

# **Unit 5: Understanding and Resolving Guest Problems**

**Hotel TEACH Lesson Plan**  
**Unit 5, Lesson 1**

**Career Counseling: Listening with Empathy**

**Objectives**

Sts will learn to resolve problems and listen empathetically for improved customer service.

EFF Skill Sets addressed	<b>Cooperate with Others:</b> Try to adjust one's actions to take into the account the needs of others and/or the task to be accomplished.
Industry Skill Sets addressed	<b>Resolve Guest Problems</b> <b>Exceed Customer Expectations</b>

**Activity 1: Empathy Skills**

T introduces another important component of active listening: empathy. T asks the Sts to define “empathy.” As Sts call out answers, T leads responses towards the following definition and writes it on the board.

***Empathy** is the ability to recognize and understand the emotions, beliefs, moods and desires of another person. Empathy is often characterized as the ability to “put oneself into another’s shoes.”*

T elicits from Sts the reasons why it would be important for hotel workers to have empathy. Some examples might be as follows:

1. *Listening empathetically makes people feel as if they are truly being heard and that their needs will be taken care of.*
2. *Listening with empathy gives guests a positive experience of the hotel and of you as a worker. Guests will always remember the worker who truly listened and cared about their problem, as opposed to the worker who offers a quick solution.*
3. *When you acknowledge how people are feeling, you reassure them that they are understood. “I understand that you must be tired after your long flight. I’ll get your room number right away.” Or “I would be upset also if the airline lost my luggage.”*
4. *Empathy improves communication and strengthens relationships.*
5. *Empathy helps to establish trust.*
6. *Empathy and trust are essential to developing solutions, winning and retaining business, and avoiding or defusing conflict.*

**Activity 2: Showing Empathy**

T breaks Sts into groups of three and has each group describe the behaviors of empathy. Write the following questions on the board to elicit answers from each group: (5 minutes)

*How do you know someone understands your feelings? What does he/she do? What does he/she say? When someone is upset, how do you know? What strategies have worked for you in dealing with an upset friend? What has not worked?*

Some examples might be as follows:

- *Acknowledge the feelings of the other person.*
- *Keep eye contact.*
- *Give him/her your full attention.*
- *Put yourself in the person's shoes.*
- *Show concern.*
- *Use active listening; listen without interrupting.*
- *Offer to help resolve the situation.*
- *Don't minimize the situation or ignore the person's emotions.*

After Sts have brainstormed the answers, T asks each group to report and writes their suggestions on the board. T then hands out "Steps to Listening with Empathy" (Handout 1) to the class and has Sts volunteer to read it aloud. T answers any questions.

### **Activity 3: Empathy Practice**

This activity will give Sts an opportunity to practice showing empathy to guests. In the same groups of three, T has Sts choose among themselves who will play the role of a hotel guest, who will be the hotel worker and who will be the group observer.

T distributes guest role-play cards (Handout 2) to the St playing the guest so the St can study the role. T instructs the Sts who are playing the role of the worker that they should use the behaviors listed on the board to demonstrate empathy towards the guest. T then hands out the rubric (Handout 3) to the Sts who are observing. The observers should be told to listen and observe the body language of the worker/guest role play and fill out the rubric for the group.

After Sts complete the role play, T gives the observers 3 to 5 minutes to discuss what they observed with their group members. T and Sts then discuss the activity as a group:

T asks the Sts who played the guest to explain what it felt like when someone was empathizing with them:

*Did your feelings about the situation change?*

*How did it feel to have someone empathize with your feelings?*

*What was your impression of the hotel after you had interacted with an empathetic employee?*

T then asks those who were playing the workers:

*Was it difficult to empathize? Why or why not?*

*If it wasn't easy to empathize, how were you able to do it?*

T then asks those who were observing the role play:

*Were there any behaviors that your group used that were not listed on the board or handout?*

### **Extension Activity**

Have Sts observe a co-worker who they believe demonstrates active listening skills and empathy in dealing with difficult guests. Have the Sts analyze the way their co-worker deals with the situation using the rubric.

### **Journal Exercise**

Instruct Sts to think about a difficult problem they have had as a customer or hotel guest when they were not shown empathy. What would they change about the other person's response? How would empathy have helped? What other communication skills would have helped? Have Sts write these reflections in their journal.

### **Teachers Tips**

- Sts may be unfamiliar with some of the vocabulary in this lesson. Review words such as “aggression” and “venting,” and explain the difference between responding and reacting. When you respond, you take a moment to think about what you say before you say it. A response is centered and non-aggressive. Reacting is an emotional comeback to someone else's emotions.
- Some workers may have felt offended and insulted by guests in the past. It may be difficult to empathize with someone who is upset. Explain that you cannot control other people's behavior, but you do have a choice as to whether you respond inappropriately or professionally.

