?
3. What are your group's observations on the pronunciation of the contractions? What, if any, other interesting pronunciation observations did your group make?

***Part 4: Production***

With a partner, read aloud and/or role-play your transcript, paying special attention to the content words, sentence stress, and contractions.

## Pronunciation Focus: Prepositions

Non-content words are often not stressed. Look at this excerpt, and try to identify the words that would likely be unstressed. How many of these are prepositions? Sentence numbers have been added for ease of reference.

<sup>1</sup>I have office hours on Monday right after the lecture. <sup>2</sup>How many people have class then? <sup>3</sup>Okay, about half of you. <sup>4</sup>So for half of you that's not a convenient time, for the other half, it's just, take the elevator up to the ninth floor and visit. <sup>5</sup>For those of you who can't meet during that time, just email me and I'll set up another time to meet with you. . . .<sup>6</sup>So not a problem. <sup>7</sup>Also if you have a question that you don't really need to set up an office hour like is this a good start to an answer for number three? <sup>8</sup>Just email me and I'll try to get back to you within a day. <sup>9</sup>So if there are less complicated things, that's an easier way to ask questions.

(Based on MICASE. Intro Astronomy Discussion Section. File ID: DIS150JU130)

Unstressed words in a phrase or clause are often not pronounced the same as they are in isolation. How do you think the prepositions in the transcript might be pronounced?

### Data Collection and Analysis

#### *Part 1: Transcription*

With one or two partners, listen to the video for either Unit 1, Places and Directions, Scene 2, or Unit 6, Groups, Scene 1, and then choose one to two minutes of speech to transcribe. Each of you should transcribe what you hear, listening as many times as you need. You can listen together or individually. Once everyone is done transcribing, compare your transcriptions, and try to create a complete transcript of the section you chose. Listen to the video again if necessary. Indicate any places in the recording where you cannot figure out what is being said and ask your instructor for some assistance.

***Part 2: Analysis***

With your partners, mark the content words that are stressed as well as the prepositions. Write your observations on the pronunciation of prepositions.

***Part 3: Report to the class***

Your report should provide the following information:

1. Remind your listeners of the focus of your investigation.
2. What, if anything, made it difficult to identify the prepositions? Was it the vocabulary or grammar? The recording? The speakers' rates of speaking? Characteristics of the speakers' pronunciations?
3. What are your group's observations on sentence stress? What, if any, other interesting pronunciation observations did your group make?

***Part 4: Production***

With a partner, read aloud and/or role-play your transcript, paying special attention to the content words, sentence stress, and prepositions.

## Pronunciation Focus: Conjunctions

Conjunctions such as *and*, *but*, *or*, and *so* are commonly used to link phrases and clauses. Would you consider these to be content words that should be stressed? Or do you think they are more likely to be unstressed? Do you think your answers to these questions might depend on the context?

Look at these sentences, and try to determine how the conjunctions might be pronounced.

1. You can get the lecture notes from the website or from the TA.
2. I have class from 9:00 to 11:00 and 3:00 to 4:30.
3. I understand the first part of the problem but not the last.

### Data Collection and Analysis

#### *Part 1: Transcription*

With one or two partners, listen to the video for Unit 4, Office Hour Concerns, Scene 2, and then choose one to two minutes of speech to transcribe. Each of you should transcribe what you hear, listening as many times as you need. You can listen together or individually. Once everyone is done transcribing, compare your transcriptions and try to create a complete transcript of the section you chose. Listen to the video again if necessary. Indicate any places in the recording where you cannot figure out what is being said and ask your instructor for some assistance.

#### *Part 2: Analysis*

With your partners, mark the content words that are stressed as well as the conjunctions. Write your observations on sentence stress.

#### *Part 3: Report to the class*

Your report should provide the following information:

1. Remind your listeners of the focus of your investigation.
2. What, if anything, made it difficult to identify the conjunctions? Was it the vocabulary or grammar? The recording? The speakers' rates of speaking? Characteristics of the speakers' pronunciations?



3. What are your group's observations on pronouncing conjunctions? What, if any, other interesting pronunciation observations did your group make?

***Part 4: Production***

With a partner, read aloud and/or role-play your transcript, paying special attention to the content words and the conjunctions.

## Pronunciation Focus: Pausing

Pausing plays an important role in effective spoken communication. Strategic use of pausing is especially important when giving academic presentations. Read this transcript of a presentation on teaching academic writing; note that there is no punctuation and that line numbers have been added for ease of reference. Mark the places you think the speaker will pause. Why did you choose those particular places?

1. **Jake:** Okay, now what we're gonna talk about is an approach to teaching academic
2. writing and what I want you all to notice about this process is how it builds how each
3. step makes you more prepared and more capable of com- accomplishing the next task
4. so we start off of course with analyzing a text you're gonna take a text you're gonna
5. dig into it and figure out what's going on now once you have analyzed the text the next
6. thing that should happen is you should become more aware of what that text is really
7. about what is it teaching you what are the themes what's important once you're more
8. aware of the text you can acquire a greater knowledge a greater understanding of what
9. that text has to offer you as a student or as a teacher and once you have acquired that
10. knowledge the end result the thing that we're going for is achievement that you have
11. achieved a greater knowledge of the text and how to write about it this is the key
12. thing once you've done all those four steps you're that much more qualified that
13. much more able to analyze the next text that you go for so it's all about building we
14. go through this process once we're gonna be that much better the second time we go
15. through that's the goal any questions at this point.

