

Delayed, defective or wrong good? – How to write a letter of complaint

Von Isabella Dauth, Köln

Wie schreibe ich einen klar strukturierten Beschwerdebrief? Wie formuliere ich sachlich, aber zugleich fordernd? Und wie bleibe ich dabei höflich und konstruktiv? Beim Verfassen eines Beschwerdebriefes müssen Ihre Lernenden einige Kriterien beachten.

In dieser Unterrichtsreihe üben Ihre Schüler Schritt für Schritt, einen Beschwerdebrief zu verfassen, der die oben genannten Kriterien erfüllt. Dabei lernen sie den Aufbau eines solchen Schreibens kennen und üben Formulierungen zur höflichen Vermittlung der Beschwerden. Außerdem wiederholen und trainieren sie die *conditional sentences*, die häufig in Beschwerdebriefen Verwendung finden.



© www.colourbox.com

In wenigen Schritten zum erfolgreichen Beschwerdebrief!

Das Wichtigste auf einen Blick

Kompetenzen

- Methodische Kompetenz: den Aufbau eines Beschwerdebriefes kennen
- Wortschatz: Ausdrücke und Phrasen zum Verfassen eines Beschwerdebriefes anwenden
- Grammatik: die *conditional sentences type I* und *II* vertiefen
- Schreibkompetenz: einen Beschwerdebrief verfassen und korrigieren

Dauer

4 Schulstunden

Niveau

B1
(Differenzierungsvorschläge für B2)

Ihr Plus

eine Checkliste zum Evaluieren von Beschwerdebriefen

Materialübersicht

1. Stunde The structure of a letter of complaint

- M 1 (Ws) Reasons for complaining
 M 2 (Ws) Rearranging a letter of complaint
 M 3 (Ws) Structure scheme – how to write a letter of complaint

2. Stunde Practising expressions

- M 4 (Ws) Learning useful expressions

3. Stunde Practising conditionals

- M 5 (Gr) Practising conditional sentences type I & II

4. Stunde Writing and correcting a letter of complaint

- M 6 (Tx) Writing your own letter of complaint
 M 7 (Ws) Checklist for your letter

Test Tone, grammar, writing – are you an expert now? (M 8)

Bedeutung der Abkürzungen

Tx: Text; **Ws:** Worksheet; **Gr:** Grammarsheet

Minimalplan

Sie haben nur 2 Stunden zur Verfügung? So können Sie die wichtigsten Inhalte erarbeiten:

- | | | |
|------------|--|-------------|
| 1. Stunde: | The structure of a letter of complaint | M 2 und M 3 |
| 2. Stunde: | Writing and correcting a letter of complaint | M 6 und M 7 |

Zusatzmaterial auf CD 29 bzw. in der ZIP-Datei

M4_Zusatz_B2 (alternatives Arbeitsblatt für das Niveau B2 mit *useful phrases* für den *letter of complaint*)



M3 Structure scheme – how to write a letter of complaint

The structure of a letter of complaint is similar to the structure of any other business letter, but in the main part there are important particularities.

Task: Read and understand the scheme. It shows how to structure a letter of complaint. You can also use it to check your results.

Letterhead (sender)
name
address
telephone
email

Date
US: January 1st, 2018
UK: 1st January 2018 or
1 January 2018

Inside address (receiver)
name
address

Subject line (naming the reason for your letter)
US: before salutation
UK: after salutation
→ in **bold**

Salutation
Dear Mrs Miller (receiver known)
Dear Sir or Madam (receiver unknown)
→ no comma

Introduction
Polite opening

Presentation of facts
Give a detailed description of the situation:
What has happened?
What is the result?
→ Include the exact date / time.
→ Begin the first paragraph with a capital letter.

Suggestion / wish
Express concrete suggestions or wishes how the problem should be solved.
→ Always be very polite in your letter and avoid an aggressive tone.

Complimentary close
UK: *Yours sincerely* (most common, addressee known)
Yours faithfully (very polite, addressee unknown)
Best / Kind regards (friendly)
US: *Sincerely yours*

Enclosure
Indicate attached documents
– Enc. (Sg. = one enclosed document)
– Encs. (Pl. = two or more enclosed documents)
→ If possible, support your letter of complaint through evidence, e. g. photos or bills.

Learning useful expressions

M 4

The following phrases help you to formulate your concerns in a letter of complaint.

Task 1

Categorise the phrases in the box as belonging to one of the following parts of a letter of complaint:

- Introduction
- Presentation of facts
- Suggestion / wish

Note down the expressions in a table like the one below. Be ready to explain your choice.

Phrases for the main body of a letter of complaint		
Introduction	Presentation of facts	Suggestion / wish
I am writing to inform you that ...		

Task 2

In the English speaking world, complaints are always polite. Underline the word(s) that support the polite tone of your letter.

- The quality does not correspond to the quality you promoted.
- I am writing to inform you that ...
- Please let me know what you know ...
- The quality does not correspond to that of your samples.
- The ordered item is wrong / missing / damaged / not working properly / of poor quality / faulty / defective / delayed.
- The quality of your product does not meet my expectations.
- I would like to send back / to return the phone at your expense.
- The product has still not arrived / has not been delivered yet.
- I would welcome it if you ...
- I regret to inform you about ...
- Your customer service / employee / team member is incompetent / unfriendly / impolite / ununiformed.
- Please replace the damaged article ...
- I would be grateful if you ...
- This matter is causing us considerable inconvenience ...
- I am writing to you with reference to ...
- I refer to my order of (date) ...
- I am looking forward to hearing from you / to your answer about the matter.
- If you need further information / have further questions, do not hesitate to ...
- I am sorry to say that ...
- Unfortunately, I must complain about ...

M 6 Writing your own letter of complaint

Now it's your turn to write your own letter of complaint!

Task

Read the situation in the box below. Write a letter of complaint in which you refer to all the aspects that caused your irritation.

Use the phrases for the main body and conditional sentences in your letter.

You work in the office of the German food company Besser Esser GmbH. You have ordered office material for an upcoming company event from the British company Pens and More.

Your order comprised sixty orange and blue pencils, 40 packets of copy and printing paper and 10 rolls of packaging tape.

Unfortunately, there was a delay in delivery of two weeks, the orange pencils were missing and five packets of the copy and printing paper were damaged.



This is not what you ordered!

© Getty Images / PeopleImages

M 7 Checklist for your letter

The checklist will help you to evaluate your letter of complaint.

Structure

I have included the following elements of a letter of complaint:

- Letterhead
- Inside address
- Date
- Subject line
- Situation
- Introduction
- Presentation of facts
- Suggestion / wish
- Complimentary close
- Enclosure

I have chosen the following structure:

- US letter
- UK letter

Content

- The description of the facts is exact, detailed and extensive.
- Precise ideas are presented on how to solve the problem

Language

- Grammar, word choice and spelling are correct.
- The word choice is diverse and varied.
- Own expressions are used.
- The chosen register is adequate and the word choice is polite.
- The sentences are complex, e.g. conditional sentences are included.

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-



Done? Tick the box!

© www.colourbox.com