

**Exercise 10.1 Analyzing a situation related to a complaint**

1. Reread the paragraph above and, in the table below, write the terms that are in bold under the proper headings.

Situation	Problem	Dissatisfaction	Request
<i>Purchased</i>	<i>Defective</i>	<i>To complain</i>	<i>I'm demanding a</i>
<i>On sale</i>	<i>merchandise</i>	<i>I was greatly</i>	<i>full refund</i>
<i>Advertisement</i>	<i>Broken</i>	<i>annoyed</i>	
<i>Company policy</i>	<i>Damaged</i>	<i>I'm unhappy with</i>	
<i>Non-refundable</i>		<i>this arrangement</i>	
<i>Manager</i>			
<i>Partial refund</i>			
<i>Sales slip</i>			

**Exercise 10.2 Identifying the appropriate translation**

1. From the choices presented below, circle the letter that corresponds to the translation that seems most appropriate to you.

French	Translation
marchandise endommagée	a. defective product b. inadequate performance <b>c.</b> damaged merchandise
surfacturé	a. mistake b. non-fundable <b>c.</b> overcharged
annonce publicitaire	a. purchase <b>b.</b> advertisement c. receipt
agacé	<b>a.</b> annoyed b. upset c. angry
Pourriez-vous m'expliquer pourquoi...	a. I want to return... <b>b.</b> Could you explain why ... c. I want to know the reason ...

English	Translation
refund	a. achat <b>b.</b> remboursement c. facture
delayed shipment	a. mauvais prix b. erreur <b>c.</b> expédition retardée
on sale	a. reçu <b>b.</b> en solde c. preuve
to complain	a. être mécontent b. être insatisfait <b>c.</b> se plaindre
I want you to replace ...	<b>a.</b> Je veux que vous remplaciez... b. Je veux me faire rembourser... c. Je veux retourner...



### Exercise 10.3 Identifying the steps to deal with a complaint

1. Read the situation below, then, in the dialogue below, underline the sentences or expressions that correspond to the various steps for dealing with a complaint.

Ms. Beasely works at Perfect Copies. A woman comes to her counter with a complaint.

Miss Campagna: Good afternoon, my name is Nicole Campagna. Last week, we picked out a wedding invitation card in your samples brochure and I ordered 100 copies. But when we received our order, I was shocked to discover that the wedding date was wrong and my fiancé's last name was misspelled. I'm not at all happy with the service. I was counting on sending out the invitations early next week, and now everything will be delayed because of these mistakes. It's too late at this point for me to go elsewhere because I need the wedding invitations for this weekend.

Ms. Beasely: If I understand correctly, you're saying that you need new wedding invitation cards because the wedding date is wrong and your fiancé's last name was misspelled?

Miss Campagna: Yes, and I need them pronto.

Ms. Beasely: Miss. Campagna, I can sympathize with your dissatisfaction. You are certainly right to expect the correct information on the wedding invitations and I'd like to help.

Miss Campagna: Yes, this delay only adds to the overall stress of the wedding preparations.

Ms. Beasely: I know what you mean. Miss Campagna, let's examine this together, shall we? First, may I see your receipt and the box of invitation cards as well, please?

Miss Campagna: Yes, I have them right here.

*She gives the receipt slip and the box to Ms. Beasely.*

Ms. Beasely: Thank you. Now, let me look up your file on the computer. Yes, here it is. Nicole Campagna and Peter Watkens. We have Watkens spelled as W-A-T-K-E-N-S. You say this is incorrect?

Miss Campagna: Yes, that's wrong. It's Watkins spelled W-A-T-K-I-N-S.

Ms. Beasely: I see, Watkins, W-A-T-K-I-N-S. Now the wedding date we have here is for August 24. This is also wrong?

Miss Campagna: Yes, it's for August 14.

Ms. Beasely: Obviously, there has been a mistake. I would like to explain the circumstances, if I may. The week your fiancé called, we were trying out a new employee. Being new on the job, she may have taken down the wrong information.