## Unit 5, Lesson 1: Handout 1

### Steps to Listening with Empathy

When listening to an upset guest:

1. **Remain centered:** Focus on your breathing, maintain eye contact and continue to listen to what is being said. When guests are upset, they are looking to resolve a problem. Allow them to vent.
2. **Take ownership and offer your assistance:** How does it feel to be in the guest's shoes? What needs does he/she have that are not being met? Example: "I can understand why you are frustrated that your room is not ready. Please let me see what I can do to resolve the problem."
3. **Ask probing questions:** Continue to ask questions to understand what the guest is trying to say and to reassure the guest that he/she is being heard. Clarify the guest's needs, and get more information to solve the problem: "Do you mean ...?" or "Did I understand you to say ...?"
4. **Remain calm:** Don't feel incompetent, angry or nervous if the guest is overreacting. The guest has a right to express his/her feelings. This is not a personal attack on you. Don't join the participant in an argument. Don't tell guests to calm down, as this often makes them angrier. Continue to listen and maintain eye contact.
5. **Summarize and apologize:** "You wanted the food cooked without butter." "You'd like extra towels in your room." Apologize to them and take ownership of the problem. Assure them that you understand that this has been a mistake on the part of the hotel.
6. **What will resolve situation?** Explain how you will take care of this. Do you need to refer them to another department? Communicate this in an assuring and genuine tone.
7. **Do not take it personally:** Do not carry any negative experiences home with you. Leave the situation in the past.

Unit 5, Lesson 1: Handout 2

**Role-Play Cards**

<p>After a very long and exhausting flight, you get into an argument with your partner because he/she forgot to buy travelers checks.</p> <p>When you get to the hotel, you get a room that does not have a balcony even though you had reserved a room with a balcony. Explain this problem with the room to the front desk.</p>	<p>After you check in to the hotel, you order a hamburger and fries for your two children from room service. You order one hamburger well done and the other burger with cheese. When room service brings the food, both hamburgers are rare and both have cheese.</p> <p>Your children complain and fight with each other over the burgers. You explain to room service that the order is wrong. You are very frustrated.</p>
<p>You are having a terrible day. You lost your Broadway tickets, and your anniversary is ruined. You tried to get replacement tickets, but the show is sold out.</p> <p>You go to the concierge to get suggestions on what else you can do. You don't know New York City at all.</p>	<p>You are in New York for the funeral of your favorite aunt. You have been distracted all day and have been misplacing things. When you go to check out, you realize that you lost your hotel voucher that would give you a 50% discount on the room.</p> <p>You feel overwhelmed and ask the room attendant to help you look for it.</p>

## Empathy in Listening

Students' Names \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Behavior Skill	Never	Rarely	Most of the Time	Always
<b>Remain Centered.</b>				
1. Did worker remain visibly calm?				
2. Did worker maintain eye contact?				
3. Did worker allow guest to explain his/her problem without interruption?				
<b>Take ownership and offer your assistance.</b>				
1. Did worker avoid sounding defensive?				
2. Did worker take ownership of the problem?				
3. Did worker offer assistance?				
<b>Ask probing questions.</b>				
1. Did worker get enough information from the guest to solve the problem?				
2. Did guest seem to feel he/she was being heard?				
<b>Remain calm.</b>				
1. Did worker make the mistake of telling the guest to calm down?				
2. Did worker sound reassuring, or did he/she yell or get impatient?				
<b>Summarize and apologize.</b>				
1. Did worker repeat exactly what the problem was back to the guest?				
2. Did worker apologize on behalf of the hotel?				

	<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Most of the Time</b>	<b>Always</b>
<b>What will resolve the situation?</b>				
1. Did the worker explain to the guest how he/she will solve the problem?				
2. Did the worker sound genuinely concerned?				
<b>Do not take it personally.</b>				
1. Does the worker seem upset after dealing with the guest?				

**Hotel TEACH Lesson Plan**  
**Unit 5, Lesson 2**

**Understanding & Resolving Guest Problems**

**Objective**

Introduces the four basic steps to resolving a guest’s problem.

EFF Standards	<b>Solve Problems and Make Decisions:</b> Anticipate or identify problems; Generate alternative solutions.
Industry Standards	<b>Resolve Customer Problems</b> <b>Act with Professionalism &amp; Integrity</b>

**Activity 1: Introduction**

T asks Sts:

- What kinds of problems do guests have?
- What are the best ways to deal with them?

T tells Sts that that they are going to watch a video that highlights the steps to solving a problem (AHLA Video – “Delivering Quality Guest Service” – Segment 3, “Handling Guest Complaints”). T will play the video once, and Sts need to listen for the answer the following question:

What is the guest’s problem?

