APEX ENGLISH
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B2 · BUSINESS ENGLISH

UNIT 7 · B7B

Closing the deal

Theme · Negotiation

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Closing the deal

Theme: Negotiation

Learning objectives

- Close a negotiation on clear, written next steps — not on 'good vibes'.
- Use verbs of the senses and reporting phrases to describe what you saw and heard in the room.
- Use silence as a tool, not a mistake — and know the difference between a trade-off and a concession.

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class

Class Book

Warm-up · The last time you didn't close

Think of a negotiation that ENDED well in the room but never actually closed — no signed contract, no follow-through, no next step. In 45 seconds out loud: what happened between 'we agreed in the room' and 'nothing happened'? Then record a 30-second voice note about what you'd do differently.

Was there a specific NEXT STEP with a name and a date — or just 'let's follow up'?

Who OWNED the follow-up — you, them, or 'someone'?

Did anything get written down before people left the room?

Bonus: did you make a concession without asking for anything in return? (That's the pattern.)

Lead-in: concession or trade-off?

Decide: CONCESSION (gave, got nothing) or TRADE-OFF (gave, got something in return).

1. 'OK, we can do €38k instead of €40k. Let's just get this signed.'

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2. 'We can do €38k IF you sign for 24 months instead of 12.'

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3. 'Sure, we can include the training package.'

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4. 'I can waive the setup fee IF we lock the price for two years.'

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followUp: In your last three deals, how many concessions were meant to be trade-offs?

CONCESSION

TRADE-OFF

Reading: Close on writing, not on feeling

The most expensive words in negotiation are 'we'll follow up on the details'. Rooms feel warm at the end of a good meeting; smiles are exchanged, hands are shaken, and everyone leaves believing the deal is done. Then the follow-up email never lands, the details drift, the priorities of week two swallow it, and six weeks later nobody's quite sure what was agreed. The close of a negotiation is not the handshake — the close is the written summary that lands within 60 minutes of the meeting ending, with named next steps, named owners, named dates, and any concession explicitly tied to what was received in return. If it isn't in the email, it wasn't in the room.

The grammar for describing what you saw and heard in the room is verbs of the senses and reporting phrases. 'She SEEMED reluctant on the payment terms' — you saw hesitation, not a hard no. 'He APPEARED to be checking with someone off-screen' — visual evidence, honest inference. 'She SOUNDED unsure when we raised the March deadline' — auditory, not psychological. 'They DIDN'T

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COMMIT to a number, but they DIDN'T PUSH BACK either' — precise reporting of what happened, not what you wished had happened. These verbs — SEEM, APPEAR, SOUND, LOOK, FEEL — plus reporting frames like 'they STOPPED SHORT OF agreeing to…', 'she IMPLIED that…', 'he DENIED that…' — are what separates a useful debrief email from a rosy one.

The third tool most people never learn is silence. When you make an offer, or you counter, or you say 'that doesn't work for us', the temptation is to keep talking — to soften, to explain, to fill the gap. Don't. The single most powerful move in a negotiation is to stop talking after your position lands, and let the other side speak next. Silence puts the burden of the next move on them, which almost always produces information — a concession, a counter, or the interest behind their position. Amateurs fill the silence and negotiate against themselves. Professionals count to twelve in their head and wait.

1. The 'close' of a negotiation is really…

   (A) The handshake

   (B) The written summary within an hour, with named next steps and owners

   (C) The moment of verbal agreement

2. 'She seemed reluctant on the payment terms' is a good debrief line because…

   (A) It's warm and diplomatic

   (B) It reports what you observed — hesitation, not a hard no — without inventing an inner state

   (C) It commits to a next step

3. The trick with silence in negotiation is…

   (A) Never use it — it's rude

   (B) Fill it quickly to keep the room warm

   (C) Stop talking after your position lands and let the other side speak next — silence produces information

