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# How to give and receive a good design critique

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## Why is critique so important?

As designers, we don't design in a vacuum. A good designer will need to learn to take the feedback from their peers, clients, and bosses to solve a particular design problem. Critiques will also help you broaden your communication skills as a designer, as there is always the opportunity to articulate *why* you did what you did or to better explain your idea to the reviewer if they don't see it as clearly as you do.

A good critique can involve both positive and negative feedback, which can be tricky to navigate. Here are some quick tips on how to give—and receive—good design feedback during a critique.

## How to give a good critique: The love sandwich

The best way to approach critiquing someone else's work is to sandwich the feedback with love. If you think of your critique as the sandwich, the bread would be what you "love" about the work and the middle—the fillings—would be what you didn't like as much.

First, tell your fellow designer what aspects you like about the piece, whatever they may be. Be descriptive. Instead of just saying "I like it" explain *why* you like it while using specific examples from the design whenever possible.

Next, move onto the constructive criticism. If you think certain aspects of a design aren't working, try to explain why or offer suggestions on how they can be improved. Asking the designer questions may help them to see problems in the execution of the design that they may not have seen on their own.

You may also want to limit your use of personal pronouns, like "you," to make sure your critique is about the design work and not about the designer. We all feel personally about our work, but during a critique it's best to separate the person from the piece. For example, say you have a critique about a line intersection. You may want to say, "The way this line intersects with that line," instead of "The way you intersected this line with that line." This will help reassure the designer that the criticism is about the work and not about them, as designers.

You don't have to agree or like the decisions of the designer but their work deserves honest feedback. Put yourself in their shoes. If they are brave enough to share their work and ask for feedback, then they deserve to get that, both the good and the bad.

Finally, don't forget to repeat or elaborate on what you liked about the piece so that the critique ends on a positive note. This way, the designer knows the piece may need some reworking, but also that there are aspects of the design that work as-is, too.

### How to receive critique well: A grain of salt

Hopefully, your fellow designer will follow the Love Sandwich guidelines and give you a great, honest critique. During a critique, it's important that when you hear the good and the bad feedback to take it with stride. Design isn't math. There are no right and wrong answers; only subjective opinions that may differ from one designer to another.

That being said, remember that a critique is about your work and making it the best it can be; it shouldn't be about you. If you disagree with specific feedback, explain your decisions thoughtfully but also listen to what's being said. Remember, those who are giving critiques generally do so because they want to help you grow as a designer, so try not to get defensive or take their criticisms personally.

And, if you don't agree with specific comments you receive during a critique, it's okay to ask for other opinions, too. [Baltimore is filled with great designers](#) who are willing to help and who love to give a good critique. There are also online resources like [Dribbble](#) or [Behance](#) that you can log into and share your work with others around the globe. Anyone, even a non-designer friend or coworker whom you trust to give honest and constructive feedback, can be a good resource. And, a good round of feedback is always better than no feedback at all

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