

Handling Complaints

INTERACTIVE GUIDEBOOK



EXCLUSIVE

✓ **EXTRA!** QR codes for every e-slides

✓ **EXTRA!** QR codes for every e-videos

✓ **EXTRA!** QR codes for every e-games

✓ **EXTRA!** QR codes for every e-answer key

**NIK INTAN BAIZURA BINTI RAMSA
SITI NURFIRDAUS MOHD NASIR**

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Siti Nurfirdaus binti Mohd Nasir

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Preface

This interactive guide e-book is specially designed for intermediate students, instructors and hospitality workers as the supplementary sources of reference, case study and enrichment activities for learning and training purposes. The authors have started this initiative as an alternative from using physical book. The use of interactive guide e-book is more feasible nowadays as individuals prefer to browse notes through their smartphones rather than using physical book. Accessibility of interactive guide e-book through smartphone has made it on-the-go as the user can browse even while waiting for bus or taxi.

The inputs given are carefully designed to help them to understand deeper and able to apply the skills in daily use. The activities are carefully arranged and presented in attractive graphics. The user just need to scan the QR code for slides, videos, games as well as answer key for selected activities.

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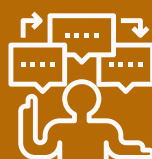
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INTRODUCTION TO COMPLAINTS





Complaints are never a happy occasion. It can be made orally or in written form to show that one is annoyed or dissatisfaction about something.

Complaints may be for many reasons such as:

- wrong goods service
- poor service
- unsatisfactory quality of goods
- late delivery
- damaged goods
- prices not as agreed upon
- condition of the room



SCAN ME



MODE OF COMPLAINT

ORAL

Phone call



Information counter



WRITTEN

E-mail



Complaint form



RULES FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS

1

Listen carefully and respectfully

2

Do not interrupt



3

Wait until the person has finished completely

SCAN ME



4

Apologise for the problem/issue

5

Speak normally in calm and peaceful tone



6

Summarise or repeat the complaint

SCAN ME



7

Explain what action will be taken, and how quickly

8

If the person is angry, remove the scene to somewhere private



Activity 1 - Look at the pictures. What might the people be complaining about?



L.A.S.T METHOD



L - Listen



A - Apologise



S - Solve



T - Thank you



SCAN ME



L.E.A.R.N MODEL



L - Listen



E - Emphathetic



A - Apologise



R - Response



N - Notify



SCAN ME





5 Tips for getting a customer to back off without being rude

1. Do consider the big picture
2. Do acknowledge feelings
3. Do ask the 4W's
 - who?
 - what?
 - where?
 - when?
4. Do apologize for foul-ups
5. Do be respectful



SCAN ME



6 WAYS TO HANDLE ANGRY CUSTOMERS



1

Apologizing



2

Showing attention to
what guest is saying



3

Explaining or promise
the action to be taken



4

Getting someone else to
do something



5

Sorting out by
yourself



6

Moving the scene
to any place
private





Activity 2 - List down situations that you normally need to lodge complaints.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____



ADDRESSING COMPLAINTS PROFESSIONALLY

01

Admit Your Mistakes

Apologize to the respective person, show empathy, and take responsibility for the complaint.

02

Validate Their Feelings

Acknowledge that the situation was unpleasant and make it clear that their negative experience is important to you.

03

Be Genuine

People can tell when apologies are insincere. Make sure your tone of voice reflects your remorse and empathy for the situation.

04

Provide Solutions & Options

Offer solutions that are within your control, and ask the person which option they prefer.

05

Follow up after resolving

Ensure their satisfaction after resolving the complaint by checking back with them to ensure their needs were met and measure their satisfaction.

LANGUAGE OF COMPLAINING



There are a number of formulae used when complaining in English. It is important to remember that a **direct complaint** for criticism in English **can sound rude or aggressive**. It is best to mention a problem in a **direct manner**. Here are some of the common:

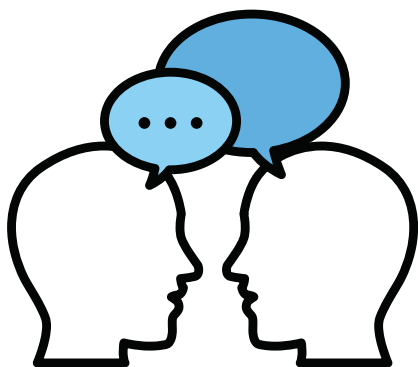


- I'm sorry to have to say this but...
- I'm sorry to bother you, but...
- Maybe you forgot to...
- I think you might have forgotten to...
- Excuse me if I'm out of line, but...
- They may have been a misunderstanding about...
- Don't get me wrong, but I think we should...



