

Complaints politeness game

Choose one of the sentences below and compete to make it as polite as possible. Discuss which of those is the most suitable in your real lives, then do the same with different lines below.

Complaints

My monthly bill is completely wrong.

I've been trying to get through for over an hour.

If you don't sort this out right away, I'll take my business elsewhere.

You still haven't paid.

These things were missing:

Please sort it out asap.

They haven't arrived.

Responding to complaints

Sorry, I've been busy.

It wasn't our fault.

I'm writing/ phoning to complain about your customer service helpline.

Sorry.

We won't do it again.

We'll give you a discount to make up for it.

I didn't know about this. I'll have a look at get back to you.

You wrote to us yesterday with a complaint.

We don't give refunds.

It's true, we made a mistake.

Compare the versions you chose as most suitable with examples on the next page. Are any of those examples too formal or not formal enough for you?

Suggested answers

Complaints

I wish to query a couple of things on my monthly bill, (if I may).

I've been having some problems getting through

If there is no satisfactory resolution of this matter in the near future, we may have to reconsider our relationship with your company.

Unfortunately, we do not have any records of a payment over the period that we mentioned in our last email.

We could not find the following items:

I hope you will take the necessary action to resolve this matter speedily.

There seems to have been some kind of delay./ As far as I am aware, they have not yet arrived.

Responding to complaints

I apologise for the delay in getting back to you, we are still catching up after the earthquake.

After considering the matter fully, we believe that it was due to...

I am writing/ phoning in connection with your customer service helpline.

I would like to apologize on behalf of APO for any inconvenience caused./ Please accept our sincerest apologies for any inconvenience caused.

You can rest assured that this situation will not occur again.

To thank you for your continued patience, we would like to offer you a discount.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention. I will investigate the matter fully and contact you as soon as possible.

We were very sorry to receive your letter informing us that we had made a mistake.

It is our general policy in such situations to offer other things such as...

There does indeed seem to have been an error.

Roleplay using polite versions of the lines on the first page in phone calls.

Roleplay phoning a customer after you receive an email complaint.