T passes out Worksheet 1 and asks for a volunteer to read the directions; then T plays the video again. In pairs, Sts write down the four steps. When they are finished, Sts compare answers with their partner. T elicits the answers from the class. T plays the video again to check that all the steps are correct.

<b>Step #1</b> – Listen <b>Step #2</b> – Respond by apologizing and offering solutions <b>Step #3</b> – Take action to solve the problem <b>Step #4</b> – Follow up by checking to see that guest is satisfied
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**Activity 2: Practice**

T passes out Handout 2 and has Sts to watch the video again to listen for the missing expressions. When Sts have finished their cloze exercise, T plays the video again but this time with the volume off. Sts need to identify what nonverbal signs the front desk clerk and Gary use to show that they are listening and trying to solve the problem:

Examples of nonverbal signs: *Front desk associate looks concerned, serious, nods his head, rubs his chin, his eyes open as he gets an idea, he puts down the phone and picks up a walkie-talkie. The maintenance worker looks serious, and he keeps his eyes focused on the computer screen; he sits straight in his chair, bending toward his work.*

In groups of three and acting out the dialogue for the class, each St plays the part from the video and uses appropriate nonverbal gestures when solving the problem.

### **Extension Activities**

1. Many hotels have their own specific rules about how to respond to guest problems. Ask Sts to design their own rules on how to respond to a guest problem and report back to class.

### **Materials**

“Delivering Quality Guest Service” from American Hotel & Lodging Association. Use the third segment, called “Handling Guest Complaints.” #052121VHSENGE, 17 minutes.

### **Teacher Tips**

If a video is not available, T may use another video, in which a problem is solved using these four steps. Even though this is a scripted dialogue, when groups are acting, have them pay attention to body language and active listening techniques.

Unit 5, Lesson 2: Handout 1

**Handling Guest Complaints**

**Directions:** Watch the video, “Delivering Quality Service,” and listen for the four steps to handling a guest complaint.

Step 1:

Step 2:

Step 3:

Step 4:

**Listening Exercise: "Handling Complaints"**

**Directions: Watch the video and fill in the missing sentences below:**

Guest 1: Yes, this is Scott Hayek in room 313.

(1) \_\_\_\_\_ . I can't seem to connect to the internet. It's very important. I'm really in a bind. I've got this wedding tomorrow, and I need to check the registry.

Front Desk: (2) \_\_\_\_\_ . Please allow me to call Gary. He's our maintenance engineer. He's pretty good with computers.

(A few minutes later)

Gary: At our hotels we need to dial 8 to get an outside line. So you need to go to your pull-down menu here and add a default to your user profile choices and ...(*Computer: "You've got mail."*) There! You're on. Good to go.

Guest 1: (3) \_\_\_\_\_

(Later)

Front Desk: Hi, Mr. Hayek. This is Alan calling from the front desk. Yes, I (4) \_\_\_\_\_ your Internet connection was working well.

Guest 1: The connection is fine, but the wedding registry is closed. I guess that's what I get for waiting until the last possible second.

Front Desk: That's too bad, but maybe there's (5) \_\_\_\_\_ .

## **Transcript from “Handling Complaints”**

Guest 1: Yes, this is Scott Hayek in room 313. I have a problem with my laptop. I can't seem to connect to the Internet. It's very important. I'm really in a bind. I've got this wedding tomorrow, and I need to check the registry.

Front Desk: I'm very sorry for your inconvenience, Mr. Hayek. Please allow me to call Gary. He's our maintenance engineer. He's pretty good with computers.

(A few minutes later)

Gary: At our hotels we need to dial 8 to get an outside line. So you need to go to your pull-down menu here and add a default to your user profile choices and ... (*Computer: "You've got mail."*) There! You're on. Good to go.

Guest 1: Great. Thank you!

(Later)

Front Desk: Hi, Mr. Hayek, this is Alan calling from the front desk. Yes, I was calling to make sure your Internet connection was working well.

Guest 1: The connection is fine, but the wedding registry is closed. I guess that's what I get for waiting until the last possible second.

Front Desk: That's too bad, but maybe there's something else we can do to help.

**Hotel TEACH Lesson Plan**  
**Unit 5, Lesson 3**

**Apologizing and Acknowledging a Problem**

**Objective**

To apologize and acknowledge a guest’s complaint in a formal register.

EFF Standards	<b>Cooperate with others:</b> Try to adjust one’s actions to take into account the needs of others and/or the task to be accomplished.
Industry Standards	<b>Communicate with Others</b> <b>Act with Professionalism &amp; Integrity</b>

**Activity 1**

T asks Sts the following question:

How do you feel when someone approaches you with a problem?

Do you take the situation personally?

What are some things to keep in mind?

