

A View Of The Sea!

A Discussion

Imagine you are going to stay in a three star hotel located in an overdeveloped tourist resort.

Work with another student. What problems do you think you could encounter with the hotel and the resort?



Think about:

- ✦ food
- ✦ the room
- ✦ staff
- ✦ organized excursions
- ✦ payment
- ✦ your expectations



B Reading

Read this newspaper advertisement by the company *Golden Tours*. This is the ad that convinced you to take a vacation in Mexico. Read also the comments you have written on the ad.

Golden Tours Takes You To MEXICO

Let us take you to the wonderful, relaxing paradise that is Mexico. Seven and 14-day tours available at great prices.

Whether you prefer lazy days on the beach or education or visits to ancient historical sites, a Golden Tours Mexican visit will suit you to a tee.

Superb hotel - The Grand Hotel

- Wonderful local cuisine
- Most rooms with a view of the sea
- All staff fluent in English

Superb location

- A city that never sleeps
- All tourists collected from a nearby airport
- Historical attractions nearby

Superb Golden Tours staff

- 12 years experience in Mexico

We had standard international cuisine most days. The Mexican dinner on the last evening was cancelled without explanation.

My view was of the adjacent hotel two yards away. My complaint to the hotel manager was brushed off.

The airport was close but we were not picked up as promised – left abandoned there for four hours!

Half the reception staff didn't speak a word of English. They knew nothing about the day-to-day excursions.

◆—————◆

Contact your local travel agent as soon as possible to guarantee your place on the next Golden Tours Mexican visit.

C Planning

Work with another student. You are going to write a letter of complaint to Golden Tours in which you will mention all of the points covered in your comments alongside the advert above.

A. Problems

Make a list together of the problems you think you need to mention in your letter.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

B. Paragraphs

How many paragraphs will you need to include in your letter? What will you need to include in each of the paragraphs?

Notes**C. Action**

What do you want *Golden Tours* to do in response to your letter? This will be an important consideration when thinking about the end of the letter.

What options exist for you? What can you ask of *Golden Tours*? Do you consider any of the problems to have ruined your vacation?

Notes

D Vocabulary

Which of these expressions belong in a letter of this type?
Can you explain what the problem is with each of the sentences that doesn't belong?



Think about:

- ✓ Relevancy
- ✓ Politeness
- ✓ Style

1. Your hotel is terrible and I want my money back!
2. We are thinking of going to Europe next year.
3. I would like a full refund.
4. Dear Michael,
5. I'm sending you this letter because I'm very unhappy.
6. If that were not enough, the following day ...
7. What most shocked me was the attitude of some of your staff at the hotel.
8. I couldn't get across to her how mad I was.
9. Yours Faithfully
10. I'm taking you to court and suing you.
11. I would appreciate as speedy a response as possible from your company.
12. The weather was beautiful as we set off from home.

E Writing

Now write up your full letter to *Golden Tours* in no more than 250 words.

Teacher Notes

Target Language:**Writing: letter of complaint****Duration:****50 minutes**

1 Structure and Timing (all times approximate)

- A. Discussion (10 minutes)
- B. Reading (10 minutes)
- C. Planning (15 minutes)
- D. Vocabulary (15 minutes)
- E. Writing (homework assignment)

Total: 50 minutes.

2 Procedure

A. Discussion

Put students into pairs to look through the prompt list. Ask them to come up with at least three or four ideas of what could go wrong in the given situation:

- *the food is awful*
- *your room is dirty*
- *the hotel doesn't organise any excursions*

B. Reading

This reading is what will provide students with the source of all their content for the later exercises and the letter itself so this part of the lesson is important. The teacher should set the scene effectively contrasting the promises made in the advertisement with the reality that the students found when they arrived in Mexico.

Ask some basic comprehension questions based on the ad to ensure the students have understood everything.

C. Planning

This planning stage will require the students to think critically about what they should and shouldn't include in their letter. If they have not done this type of letter before, ask them to think very clearly about what they would like from the company and the effect their letter is going to have on the company director/manager.

A badly constructed letter, too aggressive in tone, too informal in style and too vague in its content is unlikely to produce a positive result. This is why they are asked at this stage to think very clearly about what they want to include and what action they require on Golden Tour's behalf. You should play a part in guiding students towards a concise letter that deals with each of the problems mentioned in the comments accompanying the ad.

Possible Problems

- Mexican food not served
- Mexican dinner cancelled without explanation
- Promised sea view non-existent
- Hotel manager not sensitive to guest needs/complaints
- Not picked up from airport.
- Long wait at airport

- ❑ Staff's language skills inadequate
- ❑ Staff knew little of day to day events

Paragraphs

Students will differ over the number of paragraphs required. Something like this will suffice:

1. Introduction, reason for writing
2. Problems encountered
3. Other problems
4. Action required from company
5. Ending

Action

Students may discuss a free vacation, vouchers for future trips or some level of refund.

D. Vocabulary

Students need to learn the different "*code dialects*" that exist in English: that which you would write to a friend, that which you would write to the manager of a company that you had never before met and so on. Even in the modern world of the e-mail, students must learn that they cannot simply write as they may speak.

Answer Key

Explain to students that though some of the answers may be in perfect English, they don't belong in this type of letter either for reasons of style, irrelevancy or politeness.

| |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Irrelevant – 2, 12 Impolite – 1, 10 Too informal – 4, 5, 8 Acceptable – 3, 6, 7, 9, 11 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

There may be some debate over number 5. Generally contractions are not normally included in a formal letter as this letter of complaint would be.

E. Writing

This assignment is best set for homework unless you are planning to do a longer writing workshop in the classroom.

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