

TEN TOP TIPS FOR WRITING A LETTER OF COMPLAINT

Tip	Explanation	Example
1. Begin with the basics	Right at the start, you want to tell the manager where and when the incident took place. Then summarise the problem. This will help them to investigate your complaint more thoroughly.	<i>I am writing to complain about a product I purchased from your Kowloon branch on 28 January 2021. No sooner had I got the Samsung UE40 home than I discovered that there was no instruction manual to help me set it up.</i>
2. Keep it formal	Letters of complaint are serious documents. You're usually writing to someone you don't know, so a formal style is better.	<i>I would like to draw your attention to your company's literature I want to tell you about...</i>
3. Be forceful	Remember that you have every right to be annoyed! Something bad has happened to you. Don't be afraid to show your anger. Use expressions of shock and surprise to show how bad the situation was.	<i>I was appalled to discover... Can you imagine my consternation when... To my utter horror...</i>
4. Use your imagination	Letters of complaint need to be specific . It's not enough just to say "the play portrayed teenagers in a bad light". Give specific examples. Don't just say "the tour guide wasn't helpful" – say the specific things that he did which were unhelpful.	<i>The play portrayed teenagers in a negative light: at one point the script declared that 'we all just want to smoke weed'.</i>
5. Use PEE	Letters of complaint lend themselves especially well to the 'Point – Evidence – Explanation' structure. Point – What's your complaint? Evidence – What happened? Explanation – So what?	<i>Unfortunately, the health of patients is put in jeopardy at the hospital, since many staff members are smoking in close proximity to the sick. This will only make their conditions worse.</i>
6. Get the sequencers right	As you read a letter of complaint, the argument should get stronger and stronger. Sequencing words that make your points stronger are appropriate.	<i>Our problems did not end there, however...</i>
7. Don't be afraid to exaggerate	Ok, don't go over the top, but a bit of exaggeration will do no harm and will make your letter sound much more colourful.	<i>I can honestly say that I've never experienced such appalling customer service.</i>
8. Tell the manager what to do	Once you've listed your complaints, you need to ask the manager to actually do something. Do you need a refund? An apology? Does the shop / restaurant need to change its policies? Tell them what you expect them to do.	<i>I think that it is now incumbent upon you to order a review of safety procedures at your plant.</i>
9. Warn the reader	What happens if the manager doesn't comply with your wishes? Tell them what will happen if you don't get what you want.	<i>Should you be unwilling to provide me with a full refund, I will have no choice but to refer the matter to the Consumer Council.</i>
10. End in a complimentary way	Even though you might be mad, keep it polite. Always. Right to the end.	<i>I hope to hear from you soon.</i>