

4 BUSINESS WRITING - part two

4.1 Letter of enquiry (revision)

Exercise 1 Match each section of the letter on the following page with the appropriate gap below

a

b

c

d

e

f

g

h

i

j

1. We are currently using 15 PB Platinum 7600 PCs in our personnel department.

We have been pleased with their performance, but now need machines that will

run faster.
2. Niels Bohr

IT Manager
3. I look forward to hearing from you.
4. Could you please let me know whether it is possible to upgrade these PCs and

what the likely costs would be?
5. Dear Mr Cole
6. Mr KC Cole

Sales Manager

Dun Computers

27 Oxford Road

Canterbury

RS4 OVA
7. Yours sincerely
8. 27 April 20xx
9. Woofer's Eden

Kongsvej 14

Copenhagen 8

DENMARK
10. Our ref: UPG/PB

Exercise 2 **You are Mr Cole. Reply to this letter.**

- §1: refer to Mr Bohr's letter and say that you are happy that the PCs have given satisfaction
- §2: explain that the PB Platinum 7600 cannot be upgraded because that particular model is no longer manufactured. Say that you are enclosing the latest catalogue and draw attention to the PB Platinum 8600 PC, which would be ideal for Mr Bohr's needs. Suggest that your representative will call soon to arrange time and date to come and give a demonstration of these latest models.
- §3: conclude your letter appropriately.

4.2 Letters of complaint and replies: structure

The purpose of a letter of complaint is to get a problem solved so avoid emotional language (e.g. *I am absolutely furious about...*). In any case, the person reading your letter is probably not the person responsible for the problem. When replying to letters of complaint, avoid blaming a member of staff by name. Instead use a **passive structure**. Compare the following examples:

Ms Fox, our accountant, sent the wrong invoice.

The wrong invoice was sent due to an error in our accounts department.



Exercise 3

Read this letter of complaint.

Libercomputer

Demerlaan 45, 3500 Hasselt

www.libercomputer.be

Mr D H Lawrence

3 April 20..

Random Office Equipment

Phoenix Crescent 13

London SW8 4HD

UNITED KINGDOM

Dear Mr Lawrence

I am complaining regarding the consignment of 56 Compaq PCs, Order no. 4102/AB which was delivered on 2 April.

It was clearly stated on the order form that these devices should be pre-loaded with Windows 10. Unfortunately, they have all been loaded with Windows 7, and we are therefore unable to run a number of programs. In addition, you agreed to supply all the necessary cables, but fifteen of these are missing.

Could you please send one of your representatives to load the devices with the correct version of Windows as soon as possible. Moreover, please send the 15 cables (part number SB-01/ZX) as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

Franz Dubus

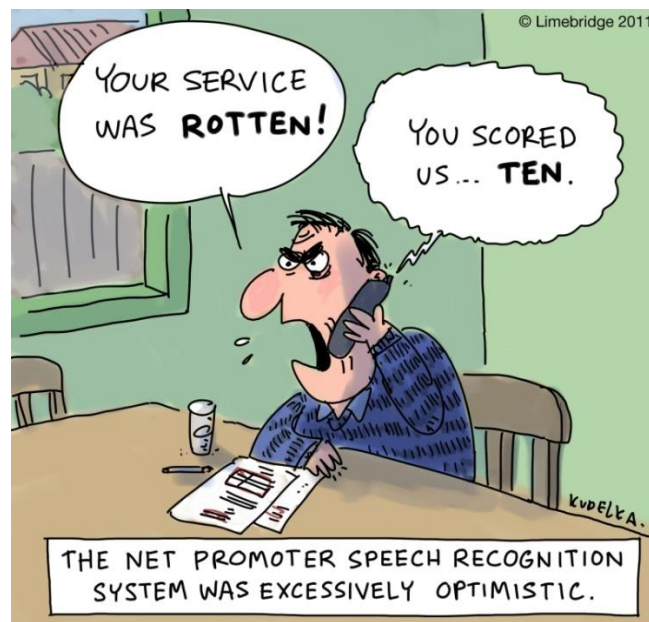
Operations manager

A letter of complaint should be structured as follows:

1. Begin with a clear reference.
2. State clearly what the nature of the complaint is.
3. Suggest a course of action that should be followed.
4. End the letter politely.

A reply to a letter of complaint should be structured as follows:

1. Begin with a reference to the letter.
2. If appropriate, apologize for the error and explain what happened.
3. Say what action you will take.
4. Apologize again and end the letter politely.



