



Difficult Customers

Lesson	CEFR
7	B2

Business English

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Introduction

No matter what industry you work in, encountering a difficult customer is completely inevitable.

From retail and hospitality to corporate IT and corporate sales, managing an angry client requires immense emotional intelligence, sharp communication skills, and thick skin.

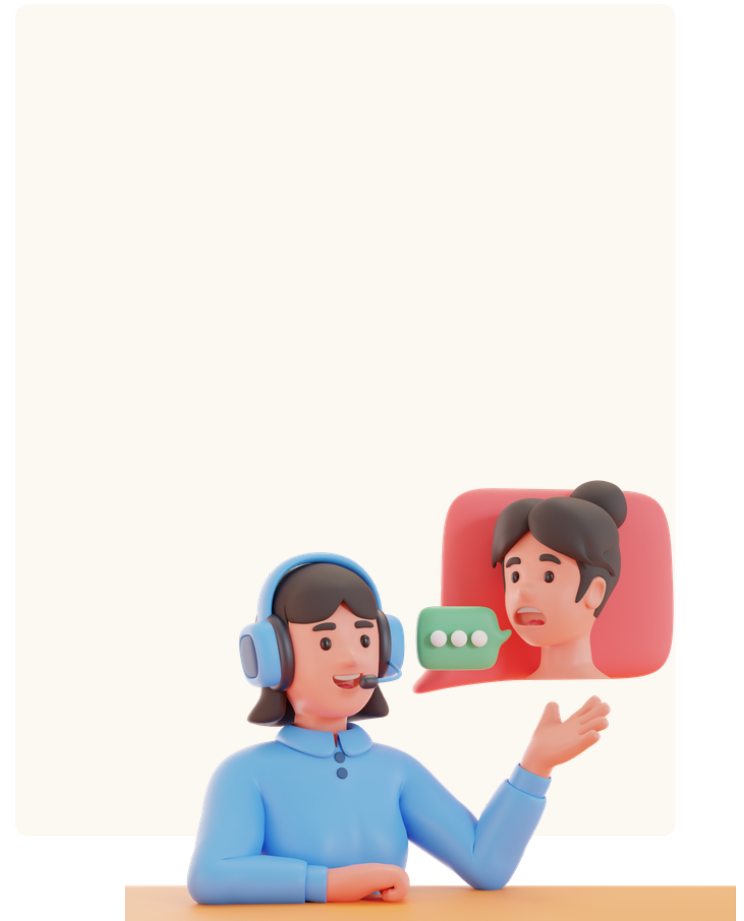
Learning how to de-escalate these high-stress situations is an essential milestone in professional growth!



Vocabulary Focus

De-escalate: To systematically reduce the intensity, anger, or overall severity of a conflict or heated situation.

Empathize: To genuinely understand and share the feelings, perspectives, or deep frustrations of another person.



Vocabulary Focus

Entitled: Believing oneself to be inherently deserving of privileges, special treatment, or exceptions to standard corporate policies.

Sovereignty (in business): The ultimate authority or boundary a worker maintains to protect themselves from abuse, knowing when a line has been crossed.



The Myth of "The Customer is Always Right"

The famous business phrase "The customer is always right" was originally coined to make consumers feel secure. However, in the modern corporate world, many companies are abandoning this absolute rule. While accommodating a customer's reasonable frustration is great, blindly accepting abuse deeply damages employee morale.

The key to surviving a customer service nightmare lies in professional detachment. Experts advise using active listening, repeating the problem back to show understanding, and offering an actionable solution. Remaining calm and firm strips the angry customer of their power.

Let's Discuss!

Round1: Personal Stories & Experiences

- Have you ever had to deal with an incredibly angry or unreasonable client in your own professional life? How did you handle it?
- Think about a time you were an unsatisfied customer. Did you complain calmly, or did you let emotions get the best of you?

Round 2: Psychology & Strategy

- Do you agree with the rule, or are there moments where a company should tell a customer to leave and never come back?
- If a customer is screaming or using profanity at you over the phone, what is the best professional response?

Interactive Roleplay Arena

Scenario A: The Late Flight Reservation

The Customer: You missed your flight because you arrived late to the airport, but you are completely blaming the airline desk agent. You demand to be put on a first-class flight tonight entirely for free.

The Employee: The strict system rules state the customer must pay a \$150 rebooking fee, and there are absolutely no free upgrades available. Stay polite and de-escalate the situation.

Interactive Roleplay Arena

Scenario B: The Undercooked Meal

The Customer: You are dining at a luxury restaurant and your steak is slightly overcooked. You are furious, making a loud scene, and demanding that your entire group's bill be made completely free.

The Employee: You want to make the customer happy by replacing the steak immediately or offering a free luxury dessert, but you cannot make the entire group's bill free. Find a compromise.