

LEVEL
Intermediate

NUMBER
EN BE 3212W

LANGUAGE
English





Goals

- Can identify and recall the characteristics of a letter of complaint and produce my own example of one.
- Can explain the distinguishing features of a letter of complaint, a reminder and an objection.







Preview and warm-up

- Unfortunately, it's likely that you will sometimes have to write a **letter of complaint**.



When was the last time you wrote **a letter of complaint**?



Writing a letter of complaint

- For a letter of complaint to be effective it needs to be **clear** and **easy to understand**.
- Remember the person you are writing to needs to know **exactly why** you are complaining, **what happened**, and ideally, **what you want to be done about it**.

- **Why are you complaining?** Set out clearly in the introduction of your letter the reason why you are complaining.
- **What happened?** Give details about exactly what happened. Include dates, times, and even staff names if appropriate.
- **What should happen next?** Once you have outlined your complaint, explain what you would like to be done to resolve the situation. Would you like your money back? An apology? Compensation?



The tone of your letter

- Often when we write a **letter of complaint** we are very angry.
- It's perfectly acceptable to write your letter of complaint using an angry tone, however **don't be rude!**

- You can write your letter using an angry tone and still **be polite**.
- Use **formal language** and tell the person you are writing to how angry or disappointed you are.
- This is a better way to write a letter of complaint than calling people names.





Different letters

- Don't get a **letter of complaint** confused with a **letter of objection**, or a **reminder letter**.

- A **letter of objection** is often written when you **do not agree** with or **want to stop** something from happening in the future.
- A **reminder letter** is sent to **remind someone** to do something important that they have not yet done.





Vocabulary review

infrastructure

coexistence

resolve

integration

solution

refund

disappointed

compensation



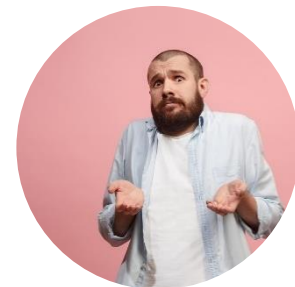


Vocabulary review



The transport **infrastructure** in the town has greatly improved in recent years.

I am so sorry for the inconvenience.
How can we **resolve** this situation?



A key component of **integration** in a new country is being able to speak the language.

The cat and the dog live in perfect **coexistence** in the same house.





Vocabulary review



We have not found a **solution** yet but we're working on it!

I am really **disappointed** in you. We were counting on you to give that presentation.



If your flight is very delayed you might be entitled to **compensation**.

If you are not **satisfied** with the computer, we will offer you a full refund within 30 days of purchase.





Complaint terms

Look at the terms related to complaints on the cards below.
Can you explain each term to your teacher?
Try to include each word in a sentence.

I asked for a
refund but the
manager declined.
This was a huge
disappointment.

refund

compensation

disappointment

resolve

solution

inconvenience

satisfactory



Complaint texts

Look at the situations on the cards below.
Can you compose a sample introductory paragraph for a letter of complaint in each situation?

A television that was broken on delivery!



A flight that was over 10 hours late and no hotel or food was provided during this time!

A supplier who delivered the wrong order, and 2 weeks late!



A mobile phone company who is still billing you, three months after you cancelled the contract!



Vocabulary review slide

regular

misunderstood

promote

compromise

overall



gradually

complain

sell-out



Sentences slide



We offer a **regular** service between Barcelona and London.

The train company is offering special ticket prices to **promote** the new service.



It wasn't the cheapest restaurant but **overall** I found it was good value for the money.

I am writing to **complain** about the poor service we received from your company.





Sentences slides



It was a real success, a **sell-out** show!

Gradually you will find your understanding of the language gets better.



I think we need to **compromise** and find a solution that we are both happy with.

Maybe I **misunderstood** you, I thought you said you were coming on Tuesday not Wednesday?





Writing a letter of complaint



When was the last time you had to write a letter of complaint?
What kind of things do you normally have to complain about?

I recently **complained** about the food served during a flight. I wanted a **refund**, but we came to a **compromise** and I was offered a voucher for my next flight.



