

Academic Discussions- Giving Positive and Negative Feedback

Without looking below, lift the positive and negative cards that you are given depending on what kind of feedback you think is being given.

Label the sections below with plus and minus signs depending on what kind of feedback is being given.

- ... is a bit/ somewhat/ fairly/ quite/ rather/ very basic/ complicated/ obvious/ vague.
- I have a few/ some doubts about...
- There was a slight/ clear lack of...

- ... is a bit/ somewhat/ fairly/ quite/ rather/ very unconvincing/ unrealistic/ overambitious/ unambitious.
- ... is a bit too broad/ ambitious/ narrow/ difficult to understand/ complicated/ detailed.

- ... is absolutely fascinating/ ideal.
- ... is very/ totally suitable/ convincing/ original.

- ... is exactly what I would do.
- ... made me look at it in a completely/ totally new way.
- I had absolutely no idea that...

- ... needs some/ a fair amount of work.
- Have you thought at all about...?
- I can strongly/ would highly recommend/ suggest...

- ... was pretty/ really quite/ very/ really/ extremely strong/ good/ realistic/ original/ convincing/ impressive.
- ... was a particular/ real strength.

- ... was a pretty/ very good choice.
- ... was an absolutely excellent idea.
- ... makes a lot of/ complete sense.

- ... was a bit/ fairly tricky but you...
- Although there is still a need for some....,...
- Though you started a little slowly,...

- I'm really no expert on this, but...
- In my humble/ honest opinion,...
- In my limited/ personal experience,...

- I hadn't even considered...
- I really liked...

- I'd really like to copy your use of...
- I wasn't quite/ very/ really/ so/ totally/ entirely sure about/ clear about/ impressed by/ convinced by...
- There wasn't quite/ really/ nearly enough...
- I wouldn't necessarily/ really recommend...
- It would have been a bit/ quite a lot better with...
- It would probably be better to...
- My main suggestion is to...
- One possible idea is to...
- What I would probably/ try to do is...
- There was a bit/ quite a lot too much...
- You had a few/ some/ quite a few/ quite a lot of problems with...
- ... wasn't very/ particularly/ sufficiently strong/ interesting/ convincing/ original/ impressive.
- You did much better than I would with...
- I totally agree with the idea of...
- You could try to prepare...
- You probably need to...
- You probably should have...
- You should probably focus on improving...
- You still need to work a little on... Nonetheless,...
- You struggled a bit with... Nevertheless,...

Check your answers as a class, asking about any you don't understand.

Test each other in pairs or small groups.

Without looking above for now, try to remember or think of feedback phrases with each of the functions below.

Positive feedback

Using positive words

Using negative words with contrastive linking phrases (“but” etc)

Referring to yourself (comparing, personal reactions, etc)

Negative feedback

Using negative words

Negatives with positive words

Giving advice

Referring to yourself (comparing, personal reactions, etc)

Use these words to make the phrases softer, more enthusiastic or more polite to help with the task above. Most of the words can be used in more than one place above.

- a bit
- a fair amount of
- a few
- a little
- a lot of
- absolutely
- at all
- can strongly
- clear
- complete
- completely
- entirely
- even
- exactly
- extremely
- fairly
- honest
- humble
- limited
- main
- much
- nearly
- necessarily
- particular
- particularly
- personal

- possible
- pretty
- probably
- quite
- quite a few
- quite a lot (of)
- rather
- real
- really
- slight
- so
- some
- somewhat
- still
- sufficiently
- totally
- try to
- very
- would highly

Partial answers

Add words to the middle of the phrases below to make them more polite, softer or more positive. Most words can be used in more than one place below and most places below can take more than one word.

Positive feedback

Using positive words

- ... is fascinating/ ideal.
- ... is suitable/ convincing/ original.
- ... was strong/ good/ realistic/ original/ convincing/ impressive.
- ... was a strength.
- ... was a good choice.
- ... was an excellent idea.
- ... makes sense.

Using negative words with contrastive linking phrases (“but” etc)

- ... was tricky but you...
- Although there is a need for some.....
- Though you started slowly,...
- You still need to work on... Nonetheless,...
- You struggled with... Nevertheless,...

Referring to yourself (comparing, personal reactions, etc)

- ... is what I would do.
- ... made me look at it in a new way.
- I had no idea that...
- I hadn't considered...
- I liked...
- I'd like to copy your use of...
- You did better than I would with...
- I agree with the idea of...

