Teacher to pupils:

*‘Get in line!’*

There is an expression called **saving face**, which is where you try to preserve someone’s self-confidence, even though you are criticising them.

* Find some examples of face saving in one of the utterances in your group. Suggest why they are there. Talk about whether the other utterances have examples of face-saving strategies.

Trainer to trainees on a training course:

*‘Can we all sit down in a circle?’*

Some requests are simply blunt commands (**imperatives)**

* Find an example of a completely bald command and suggest why it is that it is acceptable in the circumstances.
* How do the other requests in your group compare?

One student to another:

*‘Can I just borrow that pen for a second?*

**Hedging** is when we pad out what we say with words and phrases that don’t need to be there to make sense, but which soften the force of what we are saying and make it more polite.

* Find some examples of hedging in one or two of your utterances.
* Why is the hedge there?

Teacher to student:

*‘I reckon you could, you know, put a bit more effort in, don’t you?’*

**Modal** verbs are *would, may, could, should, might, can, must, will.* We often use them to soften the impact of a request.

* Find a modal verb in one of your examples and discuss why you think it is there. How forceful is it and why use it in this context?

Editor to other journalists on newspaper:

*‘This story needs a new headline.’*

Sometimes we ask questions (**interrogatives**) when we are really making commands (**imperatives**).

* Find an example of a question which is really a command and suggest why it is being used here.

Mother to child:

*‘Come on, eat up.’*

One form of **negative politeness** is to ask the question in such a way as to accept that they might say no.

* Find an example of a request which is negatively phrased and suggest why it is necessary in the circumstances.

From one family member to another:

*‘You couldn’t put the kettle on could you?’*

**Influential power** is when someone does not have actual power over someone else and is using language to gain influence over them and make them do what they want.

* Look through the utterances in your group and find one where the speaker is using influential power. How are they doing it, do you think?

Man to woman at home:

*‘I’m looking for some socks.’*

One form of **positive politeness** is to ask the question in such a way that suggests that the people listening will be on your side and will willingly go along with it.

* Find an example of a request which is positively phrased and suggest why it is necessary in the circumstances.

Head of Department to teachers:

*‘It would be great if we could create a new scheme of work for that unit.’*

**Pragmatics** is: what we mean by what we say in a particular context. We are not always direct when we make requests.

Decide which of your utterances is the most indirect in what it says. Why do you think this is? How might it relate to the power the person has (or does not have) over others?

Teacher to student who is texting beneath the desk:

*‘Having a nice text there, Sam?’*

One form of **negative politeness** is to be indirect in the way you ask for something.

* Find one or two examples of an indirect request and suggest why it is necessary in the circumstances.

Politician to electorate (wanting to raise taxes):

*‘Together we can make this a fairer society.’*

**Influential power** is when someone does not have actual power over someone else and is using language to gain influence over them and make them do what they want.

* Look through the utterances in your group and find one where the speaker is using influential power. How are they doing it, do you think?

A volunteer to another volunteer in a community centre:

*‘Maybe someone ought to tidy that up first.’*

**Pragmatics** is: what we mean by what we say in a particular context. We are not always direct when we make requests.

Decide which of your utterances is the most indirect in what it says. Why do you think this is? How might it relate to the power the person has (or does not have) over others?

Parent coming into your room:

*‘What a mess!’*

**Instrumental power** is when someone has actual power over someone else (eg a boss in a company, for example) and might therefore not need to use the same language features to get what they want.

* Look through the utterances in your group and find one where the speaker has instrumental power. Is it influencing they way they use language?Teacher to teacher in a staff room:

*‘I’m really sorry to ask, but can you please bring your own cup?’*

**Pragmatics** is: what we mean by what we say in a particular context. We are not always direct when we make requests.

Decide which of your utterances is the most indirect in what it says. Why do you think this is? How might it relate to the power the person has (or does not have) over others?

Worker to colleagues in an office:

*‘Fire!’*

**Personal pronouns** (I, you, he, we, they) are often used to help soften a request.

* Find an example of a personal pronoun which is being used to make something less confrontational and suggest why, in the context, it is there.

Teacher to student who is sitting in the corner of the classroom near the window:

*‘Joe, do you reckon it’s a bit stuffy in here?’*

Sometimes we ask questions (**interrogatives**) when we are really making commands (**imperatives**).

* Find an example of a question which is really a command and suggest why it is being used here.

Nurse to patient:

*‘Can you roll up your sleeve for me?’*

**Influential power** is when someone does not have actual power over someone else and is using language to gain influence over them and make them do what they want.

* Look through the utterances in your group and find one where the speaker is using influential power. How are they doing it, do you think?

One student to another, talking about an upcoming party.

*‘I was thinking we could maybe go together.’*

Some requests are simply blunt commands (**imperatives)**

* Find an example of a completely bald command and suggest why it is that it is acceptable in the circumstances.
* How do the other requests in your group compare?

Park maintenance worker to colleague:

*‘We should get on with that hedge trimming today.’*

**Hedging** is when we pad out what we say with words and phrases that don’t need to be there to make sense, but which soften the force of what we are saying and make it more polite.

* Find some examples of hedging in one or two of your utterances.
* Why is the hedge there?

Bus driver to passengers:

*‘Move down the bus!’*

**Modal** verbs are *would, may, could, should, might, can, must, will.* We often use them to soften the impact of a request.

* Find a modal verb in one of your examples and discuss why you think it is there. How forceful is it and why use it in this context?

Asking directions:

*‘Sorry to bother you, but could you tell me the way to the post office from here?’*

**Personal pronouns** (I, you, he, we, they) are often used to help soften a request.

* Find an example of a personal pronoun which is being used to make something less confrontational and suggest why, in the context, it is there.

**DIRECT REQUESTS WITHOUT POLITENESS FEATURES**

**INDIRECT REQUESTS WITH STRONG POLITENESS FEATURES**