4. A CONCESSION differs from a TRADE-OFF in that…

   (A) A trade-off is bigger

   (B) In a concession you give something up for nothing named in return; in a trade-off you give X in exchange for Y

   (C) They're synonyms

Vocabulary in context

Match the closing / reporting term to its plain-English meaning.

next steps — the named actions with owners and dates that follow a meeting

action item — one specific thing one specific person will do by one specific date

trade-off — you give X in return for Y — both sides move

concession — you give something up without a named return — value bleed

recap email — the written summary of what was agreed, sent within an hour

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the silent close — stop talking after your position lands; let the other side move first

Vocabulary: closing, concessions, silence, reporting

close (v.) the deal — reach a signed, written agreement — not just a handshake

circle back on X — revisit a specific open point (careful — often means 'never')

lock in (a term) — get it agreed and written down, no more moving

green-light (v.) — get formal approval to proceed

sign on the dotted line — the actual signature — the only real close

trade-off (n.) — give X to get Y — both sides move

concession (n.) — give X for nothing named in return

give ground — shift from a position, usually a small margin

hold the line — refuse to move on a specific term

package deal — several terms agreed together, not one at a time

seem / appear / sound / look — verbs of the senses — describe what you observed, not what you inferred

she implied that… — she didn't say it explicitly, but she signalled it

he stopped short of… — he almost said / did something, but didn't quite

they denied that… — they explicitly refuted the claim

they didn't commit to a number — no specific figure was given — flag it explicitly in the recap

practice

Complete each sentence with ONE word / phrase.

1. The room felt great, but until we ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___, nothing is closed.

2. Let's not do this one term at a time — I'll come back with a ___ ___ tomorrow morning.

3. On payment terms we can move; on price we ___ ___ ___.

4. She ___ ___ ___ ___ agreeing, but she wouldn't put a date on it — flag it in the recap.

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5. He ___ that the March 31st deadline was flexible — not out loud, but the phrasing was 'ideally by end of Q1'.

6. Let's ___ ___ ___ the SLA before people leave the room — I don't want it drifting into next week.

Practice 2 — collocations & rewrite

Rewrite each sentence replacing the underlined phrase with ONE word/expression from this lesson's vocabulary. Keep the meaning identical.

1. The room felt great, but until we <u>get the signature on the contract</u>, nothing is closed.

2. Let's not do this term by term — I'll come back with <u>several terms agreed together</u> tomorrow.

3. On payment terms we can move; on price we <u>refuse to move</u>.

4. She <u>almost agreed but didn't quite</u> confirming the date — flag it in the recap.

5. Let's <u>get it agreed and written down</u> before people leave the room.

Practice 3 — discursive writing (business memo)

prompt: Write a recap memo to a client following a closing call, naming the trade-offs agreed and the next steps with owners and dates.

Use at least FOUR of the target expressions from this unit.

Adopt a professional register: concise, structured, executive-friendly.

Include a clear recommendation or takeaway in the final sentence.

sample: Subject: Recap — Closing Call Our number is €38k, in exchange for a 24-month term rather than 12 — a trade-off, not a concession. You seemed open to this once we walked through the total value over two years. On the March 31st go-live, you stopped short of confirming the date, so I'm flagging it as an open item rather than assuming agreement. We held the line on price but agreed to include the training package in exchange for permission to publish a joint case study post-launch. Next step: I'll send the contract draft by Wednesday 5pm; please confirm the go-live date and training/case-study trade by Friday noon. Recommendation: let's lock in these terms this week so contracting has a full month before go-live.

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Grammar focus: Verbs of the senses & reporting phrases

1. SEEM / APPEAR — inference from what you observed — 'She SEEMED reluctant on the March date.' — you observed hesitation. 'He APPEARED to be checking with someone off-screen.' — visual inference. Grammar: SEEM + adjective ('seemed reluctant') OR SEEM + to-infinitive ('seemed to hesitate'). APPEAR follows the same pattern. Difference from 'She was reluctant': SEEM softens the claim to an inference from evidence — safer in written debriefs where you can't prove the inner state.

