89 Vague language

We generally use **vague** language in spoken English when we aren't able to be precise, or don't want or need to be.

How long will you be away?
~ Three weeks **or so**.

He earns **loads of** money, doesn't he?
~ Probably, somewhere **in the region of** £100,000.

He's **something to do with** TV, isn't he?
~ Yes, **something like that**.

She doesn't look well. Is she ill **or something**?
~ I don't know. I am **sort of** worried about her.

We'll buy that car **somehow or other**.
~ Well, I've got £1000, **give or take** a bit.

I've got loads of **stuff** to prepare. How many are coming?
~ Oh, fifty **odd**, I think.

SPOTLIGHT *something like that, etc.*

We can use can use these phrases when we are being vague.

- *She's a doctor* ***or something like that.***
- *He works in publishing I think. ~ Yeah,* ***something along those lines.***
- *He said they advise importers.* ***Something of that sort.***

GLOSSARY

vague	not clear or detailed
or so	You add **or so** after a number, quantity, etc. to show that it is approximate. SYN **or thereabouts**
loads (of sth) *inf*	a large quantity of sth SYN **tons/piles (of sth)** *inf*
in the region of	used when you are giving a number, price etc. to show that it is not exact: *He paid* ***somewhere in the region of*** *£500.* SYN **approximately**
something to do with sth	in some way connected with sth
or something *inf*	used when you are not exactly sure about a thing, person or place ALSO **or somebody/ somewhere**; SYN **something/ somebody/ somewhere or other**
sort of *inf*	to some extent, but in a way that is hard to explain SYN **kind of**
somehow	in some way or by some means, although you don't know exactly how: ***somehow or other***
give or take sth	used for talking about numbers which are not exact: *We'll have 100 guests,* ***give or take ten.***
stuff *inf*	used to refer in a general way to things people say, do, or think, etc: *They played* ***some great stuff.*** *I don't believe* ***all that stuff.***
odd (after a number) *inf*	approximately or a little more than the number mentioned: ***30 odd*** *students*

1 Replace the underlined word(s) with a word or phrase that keeps the same meaning.

1 We've got <u>loads</u> of food. .....
2 It cost £200 or <u>so</u>. .....
3 I am <u>sort</u> of glad she went. .....
4 She's an optician or something <u>like that</u>. .....
5 I think he's 50 <u>or just over</u>. .....
6 It's <u>in the region of</u> 400 miles. .....
7 I'll get there <u>by some means</u>. .....
8 He was <u>not clear</u> about how to get there. .....
9 I'll give the book to Susana or <u>one of the other girls</u>. .....

2 One word is missing in each sentence. What is it, and where does it go?

1 She was just sort pretending to be ill; I don't think she actually was. .....
2 We seem to have of rice, so I might make a paella. .....
3 He's a chief executive something; I'm not too sure. .....
4 We'll leave at seven, give take a few minutes, so don't be late. .....
5 I've got a meeting tonight but I'll finish my essay by tomorrow or other. .....
6 The whole trip cost somewhere the region of £400. .....

3 Rewrite the sentences using the word in capitals to make each sentence more vague.

1 We invited a hundred to the wedding. SO .....
2 He looks depressed. SORT .....
3 Her job is in marketing. DO .....
4 There were a lot of good groups and comedians at the festival. STUFF .....
5 It's 300 miles. REGION .....
6 We could go to France. SOMEWHERE .....
7 I've got £500. GIVE .....
8 We could get him a book for his birthday. SOMETHING .....

4 ABOUT YOUR LANGUAGE **Translate the dialogues at the top of the page. Do you have similar phrases in your language?**

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TEST YOURSELF

LIVEWORKSHEETS