

# Code Review Language

Polite, clear English phrases for giving and receiving code review feedback.

<https://coderslingo.com/resources/cheatsheets/code-review-language/>

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## Giving feedback — blocking, nit, or suggestion

Label the weight of each comment so the author knows what must change versus what is optional.

- **Blocking: this will throw a null reference when the list is empty.**  
*"Blocking" = must be fixed before merge.*
- **nit: missing a trailing newline at the end of the file.**  
*"nit" (nitpick) = minor, non-blocking, optional.*
- **Suggestion (non-blocking): we could extract this into a helper.**  
*Make optionality explicit so it isn't mistaken for a requirement.*
- **Just a thought — feel free to ignore.**  
*The softest, clearly-optional framing.*
- **This needs to change before we merge.**  
*Direct but professional for a real problem.*
- **Question (not blocking): why did we go with a map here instead of a set?**  
*Curiosity, not a demand.*

## Softening criticism

Frame problems as shared and open, not as the author's personal failing.

- **Consider extracting this logic into its own function.**  
*"Consider..." invites rather than orders.*
- **What do you think about renaming this for clarity?**  
*Opens a discussion instead of dictating.*
- **Could we maybe handle the error case here?**  
*Tentative "could we maybe" lowers the temperature.*
- **I might be missing context, but should this be awaited?**  
*Assumes you may be wrong — invites correction.*
- **One small thing: this variable name is a little ambiguous.**  
*"One small thing" signals low severity.*
- **It would be great if we could add a test for this path.**  
*Frames as a wish, not a command.*

## Praising

Positive comments are part of a good review. They are quick to write and build trust.

- **Nice, this is much cleaner than before.**  
*Acknowledge improvements directly.*
- **Love this refactor — much easier to follow now.**  
*"Love this" is common, warm, and casual.*
- **Great catch on that edge case.**  
*Credit the author's good thinking.*
- **TIL — didn't know about this API. Nice.**  
*"TIL" = today I learned. Friendly admiration.*
- **This is a really elegant solution.**  
*Specific praise lands better than "looks good."*

## Asking questions

Use questions when you don't understand the intent or want to surface a hidden assumption.

- **Can you walk me through the reasoning here?**

*Asks for intent without judging.*

- **What happens if this request times out?**  
*Surfaces an unhandled scenario gently.*
- **Is there a reason we're not using the existing utility?**  
*Checks for context you may be missing.*
- **How does this behave under concurrent access?**  
*Probes a real risk as an open question.*
- **Should this be configurable, or is hardcoding fine for now?**  
*Offers two paths and asks for a decision.*

## Responding to feedback (as the author)

*Acknowledge, act, and reply concisely. Reviewers want to see comments resolved.*

- **Good catch — fixed in the latest commit.**  
*The classic acknowledgement of a valid point.*
- **Addressed in 3f2a9c1.**  
*Link or reference the commit that resolves it.*
- **Done.**  
*Perfectly fine reply on a small change.*
- **Good point, I'll open a follow-up ticket for that.**  
*Defer out-of-scope work without ignoring it.*
- **Thanks for the review — really helpful comments.**  
*A short thank-you keeps the relationship healthy.*
- **I went with X instead — let me know if that works for you.**  
*Explain a choice and invite final sign-off.*

## Disagreeing politely

*It is fine to push back. Acknowledge the point, give your reasoning, and stay open.*

- **I see your point, but I think the current approach is clearer here.**  
*Acknowledge first, then state your view.*
- **I'd push back on that slightly — it would add a dependency we don't need.**  
*"Push back" = respectfully disagree.*
- **Fair point. That said, I'd prefer to keep it simple for now.**  
*"Fair point. That said..." is a smooth pivot.*
- **I'm not sure I agree — can we talk it through on a call?**  
*Move a stuck disagreement to a quick sync.*
- **Let's defer to the team convention on this one.**  
*Resolve style debates by appealing to standards.*