2. LOOK / SOUND / FEEL — direct sense evidence — 'She LOOKED unsure.' — visual only. 'He SOUNDED confident on the price.' — auditory only. 'The room FELT tense after the ultimatum.' — atmosphere. Grammar: LOOK / SOUND / FEEL + adjective (no 'to be'): ✓ 'she looks tired'; ✗ 'she looks to be tired'. With 'like' + noun/clause: 'It sounded LIKE a bluff' / 'she looked LIKE she'd already decided'.

3. Reporting frames — say what happened WITHOUT quoting — 'She IMPLIED THAT the budget was fixed.' — signalled, didn't say. 'He DENIED THAT they were talking to a competitor.' — explicit no. 'They STOPPED SHORT OF agreeing.' — almost, but not quite. 'She DIDN'T COMMIT TO a specific date.' — no figure given. 'He ADMITTED THAT the deadline was arbitrary.' — conceded, unexpectedly. Use these in written recaps to preserve nuance — a promise is not an implication, and a denial is not a hedge.

4. Common traps — • 'She SEEM tired' ✗ → 'she SEEMS / SEEMED tired'. Third-person -s or past -ed. • 'It LOOKS TO BE a bluff' ✗ → 'it looks LIKE a bluff' (with 'like' for noun clauses). • 'He REFUSED to answer' vs 'he DENIED that they were bluffing' — DENY takes a that-clause of a specific claim; REFUSE takes a to-infinitive of an action.

Exercise A — Choose the correct sense verb / reporting frame

Complete each debrief sentence with ONE of: seemed / appeared / sounded / looked / felt / implied / denied / stopped short of / didn't commit to.

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1. She ___ reluctant when we raised the March 31st deadline.

2. He ___ to be checking his phone under the table — probably briefing his CFO.

3. The room ___ tense as soon as we quoted €280k.

4. She ___ that they were already talking to the competitor — she just said 'we're exploring options'.

5. He ___ any conversation about the budget cap — flag it in the recap.

6. They ___ ___ ___ ___ a specific date; only 'ideally end of Q1'.

Exercise B — Rewrite as an honest debrief sentence

Rewrite each over-claim into a defensible debrief sentence using sense verbs / reporting frames.

1. 'She agreed to the March deadline.'

2. 'They lied about being in talks with the competitor.'

3. 'He'll accept €38k.'

4. 'She was bluffing about walking away.'

Exercise C — Draft the recap email

You just left a meeting where: they seemed open to €38k, they didn't confirm the March 31st date, and they implied they'd close by Friday if the training package is included. Draft the recap email (max 90 words). It MUST include: (1) a sense verb ('seemed'/'appeared'/'sounded'), (2) 'stopped short of' or 'didn't commit to' for the unresolved item, (3) at least ONE explicit trade-off ('X in exchange for Y'), (4) a named next step with an owner and a date.

1. Draft the email.

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class

Listening: three attempts to close the same €38k deal

Three of your reps are running the same close call — the client, Ana, has said 'we like it, let's see if we can find a number that works'. You're listening to who actually closes: who names the trade-off, who uses silence, and who talks the deal into a concession.

pre

Which speaker do you predict will close on a trade-off, and which will close on a concession?

Think about your last close call. Did you make a trade-off or a concession on the last €2–5k?

gist

1. Which rep closes properly, and how?

2. Which rep closes on 'good vibes' — no written next step, no owner?

3. Which rep talks the deal into a €2k concession by filling the silence?

detail

1. What EXACTLY is Priya's close — the words, the order?

2. What are the EXACT words Kwame uses that turn his €38k into €36k?

3. What does Tomás explicitly say instead of naming a next step?

Third listen — closing craft

Focus on HOW each rep uses silence and reporting. Answer from what they DO, not what they say.

