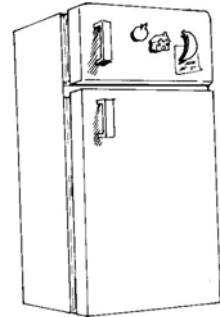


<i>900 exercises in vocational communication</i>	<b>Notes for teachers</b>	<b>D3 / 16</b>
<i>General aim</i>	<b>D: Compose a written message</b>	
<i>Level of difficulty</i>	<b>3</b>	
<i>Intermediate aim</i>	<b>1. Produce a written message</b>	
<i>Operational aim</i>	<b>Write a letter of complaint</b>	
<i>Pre-requirements</i>	<b>Ability to write complex sentences. D2 / 14 for the layout of a letter.</b>	
<i>Number of exercises</i>	<b>8</b>	
<i>Summing-up exercise</i>	<b>D3 / 16 – 1.9</b>	
<i>Comments</i>		

Here is an example of a letter of complaint.



5, Canal Way  
Lincoln

Weatherby & Co.  
95, Winchester Drive  
Salisbury

4 December 2007

Subject: complaint

Dear Sir or Madam,

I regret to inform you that I have still not received the BALLARD refrigerator, Ref. no 029525 in your catalogue, that I ordered on 15 October 2007.

The article was to be delivered to my home on 2 November one month ago. This delay is all the more unacceptable that you have already cashed the cheque to pay for the refrigerator. I have my bank statement to prove it.

Therefore, I would be grateful if you would make sure that the article is delivered as soon as possible.

Yours faithfully,

P. Morange

**GO TO THE NEXT PAGE**

First we should point out that the **presentation** of a letter of complaint is the same as for an administrative or commercial letter. On this subject, you will find all the information you need in module D3 / 14.

## 1. Why do we write a letter of complaint?

Because we are dissatisfied with something.  
In his letter, Paul Morange shows his displeasure twice.

In the 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph, he says:

*"I regret to inform you that I have still not received the BALLARD refrigerator..."*

This is a polite way to begin a letter of complaint. Paul Morange could also have used one of the following sentences:

- *I wish to point out that...*
- *I notice with regret that the BALLARD refrigerator (Ref. no 029525 in your catalogue) ordered on 15 October 2007, has still not been delivered.*
- *I wish to draw your attention to a delay in the delivery of a BALLARD refrigerator...*

But he could also have begun his letter by reminding them of the order he placed:

- *On 15 October 2007 I ordered a BALLARD refrigerator, ref. no...*  
*To date, I have not yet received delivery of...*
- *I still have not received the BALLARD refrigerator, ref...*

In the second paragraph of his letter, Paul Morange shows his displeasure again by using the word "*unacceptable*":

*"This delay is all the more unacceptable as you have cashed the cheque..."*

Other words can be used for the same thing, for example:

*"regrettable, inadmissible, annoying".*

**GO TO THE NEXT PAGE**

## 2. Why do we write a letter of complaint?

To obtain satisfaction.

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph of his letter Paul Morange them to deliver as soon as possible:

*“Therefore, I would be grateful if you would make sure that the article is delivered as soon as possible”.*

**Here are some other expressions to say the same thing.**

- I would ask that you carry out the necessary checks and ensure delivery as soon as possible.
- I expect delivery very shortly.
- I expect immediate delivery.
- Please carry out the necessary checks and ensure delivery as soon as possible.

## 3. When do we write a letter of complaint?

Paul Morange is writing because of a late delivery. That is why, in the first and second paragraphs of his letter, he repeats:

- the article he had ordered;
- the reference of the article;
- the date of the order;
- the original delivery date.

*“I regret to inform you that I have still not received the BALLARD refrigerator, Ref. no 029525 in your catalogue, that I ordered in a letter dated 15 November 2007*

*The order was to be delivered on 2 December.”*

**GO TO THE NEXT PAGE**

<i>900 exercises in vocational communication</i>	<b>Exercise</b>	<b>D3 / 16 - 1.2</b>
		<b>Eval.:</b>

We also write a letter of complaint in the following case.

