critique guidelines

DESIGN ISN'T "COOL." Graphic design is a commercial industry; a piece must speak to a specific audience and it must achieve a defined set of goals. To say "I like it" or "It looks cool" means nothing in terms of a design's effectiveness or success. Practice critiquing with concrete words, suggestions, and especially by focusing on and talking about the design principles.

ask, then answer

Is it successful? Why or why not?
Is there intention in the design decisions?
Does it have a focal point?
Is it memorable?
Does it speak to the audience?
Does it feel it resolved?
Where does it struggle?
What is confusing?
Is anything out of place?
What needs attention?
What design principles are employed?
Are they employed well?
Is the design static or dynamic? How so?

principles

alignment
balance
contrast
focal point
hierarchy
movement
rhythm
scale
texture
unity
white space

elements

color
line
figure and ground
framing
grid
pattern
process
shape
spacing
typography

and remember

It's not about you.
Avoid meaningless words and phrases.
Be specific.
Focus on the design principles.
Ask why.
Offer suggestions.
Consider the target audience.
Consider the project goals.
Be engaged.