When writing a letter of complaint:

- explain the reason for your complaint and include relevant details
- tell the reader how you are expecting him/her to resolve the issue
- state why you think your request should be granted

When responding to a letter of complaint:

- begin by acknowledging that the letter of complaint was received, and include the date. You can use phrases like: Thank you for your letter dated …, or This is in response to your letter of complaint dated … or I am responding to your letter of complaint dated …
- summarize the nature of the complaint as you understand it
- if appropriate, include a statement of apology. For example: We apologize for the problems you had with … or We are very sorry that …
- include an explanation of how you have solved (or will solve) the problem in the body of the letter. For example: I have asked the salesperson to refund your money as soon as possible.

1 Write a letter of complaint for one of the situations below. Exchange your letter with a partner and write a response to his/her letter.

Situation 1
Complaint
You have been having problems with your cable TV service. You called the company and asked them to send a technician to look at it. The technician did not arrive at the scheduled time, and when he did arrive two hours late, he said he could not do the repair. Write a letter of complaint. Include all relevant details. State what you think should be done about the situation.

Response
You are employed in the customer service department of a cable TV company. You have received a complaint from a customer. Respond to the complaint.

Situation 2
Complaint
You would like to cancel a magazine subscription that you have had for the last three years. You called the subscription department and told them to cancel the subscription, but they did not. You have a charge on your credit card statement for the renewal.

Response
You work for a magazine publishing company. You have received a letter of complaint from one of your subscribers. Respond to the complaint. Write a letter to the customer apologizing for the mistake and telling him/her how you will solve the problem.
Fill in the blanks with definite or indefinite articles (the, a, or an). If no article is needed, put $\emptyset$ in the blank.

Dear Mr. Lipias:

I am writing to express my dissatisfaction with the summer camp program at the Caukley Recreation Center this year. My daughter first attended this camp about four years ago and loved it! The children did a lot of fun activities and my daughter had a wonderful time. However, in the last two years I have seen the program at Caukley slowly deteriorate.

My first complaint is about the swimming schedule. The camp offers two hours of swimming three or four times a week. It seems that on most days, that time period is shortened by sometimes as much as half an hour as a form of punishment because some children are misbehaving. All of the children are made to sit against the wall in the pool area for 30 minutes while the counsellors are in the pool having fun themselves. This is completely unacceptable.

I am also unhappy with the programming offered at the camp this year. In previous years, children did a lot of arts and crafts. During the four weeks that my daughter spent at camp this year, she only did art once when someone from an outside organization came to Caukley.

And my final complaint involves the behaviour of one of the counsellors named Sandy. My daughter told me that this particular counsellor was going through the children's lunches looking for leftover snacks in the afternoon because she was hungry. My daughter said that the counsellor went into her bag without asking her permission. This is extremely unprofessional behaviour.

I am very unhappy with the Caukley camp this year and I would like to have my money refunded. I trust you will give this matter your immediate attention and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Write a letter in response to the complaint. Proofread your letter and exchange with a partner for peer-editing.

Search the Internet for activities or instructions about the use of articles. Review three websites that offer practice activities. Choose your favourite website and in small groups, present reasons you like it.

Possible search terms: grammar + articles practice; articles + exercises