Exercise 4

Here is the reply to Mr Dubus's letter. Fill in the missing prepositions.

Random Office Equipment

Phoenix Crescent 13

London SW8 4HD

Telephone 071 996 6431

E-mail randoff@com.uk

Mr F Dubus

13 April 20--

Libercomputer

Demerlaan 45

3500 Hasselt (Belgium)

Dear Mr Dubus

Thank you _____ your letter _____ 3 April regarding problems _____ the PCs that were recently sent _____ you.

The difficulty appears to have arisen _____ a misunderstanding _____ our ordering department, and the matter has now been put right.

I have asked our regional Computer Consultant, Mr G Robinson, to call you _____ Friday 7 April _____ 11 a.m. to ensure that the PCs are correctly loaded and to supply the fifteen cables that were left _____ of the order.

I will telephone you to check that this meeting is convenient, and in the meantime, I would like to apologize _____ the inconvenience that has been caused.

Yours sincerely

DHLawrence

D H Lawrence

Customer Liaison Officer

Exercise 5

Rewrite these sentences using the passive WITHOUT CHANGING THE TENSE.

1. You have sent us the wrong items again.

The wrong _____.

1. You should have delivered this consignment last week.

This consignment _____.

2. Someone broke two of the monitors during transportation.

Two _____.

3. Someone sent the order by surface mail instead of air mail.

The order _____.

4. Please let me know when you think you can sort this matter out.

Please let me know when you think this matter
_____.

5. You should have sent the documentation on the iPad by registered post.

The documentation _____.

6. A faulty connection could have caused the problems with the modem.

The problems with the modem _____.

7. You omitted the manuals from the order. Why?

The manuals _____ . Why?

8. You delivered the laser printers over three weeks late.

The laser printers _____.

9. We will not pay the invoice until this problem is rectified.

The invoice _____.

Exercise 6

Match the beginnings and ends of these sentences.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. I am writing to complain about the late | a. collected from the factory. |
| 2. I am writing with reference | b. on the invoice. |
| 3. We are returning the goods to you because | c. a fault in the manufacturing
process. |
| 4. Please arrange for the goods to be | d. we are not satisfied with them. |
| 5. Please send us a refund for | e. delivery of items ordered last
week. |
| 6. Please accept my apologies | f. to order PCX-666/1. |
| 7. The problem arose due to | g. the full amount. |
| 8. We would like to apologize for the error | h. for the inconvenience. |

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Exercise 7

You are the *sales manager* for Intertec, a firm specialised in PCs. You have just received a letter from M. Banville, in which she complained of a wrong delivery. Fill in the missing expressions in the following letter of reply.

Intertec

Keiberg 214, 3590 Diepenbeek, Belgium

www.intertec.be

Marianne Banville

5 June 20--

COMMAKERS

16 Pine Avenue

Manchester KL3 1SR

UK

____ (1)

Thank you for your letter of 31 May in which you said that you had received a wrong delivery.

I have looked ____ (2) this and it appears that you ____ (3) from an out-of-date catalogue. Our last spring catalogue lists the Dell PCs you wanted under DL001. There is a summer catalogue on its way to you in case you have lost the one I originally sent you.

I have instructed our agent for the UK to replace the required PCs as soon as possible and pick up the other (*ones, PCs*) (4) at the same time. Rather than sending a credit note, I have cancelled ____ (5) No 7493 and ____ (6) another with this letter.

Please accept my ____ (7) for the inconvenience.

____ (8)

Signature

____ (9)

Sales Manager

____ (10)

4.3 Letters of complaint and replies: vocabulary

Exercise 1 Complete the sentences typical of letters of complaint with the pairs of words from the box.

1. I am writing in _____ with the negative _____ of a member of your staff.
2. I hope that you will deal with this _____ promptly as it is causing me considerable _____.
3. The equipment I ordered has still not been _____, despite my phone call to you last week to say that it is needed _____.
4. Although you advertise yourself as a top-quality brand, the product I _____ was well below the _____ I expected.
5. I am writing to draw your _____ to a _____ in your customer service section.
6. I would _____ it if the faulty goods could be _____ as soon as possible.
7. I wish to complain in the strongest possible _____ about the _____ I received from a member of your staff.
8. I believe that I am _____ to an immediate _____.
9. I am writing to express my strong _____ with the goods I _____ this morning.
10. _____ I receive the goods by the end of this week, I will have no choice but to _____ my order.
11. I am writing to _____ about the _____ of a product I purchased on-line from your website.

