

How to write a complaint letter

A complaint letter is a letter written to concerned authorities if we are not satisfied with the service provided by them. These letters are usually formal in nature.

Step 1: Salutation

Dear Sir/ Madam / Manager / To whom it may concern, If you do not know the name of the person you are writing to, use this. It is always advisable to try to find out a name.

Dear Mr Jenkins, If you know the name, use the title (Mr, Mrs, Miss or Ms, Dr, etc.) and the surname only. If you are writing to a woman and do not know if she uses Mrs or Miss, you can use Ms, which is for married and single women.

You should always be polite and respectful, even if you complain. A useful way to achieve it, especially in formal letters is to use 'modal verbs', i.e., would, could or should.

Step 2: The Introductory Paragraph

You should identify what the issue is and any relevant information that you believe is important. Include more details if it's applicable to the situation.

Example: I want to express my strong dissatisfaction with the service I received during a visit to your restaurant on...

Step 3: The next paragraphs (the body)

You can extend your thoughts and feelings further. Yet, be sure to stick with the facts and avoid putting emotions into your letter. Include the time of the issue, location, people involved and what the problem was. Any complaint should be supported with a justification:

Complaint: I still haven't received the goods. Justification: I sent you a cheque three weeks ago.

Step 4: Closing paragraph

Write how you want this problem to be solved. You can also throw in some compliments about something you liked about their company's product or service.

Yours faithfully

{Your name}

"Yours sincerely" or "Yours faithfully"?: "Yours sincerely" is typically employed in English when the recipient is addressed by name (e.g. "Dear John") and is known to the sender to some degree, whereas "Yours faithfully" is used when the recipient is not addressed by name (i.e., the recipient is addressed by a phrase such as "Dear Sir/Madam")

How to write a complaint letter

You recently took a self-catering holiday in a luxury apartment, but the standard of the accommodation was very poor. The holiday company that you booked with have offered you some vouchers as compensation, but you have decided you would prefer a cash refund instead. Write a letter to the company outlining the problems you experienced with the accommodation and the action you want them to take.

Student's Letter of Complaint Answer

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to complain about the bad standard of accommodation during my last holiday. I booked this self-catering holiday last year in your travel agency. When I returned from my two-week travel last week, I immediately visited the agency to complain about my bad experiences.

Had I known that the accommodation would be so poor, I would have booked from the beginning a full-service holiday. What I expected was a luxury apartment with a small oven. Not only was the room dirty and full of bugs, but the shower was broken and unusable. To make matters even worse, there was no oven as I ordered it. Never before have I seen such a bad service at a self-catering holiday. You can imagine my anger when I had to eat out, smelling like a ... Not surprisingly, I booked another room, though without oven but clean and with a working shower. Therefore this room cost a lot more than the other one and I had to go out eating.

My purpose in visiting the agency was to ask for compensation. The young lady who served me offered some vouchers as compensation. She advised me to take my time with the answer. I have decided to ask your company for a cash refund. Would a refund about 500 euros be too much to expect? I would like to ask you to have a look on my enclosed accounts. Seeing how much money I had to invest additionally will help you to decide what to do about the whole matter.

At the very least, I would like you to inform me of the action you will take with regard to my extra invested money. Unless adequate action is taken, I shall have no other option but to publish this letter in the local newspaper.

Yours faithfully
(your name)