




Consumer Law: Consumer Problems and How to Make Complaints

CLB 5-6 Instructional Package


March 2011
COMPLIMENTARY COPY

Consumer Law



This booklet is for newcomers and British Columbians who want to know about the laws that protect you:




- when you pay for goods and services, or
- when someone owes you money, or
- when you owe someone money.

 PEOPLE'S LAW SCHOOL

THIS BOOKLET PROVIDES GENERAL INFORMATION ONLY.
IF YOU NEED LEGAL ADVICE YOU SHOULD CONTACT A LEGAL PROFESSIONAL.

Lesson Plan: Consumer Problems and How to Make a Complaint (CLB 5-6)

CLB Outcomes

- | | |
|---|--|
|  CLB 5-III: Getting Things Done | Give and respond to informal requests, permission and suggestions and advice. |
|  CLB 6-III: Getting Things Done | Get information from moderately complex business/service texts containing advice, requests or detailed specifications. |
|  CLB 6-IV: Sharing Information | Write 1 or 2 connected paragraphs to relate a familiar sequence of events, a story, a detailed description, or a comparison of people, things, routines, or simple procedures. |

Content Outcomes

- Identify consumers' rights and responsibilities when making a purchase
- Identify the information needed before starting a complaint
- Identify the steps on how to make a complaint

Resources

- People's Law School (PLS) wikibook, *Consumer Law, Problems With a Purchase*
- PLS worksheets "Consumer Law: Consumer Problems and How to Make a Complaint"
- Computer Lab (optional)

External Resources and Referrals

- For more information on how to make a complaint, visit www.consumerinformation.ca, www.consumerprotectionbc.ca, <http://mbc.bbb.org/consumers/>, and www.clicklaw.bc.ca

Assessment Plan and Tools

- Self-assessment checklist



Lesson Plan: Consumer Problems and How to Make a Complaint (CLB 5-6)

Sample Lesson Plan

Time	Tasks	Expected Outcome	Resources
10'	<p>Warm up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In pairs or small groups, students talk about the picture Go over vocabulary, if needed Assess level of knowledge of/ experience in consumer problems and making complaints 	<p>Generate interest</p> <p>Activate prior knowledge</p>	<p>PLS Worksheet: Get Ready!</p>
10'	<p>Find the Missing Word</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instruct students to skim and scan the “Common Consumer Problems” and “How to Make a Complaint” in <i>PLS’s Consumer Law</i> (2011), pages 3-5 in order to fill in the puzzle by replacing the underlined statements with the appropriate word 	<p>Recognize the meaning of key terms within a context</p>	<p>PLS Worksheet: Find the Missing Word!</p> <p><i>Consumer Law</i>, p. 3-5.</p>
15'	<p>Build Your Vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students complete the vocabulary chart by scanning the booklet for the terms Encourage students to apply word attack strategies first: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask for peer support Look at base form of word Guess the meaning from context Look in monolingual dictionaries Go over any new vocabulary 	<p>Understand key vocabulary in a new context</p>	<p>PLS Worksheet: Build Your Vocabulary!</p> <p><i>Consumer Law</i>, p. 3-5.</p>
45'	<p>Read, Talk and Write</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students work in pairs. Partner A reads “Common Consumer Problems” in <i>People’s Law School’s Consumer Law</i> (March 2011) pages 3-4 Partner B reads “How to Make a Complaint” in <i>People’s Law School’s</i> 	<p>Get information from moderately complex business text containing advice</p>	<p>PLS Worksheets: Read, Talk and Write! – Partner A</p> <p><i>Consumer Law</i>, p. 3-4.</p>

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Time	Tasks	Expected Outcome	Resources
	<p><i>Consumer Law</i> (March 2011) pages 4 and 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage students to take brief notes as they read, and not to copy everything! Have students close their PLS booklets to do Step 2, questions and answers When students have completed their question and answer chart, then they may look in their booklets to check their answers Have students close their PLS booklets when they do the writing. They may only refer to the information in their question and answer charts 	<p>Identify consumer rights and responsibilities</p> <p>Identify steps on what to do when making a complaint</p> <p>Write 1 or 2 connected paragraphs to relate a simple procedure about how to make a complaint</p>	<p>PLS Worksheets: Read, Talk and Write! – Partner B</p> <p><i>Consumer Law</i>, p. 4-5.</p>
20'	<p>Who is speaking?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students can work individually or in pairs to complete the task Go over answers as a class and discuss Ask students if they know additional expressions, requests or questions related to making a complaint or returning an item and write students' contributions on the board In small groups, students practice the phrases in role plays about returning an item and making complaints Groups can perform their role plays in front of the class or teachers can wrap up this activity with a theatre sports approach (two students from different groups come to the front of the class, the teacher reads them a situation, and the two students ad lib the scene) 	<p>Make requests or complaints with details and reasons and use appropriate level of politeness.</p> <p>Respond to requests or complaints with details and reasons and use appropriate level of politeness</p>	<p>PLS Worksheet: Who is speaking?</p>



