



Problems

Lesson code: 11JM-C6CD-CS91

UPPER INTERMEDIATE +

American English

1 Types of mistake

Match the different types of mistake with their correct definitions.

- | | |
|------------|---|
| 1. mix-up | a. a mistake in a computer program |
| 2. typo | b. a mistake that confuses somebody to believe that one thing is something else |
| 3. fault | c. a small, accidental mistake in a text made when it was typed on a computer |
| 4. gaffe | d. a small mistake |
| 5. slip-up | e. a social mistake made in speaking or behaving |
| 6. bug | f. part of a machine that isn't working properly |

Describe each of the following mistakes using words above:

1. The president called the diplomat by the wrong name.
2. After installing the software, my computer crashed.
3. The pizza I ordered was sent to the wrong address.
4. The flash on my camera isn't working.
5. Mr. Andrews received a telephone bill for \$10,000. It is normally around \$100, and he hasn't used the telephone more than usual.
6. Judy bought her husband the wrong sized socks.

2 Key words

Complete the sentences with the words below:

expired

misplace

nuisance

ongoing

refund

1. If a problem is _____, it continues to exist.
2. If you _____ something, you lose it temporarily because you have forgotten where you have put it.
3. If someone is a _____, he or she annoys or causes trouble for another person.
4. If food or drink is _____, it is no longer fresh or good to eat because it is too old.
5. If you are not happy with something you have bought, you can usually go back to the store and ask for a _____.



3 Complaints and apologies

Now listen to four dialogues and match them to each situation below.

Trouble at work: _____ Poor service: _____ Poor quality: _____ Personal difficulties: _____



Listen again and complete the information:

Dialogue 1

Complaint: an employee is late for work again

Explanation:

Result:

Dialogue 2

Complaint:

Explanation:

Result:

Dialogue 3

Complaint:

Result:

Dialogue 4

Complaint:

Result:

Listen to the following key expressions from the dialogues and complete them:

1. Can I have a _____ ?
2. Oh, I'm really _____ about that.
3. You _____, there are some major roadworks in my area.
4. I'm _____ to leave earlier from now on.
5. Oh, I'm sorry to _____ that.
6. I'll _____ what I can _____ out.
7. Please _____ with me a moment.... Right, sorry to _____ you waiting.
8. It _____ that the driver misplaced your address.
9. I'm afraid that's just not _____.
10. I really don't _____ why I have to come back to your store twice.
11. Just _____ on a second.
12. That's _____ . Thank you.
13. I was _____ if I could talk to you about something.
14. I don't want to make a _____, but ...
15. I'll try, but I'm not sure there's _____ I can do.
16. Oh well, thanks _____.
17. OK. I'll _____ you a refund.



4 Useful expressions

Now put the expressions from Exercise 3 into the appropriate category below:

Introducing a problem or complaint:

Apologizing:

Showing sympathy:

Explaining:

Promising action:

Asking somebody to wait:

Insisting on an acceptable result:

Accepting a result:

5 Role play

In pairs, write mini-dialogues for the situations below using expressions from this lesson. Then act out the dialogues for the class.

1. A customer bought a sweater from a clothing store. When he got home, he discovered a red stain on it. He returns it to the store.
2. A tenant calls his landlord about some very noisy neighbors. His landlord is out of the country at the moment.
3. A restaurant customer has been waiting 45 minutes for his order. He complains to the waiter.
4. Mark bought a new cell phone, but the screen is scratched. He takes it back to the cell phone store.



3 Complaints and apologies**Dialogue 1**

A: Can I have a word?

B: Sure.

A: It's about this morning. I'm told you were late for work again. Is this going to be an ongoing problem?

B: Oh, I'm really sorry about that. You see there are some major roadworks in my area and all the bus routes have been diverted. Anyway, I'm going to leave earlier from now on.

Dialogue 2

A: Can I help you?

B: Yes, yesterday I bought a sofa and some armchairs which were supposed to be delivered to my apartment this morning. Unfortunately, the van never showed up. Here's my receipt.

A: Oh, I'm sorry to hear that. I'll see what I can find out. Please bear with me a moment.

A: Right, sorry to keep you waiting. It seems that the driver misplaced your address. The next scheduled delivery day is on Friday.

B: I'm afraid that's just not acceptable. I really needed the furniture today and I really don't see why I have to come back to your store twice.

A: OK, let me see if we can deliver it tomorrow. Just hold on a second.... Yes, a van will come by around 2 pm. Is that all right?

B: That's fine. Thank you.

Dialogue 3

A: I was wondering if I could talk to you about something.

B: Certainly. What seems to be the problem?

A: Well, it's your brother. I don't want to make a fuss, but he is becoming a real nuisance.

B: Oh? Why is that?

A: Well, he just doesn't want to do any cleaning in the apartment. Could you have a word with him?

B: I'll try, but I'm not sure there's anything I can do. He's very stubborn... I did my best, but I really don't think he'll change.

A: Oh well, thanks anyway.

Dialogue 4

A: Can I help you?

B: Yes, this milk I bought this morning is expired.

A: Oh, I'm sorry. Do you have the receipt?

B: Yes, here it is.

A: OK. I'll give you a refund.

B: Thanks.



1 Types of mistake

1. b 2. c 3. f 4. e 5. d 6. a

Possible answers for describing mistakes:

1. gaffe 2. bug 3. mix-up 4. fault 5. typo 6. slip-up

2 Key words

1. ongoing 2. misplace 3. nuisance 4. expired 5. refund

3 Complaints and apologies

Play the audio file or use your mobile device to scan the QR code (make sure you have installed a QR code reader app and can access the Internet on your device).

Poor service: 2 Poor quality: 4 Trouble at work: 1 Personal difficulty: 3

Dialogue 1

Complaint: An employee is late for work again.

Excuse: Major roadworks have caused public transport problems.

Result: He promises to leave for work earlier.

Dialogue 2

Complaint: A customer's order was never delivered.

Excuse: The driver misplaced the customer's address.

Result: The store promises to deliver the furniture the following day.

Dialogue 3

Complaint: A roommate doesn't want to do any cleaning.

Result: His sister promises to talk to him about it.

Dialogue 4

Complaint: A customer bought some milk that was not fresh.

Result: The shop assistant gives him a refund.

Key expressions - missing words:

1. word 2. sorry 3. see 4. going 5. hear 6. see;find
7. bear;keep 8. seems 9. acceptable 10. see 11. hold 12. fine
13. wondering 14. fuss 15. anything 16. anyway 17. give

4 Useful expressions

Make sure the students understand the difference between apologizing ("I'm really sorry about that") and showing sympathy ("I'm sorry to hear that.")

Introducing a problem or complaint: 1,13,14

Showing sympathy: 5

Promising action: 4,6,15,17

Insisting on an acceptable result: 9,10

Apologizing: 2

Explaining: 3,8

Asking the person to wait: 7,11

Accepting a result: 12,16



5 Role play

CLASSES: Go around the class monitoring the activity and helping the students prepare their dialogues by providing any necessary vocabulary.

ONE-TO-ONE: Improvise the dialogues with the student.