SCAN ME





Some expressions

Expressing shocked disagreement

That's unfair!
That's unreasonable!

Making what you say more forceful

I really think that's unfair.

Signaling that you are disagree

Well, I don't think you should charge us for this!

A negative structure

It's simply not fair to charge us for this!

An important request

Can I speak to the manager?

Saying what you want someone to do

I think you should call your manager now.



Activity 3 - Choose the BEST answer.

1. That's _____.
a) ridiculous!
b) rediculous!
2. It's unreasonable _____ us extra for checking in early?
a) to charge
b) to charge for
3. It's _____ to make me pay extra!
a) just not fair
b) just not unfair
4. Well I think that's _____ unfair!
a) absolutely
b) a bit
5. _____ into my room now!
a) Well, I would like you to let me
b) Well, I would like to let you



Phrases For Making Complaints

Below are list of the phrases expressions we will use for making complaints.

- *I'm sorry to say this, but...*
- *I'd like to make a complaint about...*
- *Excuse me, but I'm really not happy with...*
- *Excuse me, but there seems to be a problem...*
- *There appears to be something wrong with...*
- *I was really upset when...*
- *I was expecting (something) but...*

And then some quite firm statements.

- *That's just not acceptable.*
- *It's a disgrace.*

QUICK TIPS

If we're not sure about something or we want to be a little less forceful, then we can soften our language a little bit by saying

There appears...

So when we say there appears we're not saying that actually is.

There appears to be something wrong with...

You want to tone down your complaint. So there appears to be something wrong with this is just a **gentle way of asking or making a complaint.**



Let's read together!



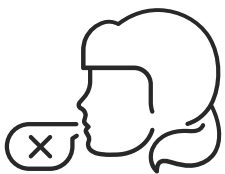
I'm sorry to say this, but the soup is cold, I really can't eat it. Could you take it to the kitchen, perhaps reheat it?



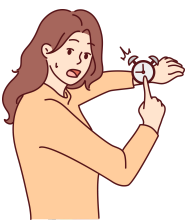
I'd like to make a complaint about the clothes that I bought here last week, here's my receipt.



Excuse me, but I'd like to make a complaint. I'm really not happy with this delay.



Excuse me, but I'm really not happy with your response. I bought this yesterday.



Excuse me, but there's a problem with the elevator. I've been waiting here for 10 minutes.

QUICK TIPS

Now, if we want **to be really firm** about something, we can **add words** like



very



really

If you're making a complaint, you can add them also, for example,

*I was **really** upset when I took this garment home. When I took it out of the bag, there was a big mark on it, and I couldn't wear it.*

*I was **really** upset, seriously I was **very** upset.*

Just use those words, to add a bit of emphasis if you want to make your complaint a little bit stronger, and a little bit more firm.

TYPES OF EXPRESSION USED FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINT



1

Apologizing



- I'm sorry...
- I'm really sorry.
- I'm sorry to hear that
- Oh, I'm sorry about that.
- I'm very / terribly / extremely sorry
- I apologise.../My apologies...
- I'm really must apologize
- I do apologize
- I apologise for the inconvenience..
- Please accept my/our (sincere /sincerest) apologies for...

2

Showing attention to what guest is saying



- Yes
- I see
- Noted Sir/Madam
- I'm very sorry to hear that
- I will see what I can do
- I will sort it out immediately
- I will do everything I can do to sort this out

3

Explaining or promise the action to be taken



- I'll have it (it sent up to you immediately)
- I'll get it (it attended to you right away)
- I'll make sure (it's brought to you now)

4

Requesting something



- I was rather hoping...
- Do you think you could...?
- Wouldn't it be good idea if/to...
- I'd rather get/have
- Something needs to be done about this...

5

Asking for specifics



- Please tell me exactly what the problem is/what happened?

6

Calming someone down



- I'm sure that we can sort it out
- I'm glad that you have brought this to our attention

7

Taking action



- I suggest you leave it with us and we'll see what can we do.
- Let me check and see what happened.
- Let me straighten this out and I will get back to you.
- I will send someone to take care of it.

8

Making promises



- You may be assured that this won't happen again.
- In the future, we will...

Let's take a look at a simple conversation of making and dealing with complaints at the restaurant. Pay attention to the phrases in bold.



