

Module 1 — High-Stakes Negotiation & Dealmaking

Everything worth remembering from this module — read it once, then take the Final Quiz.

Grammar in a nutshell

Modal verbs (advanced)

At C1, modals go beyond ability and permission: they express habit, advisability, necessity, expectation and fine shades of past judgement.

Past necessity: needn't have vs didn't need to: *needn't have + p.p. = you did it, but it was unnecessary. didn't need to = it was unnecessary (and usually not done).* → *You needn't have worried (you did). / I didn't need to pay (so I didn't).*

Advice, preference & expectation: *had better (strong advice), would rather (preference), ought to, should have / ought to have (past criticism), be bound/sure to (certain expectation).* → *We'd better go. / I'd rather stay. / It's bound to rain.*

would for past habit & be to / may as well: *would + base = repeated past actions (not states). be to = official instruction/arrangement. may/might as well = there is no better alternative.* → *We would swim every day. / Staff are to sign in. / We may as well start.*

Concession & contrast

Concession means admitting one fact while asserting a contrasting one. The right linker depends on whether a clause, a noun, or an adjective follows.

+ clause vs + noun/-ing: *although / even though / though + clause (subject + verb); despite / in spite of + noun or -ing.* → *Although it rained... / Despite the rain... / Despite being late...*

Connectors between sentences: *however, nevertheless, nonetheless (after ; or .) ; whereas / while join two contrasting clauses.* → *He is poor; nevertheless, he is generous. / Tea is cheap, whereas coffee is dear.*

Emphatic concession: *however/whatever/wherever/no matter + (adj) clause; much as = although; albeit = although it is; granted (that) = I admit.* → *However hard he tries... / No matter what... / risky, albeit necessary.*

Watch out

~~✗ "Maybe we can change the schedule."~~

✓ **"We might conceivably be able to move on the schedule — but not in isolation."**

a very cautious 'maybe' — offers a possibility without promising anything

~~✗ "We can consider it if the price is right."~~

✓ **"We could well consider a longer commitment, provided that the unit price reflects it."**

attaches your condition to the offer in the same sentence

~~✗ "We"~~

✓ **"Much as we'd like to accommodate that, it would put us below cost."**

admit you would like to, then say you can't

~~✗ "OK, but it"~~

✓ **"That may well be true; even so, the risk sits entirely on our side of the table."**

accept what they said, but keep your objection alive

~~✗ "No, we won't"~~

✓ **"However tempting a quick close might be, we're not signing that clause as it stands."**

name how appealing the offer is, then refuse it

~~✗ "Let"~~

✓ **"It might help if we parked the price for a moment and settled the smaller points."**

set a topic aside on purpose, to come back to it later

would for past habit works only with actions, not states (use used to for states: would be).

ought to keeps to; should does not.

needn't have (done but pointless) ≠ didn't need to (no obligation).

despite / in spite of are followed by a noun/-ing, never a clause (add the fact that for a clause).

however = contrast connector; however + adjective = no matter how.

although joins clauses; it is not used like despite before a noun.

Vocabulary of the module

WORD	MEANING	EXAMPLE
to hammer out	to reach an agreement after long, hard discussion	<i>"It took three sessions to hammer out the final terms."</i>
to drive a hard bargain	to negotiate very firmly, giving away little	<i>"Their procurement team drives a notoriously hard bargain."</i>
to meet someone halfway	to compromise by each side giving up part of its demands	<i>"If you can move on volume, we're prepared to meet you halfway on price."</i>
to sweeten the deal	to add something extra to make an offer more attractive	<i>"They sweetened the deal with two years of free support."</i>
to throw in	to include something extra at no additional cost	<i>"We'll throw in the training days if you sign this quarter."</i>
to back out	to withdraw from an agreement before it is final	<i>"The buyer backed out forty-eight hours before signature."</i>
to call someone's bluff	to challenge someone to carry out a threat, believing they will not	<i>"They threatened to switch suppliers, so we called their bluff."</i>
at stake	at risk; able to be won or lost in a situation	<i>"With the renewal at stake, nobody wanted to blink first."</i>

More words from the Reading

WORD	MEANING
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drawn up	prepared and written in detail
give himself up	to surrender to the police
fled	ran away to escape
patchy	irregular; working only in some places
alleged	only suspected, not yet proven
compliant	willing to obey
gauge	to judge or estimate something carefully
stray outside	to move beyond agreed limits
hold them to account	to make someone answer for their actions
closure	the feeling that a painful matter is finally settled

Useful Language — 15 phrases to keep

Making conditional offers

- ▶ **"We might conceivably be able to move on the schedule — but not in isolation."** — a very cautious 'maybe' — offers a possibility without promising anything
- ▶ **"We could well consider a longer commitment, provided that the unit price reflects it."** — attaches your condition to the offer in the same sentence
- ▶ **"We may be prepared to revisit the penalty terms, on the understanding that delivery dates become firm."** — sets a formal condition for agreeing — sounds contractual
- ▶ **"Should you be able to commit today, we could look again at the onboarding fee."** — a formal, elegant way to say 'if you can...'

Conceding gracefully

- ▶ **"Much as we'd like to accommodate that, it would put us below cost."** — admit you would like to, then say you can't
- ▶ **"Granted, your volumes have grown — but so has our scope."** — concede their point first, then push back
- ▶ **"Admittedly, our first offer was ambitious. It was also negotiable — this one is less so."** — admit something about your own past position, to sound honest
- ▶ **"Whilst we accept the principle, the numbers attached to it are another matter."** — agree with the principle but disagree on the numbers

Pushing back with respect

- ▶ **"That may well be true; even so, the risk sits entirely on our side of the table."** — accept what they said, but keep your objection alive
- ▶ **"However tempting a quick close might be, we're not signing that clause as it stands."** — name how appealing the offer is, then refuse it
- ▶ **"We simply couldn't justify those terms to our board, whichever way we present them."** — refuse because it is impossible to justify, not because you won't
- ▶ **"You could arguably get a cheaper headline price elsewhere — though not at this level of service."** — accept the comparison, then reframe the value

Managing the moment

- ▶ **"It might help if we parked the price for a moment and settled the smaller points."** — set a topic aside on purpose, to come back to it later
- ▶ **"That said, there is a version of this deal that works for both of us."** — turn from the problem to a possible way forward
- ▶ **"Let me be direct: that's beyond our walk-away point, and I'd rather tell you now than waste your afternoon."** — a calm, direct way to give a firm 'no'

✓ Ready for the Final Quiz?

Tick what you can do. All of them? You are ready — you need 70%% to pass.

- ☐ I can acknowledge the other side's position without conceding a single point ("that may well be true, even so...")
- ☐ I can make every concession conditional — provided that, on the understanding that, should you be able to
- ☐ I can trade what is cheap for you and valuable to them — term, payment days, support tier — before touching price
- ☐ I can name your walk-away point once, clearly and calmly, when pushed past it
- ☐ I can recognise pressure tactics — the bluff, the silence, the deadline — and answer with choreography, not panic