

Letter of Complaint

'The Thistles'
14 Mistletoe Lane
Berkingstead
FT2 8XY
January 23rd 2023

The Managing Director
The Apple Garden Restaurant
Potter's Lane
Berkingstead
FT1 9AA

Dear Madam,

I am writing to complain about the dreadful meal my daughter and I, together with four of our friends, had at your restaurant last night. We booked a month ago, but on arrival we were told there was no table booked in the name of 'Perkins'.

The manager grudgingly found a table for us, but it was near the kitchen doors and the staff kept bumping our chairs as they went past. At one point a waitress knocked into one of my guests and a tomato juice fell off her tray, splashing all over my guest's suit. We have received no apology for this.

It was 20 minutes before the waiter came to take orders for drinks. He was clearly in a hurry but we had to wait another 20 minutes before the drinks arrived. When they did, the Speciality Sicilian Lemonade with a Splash of Madagascan Vanilla was flat and undrinkable. The waiter seemed annoyed at being asked for a fresh bottle. He argued that there was nothing wrong with the lemonade but when I invited him to try it, he admitted that it was 'not quite right'.

We waited another hour for our first course. When it arrived, we had to send it back to the kitchen because it was cold. It is absolutely unforgiveable and quite outrageous that we should have had to wait so long for a couple of bowls of soup!

Our main course was no better. The lasagne was hot outside but stone cold inside. By the time all the food had been removed and recooked it was well past midnight and we were all too tired to eat. Upon leaving the restaurant we were all horrified to see a number of rats congregating around the bins near the kitchen entrance, which left us wondering how hygienic the kitchens are.

I look forward to hearing your comments on this matter.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Health and Safety Inspectorate and to the Great Grub Guide where we found your restaurant listed.

Yours faithfully,
Clementina Perkins



Questions

1. Briefly explain why Clementina Perkins is writing this letter of complaint.

2. At what time of year was this letter written?

3. How long did it take for the drinks to arrive?

4. What was the problem with the lemonade? Tick **one**.

- A. It was flat and drinkable. ☐
- B. It was flat and undrinkable. ☐
- C. The bottle was already open. ☐
- D. It did not arrive. ☐

5. Which word best describes what the waiter is like? Tick **one**.

- A. nonchalant ☐ C. irascible ☐
- B. gratified ☐ D. harassed ☐

6. Why was the first course returned?

7. What time was it when the main course was served for the second time? Tick **one**.

- A. 11 o'clock ☐ C. midday ☐
- B. past midnight ☐ D. late ☐

8. What reason is given for not being able to eat? Tick **one**.

- A. It was late and everyone was too tired. ☐
- B. It was late and everyone was too upset. ☐
- C. It was late and everyone was too annoyed. ☐
- D. It was time to leave and go home. ☐

9. How many people were involved with this particular meal? Tick **one**.

- A. four ☐ C. five ☐
- B. seven ☐ D. six ☐

10. Why do you think the restaurant describes the lemonade as 'Speciality Sicilian Lemonade with a Splash of Madagascan Vanilla'?

Tick **one**.

- A. The restaurant owner likes to travel to unusual places. ☐
- B. They want to make it sound extra special. ☐
- C. This is the only drink you are able to have at this restaurant. ☐
- D. So customers can recreate the lemonade at home. ☐

11. What do the appearance of rats outside the restaurant tell you? Tick **one**.

- A. The restaurant needs to empty their bins more frequently. ☐
- B. Rats enjoy the food and like eating there. ☐
- C. There might be a problem with hygiene. ☐
- D. Berkingstead is not a clean place. ☐

12. *'The manager grudgingly found a table for us'*

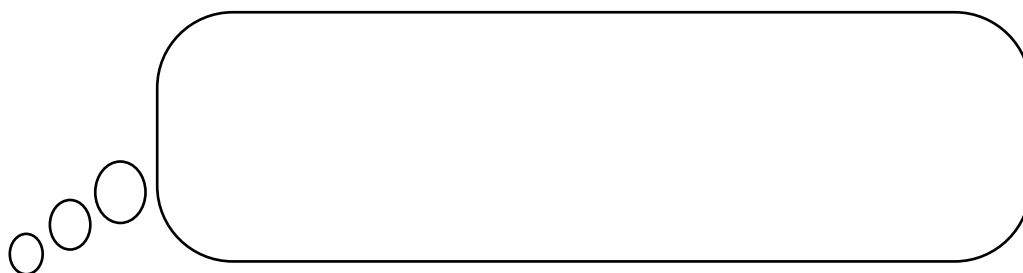
What impression of the manager do you get from these words?

Give **two impressions**.

A.

B.

13. Predict what you think the guest might have said when tomato juice was spilt down their front. Write what you think was said in the speech bubble.



14. Find and copy **a phrase** from the passage which suggests the mood of the letter writer has changed.

15. How does the writer of the letter's mood change from when they arrived at the restaurant compared to when they left.

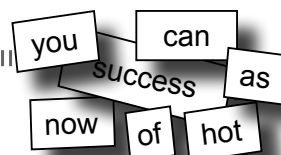
16. Number these statements from 1–5 in the order in which they happen in the passage.