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Time	Tasks	Expected Outcome	Resources
50'	<p>Find out more</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students pair up and each pair chooses one website • Put a time limit on the research time • Encourage students to practice their note taking strategies • Each student should take his or her own notes • After the allotted time for research, partners share with each other their understanding of the information from their website • Mix the pairs up • In the new pairings, one student reads www.consumerinformationbc.ca and the other reads www.clicklaw.bc.ca • Students tell their partners what they learned from their website • Debrief as a class 	<p>Get information from moderately complex business/service text</p> <p>Get more information about complaints and how to file a complaint</p>	<p>PLS Worksheet: Find out More!</p> <p>Computer Lab</p> <p>www.consumerinformationbc.ca</p> <p>www.clicklaw.bc.ca</p>
10'	<p>Self-Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow students to fill out self-assessment form independently 	Self-assessment	<p>PLS Worksheet: What did I learn?</p>



Lesson Plan: Consumer Problems and How to Make a Complaint (CLB 5-6)

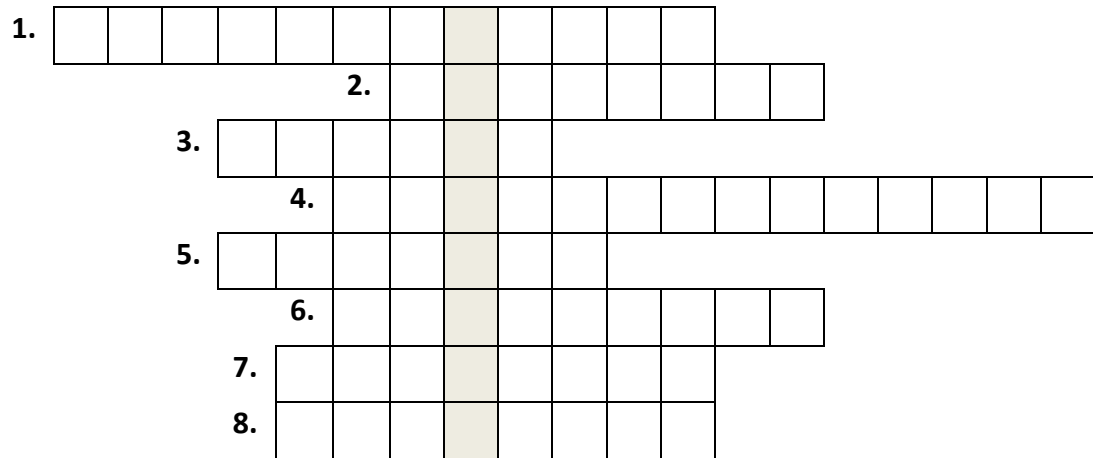
Get Ready!

Discuss the questions with a partner.



1. What is happening in the picture?
2. How long have the people been waiting? How do you think they are feeling?
3. What words and phrases do you think people use in this situation?
4. What do you think are their reasons for wanting customer service?
5. What is your experience with customer service?

Find the Missing Word!



Look in People's Law School's *Consumer Law* (March 2011) pages 3 - 5 to find the words that have the same meaning as the underlined phrases below. Write the words in the above puzzle to find the bonus word.

1. You can make a complaint at a store if the product is not a good standard or value.
2. It's important to know the rules of the store before you purchase something from the store.
3. You can ask the store to return your money back to you if you are not happy with the product.
4. It is your duty or obligation to check instructions and learn how to use a product in order to care for it.
5. If there are problems with the item you buy, the store should give you a new one.
6. You can make a statement about a product by talking to someone, calling or writing a letter to Consumer Protection BC or the Better Business Bureau.
7. Be sure to keep records of what you bought in case you need to return an item.
8. You should also collect copies of any documents, for example, some items come with a contract to fix or repair the item if it breaks.

Build Your Vocabulary!

Complete the vocabulary chart by analyzing the words to understand their form, meaning, and use.

Term:	USE (examples in booklet)	FORM (suffix, prefix, parts of speech)	MEANING	OTHER FORMS
consumer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>consumer problems</i> - <i>consumer association</i> - <i>consumer protection</i> - <i>help for consumers</i> 	<i>consume + er</i> <i>noun/adjective</i>	<i>someone who buys something</i>	<i>consuming</i> <i>consume</i> <i>consumed</i> <i>consumeristic</i> <i>consumption</i>
satisfactory				
agree				
protect				
proofs				
goods				
complaint				
claim				

Read, Talk and Write!