(Sts may respond differently, but if their responses indicate that they are taking the situation personally, T could review lesson on “Keeping a Professional Demeanor.”)

T plays the audio dialogue, “A Housekeeping Problem,” and asks Sts to listen for answers to the following three questions:

1) Does Rose take the situation personally?

*No, because she focuses on the problem. She says, “That’s not acceptable at all.”*

2) What does Rose say to apologize?

*Oh, I’m so sorry.*

3) What does Rose say to acknowledge the problem?

*That’s not acceptable at all.*

T writes “Apologizing” and “Acknowledging the Problem” on the board, puts Rose’s responses under each heading, and asks Sts to brainstorm other ways to express the same idea:

<b>Apologizing</b>	<b>Acknowledging the Problem</b>
<i>Oh, I’m so sorry.</i> <i>We’re terribly sorry.</i> <i>I apologize for your inconvenience.</i> <i>We are sorry, Sir.</i> <i>I’m sorry, Ma’am.</i>	<i>That’s not acceptable at all.</i> <i>That shouldn’t have happened.</i> <i>That wasn’t supposed to happen.</i> <i>That was not correct.</i>
<i>Sorry, man!</i> <i>Oh wow! Sorry.</i>	<i>Someone really messed up.</i> <i>Oh brother, Alex blew it again.</i> <i>Oh man, what a drag.</i>

T explains that “That shouldn’t have happened” and “That wasn’t supposed to happen” are useful ways to acknowledge or say that a mistake was made.

T then asks the class:

Why are these expressions not appropriate for apologizing?

Sorry, man!

Oh wow! Sorry.

*Those expressions are used for friends, especially saying “man.”*

Why are these expressions not appropriate for acknowledging a problem?

Someone really messed up.

Oh brother, Alex blew it again.

Oh man, what a drag.

*These expressions are too informal, and they also blame a co-worker. The guest doesn’t need to know about problems with co-workers.*

What are the expressions that are more formal or in the correct register for apologizing to the guest?

Oh, I’m so sorry.

We’re terribly sorry.

I apologize for your inconvenience.

Why would you use “we” instead of “I” when apologizing?

*Sometimes it’s better to apologize by using “we,” as a problem was probably not caused by you personally. You need to apologize and show empathy. Some hotels prefer that you use “we.”*

## **Activity 2**

T writes on the board:

That shouldn’t have happened.

That wasn’t supposed to happen.

That’s not acceptable at all.

T asks Sts to identify the subject

“that” = the problem (the hair in the tub)

T reads the following guest complaint from Handout 1 and asks Sts to identify the problem:

*“Yes, this is Joe Martin in room 2450, and I can’t get my Internet hooked up. I thought I had wireless access! I need to check my e-mails, or I’ll be in big trouble. Can you get someone up here right away?”*

The problem is that Mr. Martin doesn’t have wireless access in his room, and he needs to check his e-mails.

T then asks Sts to apologize and acknowledge the problem:

I am so sorry, Mr. Martin. That shouldn’t have happened.

T passes out Handout 2 to each pair. Pairs practice apologizing and acknowledging the problem and take turns being the guest. Sts practice

correct pronunciation of contractions, such as *I'm*, *shouldn't*, *can't*, *that's* and *I'll*.

### **Extension Activity**

Journal writing assignment: How do you feel when a guest or supervisor approaches you with a problem? Does it bother you or not? Give an example of the last time it happened; how did you respond?

Materials: **Recording of “A Housekeeping Problem.”**

### **Teacher Tips**

- “That should not happen” is a commonly used phrase as part of the apology and acknowledgment of a mistake in these situations at the hotel. It can be taught as just a useful phrase to know and use as part of this function. This lesson touches on “not taking things personally” from Unit 4, and Sts revisit it later when they report completed and uncompleted tasks.
- By this time in the course, Sts are ready for more idiomatic expressions, like “colossal mistake” or “it’s a rock,” which are found in the situation cards. Use this new vocabulary to generate lists of adjectives for “big” or other ways to express poorly cooked food.

Unit 5, Lesson 3: Handout 1

**“A Housekeeping Problem”**

Transcript

**Guest:** Excuse me, I just checked into my room, and there’s hair in the tub and it’s not mine. It’s really gross.

**Rose:** Oh, I’m so sorry. That’s not acceptable at all. I’ll clean the tub for you immediately, or if you’d like, I can see if another room is available.

**Guest:** Thank you. If you clean it, that will be just fine. I have to go out. I’ll be back in about an hour.

**(Phone rings)**

**Michael:** Guest Services. This is Michael.

**Rose:** Hi, Michael; this is Rose. I just wanted to let you know that the guest in room 407, Mrs. Johnson, checked in today and found hair in her tub. But don’t worry. I cleaned the tub, and it’s spotless.

