Quiz

For each question choose the one correct answer.

1. It’s unreasonable ____________ us extra for checking in early!
   a. to charge
   b. for charging
   c. for to charge

2. It’s ____________ to make me pay extra!
   a. just not unfair
   b. simply reasonable
   c. just not fair

3. Well I think that’s ____________ unfair!
   a. absolutely
   b. really

4. _______________ into my room now!
   a. Well, I’d like you to let me
   b. Well, I’d like to let you
   c. Well, think I should let me

Answers
1. A
2. C
3. B
4. A
Transcript

William

My name’s William Kremer. Now, it's often said that we English people hate making complaints, but just for you, I’m going to make a programme about making complaints. This edition of How To will look in detail at the language of spoken complaints.

Earlier on, I spoke to my colleague Catherine, who told me about a time she’d made a complaint a couple of years ago. The incident happened at her brother’s wedding, which was being held in a hotel. Now, Catherine arrived at the hotel one hour before the wedding but to her surprise, the hotel told her that she had to pay £10 extra for checking in early. What did Catherine say?

EXAMPLE
Catherine
‘How can you invite people to come to your hotel for a wedding and then charge them to get into their room one hour before the wedding?’ And the woman said, ‘I’m sorry that’s policy,’ and I said, ‘Well that’s ridiculous!’ and ended up talking to the manager and telling the manager that I was very surprised at their policy and that it was unreasonable to charge people who were already paying a lot of money and –

William
I can see that you’re still quite angry about this, Catherine.

Catherine
Well the memory’s coming back to me! Anyway, so in the end – sorry.

William
Do you remember – do you remember what words you used with the manager?

Catherine
Erm, I think, if you – if you be the manager I can probably kind of remember it.

William
Okay, okay, okay. Let’s imagine then that I am the manager.
**Catherine**
Okay.

**William**
Erm, and you’re at the front desk.

**Catherine**
Yeah.

**William**
And I come up and you’ve asked to see me.

**Catherine**
Yeah.

**William**
And I say something like, ‘Well hello madam. Is everything okay?’

**Catherine**
Well, no. Actually it isn’t. I’ve been – erm – I’ve booked a hotel room, my brother’s wedding is at two o’clock, I’m here at one o’clock, I want to check in and they’re telling me that I have to pay £10 for checking in early, and I think that’s absolutely ridiculous. So I’d like you to, erm, not charge me £10 and let me get into my room.

**William**
Err. Well, I’m afraid that we have our rules and regulations and our policy. I’m very sorry to hear that you’re unhappy, but I’m afraid our policy is that if you arrive before a certain time then we have to charge for that room, ‘cause obviously normally that room might be occupied by another guest.

**Catherine**
I really think that you should, erm, change your policy for this circumstance because it’s really unreasonable and, erm, unfair and I think that’s just not reasonable to charge people this kind of money.

**William**
I’d love to help you. So what did he – no, what did he say, because I’m guessing now.
Catherine
He said that kind of thing. He said exactly what you’re saying: he was polite and courteous and said, ‘That is policy; we’re not going to change it.’

William
Now, don’t worry if you missed some of that. We’re going to listen again to what Catherine said, and look more closely at some of the language that she used.

How did Catherine react when the hotel told her she’d have to pay extra for checking in early?

EXAMPLES
Catherine
And the woman said, ‘I’m sorry that’s policy,’ and I said, ‘Well that’s ridiculous!’

Elena
That’s ridiculous!

William
This is a very common way of showing that you think something is silly or unfair. It’s a strong expression, but you can make it even stronger by using a very common adverb:

EXAMPLE
Catherine
And I think that’s absolutely ridiculous!

William
Now at this point, Catherine asked to speak to the manager, probably by saying something like:

EXAMPLE
Elena
Can I speak to the manager please?

William
Catherine made her position very clear to the manager:

EXAMPLES
Catherine
I really think that you should, erm, change your policy for this circumstance because it's really unreasonable and, erm, unfair and I think that's just not reasonable to charge people this kind of money.

Elena
It's just not fair to charge people this kind of money!

Matt
It's simply not reasonable to charge people this kind of money!

William
If something is reasonable, it makes sense and it's fair. But what's the opposite of 'reasonable'?

EXAMPLES
Catherine
It's really unreasonable and, erm, unfair.

Elena
That's really unreasonable!

William
Notice that Catherine told the manager what she wanted him to do:

EXAMPLE
Catherine
So I'd like you to not charge me £10 and let me get into my room.

William
When you’re making a complaint, don’t forget to tell people exactly what you want them to do!

Before we finish, I just want to highlight two quite subtle words that you can use to show you disagree with something. Catherine used both these words when the manager asked her if everything was all right.

EXAMPLES
Catherine
Well, no. Actually it isn’t.
William

‘Well’ and ‘actually’ are used in lots of different ways in different situations. But here, Catherine is using them to signal that she disagrees with the manager. You can find out more about how to use these words on the How To webpage on bbclearningenglish.com.

Well, I’m sure you’ll be pleased to learn that in the end the hotel didn’t charge Catherine £10 for checking in early. Goodbye!