12. I insist on a full _____, otherwise I will be forced to take the matter _____.

appreciate/replaced attention/problem complain/quality connection/attitude
 delivered/urgently dissatisfaction/received entitled/replacement
 matter/inconvenience purchased/standard refund/further terms/treatment
 unless/cancel

Exercise 2 Match the beginnings (1-8) with the endings (a-h).

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. You only sent 5 mouses, instead | a) there were only 5 in the box. |
| 2. You only sent 5 mouses, in spite of | b) but there were only 4 in the box. |
| 3. Even though I paid for 6 mouses, | c) However, there were only 4 in the box. |
| 4. I paid for 5 mouses. | d) so I am refusing to pay your invoice. |
| 5. I paid for 5 mouses, | e) Therefore, I am refusing to pay your invoice |
| 6. Firstly, the quantity of mouses was incorrect. | f) of the 6 that I ordered. |
| 7. You have still not resolved the problem with the mouses. ... | g) the fact that I paid for 6. |
| 8. You have still not resolved the problem with the mouses, | h) In addition, two of them were damaged. |

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Exercise 3 Complete each phrase with *one* word. Some letters have been given to help you.

to write in co_____n with sth.

to need sth. *ur*_____ *y*

to take the matter *fu*_____ *r*

to demand a full *re*_____ *d*

to draw sb's *att*_____ *n* to sth.

to be below the expected *st*_____ *d*

to complain in the strongest possible *te*_____ *s*

to express strong *dis*_____ *ion* with sth.

to demand an immediate *repl*_____ *t*

to cause sb. considerable *inc*_____ *e*

Exercise 4 Linking words and phrases are used in complaints to explain your case clearly and carefully. Complete the table with the words/phrases from the box.

Above all	As a result	Even though	Finally	Firstly	Furthermore	However
In addition	In conclusion	In fact	In particular	In reality	In spite of the fact that	
	Nevertheless	Therefore	Taking everything into consideration			

Adding another point (like *and*): 1 _____/_____

Listing points: 2 _____/_____

Making a contrast (like *but*): 3 _____/_____

Making a contrast (like *although*): 4 _____/_____

Giving the consequence (like *so*): 5 _____/_____

Giving the most important example: 6 _____/_____

Saying what the real situation is: 7 _____/_____

Introducing the final paragraph: 8 _____/_____

Which *two* phrases are NOT followed immediately by a comma, and can come in the middle of a sentence as well as at the beginning?

_____/_____

Exercise 5

Underline the most appropriate words or phrases in the email.

I am writing to complain about the poor service we have received from your company. (1)

Firstly/Therefore, the goods you sent were not the ones that we ordered. Our order dated 16 July clearly stated that we wanted 1,000 t-shirts. (2)*In particular/However*, we only received 800.

(3)*Nevertheless/Furthermore*, we asked you to print our company logo in the top left corner of the shirts and you have printed it in the centre. To make matters worse, your staff were very unhelpful when I called. (4)*Even though/Above all*, no-one took responsibility to sort out the problem – I was simply passed from person to person. (5)*In fact/In addition*, after 30 minutes I gave up in frustration and ended the call.

The whole matter was treated by your staff as though it was completely unimportant, (6)*in spite of the fact that/therefore* we have been your customers for more than five years. (7)*In particular/As a result*, we are considering stopping all future business with your company.

(8)*Taking everything into consideration/In reality*, we must insist on an immediate replacement order, to reach here within 14 working days, at no cost to ourselves.

4.4 Complaints and apologies: useful expressions

4.4.1 Complaints (customer)

Open

I am writing...

... in connection with my order 2499 which arrived this morning.

... to complain about the quality of a product I bought from your website.

... to complain about the poor service we received from your company.

... to draw your attention to the negative attitude of some people in your customer services section.

Complaint

Our order dated 16 July clearly stated that we wanted 9 items, however you...

The goods were faulty/damaged/in poor condition.

There seems to be an error in the invoice/a misunderstanding.

The equipment I ordered has still not been delivered, despite my phone call to you last week to say that it is needed urgently.

The product I received was well below the standard I expected.

To make matters worse, when I called your company your staff ...

Request for action

Please replace the faulty goods as soon as possible.

We must insist on an immediate replacement/full refund.

Unless I receive the goods by the end of this week, I will have no choice but to cancel my order.

Close

I hope that you will deal with this matter promptly as it is causing me considerable inconvenience.

