

In the email below a supplier is forced to give some bad news to a potential customer:

	To...	Hiro Tanaka
Send	Subject:	Visit to Osaka

Dear Mr. Tanaka

I'm sorry to tell you that I have to postpone my visit to your offices next week. The reason is that my line manager will be away and I will be taking responsibility for the department in his absence.

However I'm still very keen on coming to Osaka to meet you, and I'm confident that we can establish a good relationship between our two companies.

I hope that we can reschedule the meeting in the near future – I could make it any time in early June. Please let me know which day is best for you.

Sorry again for the inconvenience.

Best wishes
Claudia Kreiner

- Notice how Claudia apologizes and explains at the beginning, and then apologizes again at the end.
- Notice how Claudia reassures Mr. Tanaka with positive language: *I'm still very keen on ... / I'm confident that ...*

In the next email a customer makes a complaint. In reply, the supplier apologizes and promises action.

	To...	Pietro Casini
Send	Subject:	Complaint

I'm writing to complain about the poor service that we've received from your company.

You installed a new air conditioning system at our offices last month. After a week it started leaking water through the ceiling of our reception area. Your technician arrived and removed all the ceiling panels in order to carry out a service, but during this work the panels and supports were badly damaged.

This has caused us considerable inconvenience, and the damaged panels create a poor image in our reception area.

I made it clear to the technician that we hold you responsible for replacing the damaged panels. However, this has still not been done.

Please take urgent action to resolve this matter.

Yours, Christine Lagarde

	To...	Christine Lagarde
Send	Subject:	Re: Complaint

Dear Ms Lagarde

I'm very sorry to hear that you've had problems with your air conditioning system. We'll be at your office tomorrow to fit new panels.

I understand completely that your reception area needs to be of the highest standard, and I can assure you that we will leave the ceiling looking as new.

Once again, please accept my sincere apologies for any inconvenience caused.

Pietro Casini

- The tone of Christine's complaint is direct, strong and factual – but not angry.
- Pietro's reply is short and simple, avoiding conflict.
- Notice the first paragraph of Pietro's reply. After apologizing he immediately promises action.
- Notice how Pietro ends by apologizing again.

The phrases you need

Customer complains

I'm writing with reference to ...

I'm writing to complain about the poor service we've received from ...

There seems to be an error / mistake / misunderstanding.

There's a serious fault with the ...

This has caused us considerable inconvenience.

This has hurt our sales and our reputation.

I made it clear that ...

Customer demands action

I must insist that you give this matter your urgent attention.

Please take urgent action to ...

Let me remind you that this product is still under warranty. So, the best solution would be to ...

Supplier gives bad news

I'm sorry to tell you that ... / Unfortunately, ...

The reason is that ... / This is due to ...

Supplier apologizes

I'm very sorry to hear that ...

I would like to apologize for ...

I was very concerned to learn about ...

Supplier reassures and promises action

I'm confident that ...

I can assure you that ...

I will make sure that ...

Supplier ends

Sorry again for the inconvenience.

Once again, please accept my sincere apologies for any inconvenience caused.

Thank you very much for bringing this matter to my attention.

Exercises

48.1 Rewrite the sentences below with the correct word order, beginning as shown.

- 1 I'm to tell you sorry that I have to postpone next week our meeting.
I'm _____
- 2 Once again, please apologies for accept my sincere any inconvenience caused.
Once again, _____
- 3 I'm ordered to tell you that the items are now in stock you pleased. We'll your order be shipping today.
I'm _____
- 4 I can doing everything possible assure you that we are to resolve this issue as possible as quickly.
I can _____
- 5 You'll be extending our online sale that we are pleased to hear for another week.
You'll be _____
- 6 I've talked to the involved staff and I'm confident that our procedures are robust and properly working.
I've talked _____
- 7 We inform you that we regret to cannot process your order due to on your account a large outstanding balance.
We _____
- 8 Thank very much you to my attention for bringing this matter.
Thank _____

48.2 Write sentence numbers 1 to 8 from the previous exercise in the boxes below.

- | | | |
|---------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a Good news | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b Bad news | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c Reassurance | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d End | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

48.3 Study the strong complaint below. Try to guess the single missing word in each gap. Write your answers lightly at the side. Several answers may be possible.