PARTNER A

Read: Read “Common Consumer Problems” in People’s Law School’s booklet, *Consumer Law* (March 2011) pages 3 and 4.

Talk: Ask Partner B the questions in the chart below and write down Partner B’s answers. Answer the questions Partner B asks you.

Write: Use the answers from Partner B to write 1 to 2 connected paragraphs explaining how to make a complaint.

Partner A asks Partner B the questions below.

Questions	Answers
1. What are the three steps to making a complaint?	
2. What can you say to explain what you want?	
3. If the person from the store or company does not do what you want, what should you do?	
4. Name two places where you can file a complaint.	
5. What can you do if you cannot solve the problem?	
6. What website can you go to to get information and help in making a claim?	

Read, Talk and Write!

PARTNER B

Read: Read “How to Make a Complaint” in People’s Law School’s booklet titled Consumer Law (March 2011) pages 4 and 5.

Talk: Answer the questions Partner A asks you. Ask Partner A the questions in the chart below and write down Partner A’s answer.

Write: Use the answers from Partner A to write 1 to 2 connected paragraphs giving advice on what to do when making a complaint

Partner B asks Partner A

Questions	Answers
1. What are some common consumer complaints?	
2. You buy something. When do you have the right to make a complaint?	
3. As a consumer, what are your responsibilities?	
4. What are the three steps to starting a complaint?	
5. When starting a complaint, what information should you collect?	
6. What should you keep notes on?	

Who is Speaking?

Identify if the person who is speaking is the consumer (C) or the sales representative (SR).

1. _____ Could you direct me to the person who handles complaints?
2. _____ I will stop buying from your company.
3. _____ It's final sale. There are no returns or exchanges.
4. _____ I'd like to return this product.
5. _____ Do you have the receipt?
6. _____ No, thank you. I'd like a refund.
7. _____ Oh, I'm sorry. The date on your receipt is 20 days ago.
8. _____ It doesn't work like it's supposed to.
9. _____ Why are you returning the item?
10. _____ I think it is only fair that you replace the product.
11. _____ Our store policy is that you can return or exchange an item within 14 days.
12. _____ I'm not satisfied with it.
13. _____ I hope we can reach an agreement on this.
14. _____ Without the receipt you can only exchange the item. There's no refund.
15. _____ May I speak to the manager?

Who is Speaking? - continued

Work in groups of 2 to 3. Role play the following situations. Use the above sentences to help you.

<p>The consumer wants to return a camera he is not satisfied with. The store clerk notices that the expiry date on the receipt is one week ago.</p>	<p>The consumer wants to return a mattress set she feels is not of satisfactory quality. The salesperson claims that the sale is a final sale.</p>	<p>The consumer wants to return a portable heater, but has lost the receipt.</p>
<p>The consumer buys a vacuum cleaner, but it doesn't work properly. She goes to the store and exchanges it for another one, same brand and model. The new vacuum has the same problem. The consumer complains to the store manager.</p>	<p>The new laundry machine the consumer bought five months ago has broken down for the third time. The warranty covers the repairs, but the consumer is fed up. The consumer complains to the store manager.</p>	<p>The consumer feels that his \$300 juicer does not function as the company claims. He calls customer service to complain.</p>

Find out more!

Work with a partner. Each partner chooses one of the websites below. Visit the website, take note on what you learned, then share what you learned with your partner.

1. Visit www.consumerinformationbc.ca, click on **Complaint Roadmap**, and find out more about ***“Be Aware of Contract Terms Before Complaining”***.

Key Terms:	What I learned?	What I need to learn more about.

2. Visit www.clicklaw.bc.ca and find out how to make a claim in Small Claims Court.

Key Terms:	What I learned?	What I need to learn more about.

What did you learn?

Fill this out on your own.

	Yes, I can do this on my own.	I need to review this.	I can't do this yet.
I can list consumer rights and responsibilities when making a purchase.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can explain what to do before making a complaint.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can explain how to make a complaint.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can make a request or complaint politely and respond politely.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can find more information about consumer law .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What else did you learn today? What other questions do you have about making a complaint?

Find the Missing Word!

ANSWER KEY

1. s a t i s f a c t o r y
2. p o l i c i e s
3. r e f u n d
4. r e s p o n s i b i l i t y
5. p r o d u c t
6. c o m p l a i n t
7. r e c e i p t s
8. w a r r a n t y

Build Your Vocabulary!