Miss. Campagna, such mistakes are not usual, and we're sincerely sorry for the inconvenience. Customer satisfaction is our priority and we intend to remedy the situation immediately. We'll put a rush on this order so that you get your wedding invitations no later than Saturday afternoon.  
Does this meet with your approval?

Miss Campagna: Yes, that's much better.

Ms. Beasely: I hope everything is to your satisfaction, Miss. Campagna. We are always willing to help.



## Exercise 10.4 Using appropriate language for dealing with a complaint

1. Using the vocabulary previously studied, write the appropriate answers for each scenario below.

*Suggested answers*

- a. You are on the phone with a client who is speaking too fast. What would you say?

*Could you speak a little more slowly, please?*

---

---

---

- b. You work for a printing company and you get a call from a client who complains that she was shocked to discover that the date on her wedding invitation cards is incorrect. What would you say to find common ground with your client and to show your willingness to help?

*I can sympathize with your dissatisfaction. You are right to expect the correct information on your wedding invitation cards. I'd like to help.*

---

---

---

- c. You work for City Transit and a woman calls to complain that her bus has been arriving 10 minutes late every morning. How would you explain the situation with the following facts: 1) The city is working on the sewer systems; 2) the bus driver has to take a detour on Argyle Street; 3) this is a temporary situation.

*Allow me to explain, madam. The city is working on the sewer systems in your area and the bus driver has to take a detour on Argyle Street. This is why the bus has been arriving a few minutes late in the morning. However, this is a temporary situation.*

---

---

---

- d. You work for a bookstore and an important client calls to complain that the shipment of books he ordered has not arrived. How could you apologize for the delay and indicate your intention to rectify the situation?

*Such delays are not usual and we apologize for the inconvenience. We will make sure the situation is corrected as soon as possible.*

---

---

---

- e. In the last scenario, how would you end the conversation in a friendly, positive way?

*I hope this meets with your approval. Will there be anything else?*

---

---

---

---

 **Exercise 10.5 Dealing with a complaint**

1. You work for the City Transit Company and you must answer incoming calls. Read the transcript of the call you received and answer the questions.



This is Jane Grimes. I'm calling about bus number 15, which goes down Riverside Drive. My son takes the number 15 bus every morning to go to school. According to the bus schedule, number 15 is supposed to arrive at our corner at 8:05 a.m. My son always goes to his bus stop well before 8:05, but recently the bus has been 10-15 minutes late. So my son has been late for classes at least three times this week. This has been very frustrating for us all. I'd like to know right away what's causing this.



2. Is it a complaint? How did you arrive at this conclusion?

*Yes. Her discourse begins with a callous tone. She is complaining about the number 15 bus being late. She uses the word "frustrating" and wants explanations.*

---

3. To make sure that you understood the reason for the complaint, you must ask the appropriate questions. Complete the dialogue below accordingly.

You: Mrs. Grimes, could I ask you a few questions to see if I've got the facts right?

Mrs. Grimes: Sure.

You: You say the number 15 bus has been late \_\_\_\_\_?

Mrs. Grimes: Yes, several times this week.

You: And this is in the morning around eight o'clock? \_\_\_\_\_

Mrs. Grimes: Yes, at 8:05 to be precise.

You: This is on Riverside Drive? \_\_\_\_\_

Mrs. Grimes: Yes, Riverside Drive.

You: Would you mind explaining that a little further, please? Where exactly on Riverside Drive?

Mrs. Grimes: At the corner of Riverside and Gordon.

4. Continue the conversation in order to find common ground and look at the facts objectively. Complete the dialogue below accordingly.

You: I agree that the bus should be arriving on time at that bus stop and I can sympathize with your frustration. Let me look into the situation. Okay, I have it here. The reason why number 15 has been late recently is because the city is

doing some work on the sewer system on Spadina Street. Bus number 15 has had to detour on Argyle before turning down on Riverside. So if the bus has been late, it's because of the sewer work. I'm pretty sure this situation is only temporary.

Mrs. Grimes: This doesn't solve my problem. The school has been calling, wanting to know why my son is always late. You'd think we would get better service with the price of bus passes these days. Couldn't you change the bus route or something?

