

Customer service

COMMUNICATION

LEVEL
Upper-intermediate

NUMBER
EN_BE_3701X

LANGUAGE
English

lingoda






Goals

- Can understand typical words and phrases used in a customer service department
- Can use new vocabulary and understanding to clearly and politely deal with a complaint from a customer or client





The **customer service department** is often on the front line of a company, and deals with both **loyal** and **happy customers**, and **customer complaints**.



Good service

Where do you think you get good customer service? What about bad customer service? Are there any countries renowned for either good or bad service?





Making complaints



Have you ever made a complaint to a customer service department? Were you happy with your treatment and the outcome of the complaint?



What is customer service?

Customer service means taking care of a **customer's needs** before, during and after a transaction. **Communication** is key for a customer service professional.



How may I help you, Sir?

Active listening

As communication is key, this should begin with **listening** to the customer. **Active listening** means **fully listening** to another person, rather than just passively hearing them.



I completely understand.



Non-verbal signs of active listening

Active listening means showing the speaker that you are listening to them. During **face-to-face** interactions, this means making use of **non-verbal signals**.

Non verbal active listening

Keep an appropriate amount of eye contact with the speaker.

Smile and nod to show that you agree, or simply that you understand.

Lean slightly towards the speaker, but not so much as to intimidate them.

Don't be distracted by anything around you.





Verbal signs of active listening

As well as non-verbal signals, it is important you **signal aloud** that you are following the customer. Of course, this is especially important when on the **telephone**.

Use small verbal comments to encourage the speaker	"yes", "umm", "right", "I see", etc.
Paraphrase what has been said	"It sounds like you are saying..."
Ask for clarification	"When you say..., do you mean...?"
Remember names/details	"I understand, Mr. James,"



More tips for active listening

Below are some more **general tips for active listening** which you can use both in person and via telephone.

Tip	Why?
Don't prepare your answer	If you are thinking about your answer in advance, you are not listening properly.
Don't interrupt	It annoys the speaker. Wait until they have finished a point before asking for clarification.
Don't answer immediately	Use your time wisely to summarise the speaker's point, and then formulate a measured response.



Customer service

Look at the quotations below. Can you add anything to the definition of customer service in the first one, and do you agree with the second one?

“

Customer service is about taking care of the customers' needs from start to finish.

”

“

One good or bad experience with a customer service professional can change a customer's perception of the entire company.

”



Active listening

Do you think you listen actively in normal life? Do you ever find it hard to concentrate on what someone's saying?





Practise active listening

Listen to your teacher describing a problem with something they bought. Practise your active listening techniques, including paraphrasing and asking for clarification. Don't worry about responding to the complaint.





Dealing with complaints

Over the next few pages, you are going to look at one of the main aspects of working in customer service: **dealing with customer complaints**.



I have to **make a complaint**.



Customer complaints

Here are some **tips** for dealing with **customer complaints**.

Listen carefully - use your active listening skills

Find out more information – ask questions in a caring manner

Apologise without blaming either your company or a person in your company

Ask the customer what a suitable solution would be for them

Deal with the complaint quickly – take responsibility or refer it upwards. Don't give the customer the run around





Dealing with complaints

Here are some **phrases** that you can use when dealing with a **customer complaint**. Which ones would you use during a **telephone** conversation, and which might you use via **email**?

Listening	Apologising	Taking action
I completely understand what you're saying.	I sincerely apologise for that.	I will act on this for you right away.
Thank you for bringing this to our attention.	We are sorry for any inconvenience that we may have caused.	I'm going to talk to my manager and see what we can do.
I can appreciate that.	Please accept our apologies.	For the quickest resolution, I would like to...



Dealing with complaints

Here are some more phrases that you can use, divided into phrases for the **telephone**, and phrases for **email**.

Telephone	Email
Thank you for calling about this matter.	Thank you for your email drawing our attention to...
We will call you again today at 4pm.	You will receive an email from my manager before the end of the day.
I truly understand your concern.	I acknowledge your concern.
Thank you for your patience.	We will take the following action to address your complaint.



Listen and respond

**Listen again to
your teacher
complaining
about their hair
straighteners.
Respond
appropriately.**



you



customer



Read through this email from a customer

To: customerservice@freshgoodfood.com

Subject: Complaint about customer treatment

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to complain about the treatment that I received in one of your stores on Camden Hill last Tuesday.