1. Priya stops talking after '€38k on a 24-month term'. What work is her silence doing?

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2. Kwame doesn't just concede €2k — the way he concedes teaches Ana something. What?

3. Tomás's 'let's circle back' feels harmless. Why is it the most expensive line in the whole call?

Language from the audio — closing moves worth stealing

Match each phrase to what it DOES.

"Our number is €38k, on a 24-month term." [then silence] — makes the offer, uses silence to put the next move on them — produces information

"I'll send the recap in 30 minutes — you confirm by Friday noon, I contract Monday." — named next step, named owner, named date — converts the verbal into the written close

"On price we can move; on term length we hold the line." — makes the trade explicit — where you'll flex and where you won't

"Sounds like we're aligned, let's circle back next week." — verbal-only close with no written commitment — the deal is now unstarted

"Our number is €38k… I mean, we've done €36k for similar accounts if that helps." — negotiate against yourself — move on price before they've responded

"Happy to include training IF we can announce this as a joint case study." — trade-off — scope for marketing rights, both sides move

Voice A (Tomás): So — yeah, this has been a great chat, I really feel like we're aligned on the value here. On the number, I know you're looking around €35–36k, we're around €40k, so we're not that far off. Let's circle back next week and see where we land on the exact figure — I'm sure we can find something that works for both sides. Thanks so much for your time today, really enjoyed it.

Voice B (Priya): OK Ana. I've heard your side. Our number is €38k, on a 24-month term. [pause] … Yeah, I hear you on the length — 12 months would be your preference. On price we can move; on term length we hold the line. The €38k is contingent on 24 months. [pause] … OK. Then we have a deal on the core. Great. Two things. On the March 31st go-live, you didn't commit to the date on this call — you said 'ideally end of Q1' — so I'm flagging that as an open item; we'll re-raise Thursday. On the training package: happy to include, in exchange for permission to publish this as a joint case study post-launch. I'll send the recap in the next 30 minutes with the number, the term, and both open items. You confirm by Friday noon; I'll get contracting to draft by Monday morning. Sound good?

Voice C (Kwame): OK, so, our number is €38k — I mean, that's where we'd like to be, obviously if that's tough we've got some flexibility, we've done €36k for similar-size accounts, so, you know, that could be a starting point too, if it helps. Um. What are you thinking? Yeah? OK yeah €36k works, let's go with that. I'll send something over at some point this week — great to chat!

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class

Speaking: solo role-play — 90-second close

Solo task. Pick ONE deal you're currently in the middle of — a client, a supplier, a salary, a project. Record yourself (voice note, up to 90 seconds) delivering the close. You MUST include: (1) an OFFER stated in ONE sentence and then SILENCE — say '[pause]' out loud, (2) ONE explicit TRADE-OFF ('X in exchange for Y' — not a concession), (3) at least ONE sense verb / reporting frame ('you seemed…', 'you didn't commit to…', 'you implied…'), (4) a named NEXT STEP with an owner, a date, and a promise of a recap email within an hour.

Scene: Your real live deal (recommended)

A: You close.

B: Imagined listener: the actual counterparty.

Scene: A salary / role negotiation

A: You close.

B: Imagined listener: the hiring manager, at the end of the third conversation.

Scene: A mid-project supplier renegotiation

A: You close.

B: Imagined listener: the supplier's account manager, after two weeks of back-and-forth.

Extra speaking task — 30-second 'the silent close'

Compress the whole close to ONE offer + silence + ONE trade + ONE next step. Record a 30-second voice note. Format: '[Offer]. [pause 3 seconds]. Happy to [X] in exchange for [Y]. Recap in your inbox within the hour; you confirm by [date/time].' Say it out loud — including the silence.

Writing mini-task

Draft the recap email for a deal you just closed verbally (max 90 words). It MUST include: (1) the AGREED terms — numbers and dates, explicitly, (2) ONE unresolved item flagged with a sense verb / reporting frame ('you seemed comfortable with X but stopped short of confirming'), (3) any TRADE-OFF made ('X in exchange for Y'), (4) ONE named next step with an owner and a date.