*Mrs. Grimes is not satisfied with the explanation provided and keeps on making unreasonable requests.*

5. Express your disagreement by objecting.

You: I'm sorry, I can't agree with you about changing the bus route. Unfortunately,  
that can't be done.

Mrs. Grimes: Why not?

6. Explain why her requests are not reasonable.

You: The reason is that we cannot arrange the bus route according to specific bus stops.  
We have to plan a route that is convenient for everyone.

Mrs. Grimes: Well, what's the point of buying a bus pass if the buses never arrive on time? What kind of service is that?

7. Share your opinion concerning the situation and convince Ms. Grimes that this is a temporary situation.

You: Mrs. Grimes, let's not forget that this is a temporary situation. You have to admit  
that, in more normal circumstances, the bus is usually on schedule. Can we agree  
on that much?

Mrs. Grimes: Yes, I guess that's true.

8. Offer Ms. Grimes an alternative, knowing that every day, starting at 7 a.m., the buses show up every 15 minutes.

You: May I say something here? What about if, for the time being, your son catches an  
earlier bus? Taking into account the 10-15 minute delay, there should be a  
number 15 passing by at the corner of Riverside and Gordon at approximately  
7:45 a.m. That way, your son won't have to arrive late for school.

Mrs. Grimes: Yes, I suppose he could do that.

9. Politely and empathetically close the conversation.

You: Though it's not entirely our fault, Mrs. Grimes, we are sorry for the inconvenience  
this delay may have caused. I hope this has been helpful to you and thank you for  
your cooperation.

 **Exercise 10.6** Dealing with a complaint

1. Read the situation below.

You are the manager at Folio Bookstore. A known customer, Frank Sanders, enters the store with a complaint. He tells you he paid \$10 for a book and that he still hasn't received it. He says he called the publishing house several times, but they kept telling him the book was not ready. He would like to cancel his order and be reimbursed.

2. Using the information you already have, complete the dialogue below as indicated, then read it out loud.

*(Confirm that you understood the situation and his wishes properly.)*

You: So what you're saying is that the order has been delayed and you want to cancel it?

Mr. Sanders: Yes. I'm cancelling the order and I want my deposit back.

*(Confirm the new information he just shared with you.)*

You: You want your deposit back as well?

Mr. Sanders: Yes.

*(Tell him you understand his position, and that you recognize the situation is unusual. Then ask him for the title of the book and the name of the author in order to look into the situation.)*

You: I see your point. I think that the delay on this order has been unusually long.  
Let's take a look at this. First of all, could you give me the title of the book and the name of the author, please.

Mr. Sanders: Yes, it's "Righteous Thunder" by Andrew and Simone Carpenter.

*(Explain to him that the publishing house for this book is small and is not working with a major distributor. So, it is possible it might take more time than expected for the book to be ready.)*

You: Okay, I've found it on the computer. I can see why it has taken so long. It's a small publishing house and they're not working with a major distributor.  
It's a fact that, with these small publishing houses, it can take quite a few weeks before we actually receive the books.

Mr. Sanders: Well, I've been waiting for five weeks already. How much longer would I have to wait if I didn't cancel?

*(Tell him you have no way of knowing with certainty, but that two or three weeks are likely.)*

You: I can't really say for sure. It could take another two or three weeks, if you're willing to wait.

*As the conversation continues, Mr. Sanders remains unconvinced about having to wait for his book. You will need to try other approaches to avoid losing the account.*

3. Write down what you could tell Mr. Sanders at this point in the conversation.

*Suggested answers:*

*I'm fairly certain that we will eventually receive the book. The delay is normal in this case.*

*OR Pardon me for interrupting but you've waited so long, why give up now? Why not wait*

*for another week or so? In my opinion, it's worth it. OR I will contact someone from the*

*publishing company and see what I can do to speed up the process.*

### **Exercise 10.7 Dealing with a complaint**

Read the situation below, then circle the letter that corresponds to the appropriate answer. The objective is mentioned in each question.

You work for Folio Bookstore. As an administrative secretary, one of your tasks is to deal with complaints of unsatisfied customers. Mrs. Holly Parker wants to return the two books that were sent to her. Listen to what she says.