I'll take a salad and a steak please...and he will take a fish soup and a chicken curry.



Yes madam. Your food will be served in 10 minutes

◀..... **it's taking a very long time**▶



Excuse me, we have been here for half an hour already. Could you tell us when will it be ready?



Sorry madam. We didn't expect so many customers today. I'll talk to the cook.

◀..... **it's the wrong order**▶



Excuse me... I think there has been a mistake. This is not what I ordered.



Oh! I am terribly sorry. I'll bring you your food immediately.

◀..... **the cutlery is not clean**▶



Excuse me...Could I have another spoon? This one is not clean.



Of course! I'm so sorry... Here you are.

◀..... **the food doesn't taste right**▶



Excuse me... My salad is too salty and her soup is cold... / The meat is undercooked; The meat is overcooked / The sauce is too spicy.



Sorry... I apologise on behalf of the kitchen. I will talk to the chef and have this replaced immediately.

◀..... **the wrong bill**▶



Excuse me... There must have been a mistake. This is not our bill / There is something in our bill that we didn't order.



Oh again I apologise...! I will fetch you the correct one in a minute.

◀..... **the service was terrible**▶

I do apologise for all the troubles you have had. This doesn't happen normally. We are phenomenally busy today. We would like to offer you 50% off on your total bill for tonight.



Wonderful! Thank you.



LISTENING PRACTICE

1

TYPICAL COMPLAINTS

1

PREPARATION

Look at the following typical complaints. Match them to the possible excuses/reasons on the right:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. damaged goods | a. a delay at the border |
| 2. goods never arrived | b. a lost invoice |
| 3. a late delivery | c. a missing order |
| 4. an overcharge | d. an accounting error |
| 5. an over due payment | e. bad handling |
| 6. lack of customer service | f. business is short-staffed |

2

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Based on the activity above, listen to the 4 dialogues in the audio below, which complaint / excuse did you hear in each dialogue? What action was decided on in each dialogue?

SCAN ME

Scan to listen
to the audio

	Complaint / Excuse	Action
Dialogue 1		
Dialogue 2		
Dialogue 3		
Dialogue 4		

3

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING: GAP FILL TYPING

Listen again and complete the expressions from the dialogues:

1. I'm a _____ we h _____ a p _____ w _____ your latest delivery.
2. I'm very s _____ about that. I'm afraid our driver was d _____ at the border again.
3. Leave it w _____ me. I will l _____ i _____ the matter.
4. I'm c _____ b _____ we h _____ a p _____ with our order.
5. What s _____ to be the problem?
6. In what w _____ are they d _____?
7. I'm very sorry. This has never h _____ before. It must be d _____ to bad handling.
8. If you s _____ us back the d _____ sets, we'll send your immediately and g _____ you a d _____ on your next order.
9. I a _____ again for any i _____ caused.
10. I'm c _____ about a m _____ on our invoice. It l _____ like you have o _____ us by \$50.
11. I'm s _____ about this. Our accounts department m _____ h _____ made a small mistake when they processed your order.
12. We'll i _____ a c _____ invoice immediately.
13. I'm very sorry, madam. We are r _____ s _____-s _____ at the moment.
14. Please w _____ here and I'll f _____ s _____ to help you.

4

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING: GROUPING

Put the expressions above into the correct categories below.

Making a complaint	
Apologizing and explaining	
Getting more information	
Promising action	

SCAN ME



Scan to check answers



LISTENING PRACTICE

2

RESTAURANT COMPLAINTS

- 1 CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING**
Watch the video and complete the sentences with the missing words.



SCAN ME



Waiter: Are you ready to _____?

John: Yes. To start a _____ and mozzarella salad. Is that right, darling?

Lisa: Yes.

John: And mushroom _____ for me.

Waiter: And for your main course?

Lisa: I'll have the fried _____.

Waiter: With French fries or baked potatoes?

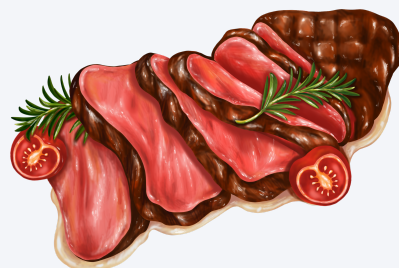
Lisa: _____ potatoes, please.

Waiter: And for you, sir?

John: I'd like the _____ with French fries.

Waiter: How would you like your steak? Rare, medium, well done?

John: _____, please.



