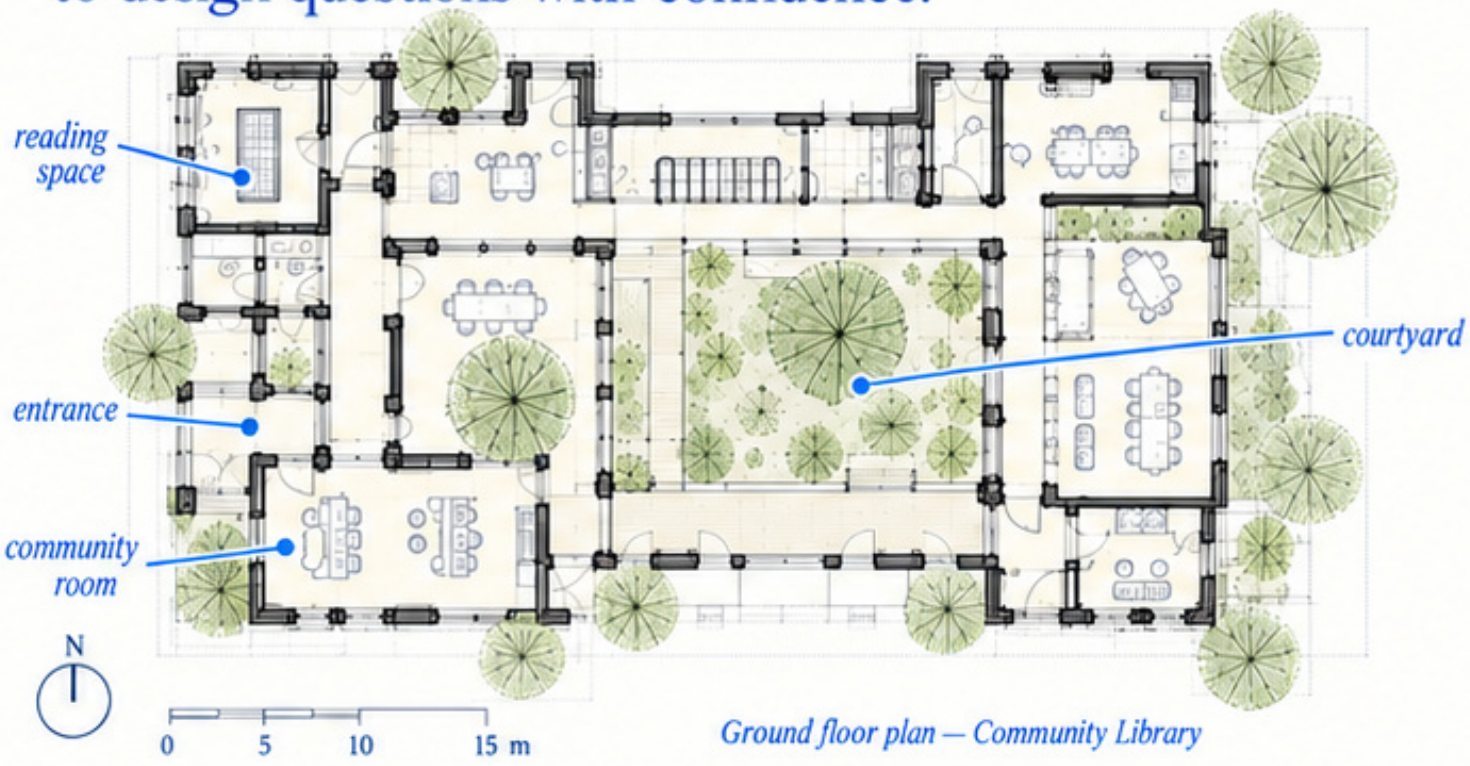
PDVS Language Tutorial Services

FREE GUIDE 04A
ARCHITECTURAL ENGLISH
LEARNING RESOURCES

How to Answer Critique Questions in English

Use calm, clear and professional language to respond to design questions with confidence.



Ground floor plan — Community Library

FROM DEFENSIVE TO PROFESSIONAL

BEFORE
"I just thought it looked better that way."

→

AFTER
"The courtyard is intentionally generous because it brings daylight into the centre of the plan and creates a calm shared focus for the reading spaces."

A SIMPLE RESPONSE FRAMEWORK

01 ACKNOWLEDGE
Show that you understand the question.

02 INTENTION
State what you were trying to achieve.

03 REASON
Explain why you made the decision.

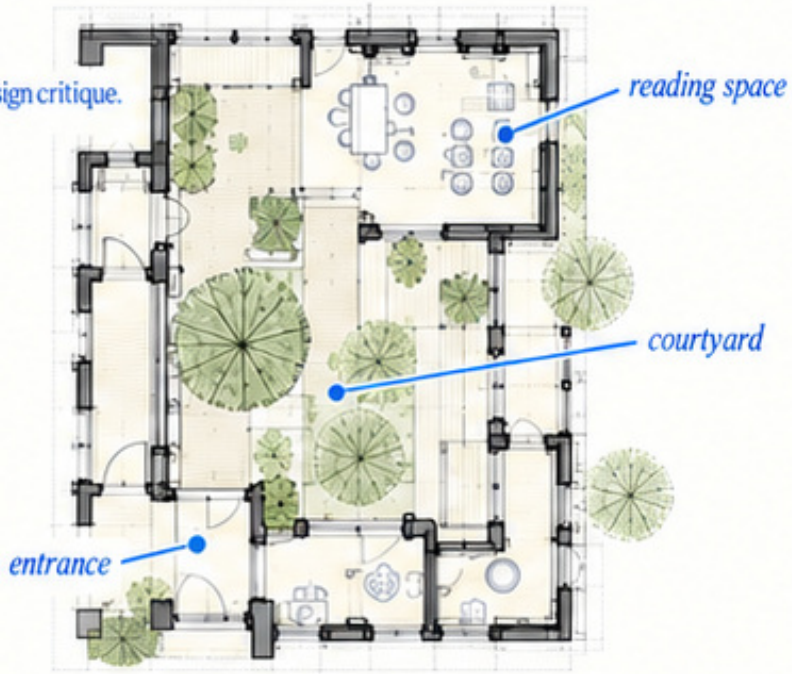
04 IMPACT
Describe the spatial or user benefit.

USEFUL TIP | Avoid sounding defensive. Explain the intention behind your design decisions clearly and specifically.

01 COMMON CRITIQUE QUESTIONS

These are typical questions you may be asked in a design critique.
Use them to prepare your responses.

1. Why did you choose this layout?
2. How does the courtyard improve the scheme?
3. Why is the entrance located here?
4. How does the plan support circulation?
5. Why did you place these spaces together?
6. What makes this proposal appropriate for the site?



Plan detail — Entrance and central courtyard

02 MODEL ANSWER

This example responds to several common critique questions.

> The layout is organised around a central courtyard so that daylight can reach the deeper parts of the plan. The entrance is positioned to create a clear sequence from arrival to shared study spaces. This arrangement improves circulation, strengthens the relationship between the community room and reading areas, and creates a calm, welcoming envirornment for users.

03 YOUR TURN

Use the prompts below to write a short response to a critique question.
Try to complete it in four sentences.

1. What design decision are you explaining? _____
2. What was your intention? _____
3. Why was this the best response? _____
4. What benefit does it create? _____

04 CHECKLIST

Does your response ...?

- ☐ answer the question directly
- ☐ explain the design intention
- ☐ give a clear reason
- ☐ mention the user or spatial benefit