

What should I include in a complaint letter to a restaurant?

1. Focus on the most important facts. Don't give unnecessary background information.
2. Make sure you include:
 - A. the reason for writing (e.g. I am writing to ...)
 - B. what went wrong
 - C. what you would like to happen now.
3. Complaint letters are usually written in a formal style.
4. Use passives to be less direct and more formal, e.g. I was served quickly.
5. Use Yours faithfully to sign off if you don't know the name of the person you're writing to.

Opening paragraph:

I am writing to complain about.....
I feel I must complain about.....
I am writing to you in connection with.....
It was completely different from.....
I am dissatisfied with.....
Unfortunately, it was nothing like what I expected.

Expressions for middle paragraphs:

I must mention / point out

To make matters worse....

I was shocked / surprised / disappointed.....

As if that was not bad enough...

To my surprise / amazement...

Closing paragraph:

I demand a full refund / immediate action / a replacement.
I would be grateful if you dealt with this matter immediately.
I would appreciate if we could sort this matter out as soon as possible.
I am afraid that if this matter is not dealt with immediately, I will....
I request a full refund for...

Ending

I look forward to hearing from you.
I hope to hear from you as soon as possible.
Thanking you in advance.

Complete the next letter using the options below.

Dear _____,

I am writing to complain and express my _____ with my recent dining experience at your restaurant on _____. Unfortunately, it was nothing like what I expected.

During my visit, I ordered the _____, which arrived _____. The _____ was _____. I brought this to the attention of the server, but the issue was not resolved. Furthermore, the service was _____. We waited _____ for our food, and our waiter was _____.

I am a regular customer of your restaurant and have always enjoyed my meals. However, this recent experience has left me extremely disappointed. I believe that the quality of food and service has declined significantly.

I request _____ for my meal and an explanation of the steps you will take to improve the dining experience for future customers. I would also appreciate a response within _____ business days.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely/Yours faithfully,

- a) length of time
- b) dish name (x2)
- c) number
- d) Your Name
- e) slow/unattentive/rude
- f) a full refund
- g) Date
- h) overcooked/undercooked/lacking flavor
- i) Restaurant Manager's Name, example: Mr Smith/Mrs Jackson
- j) disappointment and dissatisfaction
- k) not available/dismissive/unprofessional
- l) late/cold/incorrectly prepared

Answer the following questions:

What is the purpose of the letter? _____

Did the writer use formal language? _____

Does the writer want something in return? What? _____

Is the writer using a variety of sentences from page 1? _____

PRACTICE TASK

WRITING TASK: You took your family to a nearby restaurant. You were disappointed with the meal and wish to complain to the manager.

Write a letter to the manager of the restaurant. In your letter:

- explain why you were at the restaurant
- describe the problems
- write about the action you want the manager to take

Write at least 120 words.

Begin your letter as follows:

Dear Sir or Madam,