Waiter: And to drink?

John: Could you bring us the _____ list?

(A few minutes later)

Waiter: Chicken for you, madam and steak for you, sir.

Lisa: I'm sorry but I've asked for baked _____ not fries.

Waiter: No problem... I'll change it.

John: _____ me.

Waiter: Yes, sir.

John: I asked for my steak rare but this is well done.

Waiter: I'm very sorry. I'll send it back to the _____.

(later)

John: Could I have the check, please?

Waiter: Yes, sir. Here is the _____.

John: Thanks. Excuse me, I think there's a mistake in the check. We only had two glasses of wine, not a _____.

Waiter: Yes, you're right. I'm very _____. It's not my day today. I'll get you a new check.

John: Thank you.



ACCEPTING AND REJECTING COMPLAINTS



complaint

GO



Institute a Formal Complaints Process



1

Define Your Process

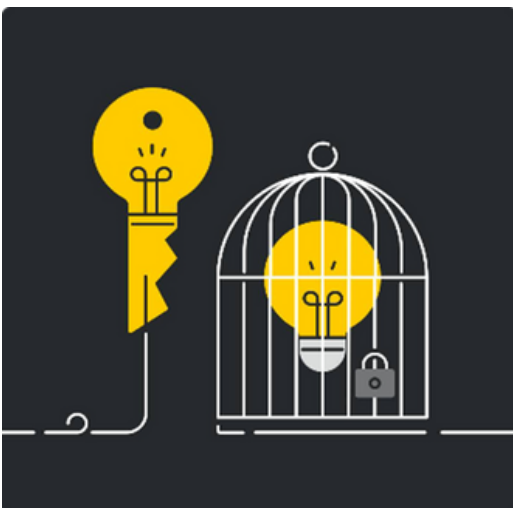
Create a clear process for accepting and rejecting complaints, including timeframes.



2

Actively Listen to Complaints

Show empathy, acknowledge their frustration, and ask questions to fully understand their concerns.



3

Provide Solutions

Share recommendations on how the customer's issue can be resolved to their satisfaction.

MAKING COMPLAINTS

I'm having problems + -ing form
I think there's a problem with ...
I think there's something wrong with ...
I've a problem with ...
(something) doesn't work
I'm afraid that's not good enough

**making
and
responding
to complaints**



RESPONDING TO COMPLAINTS



What seems to be a problem?
I'll look into it
I'll get back to you
I'm really sorry to hear that
I understand why you are upset
Let me check with ...
Let me review this situation ...

Accepting a complaint

*I'm so sorry, it will never happen again.
I can't tell you how sorry I am.
I just don't know what to say.
I'm so sorry...
We'll do our best never to make that mistake again.*

Rejecting a complaint

*I'm so sorry, but there is nothing we can do about it.
I'm afraid there is nothing (much) we can do about it.
Sorry, but I don't think it's my/our fault.*



SCAN ME





Activity 4 - Provide responses in the situations given below.

Situation 1: You work in customer service department. A client comes with a complaint. Apologise and take action (deal with the complaint).

Situation 2: An air fryer you bought is not working properly. Ask for your money back

INSTRUCTOR'S ACTIVITIES BANK



ACTIVITY

1

COMPLAINT CARDS

Activity type

Speaking activity:
Role play

Focus

Complaints, apologies and requests

Objective

To role play complaints, apologies and requests in different situations.

Preparation

Make one copy of the card for each pair of students and cut as indicated



30 minutes

Instructions

Divide the students into pairs.

Give each pair a set of cards and have the students deal them out evenly.

Explain that the students are going to make complaints, apologies and requests using the words and pictures on their cards as prompts.

Ask the students to look at their six cards and write on the other side who they are complaining to and where they are, e.g. waitress, in a restaurant.

Write an example dialogue on the board, indicating the language the students should use.

Examples:

A: Excuse me! There appears to be a fly in my fried rice.

B: I'm very sorry about that.

A: Could you bring me a new plate?

B: Certainly. One moment please.

Review other phrases for apologizing and responding to requests for students acting as Student B.

Next, students hold their cards so that the picture is facing them and the side they have written on is facing their partner.

Students then take it in turns to make a complaint to their partner who looks at who and where they are on the card and apologizes appropriately.

The other student then makes a request and their partner gives a suitable reply.

When the students have finished, they exchange cards and repeat the process.

Finally, pairs role-play the complaints to the class.