Having queued to pay for my purchases for over 15 minutes, the checkout in front of me was closed and I was told to join another queue. I expressed my annoyance at the situation and the man working on the checkout simply said it was time for his break. While I understand that everyone needs a break, I think that the changeover could have been handled more effectively.

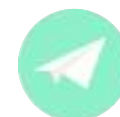
I would like to request some sort of compensation for my trouble last Tuesday – I have been very much put off shopping in your store.

I thank you in advance for your attention,
Yours faithfully,
A. Lal



Plan your response

Use this page to plan your response to the customer. Note down useful phrases and what compensation might be offered.





Write your email

- □ ×

To: alal@mail.com

Subject:

...

Write your email response here.

Welcoming clients to the office

If you are in an office environment, it is important to make a good impression on clients from the beginning. A **warm smile**, showing them **where to wait**, getting them something to **drink**, and having **newspapers or magazines** for them to read will go a long way.



Good afternoon, Ms. Jones. Would you like to take a seat?



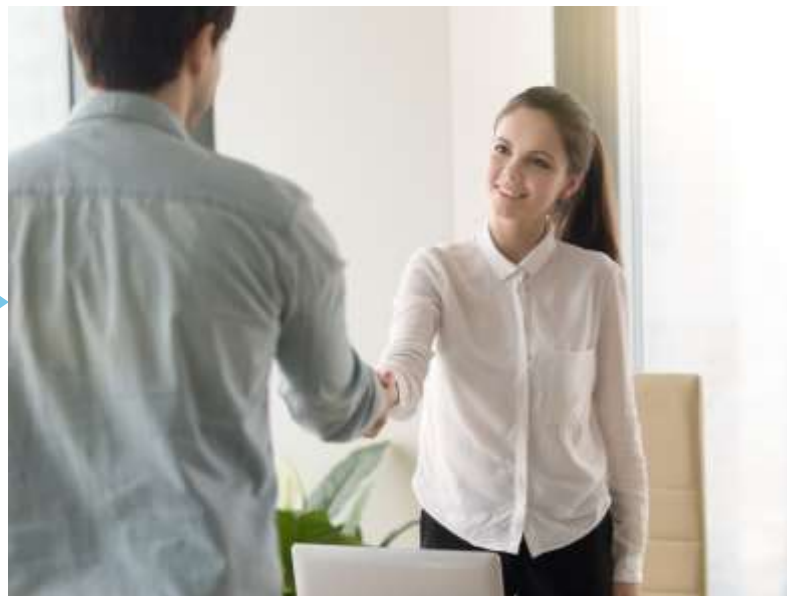
What would you like to drink?



Welcoming clients in the office

Make sure to get the name of the client, and to ask who they are there to see if necessary.

- Good morning, how can I help?
- What name was it please?
- Who are you here to see?
- Do you have an appointment?



Welcoming clients in a store

If you are in a store, it is also important to make a good impression on clients from the moment they walk in. You should focus on a friendly smile, a thank you for coming, and an unintrusive offer of help.



Good morning. Thank you for coming in.



If I can be of any assistance, please let me know.



Maintaining existing clients

Even if a person has used your services or bought your products once, there is no guarantee they will want to do it repeatedly. Below are several ideas on how you can **keep existing clients happy**.

Idea	Why?
A loyalty programme	Offer discounts to repeat clients
Newsletters	Take a client's email address and email them newsletters detailing your latest offers
Warranties	Make sure the customer knows that you will take responsibility for the product for a longer time
Satisfaction surveys	Ask your clients what they like, don't like, and what you can improve



Write a dialogue

Write a short dialogue between a customer service professional and a customer who has just walked into a clothing store.



Welcome!

Good morning!



...

...





Role play

Role play a dialogue in which you work in the reception of an office and you are welcoming a guest.





Customer loyalty



What do you think is the most effective way to ensure customer loyalty? Why?



Reflect on the lesson

Take a moment to review any new **vocabulary, phrases, language structures** or **grammar points** you have come across for the first time in this lesson.

Review them with your teacher one more time to make sure you don't forget!

