

MAKING COMPLAINTS POLITELY

A2-B1 | Functional language for explaining a problem politely

1 Useful phrase patterns

Use these phrases to explain a problem politely and ask for help.

I'm sorry, but ...

I'm sorry, but this is cold.

Excuse me, but ...

Excuse me, but I ordered tea.

There seems to be ...

There seems to be a mistake.

I'm not happy with ...

I'm not happy with this service.

Could you ...?

Could you check this, please?

Would it be possible to ...?

Would it be possible to change it?

I would like to ...

I would like to speak to the manager.

The problem is ...

The problem is that it is broken.

2 Respond to the situations

Write one polite complaint for each situation. Try to use a range of phrases.

1. Your food is cold in a restaurant.

2. You receive the wrong drink in a cafe.

3. Your hotel room has no hot water.

4. A shop gives you a shirt in the wrong size.

5. Your bus is very late.

6. A new phone you bought doesn't work.

7. You can't find your name on a class list.

8. Your neighbour is playing loud music late at night.

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A2-B1 | Suggested answers

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Possible answers

These are examples only. Other accurate and suitable responses are also correct.

Encourage students to use a range of phrase patterns from page 1.

1. I'm sorry, but my food is cold. Could you heat it up?

2. Excuse me, but I ordered coffee, not tea.

3. There seems to be a problem with the hot water in my room.

4. I'm not happy with the size of this shirt. Could I exchange it?

5. Could you tell me why the bus is so late?

6. The problem is that this phone doesn't work.

7. There seems to be a mistake. My name is not on the list.

8. Would it be possible to turn the music down? It's very late.