Negative feedback

Using negative words

1. ... is basic/ complicated/ obvious/ vague.
2. There was a lack of...
3. There was too much...
4. You had problems with...

Negatives with positive words

5. ... wasn't strong/ interesting/ convincing/ original/ impressive.
6. ... is unconvincing/ unrealistic/ overambitious/ unambitious.
7. ... is too broad/ ambitious/ narrow/ difficult to understand/ complicated/ detailed.
8. I wasn't sure about/ clear about/ impressed by/ convinced by...
9. There wasn't enough...

Giving advice

10. ... needs work.
11. Have you thought about...?
12. I recommend/ suggest...
13. I wouldn't recommend...
14. It would have been better with...
15. It would be better to...
16. My suggestion is to...
17. One idea is to...
18. What I would do is...
19. You could prepare...
20. You need to...
21. You should have...
22. You should focus on improving...

Referring to yourself (comparing, personal reactions, etc)

23. I have doubts about...
24. I'm no expert on this, but...
25. In my opinion,...
26. In my experience,...

Suggested answers

Positive feedback

Using positive words

- ... is **absolutely** fascinating/ ideal.
- ... is **very/ totally** suitable/ convincing/ original.
- ... was **pretty/ really quite/ very/ really/ extremely** strong/ good/ realistic/ original/ convincing/ impressive.
- ... was a **particular/ real** strength.
- ... was a **pretty/ very** good choice.
- ... was an **absolutely** excellent idea.
- ... makes a **lot of/ complete** sense.

Using negative words with contrastive linking phrases (“but” etc)

- ... was a **bit/ fairly** tricky but you...
- Although there is **still** a need for some.....
- Though you started a **little** slowly,...
- You still need to work a **little** on... Nonetheless,...
- You struggled a **bit** with... Nevertheless,...

Referring to yourself (comparing, personal reactions, etc)

- ... is **exactly** what I would do.
- ... made me look at it in a **completely/ totally** new way.
- I had **absolutely** no idea that...
- I hadn't **even** considered...
- I **really** liked...
- I'd **really** like to copy your use of...
- You did **much** better than I would with...
- I **totally** agree with the idea of...

Negative feedback

Using negative words

27. ... is **a bit/ somewhat/ fairly/ quite/ rather/ very** basic/ complicated/ obvious/ vague.
28. There was a **slight/ clear** lack of...
29. There was **a bit/ quite a lot** too much...
30. You had **a few/ some/ quite a few/ quite a lot of** problems with...

Negatives with positive words

31. ... wasn't **very/ particularly/ sufficiently** strong/ interesting/ convincing/ original/ impressive.
32. ... is **a bit/ somewhat/ fairly/ quite/ rather/ very** unconvincing/ unrealistic/ overambitious/ unambitious.
33. ... is **a bit** too broad/ ambitious/ narrow/ difficult to understand/ complicated/ detailed.
34. I wasn't **quite/ very/ really/ so/ totally/ entirely** sure about/ clear about/ impressed by/ convinced by...
35. There wasn't **quite/ really/ nearly** enough...

Giving advice

36. ... needs **some/ a fair amount of** work.
37. Have you thought **at all** about...?
38. I **can strongly/ would highly** recommend/ suggest...
39. I wouldn't **necessarily/ really** recommend...
40. It would have been **a bit/ quite a lot** better with...
41. It would **probably** be better to...
42. My **main** suggestion is to...
43. One **possible** idea is to...
44. What I would **probably/ try to** do is...
45. You could **try to** prepare...
46. You **probably** need to...
47. You **probably** should have...
48. You should **probably** focus on improving...

Referring to yourself (comparing, personal reactions, etc)

49. I have **a few/ some** doubts about...
50. I'm **really** no expert on this, but...
51. In my **humble/ honest** opinion,...
52. In my **limited/ personal** experience,...

Test each other in pairs:

- Raise the plus and minus cards
- Identify the function
- Add words to make sentences more polite or enthusiastic to the shorter sentences that your partner reads out
- Use the words to make sentences more polite or enthusiastic that your partner reads out to make sentences
- Brainstorm phrases with one function, with your partner helping you if you get stuck

Cards to hold up

			
			
			
			