

4.7 Writing

A formal email

I can describe an incident and make a complaint about it in writing.

- 1 Would you hang out with your friends in the places mentioned in the box? Why?/Why not? Discuss in pairs.

coffee shop empty building park
fast-food restaurant shopping centre
skate park street corner

- 2 Read the posts on the website. Do you think Jude and his friends were treated unfairly? What is the advice given by YCN?

- 3 Read Jude's email below and answer the questions.

- Are the main events described in the email the same as those in Jude's message to YCN?
- How does the style of the email differ from the style of the message?
- How do you think the manager will react?

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing on ¹ _____ of myself and my friends to ² _____ your attention to an incident that **took place** at the Queen Plaza Shopping Centre last Saturday. I would like to ³ _____ a formal complaint about the way we were treated by staff at the centre.

Last Saturday, some friends and I met in the centre at Plaza Café. We had bought some drinks and were enjoying ourselves when the manager of the café **approached** our table and **accused** us of being too noisy. When we tried to **reason with** him, he immediately called security. A moment later, two guards arrived and forced us to leave the café and the shopping centre. To make ⁴ _____ worse, they **threatened** to call the police and told us not to return in the future.

We are particularly upset because the ⁵ _____ is we were no noisier than some of the other people in the café. To be honest, we are amazed that the centre security guards are allowed to treat customers in this way. Without doubt, the worst ⁶ _____ of this whole incident was being thrown out of the busy shopping centre like criminals. We were so **humiliated** that we decided to contact you and complain.

As you are the manager of the centre, we ⁷ _____ you to reconsider your policies towards teenage customers. It is simply unfair to discriminate against young people in this way. We have contacted the local media about the incident and look forward to your response.

Yours faithfully,
Jude Seaborne

YCN

Youth City News

YCN message board

Got comments? Need advice?
This is the place ...

Author

Post



Last Saturday, my friends and I were kicked out of Queen Plaza Shopping Centre for ... no good reason! We were having a coffee at Plaza Café when the manager came over and told us to be quiet. We honestly weren't being that loud and my friend explained this to the manager. Next thing, two security guards arrived and told us to leave or they'd call the police! They walked us to the exit and told us not to come back. It was so embarrassing and a total overreaction. What can we do?



If you really weren't disturbing anyone, then it does seem unfair, Jude. Why don't you write to the centre management and explain the situation? Be sure to let us know their reaction.

- 4 Read the WRITING FOCUS and complete Jude's email. Sometimes more than one answer is possible.

WRITING FOCUS

A formal email – describing an incident and making a complaint

Introduction

- Say why you are writing and summarise your complaint.
I am writing on behalf of myself and my friends ...
I am writing to draw your attention to ...
I would like to make a formal complaint about ...

Main paragraphs

- Use narrative tenses to describe the incident you are complaining about (see REMEMBER THIS p. 5).
- Give your reaction to the incident.
We are particularly upset because ...
To make matters worse, ...
The truth/fact is (that) ...
Without doubt, the worst part of this whole incident was ...
... I/we decided to contact you and complain.

Conclusion

- Say what you would like to happen.
I/We urge you to (reconsider your policies).
I/We ask/demand that you (investigate the matter).
- Make a final statement.
It is simply unfair to discriminate against young people in this way.
- Mention that you expect a reply.
I/We look forward to your response.