



Critiquing Workshop

By Yerusha Halgryn



**English
Dave.pl**

Break the Barrier

Abstract

This workshop aims to equip students with English phrases and words which will enable them to critique work effectively in the workplace. Whether you are receiving or giving critique, this workshop will help you to be confident in these scenarios!

www.englishdave.pl

englishdave.pl@gmail.com

+48 787 942 110

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1 INTRODUCTION

Critique and feedback form a vital part of our workplace experiences.

When done incorrectly, critique can cause conflict, demotivate employees and even burn bridges in the workplace.

When done effectively however, critique and feedback can bring a team together, improve quality of work, and encourage growth in an individual, team or company.



In this workshop we will look at effective critiquing in English.

Workshop Warmer:

- Do you have a positive or negative association with giving and/or receiving critique?
- What are the most challenging aspects of giving critique?
- What are the most challenging aspects of receiving critique?

2 THINKING ABOUT CRITIQUE: ASSOCIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

1. Critiquing may be a challenging topic for some of us.
Both receiving and giving critique may be challenging, depending on factors such as:
 - work environment
 - colleagues
 - your personality
 - the positive/ negative nature of the feedback
2. Let's look at a few definitions together.
Often people use "critique" and "feedback" interchangeably.
Below is a list of terms we commonly use – let's discuss the words and our associations with them to make sure we are all on the same page.

- Feedback

According to Oxford Dictionary, feedback is: “advice, criticism or information about how good or useful something or somebody’s work is.”

In other words, feedback can be either positive, negative, or both.

- Critique

Defined as a detailed analysis and assessment of a work OR the action of evaluating something in a very detailed way.

Looking at various definitions, it becomes clear that critique focusses on all aspects of someone’s work. (not only the negatives)

- Criticism

Although there are a few definitions, most sources agreed that criticism refers to the expression of disapproval of someone’s work or behaviours. Often criticism is seen as only highlighting negatives, although sometimes we use the phrase “constructive criticism” to express a type of criticism that is not only negative, but also constructive.

3. Let’s circle back to how we handle critique and feedback. Think about these categories and label yourself accordingly. Score yourself for both the “giving” and “receiving” categories in the chat.

Giving critique and feedback:

- I am comfortable giving feedback and critique in my native tongue and in English. (1)
- I am comfortable giving feedback and critique in my native tongue but not in English. (2)
- I am not comfortable giving feedback or critique. I lack confidence in this area. (3)
- I am almost too comfortable giving feedback and critique. Often people are offended by how direct I am in the workplace. (4)

Receiving critique and feedback:

- I am not good at receiving critique or feedback. I am hard on myself and therefore feel that feedback means I did not do a good job. (1)

- I am very open to receiving critique and feedback. I feel that it improves my work and makes me aware of possible improvements. (2)
- I only receive feedback and critique well from certain people. If I do not agree with someone's opinion of my work or behaviour I struggle to accept it. (3)
- I have no problem giving feedback and critique but cannot handle receiving feedback or critique about my work or behaviour. (4)

A QUESTION TO CONSIDER: Why do I feel the way I do about giving and receiving feedback?

- Lack of vocabulary.
- Lack of confidence.
- I am careful to offend people.
- The person giving the feedback or critique is doing it in an unpleasant way.
- I am well versed in this and therefore have confidence.
- I don't take it personally.

Like we discussed in our email workshop, it's not about WHAT we say, but HOW we say it.

This workshop will equip you with phrasal structures to use when giving feedback / critiquing someone's work. The goal is that you use these structures and apply them to your specific situation.

Appraisals are all about thriving on judgment!



3 GIVING THE CRITIQUE

3.1) Phrases to use when initiating the critiquing process

General tips:

- Timing is important when giving critique.
- Making sure everyone is on the same page in terms of the expectations for the meeting.
- Initiate the process in a positive way to avoid unnecessary conflict.