✉	To...	Andrew Wilkinson
Send	Subject:	Delay to order

Dear Mr Wilkinson

I'm writing with ¹ _____ to our order no. 05782 made on 3 July. We're ² _____ waiting for ³ _____ of these parts.

I phoned you last week about this and you ⁴ _____ me that the order would be ⁵ _____ within 48 hours.

This delay is causing us considerable ⁶ _____ as we're unable to continue our operations without the parts. This has hurt our ⁷ _____ and our reputation.

I must ⁸ _____ that you give this matter your urgent ⁹ _____.

I'll be phoning you again later this afternoon and I hope that by then you have some good news for me. If I don't receive a ¹⁰ _____ response from you, I'll be ¹¹ _____ to reconsider our ¹² _____ business relationship.

Yours
Gloria Salinas

Now fill in the gaps above with the suggested words in the box below.

<i>attention assured delivery forced inconvenience insist long-term reference sales satisfactory shipped still</i>
--

48.4 The reply below has ten extra words. They're either grammatically wrong or don't make sense. Cross them out.

✉	To...	Gloria Salinas
Send	Subject:	Re: Delay to order

Dear Ms Salinas

I was very concerned to learn about the so late delivery of the parts what you ordered from us.

I've been spoken to our staff in the packing department and I'm too confident that the goods left here last week. I can only assume it that there is an issue with the courier.

I'll contact with them personally and make sure that they resolve me this matter today.

Once again, please accept that my sincere apologies for any inconvenience caused you.

Should you have any some questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely
Andrew Wilkinson

See page 151 for some writing tasks.

Much of the language used for making arrangements by email is similar to that used for making arrangements by telephone in unit 42.

Below is a typical exchange of emails for arranging a business trip. Only short extracts are shown.

Host makes an invitation

It was a great pleasure to meet you in The next time you're in China we'd be very pleased if you could visit our company. It would be a great opportunity for you to look around our new factory.

Guest accepts

Thank you for the kind invitation to visit your company. I'd be very interested in seeing your factory and seeing the production line in operation.

In fact I'll be in China from ... to Please let me know if any of these dates are convenient for you.

Host suggests an itinerary

I was very pleased to hear that you'll be here in China in January. Of course we'd be delighted to welcome you on one of those days.

I've put together a provisional itinerary – please see the details below.

How does this sound? Please let me know what you think.

Also, we'd be happy to arrange a local hotel for you if you wish.

Guest replies

Thank you so much for the careful thought you put into planning an itinerary for me. It looks fine – there's just one small change that I would suggest. ...

In relation to the hotel, I'll make my own arrangements.

I look forward very much to seeing you in ...

Guest contacts a hotel

I'm mailing you off your website. Do you have a room available for one person on the night of Wednesday 22 January? Please let me know the price of this, including breakfast.

I'd also like to know if you ...

Guest tells host the details

Yes, everything is finalized now.

I'm travelling on flight LH788, from Frankfurt to Guangzhou. It's due in at 11.30am. I'll be arriving at Terminal 2.

I'm staying at the Marriott. When I get there I'll need just half an hour or so to freshen up, then I can come straight to your offices.

Host confirms everything

Just to confirm your visit to us on ... at A driver will be waiting for you at the airport, holding a sign with your name on it. The driver will take you to your hotel, and then bring you here. Should you have any problems, my mobile phone number is ...

The phrases you need

Host to guest

We'd be very pleased if you could visit our company.

I've put together a provisional itinerary.

A driver will pick you up from / drop you off at the airport.

Do you know when you're planning to arrive?

Go straight to the reception desk and ask for me.

Should you have any problems, my mobile phone number is ...

I'm attaching a map.

Guest to host

Thank you for your kind invitation. I'd be very happy to visit your offices.

I'm travelling on flight number LH788, due in at 11.30am.

I'll need just half an hour at the hotel to freshen up.

Guest to hotel

I'm mailing you off your website. Do you have a room available for the night of Wednesday 22 January?