**Michael:** Thanks, Rose. I’ll make sure and follow up with Mrs. Johnson.

Unit 5, Lesson 3: Handout 2

**Problem Situations**

**Directions:** Read what the guest says to you. Then respond with an apology and acknowledgment of the problem.

<p>1.</p> <p>“Excuse me, can you help me? My room smells like cigarettes — it’s really disgusting!”</p>	<p>2.</p> <p>“Hello? Is this the front desk? I just checked in to my room, and the bed isn’t made, and the bathroom is messy. I can’t believe it!”</p>
<p>3.</p> <p>“What do you mean, you don’t have my reservation? I called a month ago to reserve a table by the fountain for my 10th wedding anniversary. This is simply outrageous!”</p>	<p>4.</p> <p>“Hello? I’m calling from room 2120, and my cable isn’t working, and I want to watch the soccer finals. I can’t believe this! Oh man, oh man.”</p>
<p>5.</p> <p>Yes, this is Josephine Baker in room 1537, and my Philly Cheese Steak sandwich is stone cold. I mean, it’s crazy. The thing costs \$16.75, and it is a rock. What a colossal ripoff!”</p>	<p>6.</p> <p>“Yes, this is Joe Martin in room 2450, and I can’t get my Internet hooked up. I thought I had wireless access! I need to check my e-mails, or I’ll be in big trouble. Can you get someone up here right away?”</p>

**Hotel TEACH Lesson Plan**  
**Unit 5, Lesson 4**

**Expressing Solutions and Offers**

**Objective**

To express solutions and offers to guest using “would like.”

EFF Standards	<p><b>Speaking so Others Can Understand:</b> Organize and relay information to effectively serve the purpose, context and listener.</p> <p><b>Solve Problems and Make Decisions:</b> Generate alternative solutions.</p>
Industry Standards	<p><b>Resolve Customer Problems</b></p> <p><b>Communicate with Others</b></p>

**Activity 1**

T asks Sts to listen again to the audiotape of “A Housekeeping Problem” and asks the Sts to write down the answer to the following question:

What words does Rose use to offer a solution to the problem?

*I'll clean the tub for you immediately, or if you'd like, I can call and see if another room is available.*

T asks Sts if they hear a difference between what Rose says

*If you'd like, I can call and see if another room is available.*

and this question:

*Do you want me to call and see if another room is available?*

T ask Sts to tell her:

*Which question — “Do you want?” or “Would you like?” — is more formal? (A: Would you like?)*

*Do they have the same meaning? (A: Yes.)*

T writes on the board the question format to diagram the questions. T asks Sts to give her the two solutions that Rose offered and diagram them like this:

<b>Question Format</b>					
<b>X Word</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Verb (like)</b>	<b>Object (me)</b>	<b>To + verb base</b>	<b>Rest of Sentence</b>
Would	you	like	me	to clean	the tub?
Would	you	like	me	to call	for another room?

## **Activity 2**

T passes out Handout 1 (same dialogues as from Unit 5, Lesson 3) and asks Sts to brainstorm solutions and offers for these situations. T models first situation:

*“Excuse me, can you help me? My room smells like cigarettes — it’s really disgusting!”*

*“I am so terribly sorry. That’s totally unacceptable. Would you like to move to another room, or I can call the houseman up to thoroughly clean the room for you.”*

T asks Sts:

How did I apologize? *I am so terribly sorry.*

How did I acknowledge the problem? *That’s totally unacceptable.*

What two solutions did I offer the guest?

1) *Move to another room.*

2) *Call the houseman up to thoroughly clean the room for you.*

T then reviews the polite question format by writing the grid on the board and filling in the two solutions and asks for more from the class:

<b>X Word</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Verb (like)</b>	<b>Object (me)</b>	<b>To + verb base</b>	<b>Rest of Sentence</b>
Would	you	like	-----	to move	to another room?
Would	you	like	me	to spray	the room?
Would	you	like	-----	to wait	in the lobby while I call?
Would	you	like	me	to call	the houseman to thoroughly clean the room for you?

T cuts up the dialogue problems and passes one to each pair. Sts think of two solutions and, using Handout 2, diagram their solutions correctly. Sts practice their role play and then perform them for the class. The T asks for a volunteer to ask the class the following questions:

1) How did he/she apologize?

2) How did he/she acknowledge the problem?

3) What two solutions did he/she offer the guest?

The class listens for the answers, and after each role play a St gets the feedback. At the end of class, T collects the diagram worksheets that the Sts have completed.

## **Homework Assignment**

In pairs, Sts record their dialogues. T collects dialogues, reviews them and then passes them out to different classmates the following week to review. Classmates listen to the recording and, using their “Speaking Checklist,” write down what they had trouble understanding (see “Recording Worksheet/Speaking Checklist” at the end of this lesson). Sts then discuss their feedback with their classmates.