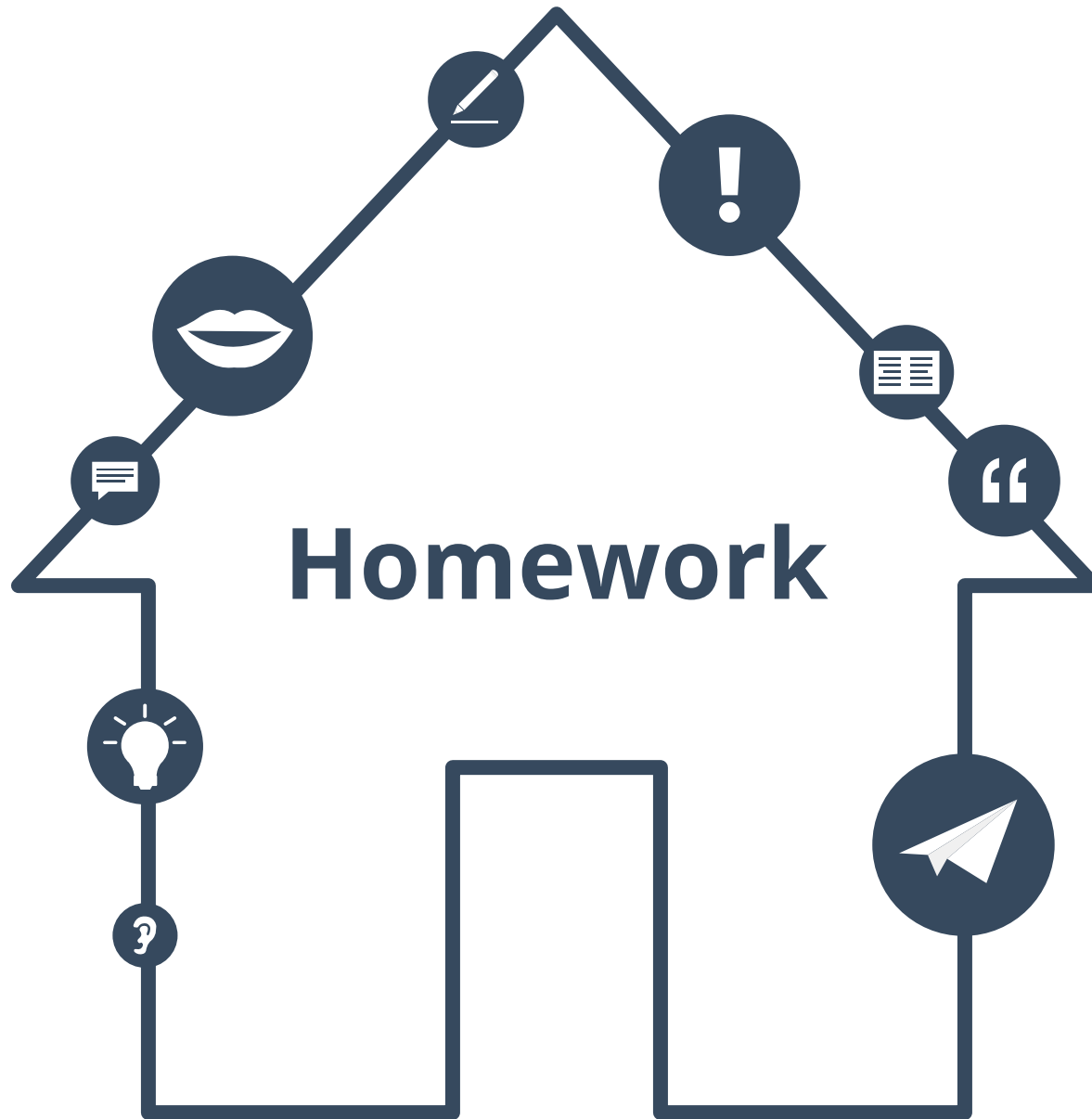




Transcription

Exercise p. 13 and 18

I'd like to talk to you about these hair straighteners I bought last week. I'm really disappointed in them – I think they're broken already. I hardly used them, and now look at them. They won't even switch on. I mean, I did leave them plugged in for rather a long time, but after just two uses that shouldn't make a difference, right?





Complaint email

Read through this email and prepare to reply.

<div>-</div> <div>□</div> <div>×</div>
To: late@airlines.com
Subject: complaint re. delayed flight
<p>Dear Sir/Madam,</p> <p>I am writing to complain about a delayed flight with Late Airlines.</p> <p>My flight was delayed for six hours in London and I missed my connecting flight to Athens. I had to buy another flight with my own money.</p> <p>I would like compensation for that flight.</p> <p>Yours faithfully, Mr. Opel</p>



Write an email

Reply to the email on the previous page.

-□×

To:

Subject:



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