4.5 Apologising (supplier)

Open	I am writing in relation to your recent complaint.
Apologising	<p>I was very concerned to learn about ... Please accept my sincere apologies.</p> <p>I would like to apologise for the inconvenience you have suffered.</p>
Denying responsibility	We appreciate that this has caused you considerable inconvenience, but we cannot accept any responsibility in this matter.
Promising action	<p>Can you leave it with me? I'll look into the matter and get back to you tomorrow.</p> <p>I have looked into the matter and ...</p> <p>I have spoken to the staff involved, and ...</p> <p>We will send replacement items/give you a refund immediately.</p> <p>I can assure you that this will not happen again.</p> <p>We're having a temporary problem with ... We're doing everything we can to sort it out.</p>
Compensation	To compensate for the inconvenience, we would like to offer you ...

Close

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention. Please accept my assurance that it will not happen again.

Once again, I hope you will accept my apologies for the inconvenience caused.

I very much hope you will continue to use our services in the future.

If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact me on my direct line.



4.6 Letters containing quotations and orders

Such letters quote the price for the requested goods or services. They will usually also contain the following information:

1. details of discounts
2. details of what costs are included in the price, such as transport and insurance
3. the preferred method and terms of payment
4. an idea of how long it will take for the goods to reach the customer.

Exercise 1 Choose the best word from the options in brackets in the following letter.

Dear Mr Pladic

Thank you for your e-mail of 14 April, in which you request a quotation for 3 Epson GT-6500 flat-bed scanners.

We can offer a gross price of € 499.00 c.i.f. Frankfurt. This includes a (*batch, quantity, multiple*) discount of 9%.

Payment may be (*done, made, spent*) by irrevocable letter of credit or by banker's draft. On all (*starting, initial, prime*) orders we usually require payment (*on, by, of*) delivery, and for all subsequent orders we (*make, let, allow*) a 30-day credit period. Please let us know how you would like to arrange payment.

We have the items in stock and can (*persuade, assure, console*) you that your order will be dealt with promptly. Please allow five weeks for delivery.

We look forward to hearing from you again soon.

Yours sincerely

Jelle Olsen

Sales representative

Exercise 2

The following letter was written to accompany an order. There are ten mistakes (grammar, style, word order, vocabulary, spelling, etc.). Find and correct them.

Dear Mister Olsen

Thank you for your email of 16 april. Please find included our order no. 123456 for three EPSON GT-6500 scanners.

We'd like to confirm that paiment for this initial order will be made on delivery and that we would like to make use of the 30-day credit period for any subsequent orders.

We would appreciate if you could arrange for the scanners to be shipped ASAP.

I look forward to hear from you soon.

Yours faithfully,

Yoeri Pladic

Computer expert

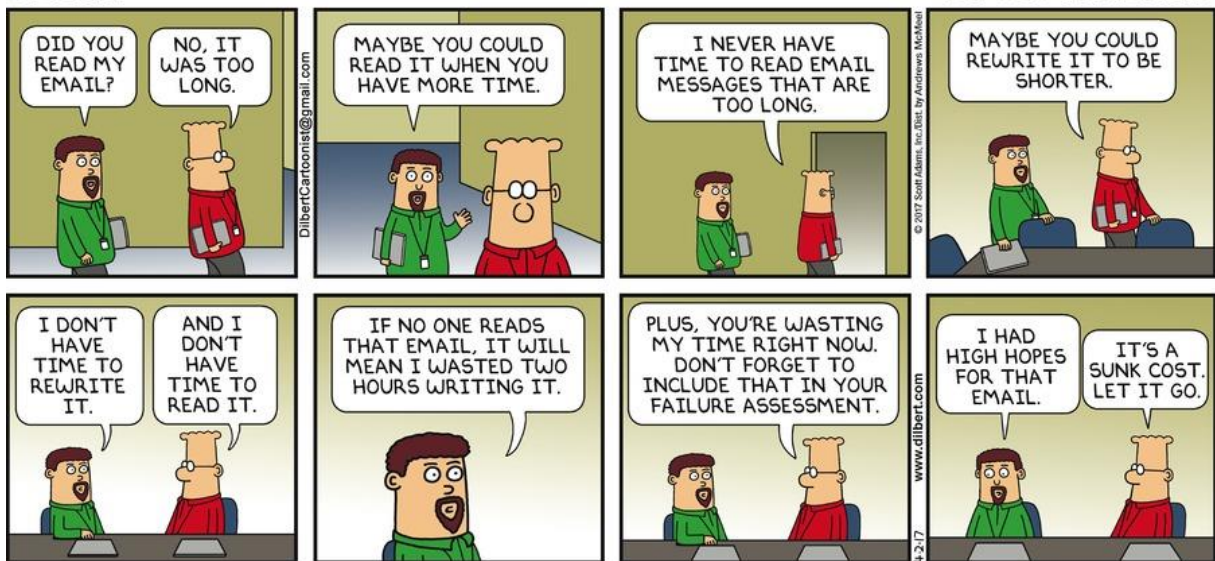
Enc. Order no. 123456

Exercise 3

Match the beginnings and ends of these sentences.

- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 1. Please find enclosed our current price | a credit card. |
| 2. Please fill in the order | b with you for 250 units. |
| 3. The prices quoted are subject to | c we can expect delivery. |
| 4. Payment can be made by | d discounts you can offer. |
| 5. We offer free overnight delivery on | e with our recent models. |
| 6. We would like to place an order | f place further orders with you. |
| 7. Please could you let us know what trade | g list and order form. |
| 8. If the product sells well, we will | h form on page 27. |
| 9. Please find enclosed a brochure | i orders of over €100.00. |
| 10. Please let us know when | j VAT at 21%. |

DILBERT



4.7 Business English

4.7.1 Documentation

Exercise 1 Use the words in italics to fill in the empty gaps.

invoice freight down payment quotation overseas shipping supplier
terms of delivery purchase forward deliver retail destination

1. After receiving their enquiry, we sent them a _____.
2. We have just received an _____ for the goods we bought.
3. Another word for 'buy' is _____.
4. Please inform us when the cargo arrives at its _____.
5. Our agents will _____ the goods to you when they arrive.
6. I've just heard that _____ charges are going up.
7. That firm is our sole _____ of these components.
8. They have added \$50 for _____ and handling.
9. When will you be able to _____ the goods to us?
10. The _____ price is 30% higher than the wholesale price.
11. Doing business on the phone with companies _____ is very costly.
12. Before we can accept your order, we require a _____ of 5% of the total price.

13. When fixing a price for an export order, the . _____ are very important.

4.7.2 Prepositions

Exercise 2 Fill the gaps in these sentences with a suitable word + preposition.

call on capable of collaborate with comment on compensate ... for comply with consist
of convince ... of co-operate with cope with credit ... with cut back on

1. I'll be _____ you when I'm next in town.
2. If you suffer any loss, we will _____ you _____ that.
3. He was unable to _____ the extra work and became ill.
4. I'm afraid I can't _____ another department's work.
5. As you appear to have been overcharged, we will _____ your account
_____ the sum of €5,000.
6. It is important to _____ any special Customs regulations.
7. All members of a team must _____ each other.
8. We've been _____ our partners in the USA for several years.
9. Due to falling sales, the company has _____ its R & D programme.
10. They're _____ doing a much better job than that.
11. The cargo _____ four one-ton crates.

12. She couldn't _____ them _____ the need to redesign the product.

4.7.3 Financial terms

Exercise 3 Fill in the missing words; use the list below.

bankruptcy charge inflation invoices turnover debit assets debts dividend overdue

1. Banks _____ your account when you use a bank card abroad.
2. Few companies pay their shareholders a regular _____.
3. _____ can result if you have no more income to pay all your debts.
4. Our customers get reminders on _____ payments.
5. People with large incomes or _____ can always get credit from a bank.
6. Banks _____ very high rates of interest on credit loans.
7. Suppliers expect their _____ to be paid promptly.
8. Although we have paid our bills regularly, we still have some outstanding _____.
9. Our profits were very small despite a large _____.
10. The increase in _____ will not change our price policy.

4.7.4 Suffixes

Some suffixes: -al, -ary, -atic, -ly, -ish, -able.

Exercise 4 Look through these sentences and fill the gap with a word built using one of the suffixes which completes the meaning.

1. The opening of the banking complex will be an important _____
(*commerce*) development for the region.
2. The new model was up-to-date and visually very _____ (*style*).
3. If you want cheap and _____ (*afford*) products you can buy them at the discount supermarket.
4. The managing director prefers to leave _____ (*finance*) affairs to the accountant.
5. The accounts department supplies us with a _____ (*quarter*) list of all payments.
6. Every company in our country is expected to contribute towards _____
(*vocation*) training.
7. The new clerk was given some _____ (*caution*) advice about dealing with customers who do not pay immediately.
8. Extra payments at Christmas are an _____ (*option*) feature of salaries in our country.
9. Before we can decide where to buy our materials we require as much
_____ (*statistics*) information as we can get on the suppliers.