



I could advise you to use modals verbs when you want to offer advice.

Use Modal Verbs to Offer Advice

English has wonderful words we call modal verbs. They are great because they transmit clear information in a simple way. Today we will use them to give advice.

Recommendation

Would. A soft way to make recommendations is with the *if I were you* structure, as in “If I were you I wouldn’t ask for a pay increase” or “I would accept the new job if I were you”. It’s an excellent way to offer your opinion without sounding intrusive.

Polite suggestions

Could is also useful for weak suggestions: “You could try presenting the data in a graph” or “You could take the train instead of a taxi”. Respectful and easy to use.

Stronger advice

Should is one of the most common ways to recommend something. It's strong but so frequent that people will not generally feel offended. Your mother, for instance, could say "You should eat healthier food" or "You should get up early" and you would take it as advice rather than an imposition.

Other examples? "You should change jobs. The environment at your office is toxic" or "One should never discredit the boss in public".

Solid reason

Ought to transmits a strong need or a moral obligation, so apply it when there's an objective reason behind your advice, such as "You ought to help your family when they need you", "You ought to call Bill. He had an accident" or "We ought to leave now. We have to get up early tomorrow". It's not too common and could be offensive if you use it in the wrong context.

Almost compulsory

Had better implies a very strong recommendation which almost becomes an obligation. It's common in threats, such as "You had better finish the project on time if you want to keep your job", "He had better apologise or he will have to face the consequence" or "You'd better solve the problem before Gwen finds out". Use it in extreme circumstances and remember it can sound intimidating.

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