Wrap-up

One CONCESSION you made recently that should have been a TRADE-OFF — what would the trade have been?

One sense verb or reporting frame you'll use in your next debrief email ('she seemed…', 'he stopped short of…').

One deal you'll re-close with a recap email today — because it was closed on 'good vibes', not on writing.

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class

Quiz

1. The real 'close' of a deal is…
   (A) The handshake in the room
   (B) The written recap within an hour with named next steps and owners
   (C) The moment of verbal agreement
2. 'She seemed reluctant on the March deadline' is a good debrief line because…
   (A) It commits to a next step
   (B) It reports what was observed without inventing an inner state
   (C) It's a hard no
3. A TRADE-OFF differs from a CONCESSION in that…
   (A) A trade-off is bigger
   (B) In a trade-off both sides move; in a concession only you do — value bleed
   (C) They mean the same thing
4. The right use of silence after your offer is…
   (A) Fill it fast to keep the room warm
   (B) Stop talking; let the other side speak next — silence produces information
   (C) Never use silence — it's rude
5. 'They didn't commit to a specific date' should appear in a recap because…
   (A) It's polite
   (B) It preserves the fact that no date was agreed — protects both sides from later misremembering
   (C) It's a deal-breaker

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Workbook — home practice

Exercise 1 — Closing & reporting lexis

Complete each sentence with ONE phrase from the box.

Word bank: sign on the dotted line · package deal · hold the line · stopped short of · implied · lock in

1. The room felt great, but until we ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___, nothing is closed.
2. Let's not do this one term at a time — I'll come back with a ___ ___ tomorrow.
3. On payment terms we can move; on price we ___ ___ ___.
4. She ___ ___ ___ agreeing, but wouldn't put a date on it — flag it in the recap.
5. He ___ that the March 31st deadline was flexible — his phrasing was 'ideally by end of Q1'.
6. Let's ___ ___ the SLA before people leave the room — I don't want it drifting.

Exercise 1b — Vocabulary — discursive writing

Write a post-negotiation debrief (120–180 words) for the Sales Director regarding a major deal with a key client. Summarize what happened and the next steps to close. Incorporate at least four phrases from Exercise 1: sign on the dotted line, package deal, hold the line, stopped short of, implied, or lock in.

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type: writing

Use at least 4 target vocabulary items from the unit.

Maintain a formal, reporting register.

Use reporting frames (e.g., 'It was observed that', 'The client indicated').

Structure clearly: Summary of Meeting, Outstanding Issues, Recommended Action.

model: Subject: Debrief on Meridian Print Negotiation To the Sales Director, The final session with Meridian Print provided several key insights. While the client implied they were comfortable with the proposed value, they stopped short of a definitive commitment during the live discussion. To lock in the agreement by Friday, I recommend we present a package deal that includes the additional training credits they requested, provided they agree to a 24-month term. We must hold the line on the core unit price, as any further concession there would erode our margins for the entire fiscal year. Once the updated terms are sent, I will follow up personally to ensure they are ready to sign on the dotted line. This deal represents a significant milestone for our regional growth, and securing it this week is critical for our Q4 targets.

Exercise 2 — Sense verbs & reporting frames

Complete each sentence with ONE of: seemed / appeared / sounded / felt / implied / denied / stopped short of / didn't commit to.

1. She ___ reluctant when we raised the March 31st deadline.

2. He ___ to be checking his phone under the table — probably briefing his CFO.

3. The room ___ tense as soon as we quoted €280k.

4. She ___ they were talking to the competitor — she just said 'we're exploring options'.

5. He ___ any conversation about the budget cap.

6. They ___ ___ ___ ___ a specific date; only 'ideally end of Q1'.

Exercise 3 — Concession or trade-off?