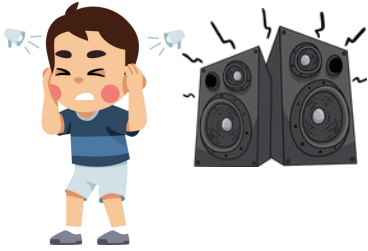


For more advanced students, the instructor gets students to work in pairs to create a congruent story based on the cards given.

Follow up Activities

The instructor can give students the follow up activity where they write down the moral values they have learned from the complaints they have made in the role play as homework.

Complaint: music too loud



Request: turn it down

Complaint: wait a long time



Request: hurry up

Complaint: drive too fast



Request: slow down

Complaint: slow computer



Request: buy a new one

Complaint: late to class



Request: arrive on time

Complaint: wrong change



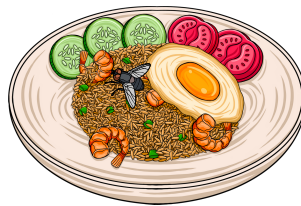
Request: one more ringgit

Complaint: too hot



Request: turn on the fan

Complaint: fly in fried rice



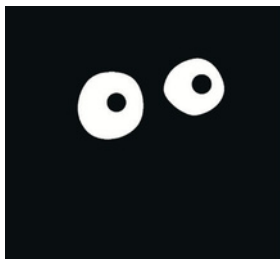
Request: a new plate

Complaint: ordered tea, not coffee



Request: a cup of tea

Complaint: too dark



Request: turn on the light

Complaint: room smells



Request: open a window

Complaint: bought a pair of trousers, but they're too short



Request: a new pair

ACTIVITY

2

FIND IT, LOVE IT, BUY IT

Activity type

Speaking activity: Role play, communicative practice

Focus

Complaining and apologizing

Objective

To practice making complaints in a shop.

Preparation

Make one copy of the worksheet for each group of 4 and cut as indicated



40 minutes

Introduction

In this shop complaints role-play game, students make complaints in a shop and their classmates try to guess where they are and what product they are complaining about.

Instruction

Divide the class into groups of four.

Then, split each group into two pairs (A and B).

Give each pair a corresponding worksheet.

Tell the pairs to keep their worksheet secret.

Explain that the worksheet shows products they brought yesterday, but there is a problem with each item and they have to return each product to the shop and make a complaint.

Write the word 'stereo' on the board.

Elicit possible problems a stereo could have, e.g. The USB port doesn't work. The speakers are blown, etc.

Give the pairs time to think about what problem each item on their worksheet could have.

Next, review expressions for making and dealing with complaints with the class and write an example dialogue on the board using the broken stereo as an example.

Example:

A: Hello. How can I help you?

B: I'd like to make a complaint about a stereo I bought yesterday.

A: What seems to be the problem? Etc.

Tell the students that they are now going to role-play shop complaints about the products on their worksheet, but they cannot say where they are or what product they are complaining about.

Go back through your example dialogue and change all the words that talk about the shop or the product, e.g. 'I'd like to make a complaint about a product I bought yesterday'.

Pairs then take it in turns to choose an item at random from their worksheet and role-play each complaint to another pair.

One student plays the role of the customer and the other plays the role of the shop assistant.

The customer makes a complaint to the shop assistant about the item they brought yesterday and tries to get an exchange or refund.

The customer must do this without saying what the item is or where he/she bought it.

Example:

I'd like to make a complaint about a product I bought yesterday.

The USB port doesn't work. When I connect a flash drive, it doesn't recognize it, etc.

The other pair listens to the role-play and looks at the shop pictures. Their task is to decide which shop they are in and what product the complaint is about.

When the role-play is over, the other pair gives their answers and the first pair tells them whether they are right or wrong.

Pairs score one point for choosing the correct shop and two points if they guess the correct product.

This process continues until all the role-plays have been completed.

The pair with the most points at the end of the game wins.



Assessment of Student Learning

At the end of the game, the instructor can ask students what the hardest aspect of the game was and which part of the game that they enjoyed the most.

Follow up Activities

The instructor can give the students a follow up activity where they have to write down the steps to make complaints politely when purchasing a faulty product / item that they have bought online or from physical store.