Be polite

Sometimes when we write a letter of complaint we can get a little carried away. Look at the very angry expressions on the cards below. What could you replace them with when writing a letter of complaint?



I hate your company!

I am going to call the Prime Minister to report you!

I expect you to come to my door personally and apologise.

My lawyer is on her way over right now!

I am going to take out a front page advert telling people never to use your company again!

You are a terrible firm.

I want all the members of staff to be fired.

This is the worst thing that has ever happened to me.

I hate you!



How to resolve a complaint

**Look at the complaints on the cards below.
What kind of response might be appropriate to ask for in order to
resolve the complaint?**

late delivery of
an item that was
faulty

travel delays or
flight cancellation

a bill that was
charged to your
account that was
too high

very bad
customer service



Complaining

Do you complain often?
Why or why not?
What is the culture of
complaining like in your home
country?





E-mail example of letter of complaint about a late delivery

To: Happy birthday cakes

Subject: Complaint about late delivery of a birthday cake

Dear Happy Birthday Cakes,

I am writing to complain about the terrible service I received from your company.

I ordered a birthday cake from you for my 10-year-old son for his birthday party, last Saturday, 7th June. I ordered the cake 3 weeks before his birthday, well within the one week limit for orders as stated on your website. I received an email confirming my order, and confirming delivery the day before his birthday.

Sadly, the day before his birthday, the cake had not arrived. I phoned your company 20 times but no one answered the phone. On the day of his birthday the cake still had not arrived and he was very disappointed. I tried to phone your company again, and have tried every day since then and have still had no response. Finally the cake arrived today, two weeks late!

This is completely unacceptable, I would like a full refund and appropriate compensation.



E-mail example of letter of complaint about company order

To: Shiny computer

Subject: Wrong order

Dear Shiny Computers,

I am writing to complain about our recent order with your company. We ordered three new computers from your company for our office and these arrived last Friday, 6th March. However, we ordered three desktop computers and instead we have received three laptop computers!

Despite numerous attempts to get in touch with your sales representative, Gary Stewart, we have not had any response from your company. We are extremely angry and very disappointed in the service we have received from your company and cannot believe we are still waiting for a response from you.

We expect this situation to be rectified as soon as possible, if not we will be forced to complain to a higher authority.

We expect a response from you within the next 48 hours.



Comparisons

Can you identify any differences
between the two e-mails?
Now, read the last email.
Which approach do you prefer?





E-mail example of letter of complaint about cancelled flight

To:/ Fast Wings

Subject:/ Cancelled flight

Dear Fast Wings,

I am writing to complain about our recent experience with your company. We were due to fly from New York to Las Vegas on Tuesday 17th November at 10am. When we arrived at the airport at 7am we were told our flight had been cancelled. We were given no explanation for the cancellation. We had planned a one week holiday in Las Vegas and had no idea what to do. Your staff could not offer us any help nor explanation and instead simply recommended we book a new flight with a different airline as they explained that the next flight with your company wasn't until 3 days later!

