

**JC Learning Lab**  
**Sample Essay - Process**

### How to Complain

I am not just a consumer - I am a victim. If I order a product, it is bound to arrive in the wrong color, size, or quantity. If I hire someone to do repairs about the house, he never arrives on the day scheduled. If I owe a bill, the computer is sure to overcharge me. Therefore, in self-defense, I have developed the following consumer's guide to complaining effectively.

The first step is getting organized. For example, I save all sales slips and original boxes or packaging. Also, I keep a file for warranty cards and product guarantees. This file does not prevent a product from falling apart the day after the guarantee runs out; however, these facts provide the "ammunition" I need to make a complaint. I know the date of the purchase, and I have an exact description of the product, including model and serial numbers. This information is then readily available when I write a letter of complaint.

The next step is to write the complaint letter to the person who will get results quickly. My experience has shown that the president of a company is the best person to contact. I will call the company to find out the president's name and make sure I note the proper spelling and title. Then I write directly to that person, and I usually get prompt action. For example, the head of a tool company arranged to replace my electric saw which fell apart after six month's use. Another time, the president of a department store had a twenty-dollar overcharge on my account corrected after three months of arguing with the manager produced no results.

If I get no response to a written complaint within ten days, I follow up with a telephone call. When I had a new bathtub installed a few years ago, the plumber left a gritty black substance on the bottom of the tub. No amount of scrubbing would remove it. I tried every cleaner available, but none of them

worked. I called the plumber, and he merely shrugged off my complaint, suggesting I use steel wool. Finally, I called the plumber's boss, and the next day, another plumber came and removed the stain. Making a phone call to the right person made all the difference.

It can be too easy to let poor products and service get the best of us. Effective complaining, however, can make the difference between being a victim or a satisfied consumer. Keeping accurate records and going right to the top can easily make this difference.