Phrases:

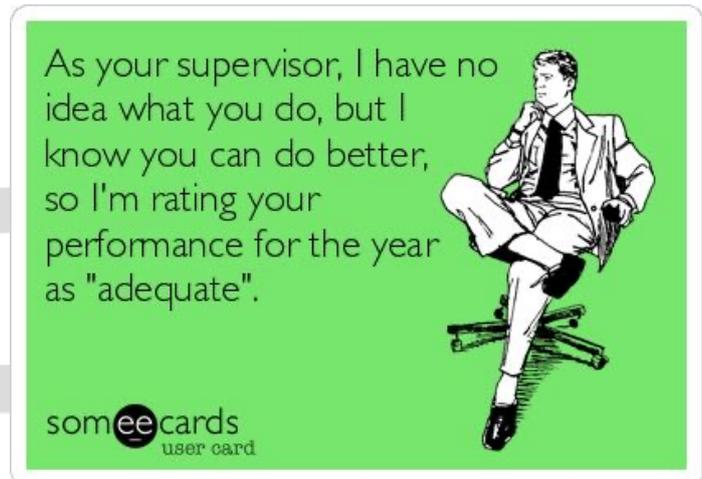
1. You asked me to have a look at....., when would be a good time to discuss it?
2. I would like to offer you some feedback on....., please have a look at your schedule and let me know when you would be able to talk it through/ discuss it.
3. Are you interested in some feedback on ...?
4. Would you like a few pointers on your ... / how you handled...?
5. Are you open to talking about this right now?
6. Are you available to have a conversation about how we could both improve to avoid further miscommunication between us....?
7. Are you up for a quick meeting about.....?
8. Could we potentially schedule a chat to make sure we are on the same page in terms of your....?
9. I have some helpful critique on your work that I would like to share with you. When would be a good time to do so?
10. I observed that some miscommunication/ misunderstandings/ conflict took place last week. Are you open to discussing ways we can improve that?

3.2) Phrases to use when at the start of the critique:

Being clear with your motive:

1. I'm giving this critique because I believe you are capable of excelling at this job...
2. I'm giving you this feedback because I want you to grow as much as possible....

3. Discussing this is important because of how some of these points could impact the wider growth of the company...
4. I am genuinely concerned about..... I trust that you will understand where I am coming from with this critique.
5. I have analysed the results from your client feedback forms/ client reviews and would like to offer you some critique on how to improve in...



3.3) The main critique:

When giving critique, we always try to acknowledge efforts, then point out specific improvements.

Another helpful structure is: **“observation -> “I statement” -> expressing the need for improvement -> suggesting a solution”**

1. I noticed that you interrupted me during our staff meeting. This made me lose track of the topic and cost us productive meeting time. Could you please take care not to do this next time? Perhaps you could make a note of your point and bring it up after I have spoken.
2. I really enjoyed your presentation! One thing you could note for next time is that... Well done for handling...during the presentation.
3. I have noticed that you have improved.....since the last time we spoke, thank you for this. This being said, I recently noticed.... a lot of gaps

4. You've been delivering excellent work with.... However, we could achieve much better results if we.... I need you to please improve your work in that area.
5. I have noticed that your engagement/ work ethic/ time management has decreased in the past week. This is an important time for the company/ project, so it is vital that you improve.... Please let me know if you need assistance in improving these areas.
6. I love your approach towards.... Let's try to improve the quality of.... A few things you could do to refine this is...
7. I really appreciated your involvement in the launch last week. However, your lack of communication made it very difficult for the team to stay on track with the task at hand. I really need you to improve on...
8. Thank you for sending the document/ doing the presentation/ speaking to the client. You made a few good improvements/ points; however, I feel that....is not up to standard. I would like you to have a second look at....and work on improving it. Please reach out to me if you need clarity on these improvements.
9. Last time we spoke about.... We agreed that you would improve...
I have noticed that you have not made an effort to follow through with these instructions. Do you need clarity on the necessity of these improvements?
10. It is important that you understand the potential results of.... I need you to improve.... immediately. Failure to do so could result in...
I am here to support you, so please feel free to ask for guidance in this area.
11. When you.... It made me very anxious/ upset/ concerned because....
For me, this meant that/ came across as/ gave the impression that....
12. I would like to offer you some critique on.... My concern is that this will turn into a bigger issue that has the potential to become a huge risk for our team/ company...

3.4) Checking understanding and keeping the relationship open:

1. Are there any points I mentioned that you would like me to clarify?
Do you agree with my critique?
2. Please confirm your understanding of the report/ requirements/
improvements.
3. Do you understand where I am coming from with this critique?
4. Would you like to highlight anything before we end our meeting?
5. How would you approach this differently in the future?
6. Before I continue, are there any aspects you feel you could
improve in this area?
7. Another helpful tip you could consider is...
8. I also struggled with.... when I started. Something that really
helped me improve is...
9. How do you suggest improving.... going forward?
10. Do you understand how.... Could have a very negative impact on
our team/ company/ relationship in the future? It is very important
to me that you improve...

That's it for this workshop!
Please feel free to contact me with any questions @
englishyerusha.pl@gmail.com 😊