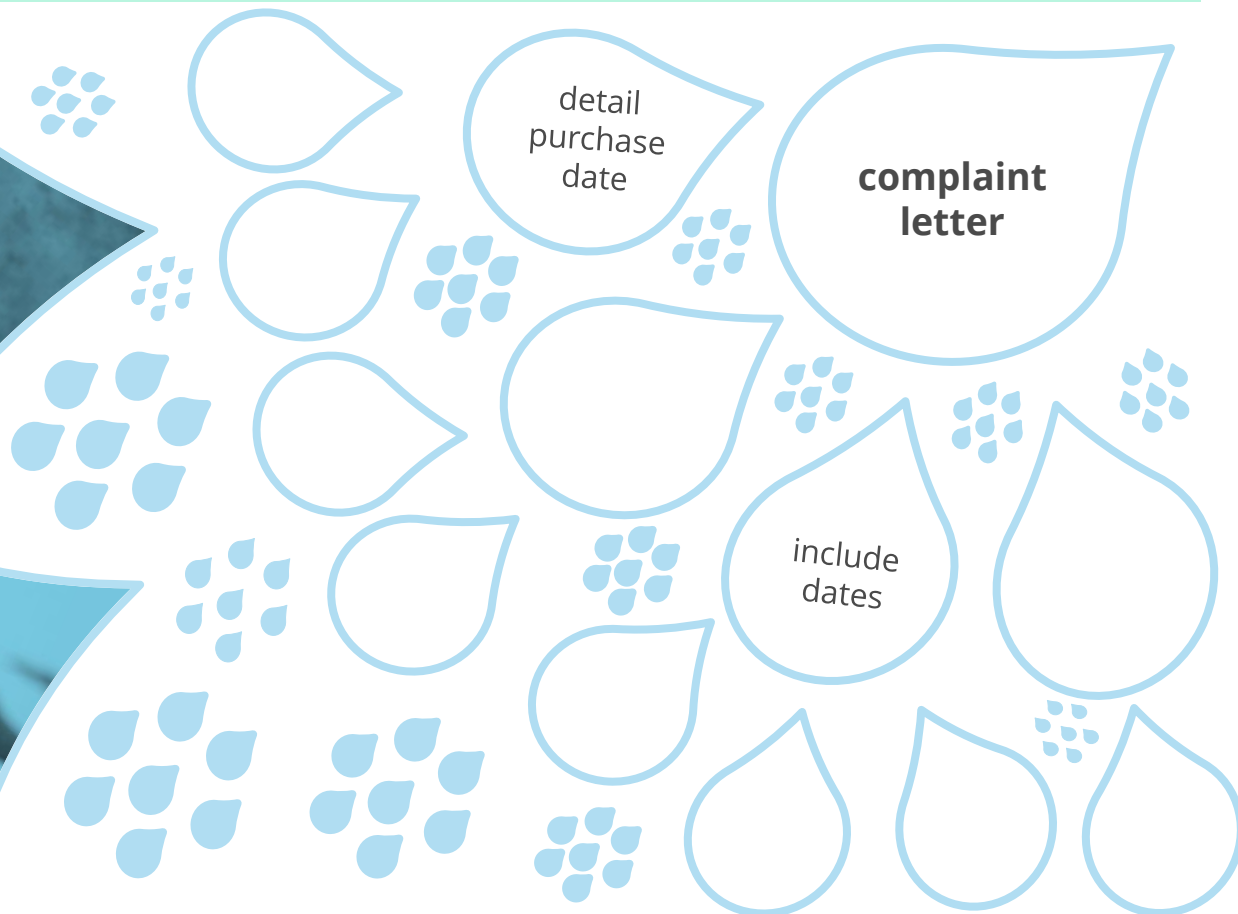
I cannot believe an airline company that offers such terrible service is still able to exist in today's competitive climate. Unless I receive a full explanation and adequate compensation for this behaviour, I will be reporting this experience to the local authorities.

I expect a response from your company within one week.



Brainstorm

You are going to write your own letter of complaint.
First, you need to decide who you want to write to.
Brainstorm the contents of your letter.





E-mail writing activity

Now it's your turn to put into practice what you have learnt in this lesson. Write a letter of complaint of at least 250 words on a subject of your choice. Before you start, brainstorm with your teacher to confirm you have remembered all the important tips from this lesson.

The diagram shows a window for composing an email. At the top is a title bar with three buttons: a minus sign, a square, and a red 'X'. Below the title bar are two input fields. The first is labeled 'To:' and the second is labeled 'Subject:'. Below these fields is a large rectangular area for writing the email body, containing several horizontal lines for text entry.



Reflect on the goals

Go back to the second slide of the lesson and check if you have achieved all the goals of the lesson.

yes

no





Reflect on this lesson

Think about everything you have seen in this lesson.
What were the most difficult activities or words? The easiest?



If you have time, go over
the most difficult slides again





This image shows a single sheet of white paper designed for writing. On the left side, there is a vertical blue margin line. To the left of this margin line are ten circular punch holes, evenly spaced vertically. The main body of the page contains ten horizontal blue lines, which are parallel to each other and extend across most of the width of the paper, leaving a small gap between the margin line and the first line, and another gap after the last line.



Introduction

Stay polite!

What happened?

Give details!

How do you
feel?

What do you
want to happen
next?

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About this material

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