### **Extension Activity**

T can use Handout 2 that the Sts hand in as information for further practice. If the Sts have mistakes, T types up a homework sheet so that the Sts can identify the questions with mistakes and correct them.

### **Teacher Tips**

- We used an X Word grammar text (*XWord Grammar*, by Jim Lydon, revised by Judith Coppock Gex, 1993, revised by Bonnie Hart, 2004) for this course. There are many available, but it is important to highlight question and statement formats in this way so Sts can practice them correctly. X Word Lesson 7, “Yes/No Questions,” is a good follow-up.
- Practice the “would like” expression with a song like the Beatles’ “I Wanna Hold Your Hand,” and have Sts change it to the more formal *I’d like to hold your hand*, so they can get a sense of the contraction and the rhythm of the expression. I find Sts have difficulty with the “would like to” form. Practicing it through a song reinforces the contraction “I’d like to ...” because they have to sing it along with the music. Songs like the Spice Girls’ “Wannabe” or Beach Boys’ “Do You Wanna Dance?” can be changed to the more formal version of “would like to” also. My Sts preferred the Beatles.
- The homework assignment is excellent. I found that the Sts were very serious about this activity — more serious than when they evaluated themselves. It really helps develop their “ear” and ability to edit their own pronunciation if they listen to someone else’s carefully.

**“A Housekeeping Problem”**

**Guest:** Excuse me, I just checked into my room, and there’s hair in the tub and it’s not mine. It’s really gross.

**Rose:** Oh, I’m so sorry. That’s not acceptable at all. I’ll clean the tub for you immediately or, if you’d like, I can see if another room is available.

**Guest:** Thank you. If you clean it, that will be just fine. I have to go out. I’ll be back in about an hour.

**(Phone rings)**

**Michael:** Guest services. This is Michael.

**Rose:** Hi, Michael. This is Rose. I just wanted to let you know that the guest in room 407, Mrs. Johnson, checked in today and found hair in her tub. But don’t worry. I cleaned the tub, and it’s spotless.

**Michael:** Thanks, Rose. I’ll make sure and follow up with Mrs. Johnson.

Unit 5, Lesson 4: Handout 1

**Problem Situations, Part 2**

**Directions:** Read what the guest says to you, then respond with an apology and an acknowledgment of the problem, and offer the guest a choice of two solutions.

<p>1.</p> <p>“Excuse me, can you help me? My room smells like cigarettes — it’s really disgusting!”</p>	<p>2.</p> <p>“Hello? Is this the front desk? I just checked in to my room, and the bed isn’t made, and the bathroom is messy. I can’t believe it!”</p>
<p>3.</p> <p>“What do you mean, you don’t have my reservation? I called a month ago to reserve a table by the fountain for my 10th wedding anniversary. This is simply outrageous!”</p>	<p>4.</p> <p>“Hello? I’m calling from room 2120, and my cable isn’t working, and I want to watch the soccer finals. I can’t believe this! Oh man, oh man.”</p>
<p>5.</p> <p>Yes, this is Josephine Baker in room 1537, and my Philly Cheese Steak sandwich is stone cold. I mean, it’s crazy. The thing costs \$16.75, and it is a rock. What a colossal ripoff!”</p>	<p>6.</p> <p>“Yes, this is Joe Martin in room 2450, and I can’t get my Internet hooked up. I thought I had wireless access! I need to check my e-mails, or I’ll be in big trouble. Can you get someone up here right away?”</p>

Unit 5, Lesson 4: Handout 2

**Question Format**

**Directions:** Write your solutions to the situation in the following boxes, and diagram your question correctly. Have your partner look it over, and hand it in to your teacher at the end of class.

<b>Question Format</b>					
<b>X Word</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Verb (like)</b>	<b>Object (me)</b>	<b>To + verb base</b>	<b>Rest of Sentence</b>
Would	you	Like	me	to clean	tub?
Would	You	like	me	to call	for another room?

**Homework: Unit 5, Lesson 4**

**Recording Worksheet / Speaking Checklist**

Directions: Complete the form, and explain it to your classmate.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic: **Reporting Incident** (Listen to the recording several times)

Date of Recording: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Ways to improve this recording...</b>
1. What words are difficult for you to understand?	
2. Is the person speaking too fast or too slow?	
3. Does the person speaking sound too soft or too loud?	
4. Does the speaker sound confident or confused?	
5. Other suggestions?	

**Hotel TEACH Lesson Plan**  
**Unit 5, Lesson 5**

**Listening to and Resolving Guest Problems over the Phone**

**Objective**

Respond professionally to an angry caller, and start working on the problem.

