

Making suggestions

Level: B1+ (pre-intermediate+)

Aims:

1. To make, accept and reject suggestions
2. To discuss problems in the workplace and brainstorm the advantages and disadvantages of suggestions made by employees

Class time: 60 minutes

Preparation time: 5 minutes (photocopying)

Resources: one copy of the worksheets per participant (2 pages)

Procedure:

1. **Introduction:** Check learners understand the vocabulary in bold in the introduction task
2. Discuss the introduction questions 1-4 in pairs/groups then feedback to the class
3. **Useful language:** In pairs, look at the useful language in part two – discuss what the expressions mean and record each example in the corresponding section of the table. You may need to pre-teach the words **propose**, **unfortunately**, **I'm afraid** and **feasible**.

Making suggestions	Accepting suggestions	Rejecting suggestions
Why don't you/we. . . I think you/we should. . . I'd like to propose something... Maybe you/we should. . .	That's a good idea. That sounds great Good suggestion. That sounds like a good idea	Unfortunately that won't work That's not feasible I'm afraid Thanks for the idea, but... I'm not sure that's a good idea

4. **Practice:** Learners practise making suggestions and accepting or rejecting suggestions from others. First they think of two workplace problems to add to the list given. They then take turns, one person explains a problem and the other makes a suggestion. The first partner then accepts or rejects that suggestion, giving reasons.
5. **Speaking:** The Suggestion Box. Learners read through the list of suggestions which employees have put in the company suggestion box. Pre-teach any vocabulary which they won't already know. When they are finished, they discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each suggestion in pairs (or small groups). This is a fluency exercise so give the learners ten to 15 minutes for this – for quieter classes you could request they speak for one minute per suggestion. Once a pair has decided on the best two suggestions they then compare their ideas with other groups until the whole class has reached a consensus – they should continue to use the making/accepting/rejecting phrases!
6. **Role play:** learners role play a conversation between a manager and an employee. The employee makes a suggestion from the suggestion box and the manager accepts or rejects it, giving reasons. When they have finished, they should switch roles.
7. **Debrief :** discuss the questions together and identify areas where learners need further input and practice, as well as areas where they can now confidently use the language covered in this lesson. Follow this up with error correction and feedback on their general language use in this lesson.
8. Give feedback on the language they used, as appropriate.

Making suggestions

Introduction

Look at the sentences below - do you know the meaning of the words **in bold**?

Discuss the following questions with your partner or in a group

1. What **improvements** would you like to make in your organisation?
2. What improvements have been made to the products or **services** which your company offers?
3. How often do you **come up with suggestions** to improve how your company works?
4. What's the best way to **propose suggestions** within a company?

Useful language

Look at the following sentences and put them in the table below:

Good suggestion

I think you/we should. . .

I'd like to propose something...

I'm not sure that's a good idea

Maybe you/we should. . .

That sounds like a good idea

Thanks for the idea, but...

That sounds great

That's not feasible I'm afraid

That's a good idea

Unfortunately that won't work

Why don't you/we. . .

Making suggestions	Accepting suggestions	Rejecting suggestions

Practice:

Now look at the following workplace problems in pairs. Add two problems of your own. Then take turns explaining the problem, and making, accepting or rejecting suggestions

1. I have so much stress I can't sleep.
2. My boss has asked me to work overtime on Saturday, but I have plans.
3. I've lost the keys to the company car.
4. I have too much overtime and can't do any more extra hours – but I also have too much work on my desk!
5. Your problem:.....
6. Your problem:.....

Speaking:



You are responsible for emptying the suggestion box in your company and passing on the suggestions to the Human Resources department. When you emptied the box this morning there were ten suggestions. Discuss each and make notes on a) the advantages and b) the disadvantages of each.

- Everyone should stand in meetings, rather than sit.
- All internal documents should be uploaded onto computers and photocopiers should be removed from the building.
- Air fresheners should be placed in each office.
- People should take a 45-minute break everyday, in which time their computers are shut down so they cannot work.
- Companies should introduce uniforms across the organisation.
- Unlimited free tea and coffee should be made available to all staff.
- Company mobile phones should be available for private use too.
- Staff should attend training courses in their own time, not company time.
- Staff should be allowed to decorate their own office in any way they wish.
- Companies should pay the petrol for anyone driving over 30km to get to work.

When you are finished decide on which two suggestions are the most productive and should be introduced to your organisation. First decide in your pair/group, then decide as a whole class.

Role play

Work in pairs and take turns. One of you is the manager, one is a member of the manager's team.

The employee's role: make one of the suggestions which you discussed from the suggestions box, giving reasons why you think it's a good idea. Use the useful language for suggestions.
The manager's role: reject or accept the suggestion, using the useful language for suggestions. Make sure to give reasons for your reaction!

Debrief

With a new partner, discuss these questions:

1. How successful was your conversation? Why/why not?
2. Is there anything you could or should have said or done differently?
3. How do you think today's lesson will help you at work?
4. What part of today's lesson would you like to learn more about?