

6e A disappointed customer

Writing a letter of complaint

- 1 Have you ever had a bad experience on holiday that caused you to complain? What happened and what was the outcome?
- 2 Read this complaint from a guest about a stay in a hotel and answer the questions.
 - 1 Why is the customer unhappy?
 - 2 What does she want the hotel to do about it?
 - 3 Does her complaint seem justified?

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Sweet Hotel Group
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Dear Sir / Madam

I am writing to express my dissatisfaction with my stay at the Victoria Arms Hotel on 12th April. I made a reservation through another website which was offering one night for two people with an evening meal and breakfast for £110. However, when we arrived at 5.30 p.m. we were informed that there was no table available in the restaurant and that we could either dine at 6.00 p.m. or find another restaurant in the town.

We had the strong impression that because it was a discounted offer, we did not receive the same level of hospitality as regular, full-paying guests. The situation was both embarrassing and inconvenient. After some discussion with the staff, we opted to dine in the restaurant, but much later than we wished – at 9.30 p.m. No one apologised for this.

Given the circumstances, compensation is not my principal concern. Rather, I would ask you to investigate the matter thoroughly to ensure this does not arise in future with other guests.

Yours faithfully



Ann Dunhill

- 3 Work in pairs. Formal letters follow certain conventions. Answer the questions.
 - 1 What is the correct position for each address?
 - 2 When do we write *Yours faithfully* and when do we write *Yours sincerely*?
 - 3 Where is the reason for writing mentioned?
 - 4 Where is the request to the recipient of the letter for action?

4 Writing skill formal language

- a Find the formal words or phrases in the letter that say the following:

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1 say I was unhappy | 7 wanted |
| 2 we were told | 8 what worries me |
| 3 a cheap deal | most |
| 4 get | 9 look into |
| 5 after we talked to | 10 make sure |
| 6 chose to eat | |

- b Convert the phrases in bold in these sentences into more formal language. Use the letter to help you.

- 1 We **want to tell you how unhappy we were** with the standard of the food on the cruise ship *Golden Dawn*.

Example:

We wish to express our dissatisfaction with the standard of the food on the cruise ship Golden Dawn.

- 2 I **told** the receptionist that I **had booked the room** for two nights, not one.
- 3 After I'd **talked to** the manager, she **said she was sorry** and promised to **look into** the problem with the shower. **But** no action was taken.
- 4 I would have expected that the safety of the guests **was what the staff were most worried about**.
- 5 Given the **trouble** this caused us, we expected **to get some money back**.
- 6 The manager said no other rooms were **free**, but if the opportunity **came up**, she'd move us.

- 5 Read the situation and then write a letter of complaint to the hotel.

You recently stayed at a small hotel in the centre of Oxford in the UK. During the night you were woken up by some noisy people trying to climb a wall into the hotel courtyard. You went down to reception to tell a member of the hotel staff but no one was there. You are angry and upset that no staff were on duty during the night.

- 6 Exchange letters and read your partner's letter. Use these questions to check their letter.

- Does it begin with the reason for writing?
- Does it end with what action is expected?
- Does it use rhetorical or other types of question to be persuasive?