**Complaint Letter Assignment**

Part of good professional communication is being able to clearly identify your audience and purpose before you start writing. Doing this effectively will help you convince the audience to follow through with your requested action or to understand and rely on your information as credible. Many documents require such persuasion or authority. This assignment will exercise your use of professional pre-writing skills and analysis.

**Instructions and Specifications**

Please follow these carefully:

1. Choose a real product or service that you have been displeased with. If you have never been displeased you will have to make it up.

2. Find the real address to the company responsible for the product or service.

3. Find the name of the person or department who would receive your letter.

Min: 0.5 pages/3 paragraphs

Letter must be free of grammatical errors. Letter must be polite and professional. Clearly communicate your issue and what resolution you are seeking. 7. Finally, explain how the needs of the audience and the outlined objectives would be fulfilled by your letter:

1. What information would you be sure to include?
2. What information might you exclude?
3. Would you need to reword or carefully word any part of your letter?
4. How do you think you would organize your letter? Why?

8. Use excellent grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

**Complaint Letter**

9. Write your complaint letter using the organization and other information you planned in your memo to me.

10. Use a formal tone and good mechanics (pay attention to punctuation!).

11. Use a correct, formal letter format.

12. Make sure to sign your letter before turning it in.

I encourage you to send your complaint letters. Students in the past have received responses that serve as interesting and sometimes good examples of professional writing.

I’ll grade this according to how well you incorporate the lectures, handouts, and these instructions and requirements. If you have any questions regarding this assignment, please contact me.

**Claim Letter—Sample Assignment 1**

**Assignment:** Your claim letter documents a problem with a specific product or service you have purchased and shows that you deserve recompense. In this assignment, request specific action to solve the problem.

**Audience:** Write to the manager who will review your case and who has the authority to act on it.

**Goal:** To use facts to persuade your reader to give you what you want.

Remain factual in your claim letter. Don’t get angry or emotional, since facts, not feelings, get results.

In paragraph 1, give the facts by briefly describing the purchase. Give the date, place, item, and cost. Add information about the salesperson, delivery, and installation as needed to support your claim.

In paragraph 2, explain what went wrong in a factual way that shows that you were not to blame. If you are requesting damages, be sure to include estimates and documentation.

In the next paragraph(s), be very specific (but reasonable) about what you want and when you want it. If you want a full cash refund and additional money for damages, say so. Don’t let the reader decide what you should receive. Close your letter in a brief but positive way.

Document your letter with a list of receipts, warranties, estimates, photographs, or other evidence to support your claim. You do not need to provide such materials; only list them on the enclosure line. You should also refer to your evidence in the letter itself.

Important issues:

1. Be sure to attach an audience analysis to this letter.
2. Use letter format correctly.
3. Avoid sexist (“Dear Sir” or “Dear Madam”) or nondirective (“To Whom It May Concern”) salutations.
4. Keep your writing style simple.
5. Avoid rudeness, sarcasm, flattery, or threats. Avoid praise of the company or flattery to your reader.
6. Provide all specifics about the case.
7. Proofread to correct all errors.
8. Sign your letter.

**Claim or Inquiry Letter—Sample Assignment 2**

After you’ve studied the appropriate sections of the business-correspondence chapter, prepare a claim or inquiry letter of your own (not both!), using the guidelines and criteria discussed below:

For this assignment, you can write either a claim letter or an inquiry letter. Whichever type of letter you choose to write, be sure to use one of the standard business-letter formats as described in the textbook.

**Claim Letter**

If you write a claim letter:

1. Begin the body of the letter with a genuine introduction; don’t just dive into a tirade about all the problems you’ve had.
2. In the body paragraphs, provide specific details about the problem with a product or service you have experienced. Include details such as date of purchase, model number, cost, and so on.
3. Assume that you are writing to a nonspecialist audience.
4. Though your technical discussion should be technical, specific, and detailed, make it brief enough so that the reader gets a clear, sharp picture of the problem.
5. Avoid the typical problems associated with this type of letter—for example, getting angry, emotional, defensive, blaming, or threatening. Maintain a professional and positive tone throughout the letter (but also firm).
6. Make it clear what you expect in compensation for the problems you’ve had; make sure your request is logical and fair and that you present it as such.
7. Document your letter with evidence such as receipts, warranties, photos, and independent estimates. You don’t need to include these with your letter; just indicate them as enclosed.

**Unsolicited Inquiry Letter**

If you write an unsolicited inquiry letter:

1. Begin the body of the letter with a genuine introduction; don’t just dive into a discussion of your project or the information you need.
2. Include information on who you are, what you are working on, why you need the information you are going to request.
3. Use some easy-to-answer format such as a numbered list of questions to make the recipient’s job of answering easier.
4. Offer to compensate for any expenses the recipient may have in providing you with the information you request.
5. Reassure the recipient that you have investigated all the regular sources of information and have not been able to get the information you are requesting.
6. Avoid scattershot requests for information (for example, “please send all available information on the World Wide Web”).
7. Express gratitude for any help the recipient can provide you; find some tactful way to show how the recipient will also benefit by helping you.

**General Requirements**

For either letter you write:

1. Use one of the standard business-letter formats shown in the business-correspondence chapter.
2. Use headings and lists, tables, or other graphics in this letter, if appropriate, just as you would in a written report.
3. As with all writing assignments in this course, use the standards of good writing style, grammar, punctuation, usage, and spelling.

Have some fun with this assignment—design your own business-stationery logo. Give yourself a title. Make up a company—of which you are the boss.