PLAY NOW



SCAN ME



Shop Pictures

Kiah's Coffee



Vivy Fashion



Car Max



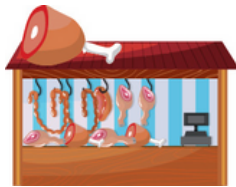
Putra Supermarket



Computers R Us



Steak House



Raja's Hardware



Gerek Bike Shop



Worksheet A

Vivy Fashion



Putra Supermarket



CarMax



Computers R Us



Steak House



Raja's Hardware



Worksheet B

Gerek Bike Shop



Vivy Passion



Computers R Us



Raja's Hardware



Putra Supermarket



Kiah's Coffee



ACTIVITY

3

WE WANT OUR MONEY BACK!

Activity type

Training game :
Discussion, problem
solving

Focus

Complaining and
handling complaints

Objective

To practice making
complaints and
handling complaints
effectively

Preparation

Make one copy of the
worksheet for each
group of 5



45 minutes

Introduction

In this We Want Our Money Back activity, students respond to complaints from customers and deal with their queries in an effective way

Instruction

Divide the class into groups of five

Give each group a list of ridiculous complaints on the following page.

It is wise to split the complaints up between groups, as otherwise the activity can take up much time.

Then, ask students to discuss and to come up with best response possible by way of feedback.

Once they have spent some time working on their response to the complaints, ask them to feedback to the whole group.



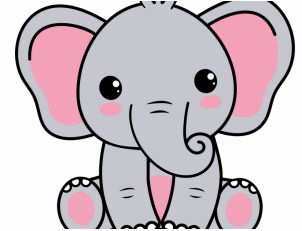
**For more advanced students,
the instructor can get
students to create a role play
scenario to add a bit more
realism to the practice.**

Follow up Activities

The instructor can give the students a follow up activity where they have to find a complaint that went viral on internet and analyze the issue focusing on how the complaint was made and handled.

RIDICULOUS COMPLAINTS LIST

A tourist at a top African game lodge overlooking a waterhole, who spotted a visibly aroused elephant, complained that the sight of this rampant beast ruined his honeymoon by making him feel "inadequate".



A woman threatened to call police after claiming that she'd been locked in by staff. When in fact, she had mistaken the "do not disturb" sign on the back of the door as a warning to remain in the room.



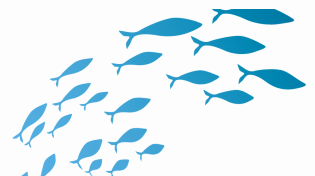
"Topless sunbathing on the beach should be banned. The holiday was ruined as my husband spent all day looking at other women."



"We bought 'Ray-Ban' sunglasses for five euros (£3.50) from a street trader, only to find out they were fake."



"No-one told us there would be fish in the sea. The children were startled."



"The beach was too sandy."



"It took us nine hours to fly home from Jamaica to England it only took the Americans three hours to get home."



"My fiancé and I booked a twin-bedded room but we were placed in a double-bedded room. We now hold you responsible for the fact that I find myself pregnant. This would not have happened if you had put us in the room that we booked."



"I compared the size of our one-bedroom apartment to our friends' three-bedroom apartment and ours was significantly smaller."



"The brochure stated: 'No hairdressers at the accommodation'. We're trainee hairdressers - will we be OK staying here?"



"There are too many Spanish people. The receptionist speaks Spanish. The food is Spanish. Too many foreigners."



"We found the sand was not like the sand in the brochure. Your brochure shows the sand as yellow but it was white."



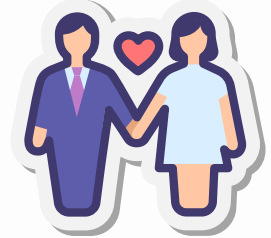
"We had to queue outside with no air conditioning."



"It is your duty as a tour operator to advise us of noisy or unruly guests before we travel."



"My fiancé and I booked a twin-bedded room but we were placed in a double-bedded room. We now hold you responsible for the fact that I find myself pregnant. This would not have happened if you had put us in the room that we booked."



"I was bitten by a mosquito - no-one said they could bite."



"I think it should be explained in the brochure that the local store does not sell proper biscuits like custard creams or ginger nuts."



"It's lazy of the local shopkeepers to close in the afternoons. I often needed to buy things during 'siesta' time - this should be banned."



"On my holiday to Goa in India, I was disgusted to find that almost every restaurant served curry. I don't like spicy food at all."



"We booked an excursion to a water park but no-one told us we had to bring our swimming costumes and towels."





Down

1. not real
2. surprise
3. noticeably, much
4. advertisement magazine
6. to look at the differences between two or more things
7. responsibility
8. to forbid, especially officially



**Scan to
check
answers**

VIDEO GALLERY

BONUS

14 VIDEOS FOR CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES



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