



Complaints: room service

Skills and curriculum references

Sc/E2.3d	Give an explanation
Sc/E2.4a	Ask for clarification and explanation
Lr/E2.1d	Listen for gist and respond, in face-to-face situations
Lr/E2.2a	Listen for detail in short narratives and explanations

This unit is aimed at Entry 2 learners. For extension and differentiation activities, the following curriculum references may also apply:

Sc/E3.1a	Use stress, intonation and pronunciation to be understood and to make meaning clear <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be aware of the role of intonation in indicating feeling and attitude
Sc/E3.2a	Use formal language and register where appropriate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be aware of the need to adapt register according to the seriousness of the situation, e.g. when apologising
Sc/E3.4d	Give an explanation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • know when an explanation is required, e.g. an explanation should normally follow an apology
Sc/L1.3d	Give explanations and instructions
Lr/E3.5a	Respond to requests for action
Lr/L1.2e	Listen for phonological detail recognise how intonation, pitch and stress can indicate attitude

Topic/function

Learners practise dealing with complaints and apologies and saying what action will be taken.

Rationale

Learners need to understand that, in English-speaking countries, complaints can be helpful to an organisation, enabling it to identify ways to improve a service or product. It is, therefore, very important for learners to know how to deal with complaints in a positive and polite way, even if they are unable to provide a direct resolution of the issue.

Many learners will be working in fairly low-level jobs, and there may be times when guests complain about things that are beyond their control: learners need to be able to refer such complaints to their supervisors. This unit includes an example of this type of complaint.

Grammar focus

This unit practises the use of 'will have' or 'get' and the past participle ('-ed') of regular verbs, as in these examples:

- 'I'll (I will) get it fixed/changed.'
- 'I'll have them changed.'

Alternatively, 'will have' can be used to refer to a job that will be done in the future:

- 'I'll have someone do it straight away.'

List of materials

The following materials accompany this unit:

- Tape transcript – page 2.4
- Photocopiable learner's materials – pages 2.5–2.6
- Photocopiable learner's flashcards 1–4 – pages 2.7–2.10.

The following materials would also be useful with this unit:

- Whiteboard/flipchart/pens.

The photocopiable learner's materials and flashcards can be found on pages 2.5–2.10 of this unit. If possible, photocopy flashcard 1 on paper of one colour and flashcard 2 on paper of another colour. The tape transcript can be found in the transcript section at the back of this resource pack as well as at the end of these teacher's notes.

Sequence of activities

Introduction

- 1 Ask the group whether any of them have stayed in a hotel and, if so, whether they experienced problems with their rooms. Write these on the board. If no examples are provided, give learners some examples of possible problems guests could experience.

Pair work

- 2 Ask learners to work in pairs and exchange experiences in more detail. They can use examples of experiences they have heard about, or even seen on television, if they have no such experiences of their own. After they have done this, they should join another pair and continue their discussion. Ask learners to think of other possible problems that could occur. They should then report back to the group and the results should be written on the board.

Responding to complaints

- 3 Remind learners that, in English-speaking countries, complaints can be very positive because they can help an organisation identify ways of improving their service or product. It is always important to remember:
 - to be polite at all times
 - that the guest wants an apology and action
 - to tell the guest what you are going to do
 - that, if you can't do anything, you should tell the guest why you can't, and who you are going to speak to.

You may like to ask learners to discuss how people complain in their own countries, if relevant.

Apology phrases

- 4 Ask learners to suggest possible phrases they could use to apologise when guests complain, depending on the situation. Write these on the board.

Examples include:

- 'I am terribly sorry.'
- 'I am very/so/awfully sorry.'
- 'I must apologise.'
- 'I do apologise.'
- 'I'm sorry about...'
- 'I'll sort it out.'
- 'I'm sorry to hear that.'

Describing problems

- 5 Distribute copies of sheet A to learners. The sheet contains examples of the language used to describe problems. Ask learners to practise the dialogues in pairs, and then, as a group, to talk through the possible responses. This dialogue is also available on the tape and a transcript is provided at the back of this resource pack as well as at the end of these teacher's notes.