A. I am sending a copy of this letter to the Health and Safety Inspectorate.	
B. The lasagne was hot on the outside and cold on the inside.	
C. We were horrified to see the number of rats.	
D. We booked a month ago.	
E. The lemonade was flat and undrinkable.	

Answer the following questions with complete sentences:

17. Why was sitting near the kitchen a problem?
18. Why might the Great Grub Guide be interested in this letter?

Word work



1. Write a short definition for each of these words.
- | | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| A. complain | D. grudgingly |
| B. undrinkable | E. hygienic |
| C. congregating | |



Extension work

Class Discussion

1. What should be the first thing, in your opinion, that the restaurant should change to improve customer service?
2. What word might you use to describe how you would have felt if your chair had been constantly knocked?
3. Do you think that this letter is firm enough?

Small Group or Pair Discussion

4. Why has Clementina Perkins sent a copy of her letter to the Health and Safety Inspectorate and the Great Grub Guide?
5. Why might the waiter have been annoyed at having to get a fresh bottle of lemonade?
6. What words could the waiter have used to remedy the situation?

Design/Create

7. Draw a picture of the table layout of the restaurant.
8. Draw an impression of what you think the food looked like.
9. Create a logo for the restaurant.

Write

10. Imagine you are managing director of the restaurant. Write a short letter in response to this letter. How will you explain the behaviour of your staff and all the things that went wrong?
11. Unknown to the manager, a food critic has been secretly dining at Apple Garden Restaurant on the same night as the Perkins. Imagine you are the food critic. Write up your report on the restaurant.
12. Write about the restaurant from the point of view of the rats.
13. Write a favourable, or unfavourable, review of any café or restaurant you have visited.

Investigate/Research

14. Find out more about health and hygiene requirements for restaurants.
15. Investigate the different styles of menu available.

Answers

Letter of Complaint (page 22)

Questions

1. Clementina is writing to complain about the unsatisfactory meal she has had at the restaurant.
2. January (winter)
3. 20 minutes
4. B – flat and undrinkable
5. C – irascible
6. It was cold
7. B – past midnight
8. A – It was late and everyone was too tired.
9. D – six
10. B – They want to make it sound extra special.
11. C – There might be a problem with hygiene.
12. Any two sensible answers. For example: The manager was impolite to the customers. / It didn't seem to them that he wanted to help them, but he did get them a table.
13. Any sensible answer. For example: Oh no! I'm covered in tomato juice. All over my favourite top, too! I demand an apology.
14. 'we were all horrified' or 'absolutely unforgiveable'
15. Any sensible answer. For example: When the writer of the letter arrived at the restaurant she would have been looking forward to having a meal with her daughter and their friends. They had booked a month ago, so had been anticipating this meal for some time. By the end of their meal, she was very upset by the poor service they had received and that their meal had been wrecked. She was also horrified to see the rats and was worried how hygienic the kitchens were.
16. A – 5
B – 3
C – 4

D – 1

E – 2

17. Sitting near the kitchen was a problem because the staff kept bumping their chairs when they went past.
18. Any sensible answer. For example: The Great Grub Guide might be interested as they wouldn't want to include a poor quality restaurant in their guide, as it would reflect badly on them and on other restaurants in the guide.

Word work

1. A – complain: to have a grievance about something, to grumble about something
B – undrinkable: when you are unable to drink something because it does not taste nice
C – congregating: when people or animals gather together in a particular spot
D – grudgingly: to do something but with great unwillingness
E – hygienic: to be clean and free from bacteria and other dirt

Pestilence Ravages London

(page 27)

Questions

1. C – in the Middle Ages
2. D – 200 people
3. B – local councillors
4. Doctors feel that poor conditions have helped the disease to spread.
5. B – white crosses
6. D – They believe that the pestilence is God's punishment against sinners.
7. D – loss of smell
8. A – the Black Death
C – the Great Mortality
9. The local watchmen are expected to keep a strict watch on boat travel and sailors.
10. D – He has provided more land on which people could be buried.

11. We are told that 'the crowded insanitary conditions in London are helping to contribute to the ease with which the Great Mortality is spreading'.
12. People are beating (flagellating) themselves to try to ward off the sickness. Accept any sensible answer for their thoughts on the effectiveness of this.
13. As a result of the Black Death, there are food shortages and people face the threat of starvation.
14. A – suspense: 'Desperate citizens face the threat of starvation ...'
B – setting: 'The new cemetery at Spitalfields ...'
C – character: 'The Abbot of Westminster'
D – lesson: 'It is the only way to cure ourselves ...'
15. Any two sensible answers. For example: The watchmen might report them to the local councillors. / The watchmen might sympathise with them and let them go.
16. Any sensible answer. For example: When will this dreadful plague ever end? I hope no one I know has died today.
17. We know that the disease attacks people indiscriminately as the King's own daughter has died as has the Abbot of Westminster. We are told that no one has been spared from the disease which 'attacks both old and young, rich and poor'.
18. Any sensible answer. For example: The doctors are trying to help people but the insanitary conditions are making their job very difficult. The beak-like mask in the illustration shows that they didn't have good solutions for preventing the spread of the disease.