There has been a **mistake**: the articles delivered do not correspond to the articles ordered. It is therefore necessary to repeat the order that you placed and point out the mistake by describing the articles received.

You write to The Clothes Hanger, a mail order company, to inform them that the size of the clothes you have just received does not correspond to your order. Your letter is enclosed in the parcel you are returning.

**Look at the suggested answers for D3 / 16 - 1.2**

We also write a letter of complaint in the following case.

There has been a **mistake**: the articles delivered do not correspond to the articles ordered. It is therefore necessary to repeat the order that you placed and point out the mistake by describing the articles received.

You write to The Clothes Hanger, a mail order company, to inform them that the size of the clothes you have just received does not correspond to your order. Your letter is enclosed in the parcel you are returning.

Josephine Sear  
11, Meadow Rise  
Ashby de la Zouch  
LE65 1ZR

The Clothes Hanger  
Customer Service Dept.

18 October 07

Dear Sir or Madam,

I have just received some articles that do not correspond to my order.

The two pairs of trousers, ref. PA 1273-14 and PA 1256-14, are size 18, whereas I ordered size 14. The references of the two articles end with the number 14 corresponding to the size ordered. It is therefore evident that the mistake is not on my part.

I am returning the two articles postage due, and would be grateful if you could send the trousers in the correct size at your earliest convenience.

Thank you in advance.

Yours faithfully,

*Josephine Sear*

Josephine Sear

<i>900 exercises in vocational communication</i>	<b>Exercise</b>	<b>D3 / 16 - 1.3</b>
		<b>Eval.:</b>

**We also write a letter of complaint when the goods ordered arrive damaged, or when an appliance does not work. In these cases, you must give details of the condition of the goods, manufacturing defects, malfunctions, etc.**

On 25 June 2007, in a PRICENET shop, you bought an RWK television, no 284162 R. after a month your television broke down. You took it back to the shop where they repaired it. Two weeks later, another breakdown. PRICENET repaired the TV again, but three months later it stopped working. You are convinced that there is a manufacturing defect. You write to the company RWK. You tell them what happened and you ask for a new television set.

**Look at the suggested answers for D3 / 16 - 1.3**

**We also write a letter of complaint when the goods ordered arrive damaged, or when an appliance does not work. In these cases, you must give details of the condition of the goods, manufacturing defects, malfunctions, etc.**

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6, Mozart Avenue  
Romsey, Hants SO51 7DB

RWK Company  
7 Fairchild Street  
Church Litton

12 November 07

Dear Sir or Madam,

On 25 June 2007, in a PRICENET shop, I bought an RWK television, ref. no 284162 R.

After only one month, my television broke down for the first time. I took it back to the PRICENET shop, where they repaired it. Two weeks later, it broke down again. The shop repaired it once again, but three months later it is once again broken down. I have reason to believe there is a manufacturing defect.

I would ask you therefore to exchange this defective television set for a new one with the same references.

Thank you in advance.

Yours faithfully,

*J. Laytham*

Jo Latham



We also write a letter of complaint in the following case.

\* An order has been delivered **incomplete**, there are items missing. You must repeat the order that you placed, indicate which articles have arrived and those which are missing.

**EXAMPLE:**

<p>XYZ shop Address</p>	<p>Company XXX Address</p> <p>Subject: complaint re mistake in delivery</p> <p>Dear Sir or Madam,</p> <p>On ..... we ordered 10 cotton print tablecloths in light blue liberty and 60 matching table napkins. There must have been a mistake in the delivery as we received 10 flower print tablecloths in light blue liberty and 60 plaid table napkins. You will understand that we cannot accept articles that do not match. We look forward to hearing from you.</p> <p>Yours faithfully,</p> <p>Signature</p>
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**GO TO THE NEXT PAGE**

### **Sending an email message**

When we write an email, we do not need to be as strict as when writing a letter. There is no point in putting the name and address of the company we are writing to as this information is already given. It is not necessary to give our own address either, as the answer will be on the computer. The closing is usually just “Best regards” followed by the name of the person writing. It is also not necessary to write the date as it is automatically in the message.

