

# TEN TOP TIPS FOR WRITING A REPLY TO A LETTER OF

## COMPLAINT

Tip	Explanation	Example
<b>1. Thank your reader</b>	Regardless of whether the person complaining is right or wrong, they have taken the time to write to you. Acknowledge this!	<i>Thank you for your letter of 12 May in which you raised concerns about...</i>
<b>2. Express regret</b>	You need to learn how to apologise without apologising! This is quite possible. Say you are sorry that they are not satisfied. But you don't have to say 'sorry, it was our fault'. In other words, show you sympathise, but don't necessarily admit it was your mistake.	<i>I was sorry to hear that your experience at our park did not meet your standards.</i>
<b>3. Apologise when you're at fault</b>	If your company was wrong, say so. It's OK to apologise when you should!	<i>Let me take this opportunity to apologise for the fact that our staff were not attentive to your needs.</i>
<b>4. Defend your company</b>	But if your company was not wrong, don't apologise! Your duty is to defend your company from any false allegations made against them.	<i>Whilst I appreciate that you were inconvenienced by the delay, we had no choice but to divert the aircraft to Kansai because of bad weather.</i>
<b>5. Refer back to the letter</b>	Remember that a reply to a letter of complaint is...a <b>reply</b> . Refer back to the original letter. Not all the time, but once or twice.	<i>In your letter you mentioned that the floor was slippery and unsafe.</i>
<b>6. Keep it polite and professional</b>	It doesn't matter if you think the person who wrote to you is mad / wrong / unreasonable. They are still human beings and you need to talk to them politely. Respect them. Remember also that you want to keep your customers, so don't offend unnecessarily.	I have to say that I do not recognise your description of our staff... <del>Your description of our staff is completely wrong</del>
<b>7. Make the reader see your point of view</b>	Remember that your reader is a reasonable person. So <i>explain</i> to them why the problem arose. Get them to see your point of view.	<i>I'm sure you will understand that we are unable to change weather patterns and that we must put the safety of our passengers and crew first.</i>
<b>8. Keep it formal</b>	Obviously, you want to cultivate a friendly, non-aggressive tone. But also try to keep it formal, as it is a professional document.	<i>I'd like to address the issues you raised in turn.</i> <del>I'd like to talk about the problems one by one</del>
<b>9. Be specific</b>	Don't just apologise for the difficulties that have been caused. Always give specific examples.	<i>We are sorry that you had to wait for three hours for your luggage and that our customer services representative did not offer you a complimentary drink whilst you waited.</i>
<b>10. Invite your reader to contact you</b>	At the end of your letter, apologise again and tell your reader that they can contact you again should they wish.	<i>Let me once again apologise for the inconvenience. Please feel free to contact me on the above address if you would like to take the matter further.</i>