



# CAE Writing Critique and Correction

## Details

Name: (-----)  
Writing Task: (Letter of Complaint)  
Submitted: (19 February)  
Marked: (20 February)

## Instructions

Your submitted piece of writing appears on Page 3, with mistakes indicated using the codes below. We suggest you:

- 1) read our general feedback of your writing on Page 2.
- 2) read through your work on Page 3 and try to correct the mistakes using the marking codes below.
- 3) when you have corrected as much as you can turn to page 4 and compare your corrections with our own.
- 4) finally read our summary on page 5

## Marking Codes

- ^ Word or words missing
- ? Don't understand
- - Omit word
- C Capitalization error
- Gd Good use of English
- O Organisation lapse
- P Punctuation
- PE Poorly expressed/unclear
- S Spelling
- SS Sentence structure
- T Tip (Not a mistake but a better way of expressing this)
- WF Wrong form
- WO Word order
- WT Wrong tense
- WW Wrong word

## Writing Task

Writing Paper: Part 2

Task type: Letter of complaint

Question

Read this extract from a letter you have recently sent to a friend:

.... Oh, and by the way, don't go to Barry's Restaurant for your birthday. We went there last night - the service was awful and the food was a disaster! I complained to the head waiter but he asked me to put it in writing ...

Write your letter of complaint to the restaurant manager. (Around 220-260 words).

### General Feedback (according to CAE marking criteria)

#### Content

All points covered in the letter relate logically to the task and were dealt with by keeping to the word limit.

#### Organisation

You have organised the letter logically with excellent sentence structure and it is easy to follow your points. However, you should remember to organise your writing into clear paragraphs.

#### Language

A range of vocabulary is used. A range of grammatical forms are used. Errors are present but do not impede communication.

#### Communicative Achievement

Ideas are communicated clearly and a suitable, semi-formal register was used. The person reading the letter would be fully informed of your complaint.

## Feedback: Indicated Mistakes

Dear Sir, (T)

I am writing to complain about the poor service I received last night when I came to your restaurant with some friends that arrived (WT) in Italy the day before to visit our country and to taste the famous Italian food. I know that your restaurant has an excellent reputation, that (WW) is why I proposed it, but I regret to tell you that the experience has been (WT) awful.

The waiter that served us was very rude to us and very impatient when we asked him details about a dish. He also made many mistakes in taking down the order and therefore we had to wait at least half an hour or more before eating what we actually asked for.

The table-cloth was dirty and that (T, WW) is something (-) unacceptable for a restaurant like yours.

To make matters worse, three out of six main courses were not available and the pasta we had was overcooked and tasteless.

It was my friends' first time in an Italian restaurant, (^) it certainly was not a very nice experience!

At the end of our dinner for which I paid for too much (-) high a price, I complained to the headwaiter but he told me to put it in writing and to address the letter to the manager.

I wish (WW) this letter would (WF) help you understand which improvements your service needs. Your beautiful restaurant is in the heart of Rome, in one of the best areas of the city. Tourists came from all over the world so I think that you must offer the best possible service.

(^) Hope to hear from you soon.

Yours faithfully

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## Feedback: Corrected Task

Dear Sir **or Madam**

I am writing to complain about the poor service I received last night when I came to your restaurant with some friends that **who had arrived** in Italy the day before to visit our country and to taste the famous Italian food. I know that your restaurant has an excellent reputation, **which** is why I proposed it, but I regret to tell you that the experience **was** awful.

The waiter that served us was very rude to us and very impatient when we asked him details about a dish. He also made many mistakes in taking down the order and therefore we had to wait at least half an hour or more before eating what we actually asked for. The table-cloth was dirty, **which** is unacceptable for a restaurant like yours. To make matters worse, three out of six main courses were not available and the pasta we had was overcooked and tasteless.

It was my friends' first time in an Italian restaurant **and** it certainly was not a very nice experience! At the end of our dinner for which I paid for too high a price, I complained to the headwaiter but he told me to put it in writing and to address the letter to the manager.

I **hope** this letter **will** help you understand which improvements your service needs. Your beautiful restaurant is in the heart of Rome, in one of the best areas of the city. Tourists came from all over the world so I think that you must offer the best possible service.

I hope to hear from you soon.

Yours faithfully

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## Feedback: Summary

This answer **IS AT** the standard we would expect from a student preparing for the CAE exam. To maximize your chances of getting a good grade you should work on the following areas:

- **You must** check your use of paragraphs as you can lose marks if your work isn't clearly organised
- **You should** make sure you know the difference between 'hope' and 'wish'.
- **You could** make every effort to showcase your use of tenses. The indicated mistakes in the first paragraph are not serious but hopefully you can appreciate why I've made alternative suggestions.

This is a well-written letter of complaint. You have answered the question fully and appropriately and used an appropriate tone or level of formality.

The points you've raised are in a logical order but you should remember to format your paragraphs correctly. Don't end a sentence halfway along a line unless it's the final sentence in a paragraph, otherwise it's very difficult to see how you have organised the piece of writing.

See the BBC website for an explanation of the difference between 'hope' and 'wish': <http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/grammar/learnit/learnitv38.shtml>

As I mentioned above, your tense mistakes are not serious or very frequent. However, as the focus in this letter is on narrating events, it's a good opportunity to showcase your use of tenses.

Finally, unless you know the gender of the person you are writing to, it's a good idea to use 'Dear Sir or Madam'.