

## Complaint and Adjustment Letters

### Complaint Letter

Choose a product (grocery item, tires, phone, etc.) or service (restaurant, clothing store, your bank, etc.) that has disappointed or injured you. Prepare a formal complaint tailored to the appropriate reader that will be posted on a selected online venue(s) or to be sent via snail mail. Be sure to consider message factors such as the Internet's wide viewership, the problem description, and any resolution or restitution you are requesting. Be careful to avoid making slanderous statements or using vulgarities. Your complaint letter is to be no longer than one, single-spaced page (conventional 8½" x 11" paper-size).

You will need to **bring two (2) copies** of your complaint to class: one to be exchanged with a classmate and one submitted for grading.

### Hints and Details

As you read examples of complaint letters, consider the writer's attention to dates and times: the reader establishes credibility (*ethos*) by being able to state the exact times and places (*logos*) that the given events occurred. Notice that important events are included and other, less crucial details related to the situation are left out. Ideally, you want to construct a complaint that is direct, imperative, and rational, while not belaboring the point. You must try to persuade the reader(s) to respond to your request while taking care not to insult or bore them—this is called the “You Approach.” The writer wants the reader to know that he or she is upset enough that he or she not only took the time to write this complaint, and it would be important and reasonable for his or her adjustment to be granted.

### Elements of Complaint Letters

- Specifically identify the unsatisfactory product or service
- Explain the problems clearly
- Propose an adjustment—a Call to Action
- Conclude courteously

The “cc:” line of your complaint can be a persuasive tool; for instance, if the addressee knows that you are copying others, it may make a big, though not necessarily positive difference as to his or her response.

### Adjustment Letter

We will exchange the complaints at our next class meeting during class. At home, you will thoughtfully consider the problem and prepare an adjustment letter in response to the complaint. The typed adjustment letter will be due [date] where we will discuss them during class. You will submit your adjustment letter with the complaint to which you are responding. ***Be sure to sign and date your letter*** and “cc” all individuals from the original complaint.