

COMMUNICATION

Proposing solutions

LEVEL

Upper-Intermediate
(B2)

NUMBER

EN_B2_2123X

LANGUAGE

English

Learning outcomes

- I can identify and recall a range of structures to propose solutions to problems.
- I can describe why certain situations are difficult and give solutions accordingly.



Warm-up



Describe the problem in the photos.

What do you think caused them?



Categorise

Categorise the problems into different categories. Do some problems fit into more than one category?



1 You recently had a bad argument with your best friend

2 A new multinational corporation has moved to your city, causing rent to increase

3 The council is removing bike lanes in the city to make roads wider

4 Everyone in your office drinks coffee from disposable cups

5 The company you work for has a high staff turnover

6 Your flat is too small for you and your flatmates to work from home

environmental

socio-economic

professional

personal



Match the problems to their solutions

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4 Everyone in your office drinks coffee from disposable cups.

5 The company you work for has a high staff turnover.

6 Your flat is too small for you and your flatmates to work from home.

a You could research coworking spaces to rent.

b You could call them and explain how you feel.

c You could start a petition opposing gentrification.

d You could review employee benefits and ask employees to complete a survey.

e You could arrange sustainability training.

f You could write a letter to your local political representative.



Proposing and supporting solutions

Review the information below.

Subject + verb (+ that) is a simple structure to remember when proposing a solution.

You can use the verbs:
suggest, recommend, propose, and advise.

- *I **suggest** you take public transport to reduce traffic pollution.*
- *I **propose** that we reduce our coffee cup waste.*
- *We **recommend** that everyone bring their own reusable cup to the office.*
- *I **advise** that you write your name on your cup.*



Subject + *support* + noun phrase + *that* is also used when supporting a solution.

- *I **support** the idea that customers care about how green a company is.*
- *We **support** the community garden that is being planned.*
- *She **supports** the new initiative that is being proposed.*



Proposing solutions

1. **Read** the situations. Then **propose** a solution using ***suggest, propose, recommend or advise.***

1 I hardly get any sleep. My upstairs neighbour blasts his music at night! > *I suggest you ask him to turn down his music at night.*

2 Traffic in this city is terrible. It takes me over an hour to drive to work. >

3 My colleague won't speak to me. I don't know what I did to make her so upset. >

4 The streets of my neighbourhood are full of trash. It's disgusting! >

5 I don't feel well at all. I think I might have a fever. >

6 My deadline is tomorrow, and I still have so much to do. >

Proposing solutions using *is* + infinitive

1. **Read** the sentences.
2. Then **review** the information in the blue box.

- We can use a **noun phrase** before ***is* + infinitive** to propose a solution.
- We also use determiners like **a/an** and **the**, as well as **possessive pronouns**.
- Nouns to use include: ***idea, advice, suggestion, course of action, and solution.***





I keep waking up late! What should I do?

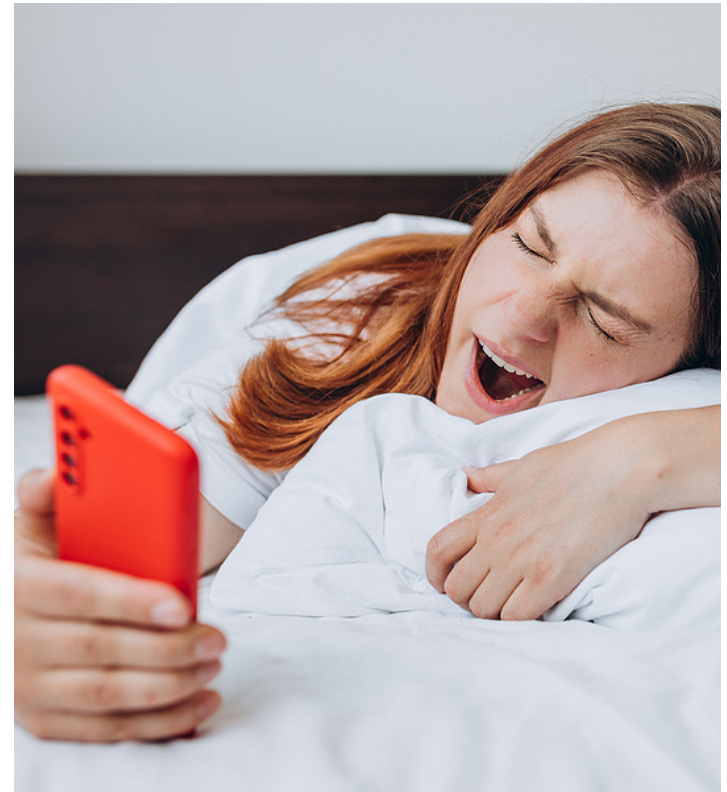
Complete the sentences below with your own ideas.