ANSWER KEY

Term:	USE (examples in booklet)	FORM (suffix, prefix, parts of speech)	MEANING	OTHER FORMS
consumer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>consumer problems</i> - <i>consumer association</i> - <i>consumer protection</i> - <i>help for consumers</i> 	<i>consume + er</i> <i>noun/adjective</i>	<i>someone who buys something</i>	<i>consuming</i> <i>consume</i> <i>consumed</i> <i>consumeristic</i> <i>consumption</i>
satisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>not of satisfactory quality</i> - <i>a satisfactory response</i> 	<i>satisfy +actory</i> <i>adjective</i>	<i>good, to a certain standard, acceptable</i>	<i>satisfy</i> <i>satisfied</i> <i>satisfying</i>
agree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>company may agree</i> - <i>if the person does not agree to do..</i> 	<i>agree</i> <i>verb</i>	<i>to decide, approve</i>	<i>agreement</i> <i>agreeable</i> <i>agreed</i> <i>agreeing</i>
protect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>laws that protect you</i> 	<i>protect</i> <i>verb</i>	<i>to guard; to keep safe</i>	<i>protection</i> <i>protector</i> <i>protected</i> <i>protecting</i>
proofs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>other proofs of purchase</i> 	<i>proof + s (plural)</i> <i>noun</i>	<i>evidence, something that provides information about what is real</i>	<i>proof</i> <i>prove</i> <i>*proofing</i> <i>*proofer</i>
goods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>about the goods</i> 	<i>goods</i> <i>noun, no singular form</i>	<i>things, products, stuff</i>	<i>goods</i>
complaint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>make a complaint</i> - <i>start a complaint</i> - <i>make your complaint</i> - <i>make up a complaint letter</i> - <i>file a complaint</i> 	<i>complaint</i> <i>noun</i> <i>adjective</i>	<i>problem, concern, a situation that you are not happy with</i>	<i>complaints</i> <i>complain</i> <i>complaining</i> <i>complained</i>
claim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>make a claim</i> 	<i>claim</i> <i>noun</i>	<i>statement</i>	<i>claims</i> <i>claimed</i> <i>claiming</i>

Read, Talk and Write! ANSWERS Key

PARTNER A

Partner B answers

Questions	Answers
1. What are the three steps to making a complaint?	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. <i>Explain the problem</i>2. <i>Explain what you want</i>3. <i>File a complaint</i>
2. What can you say to explain what you want?	<i>I think it's only fair that you replace the product or provide me a refund or repair the product free of charge.</i>
3. If the person from the store or company does not do what you want, what should you do?	<i>Speak to the manager</i> <i>Get the phone number or the address of head office</i> <i>Tell them that you will not buy from them again and you will tell others about this problem</i>
4. Name two places where you can file a complaint.	<i>Consumer Protection BC and Better Business Bureau</i>
5. What can you do if you cannot solve the problem?	<i>Make a claim in Small Claims Court</i>
6. What website can you go to to get information and help in making a claim?	<i>www.clicklaw.bc.ca</i>

Read, Talk and Write! ANSWERS Key

PARTNER B

Partner A answers

Questions	Answers
1. What are some common consumer problems?	<i>returning an item</i> <i>collecting money owed</i>
2. You buy something. When do you have the right to make a complaint?	<i>a product doesn't do what it said it would</i> <i>not satisfied with the quality</i> <i>it's not as it was described</i>
3. As a consumer, what are your responsibilities?	<i>find out the store's policies</i> <i>take care of your things and follow instructions</i>
4. What are the three steps to starting a complaint?	<i>collect information</i> <i>keep notes on what happens</i> <i>let the company know you have a problem</i>
5. When starting a complaint, what information should you collect?	<i>description of the goods or services</i> <i>cost</i> <i>receipts</i> <i>proofs of purchase</i> <i>copies of documents such as a warranty</i> <i>details of the problem</i>
6. What should you keep notes on?	<i>who you talked to (names)</i> <i>when you talked to them</i> <i>what you told them</i> <i>what was the next step</i>

Who is Speaking?

ANSWER KEY

1. C Could you direct me to the person who handles complaints?
2. C I will stop buying from your company.
3. SR It's final sale. There are no returns or exchanges.
4. C I'd like to return this product.
5. SR Do you have the receipt?
6. C No, thank you. I'd like a refund.
7. SR Oh, I'm sorry. The date on your receipt is 20 days ago.
8. C It doesn't work like it's supposed to.
9. SR Why are you returning the item?
10. C I think it is only fair that you replace the product.
11. SR Our store policy is that you can return or exchange an item within 14 days.
12. C I'm not satisfied with it.
13. C I hope we can reach an agreement on this.
14. SR Without the receipt you can only exchange the item. There's no refund.
15. C May I speak to the manager?