

12 What's the problem?

Handling complaints

- 1 Listen to a call to a software company's help desk. What's the problem? Is the help-desk worker helpful? (Why / Why not?)
- 2 Listen again and answer these questions.
 - 1 What program is the customer trying to install?
 - 2 What's his order reference number?
 - 3 Did he type in the activation key?
 - 4 What does the help-desk worker tell him to do?



- 3 Work with a partner. Read the listening script on page 114. Suggest ways the help-desk worker could be more helpful and polite.
- 4 Listen to another version of the conversation. Does the help-desk worker do any of the things you suggested?
- 5 Listen to the second version again. How did the help-desk worker sound more helpful? Make notes.
- 6 Make these complaints sound more polite. Use the words in brackets.
 - 1 Three of the packages in the shipment aren't here (don't seem).
 - 2 You're charging us too much (looks like / might be).
 - 3 Your purchasing department lost our order (sounds as if / might have).
 - 4 There are insufficient funds in your account (appear).
 - 5 You put the wrong supplier number on your invoice (seem / have put).
 - 6 We're not happy with the installation work. The wiring is loose (looks as if).
 - 7 You underestimated the costs (appear / have underestimated).
 - 8 You used the wrong kind of cartridges (sounds like / might have).

Explaining problems

The verbs *seem, appear, sound*, and *look* can make statements more tentative and polite. The activation key *doesn't work*. → The activation key *doesn't seem to work*. They are commonly used to give negative information politely. It *appears to be faulty*. It *looks like the system's a little slow today*. It *sounds as if your antivirus program might be causing the problem*.

- 7 Match the complaints in 6 to the most appropriate response below.

- a Yes, the figures we based them on might have been too low.
- b What kind should I have used?
- c I'll send an electrician round to look at it.
- d That's not possible. I think the bank may have made a mistake.
- e Oh, you're right. I'm very sorry. I'll send you a credit note.
- f No, we've received it, but I'm afraid we're waiting for parts to come in.
- g I'll contact the freight company and find out what's happened to them.
- h Oh, I'm sorry about that. I'll correct it and send it again.

Practice making the complaints and responding with a partner.

Dealing with complaints

You can acknowledge a problem without admitting fault with to hear that. I'm sorry to hear that. An apology, explanation, and/or a promise to put things right is best practice. Sorry to keep you waiting. The system seems to be a little slow today. We'll sort it out now.

- 8 Think of a suitable explanation or promise to complete these apologies.

- 1 I'm terribly sorry I'm late ...
- 2 I'm sorry I didn't call you back earlier ...
- 3 I'm very sorry that we've billed you twice ...
- 4 I'm afraid we won't be able to ship the parts until next week ...
- 5 I'm afraid I can't attend the meeting on Friday ...

- 9 Work in pairs.

A – Use the information below.

B – Use the information in file 18 on page 95.

A

You work in the purchasing department of a company that manufactures aeroplanes. B works in the sales department of one of your suppliers.

Your supplier is generally very reliable but there were a lot of problems with your last order. Call B and try to solve the problems. Use the notes below.

Ext 1479 Hans Schuster.
Your production team say they can't reach him on the phone and he hasn't replied to the email they sent him last Friday.

You only received 70.
5 missing.

Order Form			
Item No.	Description	Quantity	Unit Price
TR16-957X	Wasp alloy blades	75	€415.00
DD368-2B	Rotor discs	4	€3,675.00
DB578-6B	Rotor discs	4	€4,756.00
ST23-56R	Vanes	60	€356.00
OK.			
Total			€31,125.00
Total			€14,700.00
Total			€19,024.00
Total			€21,360.00
Subtotal:			€86,209.00
19% VAT:			€16,379.71
Total:			€102,588.71

ATR GmbH 15-18 Langenbachstr. D-80799 München +49-(0)89-2867-0

Delivery address:
MTS Ltd
28 Grange Park
Paterdown RH9 8TR
Kent
UK

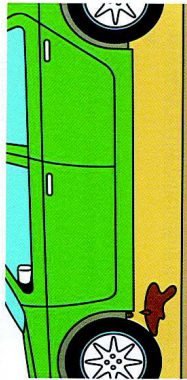
They shipped the wrong vanes!
Correct vanes must be here by the end of the month at the latest.

