

Worksheet 6: A letter of apology and compensation

- 1** When a customer telephones or writes to your company to complain, what procedure does the company follow? Discuss in pairs.
- 2** Work in pairs. Read seven pieces of advice for handling complaints. Which do you think is good advice? Which is bad advice?
 - a Listen to the customer or read their complaint carefully.
 - b Let the customer know that you are going to take action and by when.
 - c Wait to see if the customer calls or writes again before taking action.
 - d Take responsibility and investigate the problem. Talk to everyone involved.
 - e Call or write to the customer and explain the reason for the problem. Avoid making an apology or offering compensation immediately.
 - f Offer compensation if the customer suggests taking legal action.
 - g Write a polite and formal letter so everything is in writing, and offer compensation if the customer's complaint was valid.
- 3** Read this letter from a hotel manager to a customer. Based on the information in the letter, which advice in Exercise 2 do you think the hotel manager followed?

Dear Ms. Campbell,

¹Further to your letter regarding your stay at the Victoria Arms Hotel on the nights of May 25th and 26th, please accept my apology for your unpleasant experience. I sincerely regret the inconvenience caused to you because of the noise and poor room service.

²We always strive to ensure that all our guests receive the highest standard of service at our hotel, but on this occasion we clearly failed in that responsibility. As a result of your letter, I have investigated your concerns, talked to the staff involved, and taken the necessary action.

³In addition, as a gesture of goodwill I am enclosing a voucher for two free nights at our hotel at any time in the next twelve months. The voucher may be used by you or anyone at your company. We hope that you or your colleagues will enjoy your time with us on your next visit.

⁴Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions or comments. I look forward to welcoming you in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Dariusz Sz waj
Hotel Manager

4 Match these aims to the four paragraphs (1–4) in the letter.

- a Explain what action has been taken ____
- b Refer to future contact ____
- c Make your apology ____
- d Offer compensation ____

5 Find formal expressions in the letter that match these phrases.

- 1 I'm writing in reply to your letter about ...

- 2 I'd like to say sorry _____
- 3 I'm really sorry for the difficulties ...

- 4 try to make sure _____
- 5 didn't do our job properly _____
- 6 dealt with the problem _____
- 7 an offer of friendly relations _____
- 8 see you soon _____

6 A customer has written a letter of complaint to your company and they want some compensation. Imagine answers to these questions:

- 1 Why have they complained?
- 2 What happened?

7 Write a letter of apology and compensation (or a refund or replacement) to the imaginary customer in Exercise 6.

I CAN

structure a letter of apology
and compensation

use the correct level of formality