

Dealing with problems and complaints- step by step roleplays

Think of a situation in which people contact you about problems (face to face, by email, or on the phone), e.g. a student complaining about their accommodation or a professor whose classroom is too small. Look at the next page if you need help thinking of a problem.

Explain that real situation to your partner, then roleplay that same situation 10 times, following the instructions below in order until you successfully do number 10. Each time, roleplay the whole conversation from greeting to ending by saying goodbye etc. When you have finished the 10th version, discuss which of those is most realistic for you. Then switch roles and do the same for your partner's realistic dealing with problems situation.

1. Listen to the problem, apologise, then do what they want you to do
2. Listen to the problem, sound sympathetic (without actually apologising), then do what they want you to do
3. Listen to the problem, apologise or sound sympathetic, find out more about it, then do what they want you to do
4. Listen to the problem, apologise or sound sympathetic, find out more about it, do what they want you to do, then promise to make changes so that the same problem doesn't happen again
5. Listen to the problem, apologise or sound sympathetic, find out more about it, then promise to do what they want you to do (some time later)
6. Listen to the problem, apologise or sound sympathetic, find out more about it, then suggest a way that they could solve the problem themselves
7. Listen to the problem, apologise or sound sympathetic, find out more about it, then say that you can't do what they want you to do
8. Listen to the problem, apologise or sound sympathetic, find out more about it, say that you can't do what they want you to do, then suggest a way that they could solve the problem themselves
9. Listen to the problem, apologise or sound sympathetic, find out more about it, say that you can't do what they want you to do, but promise to pass on their complaint to someone who probably can
10. Listen to the problem, apologise or sound sympathetic, find out more about it, say that you can't do what they want you to do, but suggest someone else who they can contact

Suggested things to complain about

Suggested topics to talk about	Suggested problems
Cleaning/ Tidiness Communications (e.g. email) Delivery Discrimination (e.g. sexism or racism) Disputes/ Disagreements Documents/ Materials/ Publications Education/ Training Equipment/ Technology/ IT Harassment (e.g. bullying or sexual harassment) Health Immigration (e.g. visas) Information Language (e.g. translation) Map/ Directions Misbehaviour (e.g. cheating) Money/ Cost/ Payment (scholarships, funding, bills, etc) Organisation People (e.g. staff, students or family) Places (e.g. accommodation or classroom) Policies/ Rules Preparation Service Specs/ Specifications Supplies (bathroom supplies, stationery, etc) Tests/ Exams/ Grading Time (e.g. deadline, length of time) Transport/ Travel Working together	already passed broken/ unreliable broken down/ not working difficult to find difficult to understand double booked failed inadequate incorrect/ wrong insufficient lack of... late lazy lost missing moved need a refund need to cancel/ change no reply not... enough rude run out too... short slow small strict unfair unwanted without (due) notice/ permission