Claims or Complaint Letter

Claims letters are written with the purpose of explaining a problem and asking for amends. The problem could be a defective product, an error in billing, or an error in delivery.

Characteristics of the claims letter:

- Professional and courteous tone
- Clear and concise
- Factual with any copies of receipts, names of people, or pictures of the product

A claim has four distinct components:

Paragraph one—Background information.

- State the subject and purpose of the letter.
- Identify the problem and include all the relevant information: invoice numbers, dates, description of the problem (broken product, failed delivery, or an error in billing), and copy of the receipt, bill or contract. (Keep the original paperwork for your records).
- Stick to the facts.

Paragraph two—Cause and effect.

- Explain logically and clearly in specific language what went wrong. If it is a product, include that you reviewed the user’s manual, called customer service, or customer support and give the dates and times plus, if you can, give the name of the person you spoke to at that time. Do not speculate what you think is wrong.
- Explain the effect of the problem. In this section of the paragraph, you will explain any cost that came as a result of the problem. This portion is important if, for instance, you were expecting a delivery and it didn’t arrive on time or with enough of the product, forcing you to go elsewhere and maybe pay more for the product to be shipped overnight.

Paragraph four—Expected solution or amendment to the problem.

- State what you expect the company to do to solve the problem. Do not threaten to bring legal action. This is your first attempt to allow the company to correct the problem. Always send your letter expecting the company to cooperate; usually, it will want to amend the problem. If it is faulty service or billing, be specific about your expectations and give a time period. Also, if you incurred additional expenses because of the problem, you should include copies of the receipts as well.

Final Paragraph—Express gratitude to your reader for his or her response to your request.

- Provide your contact information.