EFF Standards	<b>Resolve Conflict and Negotiate:</b> Generate options for resolving conflict that have a win/win potential. <b>Guide Others:</b> Assess the needs of others and one's own ability to assist.
Industry Standards	<b>Resolve Customer Problems</b> <b>Act with Professionalism &amp; Integrity</b>

**Activity 1**

T asks Sts if they remember the last time they called a company to complain about a service.

*Did the person who answered the phone resolve the problem?*

*If so, do you remember how he/she did it?*

*Did you get angry when the person couldn't help you?*

*If so, how did the person react when you got angry?*

T then tells Sts that they will watch the *Telephone Doctor*\* episode called the "Irate Caller." T asks Sts to listen for the key phrases used in the different scenarios for each of the four parts of the ASAP method. T plays the first scenario and asks Sts to identify the language. T plays the rest of the DVD, and Sts write down more examples.

**A**pologize: "I'm sorry the information was incorrect. No wonder you're upset."

**S**ympathize or Empathize: "I don't blame you for being upset. That's so frustrating."

**A**ccept Responsibility: "Let me see how I can help. My name is Enrique. I'm the front desk agent. And I am speaking with ...?"

**P**repare to help: "Thanks, Mr. Jones. Let's see how I can help you."

T then asks Sts to listen again for two things that they should try not to do:

- 1) Don't make excuses.
- 2) Avoid transferring the call.

## **Activity 2**

T plays the Hotel TEACH Recording “Irate Caller” (see attached transcript) and asks the Sts to listen for the problem.

A very tired guest asked the housekeeper to stop vacuuming outside her door so she could sleep and was refused.

T passes out the cloze exercise (Listening Handout 1), and Sts listen again to the dialogue to fill in the phrases. T repeats audio as necessary and has Sts write phrases on the board.

T then asks Sts to identify the part of the dialogue that defuses the situation or stops the guest from being angry:

**Front Desk:** *I am terribly sorry! You must be so tired, especially after the wedding. I apologize that the attendant didn't understand that vacuuming would be so disturbing. I will call up there now and have her stop. Thank you for bringing this to our attention. I see you are calling from room 924, Mrs. Aaronson — is that correct?*

What five things did the front desk clerk do in this dialogue?

**A - Apologized** - *I am terribly sorry!*

**S - Empathized** - *You must be so tired, especially after the wedding. I apologize that the attendant didn't understand that vacuuming would be so disturbing.*

**A - Accepted responsibility and thanked the guest for telling her about the situation** - *I will call up there now and have her stop. Thank you for bringing this to our attention.*

**P - Prepared to act** - *I see you are calling from room 924, Mrs. Aaronson — is that correct?*

T asks Sts to give her the ASAP rules and writes them to the left of the phrases that the Sts picked out. T then asks Sts the following:

What two things does the front desk clerk offer to placate the guest or make the guest happier?

**Front Desk:** *We want to make sure you have a good stay here, and you must be exhausted. Would you like me to tell the front desk to take phone messages for you this morning so you can rest for a couple more hours? We can also move your checkout time to 2 PM, if you'd like.*

## **Activity 3**

With a partner, Sts read over the three role plays. T lets Sts decide which role play they would like to practice and present to the class. They

may write the dialogue down, but when they present it, they can't read from the paper. The dialogues must contain two components:

- 1) Defuse situation
- 2) Placate guest

When Sts perform the role play, T asks class to listen for these two parts, defuse and placate. After role play, class reports back the dialogue like this, using reported speech:

*She defused the situation when she said she was sorry and offered to help.*

*She placated the guest when she offered him a choice of another room or a free drink at the bar while they worked on the AC.*

### **Extension Activities**

1) Using *Make Your Mark in the Hotel Industry*, pages 66 & 67, Sts practice dialogue and do the fill-in-the-blank and sentence-completion exercises in order to highlight more ASAP phrases to use with an irate guest.

2) Sts nominate their favorite role-play scenario to work on as a class project and perform at their graduation ceremony. Sts may write out the dialogue and practice enough times so it is under 4 minutes. It must include all the ASAP steps, as well as an example of the follow-up, to ensure that the guest was moved from "irate" to "satisfied." A St will need to be the "narrator," to direct the flow of the skit. For example, the narrator would introduce the skit by saying, "This is the Hotel TEACH presentation of *The Angry Caller*."

### **Materials**

*Telephone Doctor* episode, "How to Handle the Irate Caller"  
(available at [www.telephonedoctor.com](http://www.telephonedoctor.com))  
Hotel TEACH audio, "Irate Caller"

### **Teacher Tips**



Sts may not know the term **defuse**. I found it easiest to draw a picture like this on the board of a bomb or dynamite and indicate the "fuse." To "defuse" literally means "to take the fuse away," and so I erased it. The students immediately saw the connection. It was better than saying, "Calm the guest," as we all know how we feel if someone tells us to "calm down." For some reason, we just get angrier. It is a good

discussion point for the class. Other terms they may have difficulty with are **irate** and **placate**. This I illustrated on the board by drawing “Emoticons.”



