

- 1) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'complain'?
- 2) Are you a complainer?
- 3) Who do you usually complain to?
- 4) What complaints do you have at the moment?
- 5) Have you ever complained in a restaurant, hotel, airplane or train?
- 6) How often do people complain to you?
- 7) How often do people complain about you?
- 8) Do you have any complaints about English?
- 9) What are your biggest complaints about your friends?
- 10) Do men or women complain more?

## Cultural note

It is important to remember that English is not as direct as other languages. It is important to be polite and follow rules for socially acceptable behaviour. For example, it is normal, when making a complaint, to start by saying "**sorry**" or "**excuse me**", even though you haven't done anything wrong. Being polite will help you get what you want.

### Example:

#### In a shop

You're in a shop and the assistant gives you the wrong change.

"**Excuse me**, I think you've given me the wrong change."

OR

"**Sorry**, I think this change is wrong, I gave you £10 not £5."

#### In a hotel

##### Customer

"**Excuse me**, but **there's a problem with** the heating in my room"

"**Sorry to bother you**, but **I think there's something wrong** with the air-conditioning."

"**I'm afraid I have to make a complaint**. Some money has gone missing from my room."

"**I'm afraid there's a slight problem with** my room - the bed hasn't been made."

##### Hotel worker

Normally the worker will apologise deeply for the problem and promise some immediate action.

"**I'm so sorry sir / madam**, I'll send someone up to look at it immediately."

"**I'm sorry to hear that**, I'll get someone to check it for you."