1 disc needs to be re-worked. Should we ship it back or will they pay for the rework to be done here?

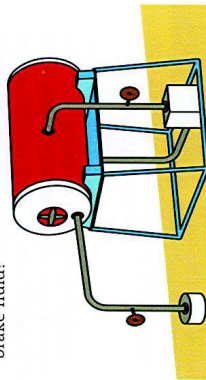
Describing damage

- 1 ²¹ Listen to three conversations about some things that have gone wrong. For each one, make a note of what's been damaged or isn't working correctly.

- 2 ²² Listen again and answer these questions.



- 1 Why didn't Jack know the car was leaking brake fluid?

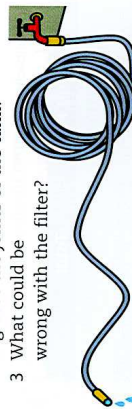


- 2 Why do the service technicians need to:

a use ladders?

b grease the joints of the tank?

- 3 What could be wrong with the filter?



go, get, and become

We often use *get* and *become* before adjectives to describe changes.

get dirty, become dirty, get twisted, become twisted
Get is more common than *become* in informal and spoken English.

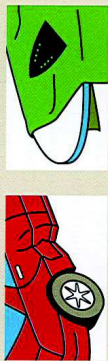
We also use *go* to talk about changes for the worse.

The joints are going rusty. Something went wrong with the brakes.

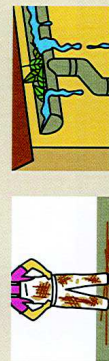
- 3 Work in pairs or groups. Make a list of different things that can:



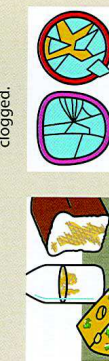
- 1 go rusty or get corroded.



- 3 get dented.



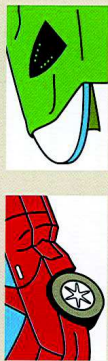
- 5 get dirty.



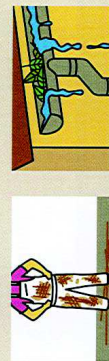
- 7 go off, go stale, or go mouldy.



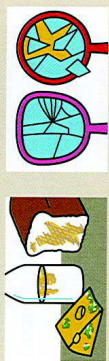
- 2 get bent.



- 4 get burnt or scorched.



- 6 get blocked or clogged.



- 8 get cracked or broken.

- 4 Complete these sentences with a phrase from 3.

- Don't put coffee grinds down the sink. The drain could ...
- Use a larger knife to open that paint can. That little one could ...
- Carry those eggs carefully. I don't want any to ...
- Take off your boots. We don't want the carpet to ...
- We may need to store some of these medicines in the fridge so they don't ...
- Use a blowtorch to remove the paint, but make sure the window frame doesn't ...
- I'm always nervous when I'm parking in a tight spot. I don't want my new car to ...
- Don't leave the tools outside in the rain. They could ...

- 6 Think of two or three things that could:

- get lost or go missing.
- go blunt.
- get tangled.
- get scratched.
- get chipped.
- go flat.*
- get torn.
- get crumpled or creased.
- get dusty.
- get stained.
- get squashed.
- get jammed.

a flat battery **B/E** a dead battery **AmE**

- 7 A lot of things around our homes can get damaged if we don't take care. Look at the picture and find things that could get broken or damaged.

- 8 Work in pairs.

A – You have a beautiful home. **B** is looking after it for you while you're on holiday. They call you with some bad news. Find out what's happened.

B – Turn to file 43 on page 104.

