Activity Type
Pairwork speaking activity

Language Focus
Complaints, apologies and requests

Aim
To make complaints, apologies and requests in different situations.

Preparation
Make one copy of the worksheet for each pair of students and cut as indicated.

Level
Pre-intermediate

Time
30 minutes

Introduction
In this fun speaking activity, students practice making complaints, apologies and requests.

Procedure
Divide the class into pairs and give each pair a set of cards. Tell the students to take six cards each.

Explain that the students are going to make complaints and requests using the words and pictures on their cards as prompts.

Before they start the activity, ask each student to look at their six cards and write on the other side who they are complaining to and where they are, e.g. waitress, in a restaurant.

Explain that the language the students use to make the complaint and request will depend on the words and the picture on their card. Their partner's response will also vary slightly, depending on the situation written on the other side of the card.

Write an example dialogue on the board, indicating the language the students should use.

Example:
A: Excuse me! There appears to be a fly in my soup.
B: I’m very sorry about that.
A: Could you bring me a new bowl?
B: Certainly. One moment please.

Tell the students to hold their cards so that the picture is facing them and the side they have written on is facing their partner.

Now, ask the students to take it in turns to hold up a card to their partner and make a complaint. Their partner apologizes appropriately and after that the student makes a request.

When the students have finished, ask them to exchange cards and repeat the process.

Finally, ask pairs of students to present the complaints to the class.
Complaint - music too loud
Request - turn it down

Complaint - wait a long time
Request - hurry up

Complaint - drive too fast
Request - slow down

Complaint - slow computer
Request - buy a new one

Complaint - late to class
Request - arrive on time

Complaint - wrong change
Request - one more dollar

Complaint - too hot
Request - turn on the fan

Complaint - fly in soup
Request - a new bowl

Complaint - ordered tea, not coffee
Request - a cup of tea

Complaint - too dark
Request - turn on the light

Complaint - room smells
Request - open a window

Complaint - bought a pair of trousers, but they’re too short
Request - a new pair