Here is an example of a message sent by email:

Dear Sir or Madam,  
To date, I have not yet received the books I ordered, ref 623 744. They should have arrived yesterday. I would like to know where the parcel is and if there is a problem of any sort.  
Thank you in advance.  
Best regards,  
Elsie Bragg

### **Now it's your turn!**

You have ordered some articles on Internet. On reception, you realise that the articles do not correspond to your order. You are going to send an email to the webmaster (the webmaster is the person who receives the correspondence on Internet and who answers).

**Look at the suggested answers for D3 / 16 - 1.5**

### **Sending an email message**

When we write an email, we do not need to be as strict as when writing a letter. There is no point in putting the name and address of the company we are writing to as this information is already given. It is not necessary to give our own address either, as the answer will be on the computer. The closing is usually just “Best regards” followed by the name of the person writing. It is also not necessary to write the date as it is automatically in the message.

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Thank you in advance.  
Best regards,  
Elsie Bragg

### **Now it's your turn!**

You have ordered some articles on Internet. On reception, you realise that the articles do not correspond to your order. You are going to send an email to the webmaster (the webmaster is the person who receives the correspondence on Internet and who answers).

Dear Sirs,  
On 3 September 2007 I ordered 2 DVDs. They were:  
- RAZZIO in concert, ref. D713-03  
- Meeting with the Moon, ref. F910-31  
I received 2 DVDs which are totally unconnected to my order.  
- Ballroom dancing  
- Japanese in a week  
  
Could you tell me how I can return them to you for exchange or refund? How long would delivery take for the right articles?  
Thanks in advance.  
Best regards,  
Arthur Wagner

## **THREATS, REQUESTS FOR DAMAGES.**

Sometimes it happens that a person suffers **loss** (financial or material) due to a problem with an order.

If an order arrives late, in bad condition, if it is incomplete, or if the articles do not correspond to those ordered, the customer might suffer the consequences. Especially if the goods were ordered to be sold (in the case of a shop) or to carry out work (in the case of a company).

A client who believes that a delay, mistake or bad condition of the goods will make him sustain a loss can threaten the company with whom they placed the order and request compensation.

But be careful: a letter of complaint is always written in order to obtain satisfaction or to reach an agreement. So it is important to remain polite at all times.

### **Here are some expressions that can be used:**

*If we do not receive these articles by..., we will be obliged to ask for compensation for losses incurred.*

*I am therefore obliged to demand compensation for my loss.*

*We are therefore entitled to request compensation for the loss due to this delay.*

*Because of this delay, I have suffered severe loss. Consequently, I ask you to compensate by paying an indemnity of ...€.*

*As compensation for the losses incurred, I demand compensation of ...€.*

*In view of the financial losses incurred by..., I am obliged to demand compensation.*

**GO TO THE NEXT PAGE**

<i>900 exercises in vocational communication</i>	<b>Exercise</b>	<b>D3 / 16 - 1.6</b>
		<b>Eval.:</b>

You manage a confectioner's shop. On 25 November 2007, you ordered 10 boxes of dark chocolate, 15 boxes of milk chocolate and 5 boxes of white chocolate.

Today, 10 December, the order arrived in damaged condition: the packing was torn, 5 boxes of the milk chocolate are damaged and 5 boxes of white chocolate are missing.

You write a letter of complaint to the manufacturer. You ask him to send you the missing items and replace the damaged items, which cannot be sold, by 20 December at the latest. You threaten to ask for compensation if the delivery is not honoured, as after the Christmas period, you might be unable to sell them.

**Look at the suggested answers for D3 / 16 - 1.6**

You manage a confectioner's shop. On 25 November 2007, you ordered 10 boxes of dark chocolate, 15 boxes of milk chocolate and 5 boxes of white chocolate.

Today, 10 December, the order arrived in damaged condition: the packing was torn, 5 boxes of the milk chocolate are damaged and 5 boxes of white chocolate are missing.

You write a letter of complaint to the manufacturer. You ask him to send you the missing items and replace the damaged items, which cannot be sold, by 20 December at the latest. You threaten to ask for compensation if the delivery is not honoured, as after the Christmas period, you might be unable to sell them.