Decide whether each closing move is a CONCESSION (value bleed) or a TRADE-OFF (both sides move).

1. 'OK, we can do €38k instead of €40k. Let's just get this signed.'

   (A) CONCESSION

   (B) TRADE-OFF

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2. 'We can do €38k IF you sign for 24 months instead of 12.'
   (A) CONCESSION
   (B) TRADE-OFF
3. 'Sure, we can include the training package.'
   (A) CONCESSION
   (B) TRADE-OFF
4. 'We can include the training package IF we can announce it as a joint case study.'
   (A) CONCESSION
   (B) TRADE-OFF
5. 'Fine, I'll waive the setup fee.'
   (A) CONCESSION
   (B) TRADE-OFF
6. 'I can waive the setup fee IF we lock the price for two years.'
   (A) CONCESSION
   (B) TRADE-OFF

Exercise 4 — Rewrite as an honest debrief

Rewrite each over-claim into a defensible debrief sentence using sense verbs / reporting frames.

1. 'She agreed to the March deadline.'
2. 'They lied about the competitor.'
3. 'He'll accept €38k.'
4. 'She was bluffing about walking away.'

Exercise 5 — Three attempts to close the same €38k deal

You'll hear three reps try to close the same deal with Ana. Decide who closes properly, who closes on 'good vibes', and who talks the deal into a concession.

1. Which rep closes properly?

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2. Which rep closes on 'good vibes'?

3. Which rep talks the deal into a €2k concession by filling silence?

Voice A (Tomás): This has been a great chat — I feel like we're aligned on value. On the number, we're around €40k, you're around €35–36k, so we're not far off. Let's circle back next week and see where we land. Thanks so much!

Voice B (Priya): OK Ana. Our number is €38k, on a 24-month term. [pause] I hear you on the length. On price we can move; on term length we hold the line. The €38k is contingent on 24 months. [pause] OK — deal on the core. On the March 31st go-live: you didn't commit today, only 'ideally end of Q1' — flagging as open. On the training package: happy to include, in exchange for permission to publish this as a joint case study. Recap in 30 minutes; you confirm by Friday noon; contracting drafts Monday.

Voice C (Kwame): Our number is €38k — I mean, that's where we'd like to be, obviously if that's tough we've done €36k for similar accounts, so, you know, that could be a starting point too… Um. What are you thinking? Yeah? OK, €36k works. Let's go with that.

Exercise 6 — Draft the recap email

You just left a meeting where: they seemed open to €38k, they didn't confirm the March 31st date, and they implied they'd close by Friday if training is included. Draft the recap email (max 90 words). It MUST include: (1) a sense verb, (2) 'stopped short of' or 'didn't commit to', (3) ONE explicit trade-off, (4) a named next step with owner and date.

Exercise 7 — Case study reflection: Meridian Print

Think about the Meridian Print case (12-month contract, they want +22%, you have 6 months and a big pitch in 5 weeks). Answer the questions.

1. What SPECIFIC BATNA data do you need before Thursday's call — and how do you get it in 48 hours?

2. Cristina's POSITION is +22%. What's her likely INTEREST — and where's the creative deal?

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3. Draft the OPENING of your Thursday call — the first 3 sentences.

4. You reach +8% for 6 months IN EXCHANGE FOR a 12-month extension. Draft the 60-word recap.

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class

Answer key — Class Book

Lead-in: concession or trade-off?

1. CONCESSION — €2k for nothing.
2. TRADE-OFF — €2k for revenue certainty.
3. CONCESSION — added scope for free.
4. TRADE-OFF — real return for the concession.

