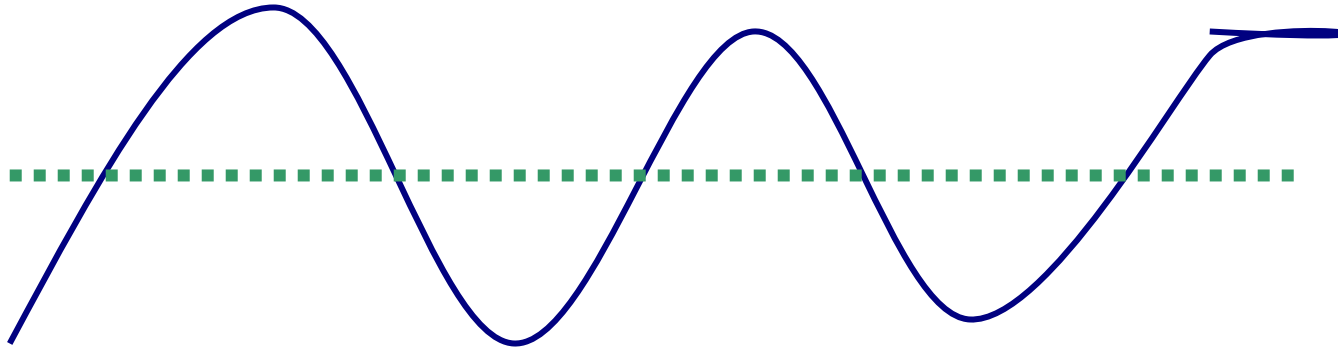


# Dead-level Abstracting



In his book *People in Quandaries*, Wendell Johnson describes a problematic linguistic occurrence that he called "dead-level abstracting."

Probably all of us know certain people who seem able to talk on and on without ever drawing any general conclusions. (Others' speech) is characterized especially by vagueness, ambiguity, even utter meaninglessness. The low-level speaker frustrates you because he leaves you with no direction as to what to do with the basketful of information he has given you. The high-level speaker frustrates you because he simply does not tell you what he is talking about. (1946)