

## 9 Language Excellence

### Presentation: A formal letter of complaint

1 Match the headings (1–4) with the paragraphs (A–D).

- |                     |                      |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1 Expectations      | 3 Steps taken so far |
| 2 Summary of events | 4 Opening statement  |



## QUEEN'S HEAD HOTEL

25 Main Street  
Hallstown HT1 9ZP  
[www.queensheadhotel@hallstown.com](mailto:www.queensheadhotel@hallstown.com)

Dear Mr Brown,

A \_\_\_\_\_

I am writing to complain about your recent review of our hotel, which appeared in the June edition of your magazine.

B \_\_\_\_\_

My main complaint is that review was very unfair. You described the furnishings as out of date and dirty, yet they are less than one year old and in very good condition. You complained that you had stayed in a room without a view. However, I have checked the room allocation and you stayed in room 215, which has a view of the ocean. You described the buffet breakfast as poor, yet our new chef provides a huge variety of dishes from eggs five ways through fresh fruit to ten different pastries. Finally, you described the staff as rude and unhelpful, which I find hard to believe as they are all trained to be attentive to our guests' needs.

C \_\_\_\_\_

I spoke to your assistant the day I read the review. However, she told me you were unavailable and that she was unable to do anything.

D \_\_\_\_\_

I would appreciate it if you could offer me some form of explanation for the review as I feel we have been very seriously misrepresented. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely,

*Lucy Towers*

Lucy Towers

#### A formal letter of complaint

Formal letters usually follow a standard format. If you address the letter to a particular person, for example *Mr Brown*, then finish the letter with *Yours sincerely*. If you don't have the name of a person, then write *Dear Sir/Madam*, and finish with *Yours faithfully*.

#### Remember!

Start the letter by making it clear what you are writing about. Then go on to explain the problem or situation in more detail. After that, clarify what you have done so far to remedy the situation. Finish the letter by making it clear what you would like to happen.

## Practice: A formal letter of complaint

### Present, past, future, conditional tenses

#### Present tenses

##### Present simple

I **work** / **don't work** with computers.

##### Present continuous

You're **reading** / **not reading** a blog.

#### Past tenses

##### Past simple

He **read** / **didn't read** the travel guide.

##### Past continuous

We **were** / **weren't checking** the manual.

##### Present perfect

They've **tried** / **haven't tried** the new recipe.

##### Past perfect

I **had** / **hadn't finished** reading the cartoon.

#### Future tenses

##### Will

You **will** / **won't go** to university next year.

##### Be going to

He **is** / **isn't going to** write a blog.

##### Present continuous for future arrangements

We're **finishing** / **not finishing** school this year.

#### Conditional tenses

##### First conditional

If you **pass** your exam, you'll **go** to university.

##### Second conditional

If you **passed** your exam, you **would go** to university.

##### Third conditional

If you **had passed** your exam, you **would have gone** to university.

### Typical errors

I have seen him yesterday. **X**

I saw him yesterday. **✓**

I had read that review last week. **X**

I read that review last week. **✓**

If I would went on holiday, I would relax on the beach. **X**

If I went on holiday, I would relax on the beach. **✓**

- 1 Complete the sentences with the correct form of the verbs in brackets.

I am writing (write) to complain about the service I received at your hotel.

- 1 He \_\_\_\_\_ (not illustrate) a cartoon before. This is his first time.
- 2 They \_\_\_\_\_ (write) a review of their hotel for the travel guide.
- 3 If we \_\_\_\_\_ (not like) this hotel, we'll move to another one.

- 2 Complete the extract from a letter of complaint with the correct form of the verbs in the box.

appreciate arrive be not work ring write

I am writing to complain about a radio that I bought from you last week. My main complaint <sup>(1)</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ that the radio doesn't work very well. The radio signal is very weak wherever I place the radio. In addition, when it <sup>(2)</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ the battery cover was loose in the box. I replaced the cover, however it does not fit properly, so the battery <sup>(3)</sup> \_\_\_\_\_. I <sup>(4)</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ your customer service department several times but no one answers the phone. I <sup>(5)</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ it if someone could contact me to discuss a refund.

- 3 Correct the errors.

I'm leave in five minutes to catch my plane.

I'm leaving in five minutes to catch my plane.

- 1 I've wrote poems ever since I was little.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2 If they were more responsible, I will allow them to walk to school on their own.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3 I had read the travel guide when you rang.  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Final Writing Task

### A formal letter of complaint

Write a letter complaining about a product you have bought or a poor service that you have received recently. Use the example on page 17 to help you. Make sure you follow the correct layout and use formal language. Try to use a mix of tenses.