

Worksheet 8: Complaining and apologising

1 Discuss these questions in groups.

- 1 Have you ever complained about a product or service? What happened? Did you request and / or receive:
 - a refund?
 - a repair?
 - a replacement?
- 2 Does your company ever receive complaints from clients or customers? What are they about exactly? What is your company policy about complaints? Do you always refund, repair or replace?

2 Read the complaint and answer these questions.

- 1 Is it about a service or a product?
- 2 What problems have there been?
- 3 Has the writer spoken to a real person?
- 4 Does the writer want a refund, a repair or replacement?

My new internet service was installed on 3rd January by your company technician. I subscribe to your Premium Business Plan service. Apparently this guarantees (according to your website) 'maximum download speeds and superfast broadband'. However, it is now two weeks since installation and there have been a series of problems with the service.

First of all, internet use is often interrupted or download speeds are very slow. This means that I am unable to videoconference with colleagues and clients. Worse still, on 10th January there was no service at all so I telephoned your helpline. I was told by a recorded voice that the service was temporarily interrupted. In fact, the service did not return until 24 hours later. The internet service continues to be slow.

Having been unable to speak to someone, I am writing to you to demand that a technician solves the problems immediately. I intend to withhold any further direct debits from my bank account until the matter is resolved.

3 Match paragraphs 1–3 with the purpose a–c.

- a action required
- b background to the complaint
- c details of the problems

4 Writers often use -ly adverbs such as *fortunately*, *accidentally*, etc. to comment on a sentence. Find three sentences in the text with -ly adverbs, and then answer these questions.

- 1 In each sentence, is the -ly adverb at the beginning of the sentence, at the end of the sentence or before a verb or adjective?
- 2 Does the -ly adverb comment on the whole sentence (or clause) or on one word?

5 Read the telecom company's reply. Choose the correct options to complete the letter. Note the position of each adverb and what it comments on.

With reference to your complaint dated 18th January, we (1) *sincerely* / *fortunately* apologise for the inconvenience caused by problems with your service. (2) *Temporarily* / *Unfortunately*, there have been a number of faults reported in your area of the country and so our service team has been (3) *immediately* / *extremely* busy trying to resolve certain technical issues.

I am happy to report that we have been able to isolate the problem. It has been caused by local roadworks in your district affecting cables beneath the surface, (4) *luckily* / *apparently*. The lines are now (5) *rapidly* / *slowly* being fixed. You should experience normal service by midnight tonight at the latest.

Due to the inconvenience caused to you, we will refund your subscription for the months of January and February. Please accept our apologies and contact us again if you are not (6) *fairly* / *completely* satisfied with this response.

6 Match paragraphs 1–3 with the purpose a–c.

- a offer to the customer
- b action to solve the problem
- c apology and explanation

7 Think of one complaint that a customer might have about your company. Then write one of the following:

- a complaint from the customer, using three paragraphs and the structure in Exercise 3. Use at least one -ly adverb in each paragraph.
- an apology to the customer, using three paragraphs and the structure in Exercise 6. Use at least one -ly adverb in each paragraph.

I CAN

structure my complaint or apology with three paragraphs.

use -ly adverbs to comment and add emphasis