



MAKING COMPLAINTS

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MAKING COMPLAINTS – COMPLAINING POLITELY

B1 Lower Intermediate | Practical English for everyday adult life

1. What Do You Think?

Work with a partner. Talk about these questions. Give reasons and examples when you can.

- Have you ever complained about a product or service? What happened?
- What things do people often complain about?
- Is it better to complain immediately or wait until you are calm? Why?
- What makes a complaint polite?
- What makes a complaint rude?

2. Complaint Vocabulary

Match each word on the left with its correct meaning on the right. Write the correct letter (a–h) in the blank next to each number.

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1. _____ complaint | a. something that is not working correctly |
| 2. _____ refund | b. an answer to a problem |
| 3. _____ receipt | c. money you get back after returning something |
| 4. _____ faulty | d. help provided to customers before or after a purchase |
| 5. _____ replace | e. a problem with a product or service |
| 6. _____ customer service | f. unhappy because something was not as good as expected |
| 7. _____ disappointed | g. a document showing what you bought and paid for |
| 8. _____ solution | h. to give someone a different product because there is a problem |

3. Polite or Too Direct?

Read each sentence. Write **P** for polite or **D** for too direct. Then change the direct sentences to make them more polite.

- | | |
|---|-------|
| 1. This is terrible. Fix it. | _____ |
| 2. I'm afraid there's a problem with my order. | _____ |
| 3. Give me my money back. | _____ |
| 4. Would you mind checking this for me? | _____ |
| 5. Your staff made a mistake. | _____ |
| 6. I'm afraid there seems to be a mistake on my bill. | _____ |
| 7. I want to speak to the manager. | _____ |
| 8. Could I speak to the manager, please? | _____ |

4. REAL ENGLISH BOX

Natural Complaint Language	
Choose two expressions from the box. Write a short complaint using each one.	
1. _____	
2. _____	
Instead of...	Try...
This is wrong.	I'm afraid there's a problem with this.
You gave me the wrong order.	I think there may have been a mistake with my order.
Fix this.	Could you check this for me, please?
I want my money back.	I'd like to ask for a refund, please.

5. Quick Practice

Choose one situation. Say your complaint to a partner. Your partner listens and suggests a polite solution.

- Your hotel room is dirty.
- You ordered a vegetarian meal, but received meat.
- Your new headphones do not work.
- Your bill is higher than you expected.

6. Your Complaint Checklist

Before you finish, check your language.

- I explained the problem clearly.
- I stayed polite.
- I used a polite expression.
- I asked for a solution.
- I listened to the other person.

Useful phrase to remember: "I'm afraid there's a problem with..."

Teacher's Key

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Key

- e** — complaint (a problem with a product or service)
- c** — refund (money you get back after returning something)
- g** — receipt (a document showing what you bought and paid for)
- a** — faulty (something that is not working correctly)
- h** — replace (to give someone a different product because there is a problem)
- d** — customer service (help provided to customers before or after a purchase)
- f** — disappointed (unhappy because something was not as good as expected)
- b** — solution (an answer to a problem)