To clear up errors or misunderstandings

I think you may have forgotten to deduct the 20 per cent discount we agreed on.
There may have been a misunderstanding about the delivery date.
It may have slipped your mind, but you said you were going to send off the consignment before Friday.

Sometimes it is necessary to be more direct

I'm not at all happy/satisfied with this machine. It …
What are you going to do about the malfunctioning unit? Will you repair it or exchange it?

If polite methods do not work

If you don't exchange the unit by Friday, I'll cancel my next order.
What do you mean, you can't give me my money back? I want to speak to the manager.

To ask for the reason for the complaint

What exactly is the problem?
I'm sorry to hear that. What is wrong with it?

To apologise and to explain

I'm sorry. – I'm very/extremely sorry.
Sorry, my fault. I didn't realise that …
There's been a problem in our accounting department.

To accept someone's apology

That's all right. – It's quite/perfectly all right.
That's okay. It really doesn't matter.

Work with a partner. Think of at least three different situations in which you can use these phrases, and make up short dialogues. Also note that in Britain complaints are generally made in a polite, tentative tone!

4. Additional practice

a **Complete the body of this letter using the words from the box. Then draft a full complaint, supplying all necessary particulars (names, dates, etc.) from your own imagination.**

Boxes Nos. 1, 3 and 4 reached us in perfect condition. **1** , box No. 2, **2** contained the T-shirts, was badly damaged, **3** looked as if it had been broken open.

4 we examined the enclosed packing list, we found that 125 shirts were missing, and **5** the rummaging in the boxes, quite a few other shirts were torn and **6** cannot be sold.

7 the transaction was on a DAP basis, we would ask you to contact your forwarding agent with regard to compensation.

8 you will find a list of the damaged and missing shirts, and we would ask you to send us replacements as soon as possible. The damaged articles will be kept at our warehouse **9** we hear from you.

and
as
because of
enclosed
however
therefore
until
when
which