Quiz

1) What does the negative adjective 'bossy' mean?

a. likes giving orders  
b. enjoys working alone  
c. doesn't enjoy work

2) Which sentence is correct?

a. You could perhaps think about changing the format.  
b. You think could perhaps about changing the format.  
c. You could think perhaps changing the format.

3) Which of these sentences is a recommendation?

a. The image is amazing! Good work!  
b. It's just that I think it needs a stronger image.  
c. I really don't like that image.
Answers

1) a
2) a
3) b
Transcript

William
Hello and welcome to the programme. My name is William Kremer. Now, you may have heard another episode of How To in which we looked at how to make positive and negative comments about something. In that programme we heard clips from a conversation between Claire and her boss, Mark. Claire was showing Mark her design for a new website and he made some positive and negative comments about her work.
Well, now it's time for Mark to make some recommendations to Claire - some suggestions for changes. In this first clip, listen carefully to the way that Mark uses the word 'want'.

EXAMPLE

Mark
That leads the audience through, but it gives them the freedom. So you still want all of these links.

William
Mark says, You still want all of these links. Saying you want in this context is like saying you need. Listen to this example:

EXAMPLE
What you need is a nice clear structure in the design.

William
'What you want is this.' 'What you need is that.' Now let's listen to the way that Mark uses the word 'could':

EXAMPLE

Mark
So you could vary: the 'prepare' area could look in one particular way, the 'listen to the programme' could have another look, the 'take the challenge' -

William
Mark says that different parts of Claire's design could have a different look - a different style.

EXAMPLE
Mark
So you could vary: the prepare area could look in one particular way, the listen to the programme could have another look, the take the challenge.

William
As well as could, we can make recommendations using would. Perhaps you already know that one way to make a suggestion is to say, If I were you, I would do this, or, If I were you I'd do this. For example, in a restaurant, your friend might say to you:

**EXAMPLE**
That seems like a lot of money! If I were you, I'd check the bill.

William
Now listen to how Mark uses the word 'would':

**EXAMPLE**

Mark
So I mean, what I - what I would do with this is think about a structure, a navigational structure, that leads the audience -

William
Mark doesn't say, If I were you I would, but he says, What I would do is.

**EXAMPLE**

Mark
So I mean, what I - what I would do with this is think about a structure, a navigational structure, that leads the audience.

William
So, to make a recommendation, you can say, You could do this, or, What I would do is that. These are two ways to make a clear and definite suggestion. However, Mark doesn't know exactly what he thinks Claire should change: he just thinks she could think about things in a different way. That's why he says, What I would do is think about.

**EXAMPLE**
Mark
So I mean, what I - what I would do with this is think about a structure, a navigational structure, that leads the audience.

William
It's useful to be vague! And another way of saying think about that is look at that.

EXAMPLE

Mark
I also think, you know, you might want to look at, erm, some of the - the imagery and think about perhaps simplifying that.

William
You might want to look at some of the imagery, Mark says.

So far then, we've looked at several ways you can make recommendations, and two structures that you can use to be vague. Part of the reason that Mark is being a little vague is that it softens what he's saying. It makes him seem less bossy, because he is making a suggestion rather than telling Claire exactly what to change. Don't forget that Mark is Claire's boss, so he doesn't need to sound very bossy. Claire will take his suggestions very seriously.

Let's now look at some other ways to soften recommendations in order to appear less bossy and let's start off by listening to that last clip again.

EXAMPLE

Mark
I also think, you know, you might want to look at, erm, some of the - the imagery and think about perhaps simplifying that.

William
Mark softens what he says with the word perhaps. He also uses the very cautious phrase you might want to look at. Listen again:

EXAMPLE

Mark
I also think, you know, you might want to look at, erm, some of the - the imagery and think about perhaps simplifying that.
William
Mark could also have said:

EXAMPLE
You could possibly think about the imagery.

William
You could possibly think about. You might want to look at. Let's now look at one more word that you can use to soften your recommendations in order to make you seem less bossy. I'm not going to tell you what this word is but see if you can guess from the following clip:

EXAMPLE

Mark
Erm, just a way that engages the audience more, because everything's very, very similar.

Claire
Right: so a bit of signposting.

Mark
Yeah: just to lead people, the audiences, through the content. It's just about really helping them know.

Claire
Yeah.

William
Did you guess? The word is just. Mark is using just to explain the reasons for his suggestions.

Don't forget that there is more information about the language in today's programme and a downloadable quiz, on the How To webpage on bbclearingenglish.com. You might want to take a look.