

COMPLAINTS

A complaint is any situation where you feel that your needs have not been met sufficiently and are seeking to resolve the situation. Making a complaint is a way of expressing displeasure or annoyance in response to an action you see as unfavourable. Although our first reaction may be sometimes direct, it is best to phrase our complaint more politely, especially when dealing with foreign business partners and/or clients.

Therefore, instead of saying:

Why haven't you sent the invoice?

That's ridiculous!

I will not do any business with you in future!

And when exactly were you planning on doing this?

you might use one of the following phrases:

- I'm sorry to bother you ...
- I'm sorry to say this but...
- I'm afraid there may be a misunderstanding.
- There may have been a misunderstanding about...
- I understand it's not your fault...
- I think you might have forgotten to...
- Perhaps you forgot to...
- Excuse me if I'm out of line, but...
- Don't get me wrong, but I think you should...

In a conversation, you can also use certain words to signal your disagreement, such as 'well' and 'actually':

- Well, I have to say that I'm not very impressed with your service.
- Well, I don't think it's fair to make us pay extra for the covert.
- Actually, I don't think it's fair to blame the contractors.

Making a complaint can be a difficult and distressing experience because its main objective is to get answers about what went wrong, receive an apology or be told that changes to practice will be made to prevent it from happening again. Apologising and explaining what went wrong can be just as distressing. Below are some examples of how to respond to a complaint.

Positive response to complaints:

- I'm so sorry, but this will never occur / happen again.
- I'm sorry, we promise never to do the same mistake again.
- I apologise; we'll do our utmost / best not to do the same mistake again.

Negative response to complaints:

- Sorry, there is nothing we can do about it.
- I'm afraid there isn't much we can do about it.
- We are sorry to hear this, but unfortunately we cannot control all actions of our residents.

A. Choose the correct answer to each question. Each question has only one correct answer.

- 1) Excuse me if I'm _____, but you haven't fulfilled your obligations from the contract.
 - a) out of touch
 - b) out of date
 - c) out of line
- 2) I'm sorry to have _____ but you need to send us those goods ASAP.
 - a) to say this
 - b) to tell this
 - c) tell this
- 3) I'm sorry _____, but the current parking situation is not satisfactory.
 - a) to complain you
 - b) to bother you
 - c) to distract you
- 4) _____ to send out a reminder about the meeting this morning.
 - a) Perhaps forgetting
 - b) Perhaps you forgot
 - c) Perhaps to forget
- 5) I think you _____ to send the report.
 - a) might forgot
 - b) must forgotten
 - c) might have forgotten
- 6) There may have been _____ about what I ordered.
 - a) a misunderstanding
 - b) an understanding
 - c) a bad understanding
- 7) Don't _____, but I think we should take this opportunity to implement new approaches.
 - a) have me wrong
 - b) get me right
 - c) get me wrong

Key: 1c, 2a, 3b, 4b, 5c, 6a, 7c

B. Match the expressions on the left with their synonyms or explanations on the right.

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|-----------------|---|
| a) compensation | 1 damaged |
| b) assertive | 2 furious |
| c) faulty | 3 confident |
| d) receipt | 4 a written statement saying that money has been received |
| e) refund | 5 reward |
| f) fuming | 6 to have your money returned |
| g) assure | 7 guarantee |
| h) complain | 8 say you are unhappy about something |

Key: a5, b3, c1, d4, e6, f2, g7, h8