



Focus: Giving praise clearly and genuinely, avoiding vague compliments, using polite but strong expressions, and mastering praise-related grammar

Giving Praise & Positive Reinforcement



The English Hub

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Use natural English to give clear, professional praise
- Apply grammar structures that emphasise appreciation and effort
- Avoid empty or overused compliments
- Motivate others using polite, effective reinforcement

Introduction & Warm-Up

Positive reinforcement isn't just saying 'Good job.' It's about recognising the effort, giving feedback that helps, and showing appreciation with the right tone. Let's learn to praise like a professional.

Discuss:

- When was the last time someone praised you at work?
- What made it feel sincere or not sincere?

Vocabulary: Useful Praise Phrases

Review the following phrases with your tutor:

Expression	When to Use
“Great attention to detail.”	Accuracy-focused praise
“I really appreciate your initiative.”	Proactive work
“You handled that professionally.”	Conflict or difficult tasks
“You’ve made real progress.”	Growth & learning
“Thanks for stepping up.”	Leadership or unexpected help

Task: Match the praise phrases to the following scenarios:

- A colleague spotted small errors and formatting issues before the document was sent to a client.
- A team member started preparing presentation slides before anyone asked.
- A staff member stayed calm and resolved a tense call without escalation.
- Someone improved their skills and now works much faster than before.
- A co-worker took over a task when another person was unexpectedly absent.



Grammar: Present Perfect for Noticing Progress

Understanding the grammar rule:

Present Perfect is often used to praise achievements or improvement that started in the past and are still relevant.

Structure: Subject + have/has + past participle

Examples:

- “You’ve improved your presentation skills a lot.”
- “She’s handled the transition really well.”

Task: Turn the following workplace achievements into praise using present perfect:

Workplace Achievements:

- A colleague has increased sales by 20% this quarter.
- A teammate has solved several technical problems for the IT department.
- A project manager has improved communication between remote teams.



Activity – Sincere or Superficial?

Your tutor will read out the situation below, followed by two praise examples for the following:

Situation:

A junior colleague recently gave their first presentation to the team. They were a bit nervous, but they clearly prepared, spoke clearly, and answered audience questions confidently.

Praise examples:

A. “Nice work.”

B. “You explained the topic clearly and answered the questions really well.”

Task: Identify which praise is more sincere and why.

Then, rephrase a sincere version of a compliment they’ve heard at work.



Listening – Tone of Appreciation

Your tutor will read out the following praise lines with two tones:

1. Warm and expressive
2. Flat or rushed

Praises:

- “You really led that meeting well.”

Task: Identify which tone feels more encouraging and why.

Then, Practise creating and saying your own two praise phrases with clear, warm tone.



Grammar: Adverbs to Strengthen Praise

We often use adverbs like **really, absolutely, thoroughly, consistently** to make praise more meaningful.

Examples:

- “You’ve really helped move the project forward.”
- “She consistently meets her deadlines.”

Task: Add a strong adverb (really, absolutely, thoroughly, consistently) to make the following praises more meaningful:

1. You helped move the project forward.
2. She meets her deadlines.
3. They supported the team during the busy season.
4. He improved the report’s clarity.
5. You’ve handled the client relationship well.



Vocabulary: Praise vs. Feedback

Review the sentences below, and discuss the difference between praise and feedback:

Praise	Constructive Feedback
“Great energy during the session.”	“Great energy during the session, you could pause more for clarity.”
“Excellent research summary.”	“Excellent research summary, it might be even stronger with fewer data points.”

Task: Have a go at reading each sentence. Decide whether the sentence is **praise** or **constructive feedback**:

1. “Your presentation kept everyone engaged.”
2. “Good overview, you could include more examples next time.”
3. “Fantastic teamwork on the project.”

Task: Choose one praise sentence and turn it into constructive feedback by adding a suggestion.

Activity: 3-Part Praise Formula

Review the structure of this 3-part praise model with your tutor:

- **What they did**
- **Why it mattered**
- **Future encouragement**

Example:

- “You stayed late to finalise the client deck, that helped us present on time. Keep it up, it made a difference!”

