



Degrees of Uncertainty

Many words and phrases act like markers in a text to indicate to readers that the author is less than certain about what is being said. Collectively, these words and phrases that indicate uncertainty are called **uncertainty qualifiers**. These markers in the text help readers to identify where the author is uncertain, or how much confidence the author has in what they are saying. There are many different kinds of uncertainty qualifiers:

- **verbal phrases:** as likely as, chances are, close to certain, likely, few, high probability, it could be, it seems, quite possible
- **expression of uncertainty with quantification:** all, most, many, some, etc.
- **modal verbs:** can, may, should
- **adverbs:** roughly, somewhat, mostly, essentially, especially, exceptionally, often, almost, practically, actually, really
- **speculation verbs:** suggest, suppose, suspect, presume
- **nouns:** speculation, doubt, proposals
- **expressions:** raise the question of, to the best of our knowledge, as far as I know

DIRECTIONS: Read the assigned text. How confident are you in the accuracy of the information the author presents? Use the scale below to assign a score to the text. Be prepared to defend your score.

My score for this text: _____

100	certain
85-99	almost certain, believe, evident, little doubt
60-84	fairly certain, likely, should be, appear to be
40-59	have chances
15-39	probably not, fairly uncertain, is not expected
1-14	not believe, doubtful, not evident