

5 Read the instructions below and the beginnings and endings from letters of complaint. Then match the beginnings and endings and say whether the language in each pair is mild, strong or abusive. Which level of language would be most appropriate for the situation described?

You recently travelled by coach and were very disappointed with the service provided by the staff, and the delays you encountered. Write a letter to the company to complain and to demand compensation.

BEGINNINGS...

- 1 I am writing to express my total dissatisfaction with the appalling service I experienced on one of your coaches from Cardiff to Coventry on 24th May.
- 2 I am writing to complain about the poor quality of the service I experienced on one of your coaches from Cardiff to Coventry on 24th May.
- 3 I am writing to draw your attention (if you have any, which I doubt) to the fact that the staff who 'served' us on your Cardiff-to-Coventry coach on 24th May are incompetent, idle fools.

...ENDINGS

- A I hope that you will look into this situation as a matter of some urgency, and that the service offered by your company will improve.
- B Organise your pitiful company efficiently and stop cheating the public by charging outrageous prices for fifth-rate service.
- C I insist that my wife and I receive a full refund of the price of our tickets, and must warn you that unless this matter is resolved at once I will not hesitate to take legal action.

6 Read the following situations, and say whether mild or strong language would be more appropriate for a letter concerning each one. Then, choose two situations and write a suitable beginning and ending for a letter of complaint about each.

- 1 your neighbour's dog barks at night – you can't sleep
- 2 the hotel receptionist forgot to place your wake-up call – you overslept, missed your flight and had to pay for another ticket
- 3 you found a piece of glass in a packet of frozen food – you nearly swallowed it
- 4 the TV guide always has inaccuracies concerning dates and times – you can't be sure what programmes will be shown
- 5 the birthday cake you ordered wasn't delivered on time – the children were extremely disappointed
- 6 there was no lifeguard on duty at the public swimming pool – your child almost drowned



DISCUSS & WRITE

7 Look at the following writing task instructions and then answer the questions below. The questions apply to both tasks.

- a) *You are the manager of a supermarket which is losing customers because employees of the company next door park their cars in the supermarket parking area. Write a letter of complaint to the company and suggest what should be done.*
- b) *You have noticed that students at your son's school are often left unattended. Write a letter of complaint to the headmaster and ask him to ensure that the situation does not continue.*

- What greeting would you use?
- What is the main purpose for writing the letter?
- What is the additional purpose?
- What paragraph plan would you use?
- What useful expressions could you use as opening and closing remarks?
- How would you sign the letter?

8 Choose ONE of the writing tasks above, and write a complete paragraph plan with notes. Then write the letter in about 300 words.

e. Letters of Apology

- If you have received a letter of complaint, it is polite to reply to it. The purpose for writing a **letter of apology** is to explain the reason(s) for the problems stated in the letter of complaint and to ensure that the situation will be resolved/improved. You may also offer some form of compensation.
- A letter of apology is written in a formal style and requires a dignified and polite tone.
- You should deal with each aspect of the complaint in a separate paragraph.

Useful Language

- **Opening remarks:**
I am writing to apologise for ... /offer my apologies for ...
Please accept my/our sincere/profuse apologies for (the unavoidable delay, etc)
I must/would like to apologise for (the unfortunate confusion, etc).
- **To introduce new points:**
With regard to/As regards ...
As far as ... is/are concerned ...
Firstly/First of all/Secondly/Finally, ...
- **To emphasise what you say:**
Clearly/Obviously/Needless to say, ...
- **To express reality:**
In fact/As a matter of fact/Actually/Indeed, ...
- **Making amends:**
Please allow me to offer/suggest ... as compensation (for ...).
I insist on (+ ing) to make up for your loss/inconvenience, etc.
- **Closing remarks:**
Once again, my/our sincere(st) apologies for the inconvenience caused.
I hope that you will accept my apologies/that my apologies will be accepted.
I hope that you can forgive/overlook this regrettable error.

1 Fill in the correct words/phrases from the list below. Try to include them in your letters.

inevitable, gift voucher, isolated incident, circumstances beyond our control, at your disposal, compliments, complimentary, oversight

- 1 I assure you that this is a(n) (single occurrence which is unlikely to happen again)
- 2 Unfortunately due to, we will not be able to offer an alternative venue for the concert. (something which we have no control over)
- 3 Failure to repair the equipment was due to a(n) on our part. (failure to notice something)
- 4 It is that our prices will rise periodically. (certain)
- 5 We are delighted to enclose tickets for our forthcoming concert, by way of compensation. (free)
- 6 A complete refund cannot be given but a(n) for the amount has been enclosed. (token)

Introduction

Paragraph 1
state reason(s) for writing

Main Body

Paragraphs 2-3
give explanations

Paragraph 4
suggest compensation

Conclusion

Final Paragraph
closing remarks

Full name

- 7 Please accept the enclosed with our (regards)
- 8 In light of your previous experience, I would like to assure you that all computers will be (available for use whenever you like)

2 Fill in the gaps with a suitable preposition.

- 1 This situation was due an oversight, which resulted a breakdown in communication and led your losing the contract.
- 2 The company cannot be held responsible any inconvenience caused as a result bad weather.
- 3 Unfortunately, our client is no obligation to offer any compensation according the terms of the contract.