

IDIOMS & PHRASAL VERBS

Uncertainty and Judgement

C2 | Adults / Teens | Idioms + Discussion | 45-60 minutes

Topic: Discussion | Skills: Vocabulary, Speaking

Study the phrases and examples. Discuss the questions and try to use the new language.

USEFUL LANGUAGE

1. suspend judgement	delay forming an opinion until you know more	We suspended judgement until both accounts could be checked.
2. on a knife edge	in a situation where a small change could decide everything	With one vote remaining, the result was on a knife edge.
3. in the balance	uncertain and still capable of going either way	The project's future remained in the balance after the review.
4. a shot in the dark	a guess or attempt made with very little information	Without reliable figures, our first estimate was a shot in the dark.
5. read the tea leaves	interpret uncertain signs to predict events (figurative)	Analysts were reading the tea leaves after the unusually brief announcement.
6. second-guess	anticipate another person's decisions or intentions	We wasted hours trying to second-guess the panel.
7. err on the side of caution	choose the safer option when the outcome is uncertain	With the results unclear, the organisers erred on the side of caution.
8. reserve the right to	keep the option of taking a particular action later	The committee reserved the right to revise its recommendation.

DISCUSSION

1. When is suspending judgement responsible, and when can it become a failure to act?
2. How should leaders communicate when an important outcome is balanced on a knife edge?
3. What duties does an employer have when employees' roles hang in the balance?
4. When is a shot in the dark preferable to delaying a decision?
5. How can you distinguish informed forecasting from merely reading the tea leaves?
6. When does trying to second-guess a decision-maker distract from making a strong case?
7. Who should bear the cost when an institution errs on the side of caution?
8. How can an organisation reserve the right to change course without making its promises meaningless?