Appendix 1

Step 1: Saying you have a Complaint

1. Excuse me, but I'd like to make a complaint.
2. I'm sorry to bother you, but I think there's something wrong with … .
3. I'm afraid I've got a bit of a problem. You see, … .
4. I'm sorry to have to say this, but there's a slight problem with … .
5. Excuse me, but there appears/seems to be a problem with … .

(Adapted from: www.teach-this.com/images/resources/complaining-and-apologizing-useful-language.pdf)

Step 2: Stating the Problem

Complaints can be statements reacting to a negative behavior, attitude, or habit. Examples:

1. My students don't turn in their homework on time.
2. Children spend too much time playing video games.

Complaints can also be statements reacting to a condition. Examples:

1. The office is too hot.
2. This city has too much air pollution.
3. Rent is too expensive in this neighborhood.

(Adapted from: www.teach-this.com/images/resources/complaints-apologies-and-requests.pdf)

Step 3: Making a Request

Requests usually follow a complaint. Use "please," "I would be grateful," or "I would appreciate it" to make a request more polite. Examples:

1. Could/Can you please … [turn in your homework at the beginning of class]?
2. I would be grateful if you could/would … [come to class on time].
3. I would appreciate it if you could/would … [clean up your room].

Must and/or *insist* make a request stronger:

1. You must … [turn in your homework at the beginning of class].
2. I must insist that you … [come to class on time].

(Adapted from: www.teach-this.com/images/resources/complaints-apologies-and-requests.pdf)

Practice:

Make a complaint for the following situation: You're eating at a restaurant, but the service has been slow, the server brought the wrong order, and the silverware is dirty. Use the vocabulary above to complain to the server and make a request.