

Complaining about goods or services

Teaching the Topic

Two possible scenarios you could explore with the learner are making a complaint in person and making a complaint over the telephone.

The learner must be clear about what the issue is and how they would like to see it resolved.

Resources

- Guarantees from shops or websites.
- Terms and conditions on household bills or contracts.
- Receipts with wording about return of goods or exchange.
- *Your Consumer Rights (Goods)* and *Your Consumer Rights (Services)* booklets from the Ministry of Consumer Affairs website (www.consumeraffairs.govt.nz).
- *Your Rights* leaflet from the Health and Disability Commissioner's website (www.hdc.org.nz).

Suggested activities

- Talk about what is needed – what the problem is and what the learner wants to happen as a result of the conversation.
- Get the learner to make notes of what they want to talk about, for example, when they placed the order, details of items they ordered, details of what they have received.
- Practise the beginning of the conversation: *I'd like to complain about... I have a problem with ...*
- Role play the exchange and record it. Listen together and correct any language problems.

Using the Worksheet

Introductory activity: Has the learner ever been in a situation where they weren't happy with a product or service they received? What happened? What did they do about it?

This is a speaking activity based on nine pictures. The learner looks at the pictures and tells a story about a problem with the mobile phone a person bought.

Adapt the activity to the learner's level:

- cut the pictures up and ask the learner to arrange the pictures in order as you tell the story
- cut the pictures up and ask the learner to put them in order and tell the story themselves
- role play the conversation between the unhappy customer and the customer service representative

Main learning points

- Tell a story clearly. Use the past tense to show chronological order. Use simple sentence patterns correctly – He bought a new mobile phone. It fell apart after three days. He took it back to the store. He asked for a replacement.
- Use words and phrases associated with making a complaint.

Language

- Describe what happened – *fell apart, doesn't work properly, is not what I ordered, still isn't right, appears to be something wrong with.*
- Wording on documents – *proof of purchase, receipt, credit card statement, bank statement, guarantee, warranty, terms and conditions, refund.*
- What do you want to happen next? – *So you will remove that charge from my account? So you will send me the correct one? So you will be here at 1pm tomorrow? So the next visit will be free?*
- Words and phrases for other common complaint situations – *unexpected fees, received the wrong mail order item, service person hasn't arrived when expected.*

Complaining about goods or services

That's not right!

1. Tell the story from the pictures given. Use words and phrases in the box below to help you.

bought

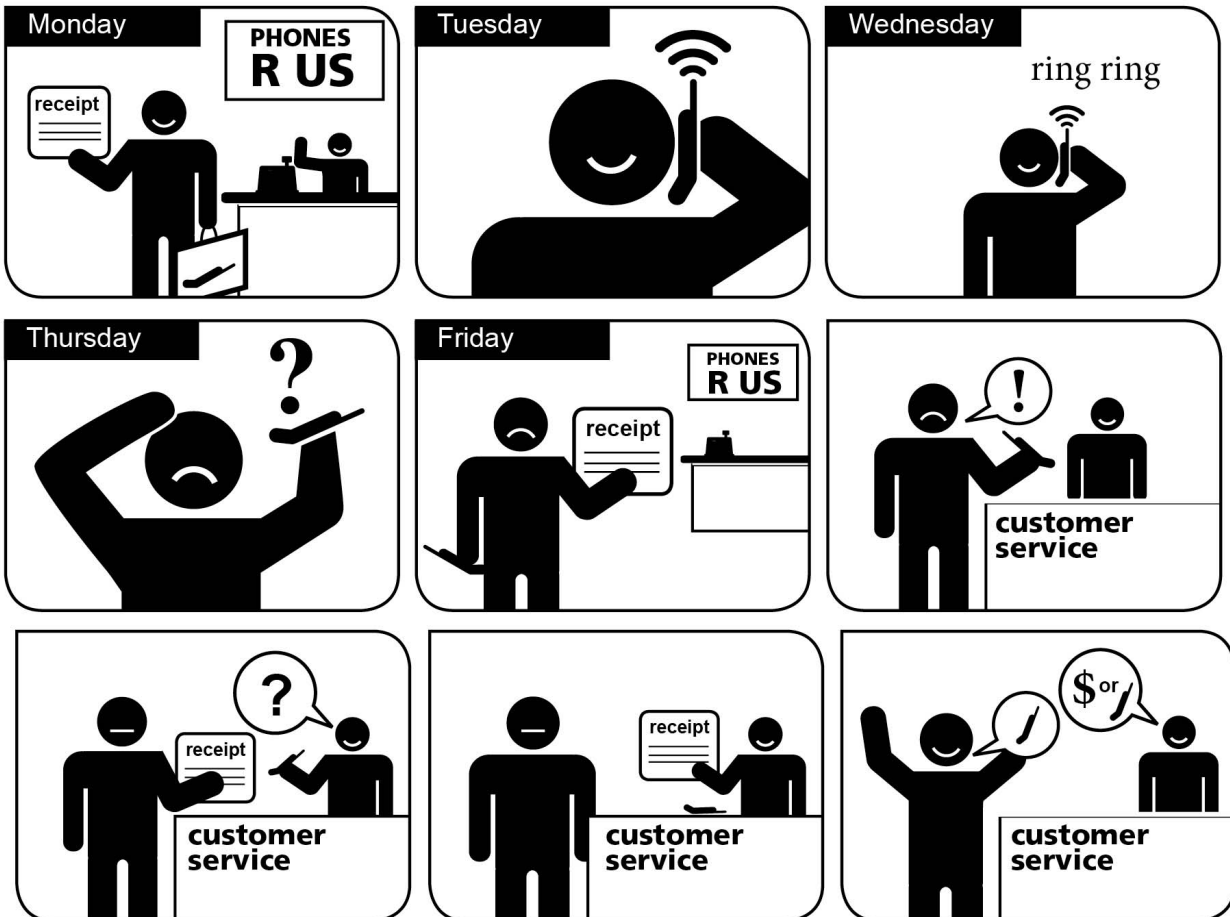
mobile phone

receipt

stopped working

refund

replacement



2. Talk about the picture story with your tutor:

- What did the man take away with him when he left the store on Monday?
- Was the phone working when he first used it on Tuesday and Wednesday?
- How do you think the man felt when his phone stopped working on Thursday?
- Why did he go to the customer service desk?
- Why did the customer service person ask for the man's receipt?
- How did the customer service person's offer of a new phone or his money back make the man feel?
- What else could the man have done if he wasn't happy with how the customer service person dealt with his complaint?