

4.3 Doing business: cohesive complaint paragraphs

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ Total: 24 marks

KEY WORDS claim 论断 • Cohesive devices 衔接手段

Objective

Explain a service problem through an organised paragraph, reference words and appropriate qualification. The shop and trial below are fictional; this is language practice, not a business forecast.

1 Key knowledge and worked examples

■ Key knowledge: make every sentence serve the paragraph

A topic sentence states the paragraph’s main idea. Evidence gives specific support; an explanation connects that support to the idea. A closing sentence can suggest a response. **Cohesive devices** 衔接手段 connect sentences: “these orders” refers back to named orders, “however” signals contrast and “therefore” introduces a conclusion. A connector cannot repair a missing logical link.

Distinguish a delay from its possible cause. A record of two late orders does not prove that a delivery company caused them. A practical request should identify an action, a responsible person and a useful response time rather than merely complain that service is “bad”.

■ Source A: shop record

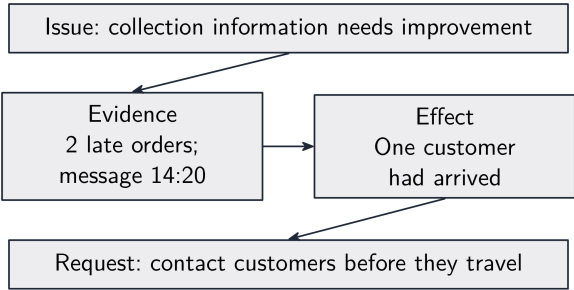
Riverside Stationery promised to prepare twenty collection orders by 14:00 on Monday. Eighteen were ready at that time. Orders R17 and R19 became ready at 15:00. The record says that both needed a replacement notebook because the required colour was unavailable. It does not say when the shop discovered the shortage. Staff contacted the two customers at 14:20. One customer had already travelled to the shop. The shop has not recorded how much time either customer lost.

■ Source B: draft complaint

The shop’s collection information needs to be more reliable. Two orders were not ready at the promised time. This matters because a customer may make an unnecessary journey. However, all orders were complete by three. Therefore, the problem should be ignored. It was definitely the delivery driver’s fault. I want things to be better soon.

■ Worked example: connect evidence to a useful action

Known: two orders were late; notice came after the promised collection time. The timing can support a request for earlier notification, but not a claim about an unnamed driver.



Model: “Two of twenty orders were not ready by 14:00. Staff informed those customers at 14:20, after the promised collection time. This delay could make a journey unnecessary; one customer had already arrived. Please explain how customers will be warned before travelling when stock is unavailable.” The final request follows the evidence and does not invent a cause or a measured loss.

2 Practice

2.1 State how many orders were ready by the promised time and identify the two late order references. [2]

2.2 Identify the topic sentence in Source B. State what “This” refers to in its third sentence. [2]

2.3 Explain why “Therefore, the problem should be ignored” does not follow from the preceding sentence. Give ONE customer effect supported by Source A. [3]

2.4 Correct “It was definitely the delivery driver’s fault” using the record. Include one known fact and one limit to what can be concluded. [3]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 Replace the final three sentences of Source B with a coherent 60–80 word ending. Acknowledge eventual completion, retain the problem and request a specific response without accusing an unsupported cause. [6]

3.2 Write a 100–130 word email as the customer for order R17. You reached the shop at 14:05 and received the 14:20 message there. Use the order reference, promised time, actual completion time and communication problem. Ask for an explanation and a feasible service improvement. [8]

Solutions

2.1 Eighteen ready; R17 and R19 late.

2.2 “The shop’s collection information needs to be more reliable”; “This” refers to the two orders not being ready at the promised time.

2.3 Eventual completion does not remove the earlier inconvenience. One customer had already travelled to the shop, so earlier notification could have prevented an unnecessary journey or wait. Do not award a claimed exact time loss.

2.4 The required notebook colour was unavailable and replacements were needed; the record neither identifies a delivery driver nor explains when the shortage was discovered; it cannot establish that driver’s responsibility.

3.1 Six points ($6 \times B1$): completion by 15:00 acknowledged; earlier delay retained; after-deadline notification identified; plausible effect linked; specific explanation/improvement requested; logical, readable ending without invented blame. Sample: “Although the orders were complete by 15:00, their customers were told about the delay only at 14:20. One had already arrived, so eventual completion did not remove the inconvenience. The record identifies a stock shortage but does not establish who caused it. Please explain when the shortage was discovered and how the shop will notify customers before their promised collection time if a replacement item is needed.”

3.2 Eight points ($8 \times B1$): R17; promise 14:00; arrival 14:05; message 14:20; completion 15:00; clear explanation request; feasible earlier-contact proposal; polite, coherent language without unsupported blame. Sample: “Dear Riverside Stationery Team, I am writing about collection order R17, which was promised for Monday at 14:00. I arrived at 14:05, but the order was not ready. I received your message at 14:20 while I was already in the shop, and the order became available at 15:00. I understand that the notebook colour was unavailable. Could you explain when this shortage was discovered and why the message came after the collection time? For future orders, please consider checking stock earlier and contacting customers before they travel if an item must be replaced. I would appreciate a reply explaining whether this arrangement is possible. Thank you for your help. Kind regards, Wei.”