It was helpful for those who learn better visually to see that to **placate** the guest is not enough, but to move the guest to being **satisfied** with the overall stay at the hotel is the most important. A discussion on different ways to “satisfy” the guest without offering “coupons” or “gifts” is something you may want to explore. Following up later with the guest, doing what you say and showing genuine concern about their problem satisfies most people.

If you are unable to get the *Telephone Doctor* series, proceed using the Hotel TEACH “Irate Caller” recording. We recommend the *Telephone Doctor*, as it is an industry standard and excellent for native speakers as well.

Unit 5, Lesson 5: Listening Handout 1  
**Cloze Exercise “Irate Caller”**

*Directions: Listen to the recording, and fill in the missing words or expressions.*

**Front Desk:** Good afternoon, Sheraton New York, this is Juanita.

\_\_\_\_\_?

**Guest:** Your people are so incredibly rude! All I wanted was a little extra sleep this morning because my daughter got married last night. But at 9 AM there was all this vacuuming outside my room. I went outside to ask the housekeeper to stop vacuuming. The woman — I don't know what her name was — said, “Sorry, lady, but I have to vacuum this area now. Relax, \_\_\_\_\_.” I couldn't believe it. I asked her again if she could vacuum later, but she said, “\_\_\_\_\_.”

**Front Desk:** \_\_\_\_\_! You must be so tired, especially after the wedding. I apologize that the attendant didn't understand that vacuuming would be so disturbing, I \_\_\_\_\_. Thank you for bringing this to our attention. I see you are calling from room 924, Mrs. Aaronson — is that correct?

**Guest:** Yes that's me. Thanks for taking care of this.

**Front Desk:** We want to make sure you have a good stay here, and you must be exhausted. \_\_\_\_\_ the front desk to take phone messages for you this morning so you can rest for a couple of more hours? We can also move your checkout time to 2 PM, if \_\_\_\_\_.

**Guest:** Yes, that would be good. Could you call me for a wake-up call at 12:30? I'll checkout by 2 PM; that would help. Thank you.

**Front Desk:** I would be happy to. Please call me if \_\_\_\_\_.  
Again, my name is Juanita.

**Guest:** Thank you, Juanita. You've been great.

## Conversation 1 - Transcript for Listening “Irate Caller 1”

**Front Desk:** Good afternoon, Sheraton New York, this is Juanita. How may I help you?

**Guest:** Your people are so incredibly rude! All I wanted was a little extra sleep this morning because my daughter got married last night. But at 9 AM there was all this vacuuming outside my room. I went outside to ask the housekeeper to stop vacuuming. The woman — I don't know what her name was — said, “Sorry, lady, but I have to vacuum this area now. Relax, I'll be done soon.” I couldn't believe it. I asked her again if she could vacuum later, but she said, “No, it has to be done now.”

**Front Desk:** I am terribly sorry! You must be so tired, especially after the wedding. I apologize that the attendant didn't understand that vacuuming would be so disturbing. I will call up there now and have her stop. Thank you for bringing this to our attention. I see you are calling from room 924, Mrs. Aaronson — is that correct?

**Guest:** Yes that's me. Thanks for taking care of this.

**Front Desk:** We want to make sure you have a good stay here, and you must be exhausted. Would you like me to tell the front desk to take phone messages for you this morning so you can rest for a couple more hours? We can also move your checkout time to 2 PM if you'd like.

**Guest:** Yes, that would help. Could you call me for a wake-up call at 12:30? I'll check out by 2 PM. That would be good. Thank you.

**Front Desk:** I would be happy to. Please call me if you need anything further. Again, my name is Juanita.

**Guest:** Thank you, Juanita, you've been great.

**Role-Play Scenarios**

- 1) A guest calls and asks to speak to a manager. She wants to complain. She is a strict vegetarian. She ordered the vegetable lasagna from room service, but when she took a bite of it, there was meat in it. She tells you that when she made the order, she had asked room service if there was any meat in the lasagna, and they told her no.
  
- 2) A guest calls you at the front desk. She is very annoyed. She tells you that she has been sick and can't have the air conditioning on. She always turns it off, but the room attendant turns it back on when she cleans the room. The guest says that she left a note for the room attendant asking her to leave the air condition off, but when the guest got back to her room tonight, the air conditioning was on again.
  
- 3) A guest calls the front desk to complain. He tells you that he called yesterday to ask for a room change because his cable wasn't working. He was told someone would fix it yesterday. No one came, and the cable is still not working today.