Task: Create a 3-part praise statement for the following scenario:

Scenario: A teammate volunteered to cover a client presentation at the last minute because the original presenter was unwell. They managed to prepare quickly, delivered the slides confidently, and answered all client questions, which helped secure the next stage of the deal.



Grammar: Using “It’s impressive that...”

We often use the phrase “**It’s impressive that...**” to praise initiative, achievements, or consistency.

Examples:

- “It’s impressive that you delivered both reports early.”
- “It’s impressive that you’ve led the last three meetings.”

Task: Convert the simple praises below into sentences with “It’s impressive that...” form.

1. ‘You finished the project two days early’.
2. ‘You’ve organised all the files in one afternoon’.

Example:

Simple Praise: You learned the new software in just one week.

Converted: It’s impressive that you learned the new software in just one week

Reading – Workplace Recognition Example

Read the text below to your tutor:

“Hi Alex,
Just a quick note to say, great job coordinating yesterday’s client call. You stayed calm under pressure and helped clarify some tough points. That kind of support doesn’t go unnoticed!”

Task: From the text, Identify:

- The specific praise
- Why this matters
- Which tone is being used



Activity: “Praise Swap” (Rewording)

Your tutor will read out the scenario below, followed by two vague phrases:

Scenario:

Last week, your teammate helped finalise a client presentation. They stayed late to fix formatting issues, added missing data charts, and rehearsed the delivery with you. The client complimented how clear and professional the presentation looked.

Phrases:

“You did well.”

“Thanks for the help.”

Task: Rephrase each vague phrase into a detailed, specific piece of praise that clearly explains **what** the teammate did, **why** it mattered, and/or the **positive outcome**.



Grammar: “Keep up the...” + Positive Noun

The term ‘keep up the...’ is used as a polite, encouraging way to maintain effort.

Examples:

- “Keep up the great teamwork.”
- “Keep up the attention to detail.”

Task: Build an encouraging sentence using ‘**keep up the...**’ for the following scenarios:

Scenario 1

You’re reviewing a colleague’s work on a major client project. They’ve been consistently meeting deadlines and maintaining high-quality standards.

Scenario 2

Someone in your team has stayed upbeat and encouraging during a busy period.



Vocabulary: Alternatives to “Great Job!”

Review the following phrases with your tutor:

Basic Phrase	Stronger Alternative
“Good work.”	“That was a strong, well-organised report.”
“Nice job.”	“You really led that call with confidence.”
“Well done.”	“Your input helped shape the outcome.”

Task: Create your own upgraded praise versions by replacing the short, generic phrase below with something specific and professional:

Scenario: Someone stepped in to cover a task for an absent team member, ensuring a key deadline was met.

Basic Praise: “Well done.”

Task: Upgrade this into praise that shows appreciation for their initiative and reliability.

Listening – Emotional Impact of Praise

Your tutor will read out the following statements:

1. “You’ve really helped the team feel supported this week.”
2. “Your consistency brings stability to our projects.”

Discuss: How this type of praise builds morale.

Then, give 1 piece of **emotion-focused praise** that recognises not just the effort, but also how it positively affected the new team member or the team’s atmosphere:

Scenario:

A teammate has been spending extra time helping a new hire settle in. They’ve explained processes patiently, introduced them to the team, and made sure the new person feels included in meetings.



Grammar: “I noticed that...” for Observation-Based Praise

The phrase ‘I noticed that...’ is often used for subtle or less public praise.

Examples:

- “I noticed that you stayed back to help the intern.”
- “I noticed that your last report was especially detailed.”

Task: Build 2 example sentences using this grammar.

Example: ‘I noticed my colleague secured a deal with a tough client’

Activity: Praise in Different Contexts

Your tutor will read out 3 roles:

- Intern joining the team
- Peer who solved a tech issue
- Senior who mentored you

Task: Build one praise sentence for each person, adjusting formality and tone.

Pronunciation Practice: Tone & Emphasis in Praise

Practise reading the following phrases, with support from your tutor.

- “I *really* appreciate your help.”
- “You’ve done an *excellent* job.”
- “It’s been *impressive* to see your growth.”

Tip: Focus on stress and tone, to improve fluency.