*"The Sweet Touch"  
Sweets and Chocolates  
Address*

*Name of Chocolate manufacturer  
Address*

*10 December 2007*

*Subject: complaint*

*Dear Sir or Madam,*

*On 25 November 2007 I placed an order with your company for 10 boxes of dark chocolate, 15 boxes of milk chocolate and 5 boxes of white chocolate. Part of the order arrived this morning in very bad condition: the cardboard packing was torn, 5 of the 15 boxes of milk chocolate were damaged and 5 boxes of white chocolate are missing.*

*The Christmas holidays are approaching and I need these goods to satisfy the demands of my customers. I therefore ask that you send the 5 missing boxes immediately, and replace the 5 damaged boxes by 20 December at the latest.*

*If this date is not honoured, I will be obliged to claim compensation for the losses incurred.*

*Yours faithfully.*

*Signature*

Mrs Danu is a dressmaker. On 25 April 2007, she ordered from the Ginger catalogue, an Elsa sewing machine, luxury model, ref. XZT03. She received it on 10 May 2007. The machine does not work. Mrs Danu can therefore not do her work. Here is the letter that she writes to the Ginger Company.

<p style="text-align: right;"><i>25, Maple Tree Avenue Exeter, Devon 15 May 20..</i></p> <p><i>Dear Sir,</i></p> <p><i>The sewing machine that you sold me (which I received on 10 May) does not work. I can't do my work and my clients are waiting. It is not good at all. I paid for the machine. Someone will have to come and make it work or you will have to give me another one. If not, I will sue you.</i></p> <p><i>Yours faithfully.</i></p>
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- 1) Note down all the mistakes in this letter.
- 2) Rewrite Mrs Danu's letter

**Look at the suggested answers for D3 / 16 - 1.7**

Mrs Danu is a dressmaker. On 25 April 2007, she ordered from the Ginger catalogue, an Elsa sewing machine, luxury model, ref. XZT03. She received it on 10 May 2007. The machine does not work. Mrs Danu can therefore not do her work. Here is the letter that she writes to the Ginger Company.

<i>25, Maple Tree Avenue Exeter, Devon 15 May 2007</i>
<i>Dear Sir,</i>  <i>The sewing machine that you sold me (which I received on 10 May) does not work. I can't do my work and my clients are waiting. It is not good at all. I paid for the machine. Someone will have to come and make it work or you will have to give me another one. If not, I will sue you.</i>  <i>Yours.</i>

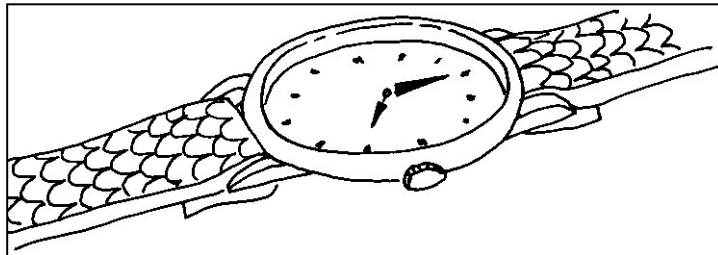
1) Note down all the mistakes in this letter.

2) Rewrite Mrs Danu's letter

- Mrs Danu did not indicate the name and address of the addressee.
- She did not give the subject.
- Mrs Danu forgot to specify the make and reference of the machine.
- Elle uses expressions that are too familiar: "it is not good at all", "someone has to come and make it work or you will have to give me another one".
- You should not threaten to sue in a letter of complaint.
- The closing formula is not right.

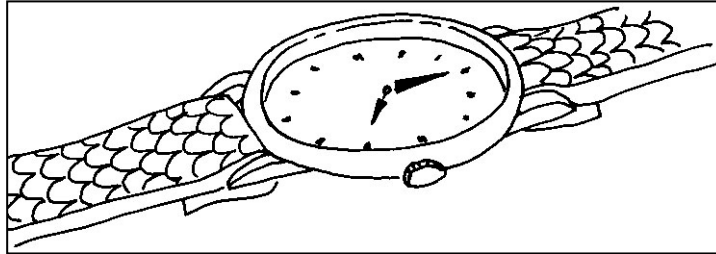
<i>25, Maple Tree Avenue Exeter, Devon 15 May 2007</i>
Ginger Sewing Machines After Sales Department Address
<b>Subject: complaint</b>
Mrs, Mr,  On 10 May 2007. I received delivery of the Elsa sewing machine, luxury model, ref. XZT03, which I had ordered on 25 April 2007. I paid by cheque, on delivery. Unfortunately, the machine does not work. My clients are waiting and I cannot work. Therefore I am suffering loss of profit. Thus, I would ask you either to ensure that the machine works, or to send me a replacement in working condition as soon as possible. Otherwise I shall be obliged to ask for compensation for the financial losses incurred. Yours faithfully,  Jane Danu