Reading: Close on writing, not on feeling

1. (B) The written summary within an hour, with named next steps and owners
2. (B) It reports what you observed — hesitation, not a hard no — without inventing an inner state
3. (C) Stop talking after your position lands and let the other side speak next — silence produces information
4. (B) In a concession you give something up for nothing named in return; in a trade-off you give X in exchange for Y

Vocabulary: closing, concessions, silence, reporting

1. sign on the dotted line
2. package deal
3. hold the line
4. stopped short of
5. implied
6. lock in

1. The room felt great, but until we sign on the dotted line, nothing is closed.
2. Let's not do this term by term — I'll come back with a package deal tomorrow.
3. On payment terms we can move; on price we hold the line.
4. She stopped short of confirming the date — flag it in the recap.
5. Let's lock in the SLA before people leave the room.

Grammar focus: Verbs of the senses & reporting phrases

1. seemed / appeared / sounded / looked
2. appeared / seemed
3. felt
4. implied
5. denied / stopped short of
6. didn't commit to

1. Model: 'She SEEMED comfortable with the March deadline but STOPPED SHORT OF confirming it — she said "ideally by end of Q1". Flag as an open item; not yet locked in.'
2. Model: 'They DENIED being in active talks with the competitor, but she IMPLIED they were "exploring options". Treat as high probability, not certainty; price the offer accordingly.'
3. Model: 'He APPEARED open to €38k — his tone SOUNDED softer once we mentioned the 24-month term — but he DIDN'T COMMIT to the number in writing. Recap explicitly with €38k conditional on 24-month lock-in.'
4. Model: 'Her walk-away threat SOUNDED LIKE a bluff — she stayed in the room for another 30 minutes and kept pushing on scope, which she wouldn't do if she were actually leaving. We SHOULD HAVE let the silence sit longer to test it.'

1. Model: 'Subject: Recap — pricing, deadline, training package\n\nQuick recap. On price: you SEEMED open to €38k, conditional on a 24-month term (not 12). We'll confirm in writing tomorrow. On the March 31st go-live: you DIDN'T COMMIT to the date and asked for "ideally end of Q1" — we've flagged this as open and will re-raise Thursday. On the training package: happy to include, IN EXCHANGE FOR permission to publish a joint case study post-launch. Next step: I'll send the revised paper by Wednesday 5pm; you confirm the training / case-study trade by Friday noon. — Marta.'

Listening: three attempts to close the same €38k deal

1. Voice B (Priya). Names the trade explicitly ('€38k in exchange for a 24-month term'), uses silence after her offer, sends the recap email within an hour with named owners and dates, and doesn't drop scope for free.

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2. Voice A (Tomás). Ends the call with 'sounds like we're aligned, let's circle back next week'. No number confirmed, no date, no owner, no email. Six weeks from now nobody will remember what was agreed.
3. Voice C (Kwame). Makes the offer, then keeps talking — softens, explains, and eventually says 'or we could do €36k if that helps' before Ana has even responded. Classic 'negotiate against yourself'.
1. 1. 'Our number is €38k, on a 24-month term.' 2. Silence — she stops talking. 3. Ana pushes back on the term length; Priya holds. 4. Ana accepts. 5. Priya immediately: 'Great — I'll send the recap in the next 30 minutes with the number, the term, and the March 31st go-live as an open item. You confirm by Friday noon; I'll get contracting to draft by Monday.' Named next step, named owner, named date. That's the close.
2. 'Our number is €38k… I mean, that's where we'd like to be… obviously if that's tough, we've got some flexibility, we've done €36k for similar-size accounts, so… you know, that could be a starting point too, if it helps.' — he moves €2k before Ana has said a word. He negotiated against himself in his own opening.
3. 'Great chat, sounds like we're aligned, let's circle back next week and see where we land.' No number, no date, no owner, no email committed to. 'Circle back' is the death-rattle of an unclosed deal.
1. Two things at once. (1) It puts the burden of the next move on Ana — Ana has to either accept, counter, or explain — all of which produce information. (2) It signals that Priya is comfortable with the number; comfortable people don't fill silence. Kwame's continued talking signals discomfort with his own price, which invites push-back.
2. That the €38k was a soft number, and that Kwame moves when he's uncomfortable, not when Ana pushes. Ana now knows: (a) she can get more by pushing gently, (b) any Kwame concession will come without a return ask. This one call will cost Kwame's team on every subsequent Kwame deal for the next 12 months, because Ana will tell her network.
3. Because it converts the 45 minutes of momentum from the room into zero written commitment. Next week Ana is in different meetings with different priorities. The deal is now competing with everything else on her plate, and 'you agreed with me on the call' has no evidentiary weight without an email. The close was verbal; the deal is unstarted.