Choosing responses

- 6 Cut up copies of the segments from flashcards 1 and 2 and distribute to learners. If possible, photocopy flashcard 1 on paper of one colour and flashcard 2 on paper of another colour.

Ask learners to match responses to problems. This will give learners an introduction to the variety of responses. Learners should also add suitable apology phrases when doing this exercise.

Group work

- 7 Distribute copies of sheet B to learners. This lists six complaints. Ask learners to discuss possible responses in small groups. They can make notes on their sheets.

Extension and differentiation

With more-able learners, cut up and distribute copies of one segment from flashcard 3 (complaints) and one segment from flashcard 4 (responses). Learners should write a response and a complaint on each of their cards. Mix up all the cards and ask learners to pick one card each. Their task is to find the person with the corresponding complaint or response by asking questions to other learners. Possible examples include:

- 'Is your card a complaint or a response?'
- 'Is your complaint about your room?'

Learners should then read out their situation in their pairs to the rest of the class.

Ask learners how they would deal with the following complaints:

- 'My dry cleaning hasn't been returned.'
- 'I ordered a bottle of Australian red wine, not white wine.'
- 'My bed wasn't made this morning.'
- 'I didn't get a newspaper this morning.'
- 'The receptionist takes too long to answer the phone.'



Tape transcript

Unit 2 Complaints: room service

- 1 **Guest:** I want to complain about the state of my room.
- Employee:** I am very sorry to hear that you have a complaint, sir. I will call housekeeping for you.
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- 2 **Guest:** Hello, I've got a problem with my room.
- Employee:** I am very sorry to hear that. What seems to be the problem?
- Guest:** Well, it's dirty...
- Employee:** Oh dear, I'll send a cleaner right away.
- Guest:** ...there aren't any tea bags...
- Employee:** Oh, I do apologise. I'll get some for you right now.
- Guest:** ...and the television doesn't work.
- Employee:** I'm very sorry. We'll fix it straight away, madam.
- Guest:** And there's something else! I reserved a twin room and this room has a double bed.
- Employee:** Just a moment, please. I'll get the manager for you.



Complaints: room service

Name _____

Dialogue 1

Guest: I want to complain about the state of my room.

Employee: I am very sorry to hear that you have a complaint, sir. I will call housekeeping for you.

Dialogue 2

Guest: Hello, I've got a problem with my room.

Employee: I am very sorry to hear that. What seems to be the problem?

Guest: Well, it's dirty...

Employee: Oh dear, I'll send a cleaner right away.

Guest: ...there aren't any tea bags...

Employee: Oh, I do apologise. I'll get some for you right now.

Guest: ...and the television doesn't work.

Employee: I'm very sorry. We'll fix it straight away, madam.

Guest: And there's something else! I reserved a twin room and this room has a double bed.

Employee: Just a moment, please. I'll get the manager for you.





Complaints: room service

Name _____

Read these complaints, then discuss how you would respond. You can make notes below each complaint.

1 'The bathroom is dirty.'

2 'There isn't any toilet paper.'

3 'The shower doesn't work.'

4 'Our luggage isn't in our room.'

5 'The sheets aren't clean.'

6 'The table lamp is broken.'



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My room hasn't been cleaned.

The air conditioning doesn't work.

The TV in the next room is too loud.

There aren't any clean towels in the bathroom.

The waste bin hasn't been emptied.

There isn't any milk.

The shower is dirty.

My luggage hasn't been brought to my room.



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I'll see to it straight away.

I'll have it fixed straight away.

I'll ask the guest in that room to turn it down.

I'll get some sent up right now.

Let me empty it for you now.

I'll get some for you now.

I'll have someone clean it straight away.

I'll do it now.



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Complaint

Complaint

Complaint

Complaint

Complaint

Complaint



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Response

Response

Response

Response

Response

Response