1. To assure Ms. Parker that you have correctly interpreted her complaint, you would say:
  - a. So you're saying that on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April, you ordered the books?
  - b. We sent you too many books, Mrs. Parker?
  - c. So what you're saying is that we sent you the wrong books?
2. To find common ground with Ms Parker, you would say:
  - a. Well, it's not our fault, Mrs. Parker.
  - b. Mrs. Parker, you're right to expect efficient service from us.
  - c. Mrs. Parker, could you tell me more about that, please?
3. To review the facts objectively, you would say:
  - a. Let's examine the situation more closely. Could I see the books, please?
  - b. I'm not sure this will work, Mrs. Parker.
  - c. Sorry to interrupt, but I must see the books.
4. When you check the merchandise and the invoice, it becomes obvious that you have not delivered the right books. The fault belongs to the bookstore. To apologize to the customer, you would say:
  - a. What else can we do, Mrs. Parker?
  - b. Mrs. Parker, we sent the right books. It's your mistake.
  - c. We have indeed sent you the wrong books. I apologize for the inconvenience.
5. To end the conversation in a polite and friendly way, you would say:
  - a. Customer satisfaction is our priority. We will give you the right books immediately.
  - b. Allow me to make a suggestion. I will get my boss.
  - c. Look at it this way, Mrs. Parker, at least we didn't lose your books.

 **Exercise 10.8** Dealing with a complaint

1. Read the situation below.

You work at Mr. Reid's Bookstore. Since the manager is absent, you deal with the complaints of the customers. A man walks into the store with the following complaint.



*Since your salesclerk made the mistake, the bookstore is at fault.*

2. Below are guidelines in the form of questions. Using the vocabulary previously studied, write what you would say to address the complaint. Then, role play the dialogues out loud.



*Suggested answers*

What would you say to:

a. Show that you are actively listening?

*If I understand correctly, you're saying that we overcharged you.*

b. Make a statement that the customer and you can both agree on? If suitable empathize with the customer.

*Yes, I agree. We charged you \$19.95 instead of \$9.95. I understand why you're upset.*

c. Review the facts objectively? Give explanations if you think it will help.

*Obviously, there's been a mistake. The misunderstanding could be due to a new employee we hired recently.*

d. Apologize for the mistake and assure that the store will make amends?

*We are sorry for this inconvenience. Customer satisfaction is our priority and we will remedy the situation right away.*

e. Close in a friendly and positive way?

*I hope this has been helpful and thank you for your cooperation. Will there be anything else?*

 **Summary exercise**

1. Two customers are calling saying they were unfairly treated by the company I.L.S. The transcription of the first call is presented below, and you will listen to the second call in an audio. Write down what you would tell these customers in order to efficiently deal with their complaint. Record your answers. This way, you can listen to your answer and evaluate if the expressions you used were appropriate.

**Client No. 1: Mrs. Johnson**

Hi, I just received my transcript and noticed that I lost marks because I was absent more than four times. It's true that I missed some classes, but every time it was because I had to stay home to take care of my sick son. Can't you take that into consideration?



*Suggested answers*

First, show empathy towards this woman.

*I understand what you mean and I'm sorry to hear about your son.*

---

Next, review the facts with her objectively. Remind her that rules cannot be broken.

*Let's examine the situation more closely. You did after all miss over four classes.*

---

*Your lack of attendance is the reason why you lost those marks.*

---

*We understand that your son was sick but the fact remains that the school has certain standards to maintain.*

---

Finally, end on a positive note.

*I hope this has been helpful and thank you for your cooperation. Will there be anything else?*

---

**Client No. 2: Mr. Hau**



*Suggested answers*

First, agree with this man. Obviously, he has his facts right.

*I agree with you. You are right to expect to receive your full six courses.*

---

Next, since the school is at fault, offer an apology.

*We apologize for this oversight and we regret the inconvenience.*

---

Finally, offer to make amends (e.g., a reimbursement or an extra week of courses).

*Customer satisfaction is our priority and we will correct the situation right away*

---

*by offering you a credit of 25% off of your next session.*

---

Now, end the conversation on a positive note.

*Does this meet with your approval? Will there be anything else?*

---