

Types of business letters

Complaints and adjustments

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References

- Ashley (Oxford), unit 7
- English for Business, p. 6-7
- <https://www.prismnet.com/~hcexres/textbook/complnt.html>
- <https://lektsii.org/3-17434.html>

Plan

- 1. Most common cases.
- 2. Vocabulary.
- 3. Structure of a complaint.
- 4. Language.
- 5. Examples.
- 6. Adjustment (reply) structure.
- 7. Examples.



1. Most common cases

A **letter of complaint** is sent when:

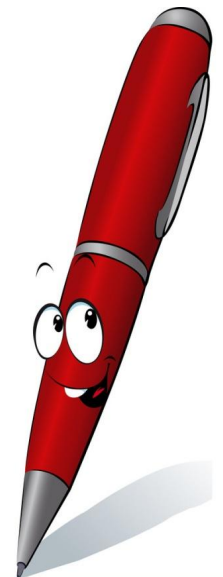
1. **Short-delivery**/short-shipment (недопоставка товара), goods **not ordered** have been received: it's necessary to check the **packing list** (упаковочный лист) as well as the invoice.
2. Goods of an **inferior quality** (the goods are not up to standard): the buyer may accept damaged goods if supplier offers a discount, but if the goods unsalable the buyer will demand replacements.
3. **Discrepancy** (несоответствие) between the description in the brochure and the goods arrived.
4. **Damages of articles**: usually the business of insurance companies but if it is caused **negligence of the packers (inadequate packing)** the insurance companies will not **accept responsibility**.
5. There is **delay in shipment**:
 - - companies usually have a **penalty clause** (пункт о штрафах) in their contract to protect them against loss from delay;
 - - if the delay is very long the buyer may cancel the order, and there may be great loss to both.
6. **Misdirection** and errors in addressing.
7. **Manufacturing defects** (found out through equipment operating).

2. Vocabulary

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Dispute (разногл.) | 9. Wear-and-tear (=8) |
| 2. Backlog (задолж.) | 10. Bad workmanship |
| 3. Commitment
(обязательство) | 11. Legal action (обр. в
суд) |
| 4. Miscalculation | 12. To investigate a
complaint |
| 5. Overcharge | 13. To deny/accept
responsibility |
| 6. Undercharge | 14. To put matters right |
| 7. Refund | 15. To cancel an order |
| 8. Deterioration
(износ, порча) | |

3. Structure

- 1. Opening.
- 2. Explaining the problem.
- 3. Suggesting a solution.
- 4. Sanctions – not obligatory.
- 5. Closing.



4. Language

- No apologizing! (no “I am sorry” or “I regret”):
I am writing to inform you;
I am writing with reference to your Order 345...;

No emotions! (no *disgusting*, *amazed* etc.):
This is the third time this mistake has occurred and
we are far from satisfied with the service you offer.;
I think the reason that (...) is because...

Language

No: “you must, don’t, you made an error, fault, blame”!

Better: Passive, impersonal structures, *if, could, should, would*:

- *This mistake must be corrected as...*
- *There appears to be an error on the statement...*
- *There seem to be some misunderstanding...*
- *Unless you can fulfill our orders efficiently in the future, we will have to consider changing to another supplier.*
- *The best solution would be for me to...*
- *If I send you.. and deduct it from my next statement, that should put the matter right*

5. Example

- It is not our fault



- The mistake *could not have originated* here, and *must be connected with* the dispatch of the goods

6. Adjustment

1. Thank you
2. Asking for time to investigate the reason / to explain it
3. Explaining the mistake:
The mistake was due to...
There appears to have been some confusion
It is unusual for this type of error to arise
Solving the problem:
We have compared/ inspected...
4. Closing (apologizing, thank for patience).