## **Data Collection and Analysis**

### ***Part 1: Transcription***

With one or two partners, listen to the video for Unit 6, Visuals, Scene 2. Mark the pauses you hear using a different colored pen or pencil. Listen as many times as you need to. Once everyone is finished, compare the speaker's actual pauses with your initial marks.

If you like, also ask a native speaker to read the transcript. Using a different colored pen or pencil indicate where the native speaker pauses. Notice the differences between the native speaker's and the instructor's use of pausing.

### ***Part 2: Analysis***

With your partners, discuss these questions.

- Why do you think the instructor paused when he did?
- Is there any pattern to where the speaker pauses?
- What changes in stress, intonation, volume, and rate of speech do you notice before the pauses?
- Did anything surprise you about the way in which the instructor used pausing?
- Do you think the pauses helped get the speaker's message across? Explain.

### ***Part 3: Report to the class***

Your report should provide the following information:

1. Remind your listeners of the focus of your investigation.
2. What are your group's observations on pausing? What, if any, other interesting observations did your group make? What suggestions would you give someone about how to pause effectively?

### ***Part 4: Production***

With a partner, read aloud and/or role-play the transcript, paying special attention to pausing.

### ***Part 5: Additional Work on Pausing***

Go through the same process, using another transcript you have already made. Alternatively, transcribe a section of Unit 4, Advising Appointments, Scene 1, 2 or 3, and mark the pauses.

## Pronunciation Focus: *Have*

Whether a word is stressed in a sentence affects how it is pronounced. Another factor influencing how a word is pronounced is the sounds that immediately precede or follow the word. It's also important to consider that—unlike in writing where each word is visually separate from all other words—in speaking, words and sounds are often connected to create a fairly continuous stream of sounds within word or thought groups. Thus, when two words are said in succession, the boundary between those words may not necessarily be clear. Another result of this continuous stream of speech is that word initial and word final sounds may be pronounced quite differently from how they are spoken in isolation.

Do you think *have* is usually stressed or unstressed in a sentence? What does an unstressed *have* sound like? How will the *have* likely be pronounced in the following?

1. If I have time I'll come to the party.
2. I would have done better on the test if I had studied harder.
3. I shouldn't have stayed up so late.
4. What have you been up to?
5. I think my TA could have been more helpful.
6. I have to leave at noon.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

#### ***Part 1: Transcription***

With one or two partners, listen to the video for Unit 6, Groups, Scene 1, and then choose one to two minutes of speech to transcribe. Each of you should transcribe what you hear, listening as many times as you need. You can listen together or individually. Once everyone is done transcribing, compare your transcriptions, and try to create a complete transcript of the section you chose. Listen to the video again if necessary. Indicate any places in the recording where you cannot figure out what is being said and ask your instructor for some assistance.

#### ***Part 2: Analysis***

With your partners, mark the content words that are stressed, each instance of *have*, and the pauses. Write your observations on how *have* is pronounced.

***Part 3: Report to the class***

Your report should provide the following information:

1. Remind your listeners of the focus of your investigation.
2. What, if anything, made it difficult to identify *have*? Was it the vocabulary or grammar? The recording? The speakers' rates of speaking? Characteristics of the speakers' pronunciations?
3. What are your group's observations on the pronunciation of *have*? What, if any, other interesting pronunciation observations did your group make?

***Part 4: Production***

With a partner, read aloud and/or role-play your transcript, paying special attention to the content words, sentences stress, and *have*.

## Pronunciation Focus: Vowels in Sequence

How should you pronounce two vowels in a row such as in the word *situation* or the phrase *my assignment*? Should you pause between the vowels so that you can pronounce them both? Should you avoid pausing—especially in the middle of a word? Discuss these questions. Then try to figure out how to pronounce the two-vowel sequences in these sentences.

1. Do you think biodiversity loss is a serious issue?
2. How often does that really occur?
3. To what extent do you see other people contributing?
4. I need to free up some time in my schedule.
5. To actually solve this problem you need to create an environment that invites people to invest.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

#### ***Part 1: Transcription***

With one or two partners, listen to the video for either Scene 1, 2, or 3 in Unit 4, Appointments with an Advisor, and then choose one to two minutes of speech to transcribe. Each of you should transcribe what you hear, listening as many times as you need. You can listen together or individually. Once everyone is done transcribing, compare your transcriptions, and try to create a complete transcript of the section you chose. Listen to the video again if necessary. Indicate any places in the recording where you cannot figure out what is being said and ask your instructor for some assistance.

#### ***Part 2: Analysis***

With your partners, mark the content words that are stressed as well as the two-vowel sequences. Write your observations on how two-vowel sequences are pronounced.

***Part 3: Report to the class***

Your report should provide the following information:

1. Remind your listeners of the focus of your investigation.
2. What, if anything, made it difficult to identify the two-vowel sequences? Was it the vocabulary or grammar? The recording? The speakers' rates of speaking? Characteristics of the speakers' pronunciations?
3. What are your group's observations on pronouncing two-vowel sequences? What, if any, other interesting pronunciation observations did your group make?

***Part 4: Production***

With a partner, read aloud and/or role-play your transcript, paying special attention to the content words and the two-vowel sequences.