I'd also like to know if you have a swimming pool and gymnasium / 24 hour reception / a courtesy shuttle bus from the airport.

I need a view of the ... / wireless Internet access / an iron in my room when I arrive.

Other vocabulary

a window seat / an aisle seat

a single / return trip (BrE); a one way / round trip (AmE)

a booking / to book (BrE); a reservation / to reserve (AmE)

Leave the motorway (AmE freeway) at exit 12.

Keep going for three blocks, then turn left.

Exercises

49.1 Complete each sentence 1–8 with the best ending a–h.

- 1 It was a great pleasure to ... d
- 2 We'd be very pleased if ...
- 3 I'd be very interested ...
- 4 I've put together ...
- 5 A driver will pick you ...
- 6 A driver will drop you ...
- 7 Go straight ...
- 8 I'll need to freshen up ...

- a a provisional itinerary.
- b at the hotel first.
- c in seeing your factory.
- d meet you in Germany.
- e off at the airport.
- f to the reception desk and ask for me.
- g up from the airport.
- h you could visit our company.

49.2 Fill in the gaps with the prepositions in the box.

at at at at for for from in
in in off on on to with

- 1 I was very pleased to hear that you will be here _____ China _____ January.
- 2 I'm mailing you _____ (or from) your website. Do you have a room available _____ one person on the night of Wednesday 22 January?
- 3 I'm travelling _____ flight LH788, _____ Frankfurt _____ Guangzhou.
- 4 The flight leaves _____ 11.15am _____ Tuesday 21 January.
- 5 It's due _____ at 9.30 on Wednesday 22 January.
- 6 It arrives _____ Terminal 2.
- 7 I'm staying _____ the Marriott.
- 8 A driver will be waiting _____ you _____ the airport, holding a sign _____ your name on it.

49.3 Cross out the one word in each group that is not correct. Check any unknown words in a dictionary.

- 1 You can *get* / *catch* / *take* / *miss* / *lose* / *be booked on* / *board* / *book* / *reserve* a flight.
- 2 A flight can *be overbooked* / *be delayed* / *be held up* / *be diverted* / *be bound for somewhere* / *leave* / *depart* / *take off* / *arrive* / *land* / *be full* / *be half-empty* / *be on time* / *be cancelled* / *be annulled*.

49.4 Marcus is telling a story about his business trip. Fill in the missing letters.

“The taxi driver dro__ed me o__ at the wrong terminal, and it took me some time to find the right ch__-__ area for my airline. Then I had to pay an exc__ baggage cha__ because my suitcase was so heavy. Anyway, I went thr__ passport control and then waited for ages at security – there was a long qu__ (AmE *line*). While I was waiting for my g__e to be called, I decided to do some shopping. I didn't notice the time go by and I had to __sh to b__d the flight. During the flight we had a lot of really bad turb__ce – when we tou__d __ I was shaking like a leaf. I pi__ed up my baggage and went to the cab r__k outside the terminal. On the way to the hotel we got st__ in traffic, and then at the end the driver tried to ri__ me o__ . I asked for a re__t and he wasn't very pleased. I checked into the hotel and I was looking forward to an e__ly ni__ , but the disco in the hotel basement made that impossible.”

49.5 The email below gives directions. Fill in the gaps with the words in the box.

blocks exit follow main miss freeway past
signposted turn down for for on on on

Leave the ¹ _____ at ² _____
12. Follow the main road, ³ _____ for the city centre. Stay ⁴ _____ this road ⁵ _____ about four miles until you come to a large Shell gas station on your right. You can't ⁶ _____ it.
⁷ _____ right just ⁸ _____ the gas station and keep going straight. Our offices are a short distance ⁹ _____ this road – about three ¹⁰ _____. You'll see them ¹¹ _____ your right.

When you arrive at the ¹² _____ gate, Security will give you a visitor's pass. ¹³ _____ the road round to the main reception where there is a visitor's parking lot. When you get to reception, just ask ¹⁴ _____ me – they'll be expecting you.

If you have any problems, give me a call ¹⁵ _____ my cell phone.

Looking forward to meeting you next week.

Regards

See page 151 for some writing tasks.