Quiz

1. (B) The written recap within an hour with named next steps and owners
2. (B) It reports what was observed without inventing an inner state
3. (B) In a trade-off both sides move; in a concession only you do — value bleed
4. (B) Stop talking; let the other side speak next — silence produces information
5. (B) It preserves the fact that no date was agreed — protects both sides from later misremembering

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class

Answer key — Workbook

Exercise 1 — Closing & reporting lexis

1. sign on the dotted line
2. package deal
3. hold the line
4. stopped short of
5. implied
6. lock in

Exercise 2 — Sense verbs & reporting frames

1. seemed / appeared / sounded
2. appeared / seemed
3. felt
4. implied
5. denied / stopped short of
6. didn't commit to

Exercise 3 — Concession or trade-off?

1. (A) CONCESSION
2. (B) TRADE-OFF
3. (A) CONCESSION
4. (B) TRADE-OFF
5. (A) CONCESSION
6. (B) TRADE-OFF

Exercise 4 — Rewrite as an honest debrief

1. Model: 'She SEEMED comfortable with the March deadline but STOPPED SHORT OF confirming it — she said "ideally end of Q1". Flag as open; not yet locked in.'
2. Model: 'They DENIED being in active talks with the competitor, but she IMPLIED they were "exploring options". Treat as high probability, not certainty.'
3. Model: 'He APPEARED open to €38k — his tone SOUNDED softer once we mentioned the 24-month term — but he DIDN'T COMMIT to the number in writing. Recap €38k conditional on 24-month lock-in.'
4. Model: 'Her walk-away threat SOUNDED LIKE a bluff — she stayed 30 more minutes and kept pushing on scope, which she wouldn't do if she were actually leaving.'

Exercise 5 — Three attempts to close the same €38k deal

1. Voice B (Priya) — names the trade explicitly ('€38k in exchange for 24-month term'), uses silence, sends a recap within an hour with named owners and dates.
2. Voice A (Tomás) — 'sounds like we're aligned, let's circle back next week'. No number, no date, no owner, no email.
3. Voice C (Kwame) — makes the offer then keeps talking, softens, offers €36k before Ana has even responded.

Exercise 7 — Case study reflection: Meridian Print

1. Model: Call the second-place bidder Monday. Ask: (a) can you take over in 30 days, (b) 6-month price, (c) Q3 on-time-delivery numbers, (d) two reference calls. Without this we're negotiating without a BATNA and Cristina will smell it.
2. Model: Interest = her boss's Q4 revenue target. The 22% is a round number and 'paper costs' is theatre. Creative deal: smaller increase (8–10%) IN EXCHANGE FOR a 12-month extension at the new rate (she doesn't have to re-negotiate in six months) or a public reference she can use.
3. Model: 'Cristina, thanks for making time. Two things upfront. First — the 22% as it stands, we can't accept, and I want to be direct rather than dance around it. Second — I hear that your side has pressure, and I don't want to walk away from a working relationship over one letter. So I'd like to spend 30 minutes finding a version that works for both of us — I have three questions and one proposal.'

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class

4. Model: 'Recap: agreed +8% on remaining 6 months (€24k → €25.9k) IN EXCHANGE FOR a 12-month extension at that rate commencing after current term. You STOPPED SHORT OF confirming the delivery-SLA improvement discussed (target 90% on-time) — flagged as open for Monday. Next: I send updated MSA amendment by Friday 5pm; you sign or comment by Wednesday.'

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class