

Giving Advice

There are various grammar structures that can be used when giving advice in English. Here are some common ways to build sentences and examples to help you understand.

1. Modal Verbs

The primary modal verbs are **can, could, will, may, might, could, would, should, and must**

While many of these modals can be used to give advice the most common one is **should**. Here is an example:

- You should take a bus to go to school. It is cheaper than a taxi.

Other modals like can, could, might, could and must are also sometimes used to give advice. Here are some examples:

- You can pay the money back to the bank.
- You could tell your sister you're sorry.
- You might want to explain your actions.
- You mustn't wait any longer!

As you might be able to tell from these examples, when you use must it is quite direct and forceful. Should is less forceful but still direct. The other modal verbs sound like light suggestions.

2. Second Conditional (If I were you, ...)

Another way you can give advice is to use the phrase "If I were you, ...". This is actually a form of the second conditional and when you use it to give advice, you will use the word 'would' or 'would not' in the second clause of the sentence. Here is an example:

- If **I were** you, I **wouldn't** eat so much cake. It is bad for your health.

This can be a great choice for advice because it is less direct and sounds more empathetic than should. You can also omit the first part of the sentence if the context of the conversation makes it clear that you are giving advice.

- I wouldn't eat so much cake.

3. Suggest or Recommend + gerund

Many students make grammar mistakes when using the verbs suggest and recommend. You can use these verbs to give advice directly to another person by adding the gerund afterwards. (gerund = verb+ing) Here is an example:

- I **suggest going** together for our safety.
- I **recommend eating** a balanced diet.

4. Subjunctive

The subjunctive is another way that the verbs recommend and suggest are commonly used. It is a little more flexible than using recommend/suggest + gerund because you are able to add a pronoun to your sentence and give advice to anyone, not just the person you are talking to. Here is how you build the subjunctive:

1. pronoun of the person giving advice
2. suggest/recommend
3. the word that (optional)
4. pronoun of the person/people who will receive the advice
5. the bare infinitive of a verb

Here is an example:

- **I suggest we go** together for our safety.
1. 2. 4. 5.
- **He recommends that you eat** a balanced diet.
1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

Activity

For each problem, write a suitable piece of advice. Use a variety of the grammar structures above. When you are finished, compare your answers with a classmate and decide who was able to give better advice.

1. **Problem:** I want to quit smoking.

2. **Problem:** I won \$100,000 and I don't know what to buy first!

3. **Problem:** I want to lose 10kg.

4. **Problem:** I found a wallet on the street with \$200, an ID and two credit cards inside.

5. **Problem:** I have a terrible headache.

6. **Problem:** I just feel sad for no reason.

7. **Problem:** I want to get rich quick!

8. **Problem:** My room is a mess, and I hate cleaning.

9. **Problem:** I want to make a good impression on someone I like.

10. **Problem:** I have trouble remembering English vocabulary.