1 One possible solution is to...

2 My suggestion is to...

3 The best course of action is to...

4 Some advice to consider it to...





Discuss

In breakout rooms or together as a class, **propose solutions** to the problems below.

**My computer crashed
with all my important
documents on it!**



**I'm moving to another
country in three months
and don't speak the
language of this country.**

Using questions to offer solutions

1. **Read** the questions.
2. Then **review** the information in the blue box below.

Are you aware that career advice is available through the university?

Have you considered going to the doctor?

Have you tried avoiding caffeine after lunch?

- You can also suggest a solution by **asking a question**, especially if the problem is **sensitive** or **personal**.
- Questions in the **present perfect** offer solutions very well.
- Verbs like **consider**, **think**, and **try** are particularly useful.
- Adjectives like **aware** and **possible** are also effective.





Offer solutions

1. **Read** the personal problems below.
2. Ask **questions** to offer each person some solutions.



My husband and I work very different hours. We rarely see each other.

I'm hosting a dinner party on Saturday, but I'm having second thoughts.

I recently lost my job and I'm worried I won't be able to pay the bills.

I'm trying to eat less red meat, but I am finding it very difficult.



Do you suffer from
imposter syndrome at
work?

Imposter syndrome is when you don't believe you are qualified for your position, even though you are.

What solutions could you propose to someone experiencing **imposter syndrome**?



Proposing solutions

1. **Read** the problems below.
2. **Use** the phrases from the lesson to propose some solutions.



You don't have a good work-life balance.

You don't get along with a colleague you work closely with.

Your working style is drastically different than your manager's.

You've made a huge mistake at work that could delay an important project.

End of the lesson

Idiom

have seen better days

Meaning: to be worn out and in bad condition

Example: These shoes have seen better days. It's time to get a new pair.



Additional practice



Using questions to offer solutions

1. **Read** the situations. 2. Then **offer** solutions using questions.

1 I've been suffering from imposter syndrome lately.



Have you considered taking a step back and looking at everything you've accomplished?

2 I'd like to get closer to my brother, but we don't talk that often.



3 I'm having my wedding in a few weeks. I didn't invite my colleagues, and now I feel guilty about it.



4 The other day, my colleague called in sick. But on my lunch break, I saw him reading at a café.



5 I've been having a lot of trouble sleeping lately. There's just too much on my mind.



6 My foot hurts, and I have no idea why.





Fill in the gaps

Complete the sentences with the correct word.

- 1 The right course of _____ is to be kind.
- 2 The _____ idea is to change employment law so that it is fair.
- 3 _____ solution is to improve educational opportunities for everyone.
- 4 We propose _____ school meals should be free for children from low-income families.
- 5 One option _____ to raise taxes.

is
best
one
that
action



Proposing solutions

1. **Read** the situations. Then **propose** a solution using ***suggest, propose, recommend or advise.***

1 I don't like where I work.



I suggest you look for a new job.

2 My lower back is in so much pain. I can hardly walk!



3 My best friend wants to move in with me, but I'm not sure it's a good idea.



4 My boss always asks me to stay late.



5 A kitten followed me home. I don't think it has an owner.



6 I've been invited to two parties on the same day. I don't know which one to go to!





Discuss

Propose **solutions** to the problems below.

I locked myself out of my apartment and I don't have a spare key!



I just had a terrible argument with my best friend.



Answer key

P.4: *suggested answers*

environmental: 3 and 4

socio-economic: 2, 3

professional: 4, 5, 6

personal: 1, 6

P.5: 1.) b 2.) c 3.) f 4.) e 5.) d 6.) a

P.20: 1.) action 2.) best 3. one 4.) that 5.) is



Summary

Proposing solutions

- **Subject + verb + *that*** is a simple structure to remember when proposing a solution.
- You can use verbs like: ***suggest, recommend, propose, and advise,***
- ***I suggest that*** you buy some more.

Supporting solutions

- **Subject + *support* + noun phrase + *that*** is also used when supporting a solution.
- ***I support the idea that*** customers care about how green a company is.

Using questions to offer solutions

- You can also suggest a solution by asking a **question**, especially for **sensitive** or **personal** topics.
- Questions in the **present perfect** work well. Verbs like ***consider, think,*** and ***try*** are also particularly useful. Adjectives like ***aware*** and ***possible*** are equally as effective.
- ***Have you considered*** going to the doctor?

Proposing solutions using *is* + infinitive

- We can use a **noun phrase** before ***is* + infinitive** to propose a solution.
- We also use determiners like ***a/an*** and ***the***, and **possessive pronouns**.
- Nouns to use include: ***idea, advice, suggestion, course of action,*** and ***solution.***
- ***One idea is to*** raise the minimum age.



Vocabulary

petition

to exploit

cap

drastically

course of action

