

Soft Speech Sleuth Answer Key

1. To soften or make unpleasant news sound more polite or less harsh.
2. "Downsizing," "let go," "relocated," "retired," "correctional facility," and "passed away."
3. To sound professional, kind, or to avoid upsetting others.
4. The tone becomes gentler and more positive, making difficult topics easier to hear.
5. Answers will vary (e.g., "passed away" instead of "died").

- **Teaching Tips:**

- Read the paragraph aloud once using a neutral tone, then again emphasizing euphemistic phrases to help students hear the difference.
- Discuss why writers or speakers might prefer euphemisms in **business, media, or personal communication**.
- Model underlining the first euphemism together before students continue independently.

- **Differentiation Strategies:**

- For **younger learners (Grades 6-7)**: provide a brief list of common euphemisms beforehand to support recognition.
- For **older or advanced learners (Grades 8-9)**: have students rewrite the paragraph without euphemisms to compare tone and clarity.

- **Extension Activities:**

- Challenge students to find euphemisms in news articles, job postings, or political speeches.
- Have students write their own short paragraphs using both direct and euphemistic language to explore tone shifts.
- Discuss ethical considerations—when is it helpful to soften the truth, and when might it be misleading?