

# Criticism & Taking Mental Space

Sometimes, criticism or negative feedback comes at any time - from teachers, classmates, or even friends. And in school, you can't always walk away or take a break right away.

This activity helps you decode criticism and learn how to take mental space even when you can't physically leave.

“Taking mental space” means creating a small pause in your mind - a chance to breathe, think, and decide how you want to respond instead of reacting on impulse.

# Criticism & Taking Mental Space

## 1. What Happened?

Think of a time someone gave you feedback or corrected you.

Who said it? What did they say? Where were you?

## 2. My First Thoughts

What were the first things that popped into your head?

 They think I'm...

 This makes me feel...

 I wanted to ...

### **3. Criticism Decoder**

Let's break it down. Was this...

Type of Criticism

Yes / No

Notes

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Helpful/  
Constructive?

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Unkind/  
Meant to upset?

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Said in a rude tone?

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Said to help me improve?

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### **4. Flip the Thought**

Let's turn the unhelpful thought into a helpful one.

Unhelpful Thought

Helpful Thought Flip

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They think I am stupid

They are trying to help  
me understand better

## **5. What I Can Do Next Time...**

- Take a deep breath & say “thanks I will think about it”
- Use positive self-talk
- E.g. “this moment will pass”
- “it’s okay to get thing wrong sometimes”
- “they are not trying to upset me”
  
- Practice script (“okay, I didn't see it that way”, “I’ll try and work on that,,” “Can I have a minute to think about it?”)
  
- Imagine a peaceful place
  
- 54321 grounding
  
- Breathing (you could ask to go to the toilet if feeling self conscious)