You ordered a coat by mail order. With this order, you were supposed to receive a free watch. The coat is fine but the watch does not work. When you removed the protective film, you neither forced nor damaged the watch. You followed the instructions to start it, but to no avail. You therefore write an email to the mail order firm to tell them about the problem and ask them to send you a watch that works.

**Look at the suggested answers for D3 / 16 - 1.8**



You ordered a coat by mail order. With this order, you were supposed to receive a free watch. The coat is fine but the watch does not work. When you removed the protective film, you neither forced nor damaged the watch. You followed the instructions to start it, but to no avail. You therefore write an email to the mail order firm to tell them about the problem and ask them to send you a watch that works.

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am very satisfied with the coat I received, but I ordered it particularly because I very much liked the watch that you were offering as a free gift. It is indeed very nice, but alas, it does not work. I have read the instructions carefully, I removed the plastic film, but no matter how I tried to turn the knob to adjust the time, the hands would not move. I cannot therefore start my watch and am very disappointed... I would like to add that I did not try to "force" it and did not damage it. I simply tried to make it work as in the instructions. The guarantee is therefore valid, as it is no doubt a manufacturing defect.

I would be very grateful if you could send me a watch that works qui to replace the one that I am returning to you.

Thank you in advance.

Yours faithfully,

Grace Winter

You have just bought two sets of sheets, one white and one pink (top sheet, fitted sheet and matching pillowcases) by mail order from the House Beautiful Company. You removed the packaging from the white sheets, and washed them at 40° and then ironed them to remove the stiffness. You then noticed that the cotton was of very bad quality. The material was rough and unpleasant to the touch. You therefore did not unwrap the second set of sheets which was of the same make.

You send it all back with a letter of complaint. You hope that they will refund everything, but you know that when an item has been washed, it can usually not be replaced or refunded... You therefore have to be very diplomatic to obtain satisfaction, but you insist on the fact that you were very disappointed as you have been a customer with House Beautiful for a long time.

Write a letter of complaint.

**Look at the suggested answers for D3 / 16 - 1.9**

29 Fishpool Street  
St Albans, Herts

Customer no: 644 855 486  
Order no: 1-6-237-70814-91

1<sup>st</sup> September, 07

Dear Sir or Madam,

I have been a customer with House Beautiful for a very long time, and I ordered and duly received a series of articles for a total of 201.40 €. However, these articles are not only disappointing, they are unusable. The order was for two sets of Columba sheets, consisting of a top sheet, a fitted sheet and matching pillowcases, one white and the other pink.

I have left the pink set in its original packaging. I washed the white one in the machine at 40°C, as one always does with new sheets. I then realised that the material (100 % cotton) was very rough and unpleasant to the touch. Impossible to sleep in sheets like that! Test it against your cheek and you will see what I mean. Luckily I did not unwrap the other set, which I am returning intact.

I realise that to send back an article and be refunded, the article must not have been washed. But I was not expecting to have any problems with these, and in all my experience, I really did not think that such non-quality of cotton could possibly exist. That is why I did not hesitate to wash the sheets, which, in any case, I could not use as they were, as for any new sheets.

As the total price of the sets of sheets and pillow cases was rather high (201.40 €), I would be very upset to have lost the money, as I simply cannot use them as they are.

The references are as follows:

- set of sheets and pillowcases, Columba white 105 643 3
- set of sheets and pillowcases, Columba pink 105 645 6

I thank you for your attention.

Yours faithfully,

Nekia Hawthorne