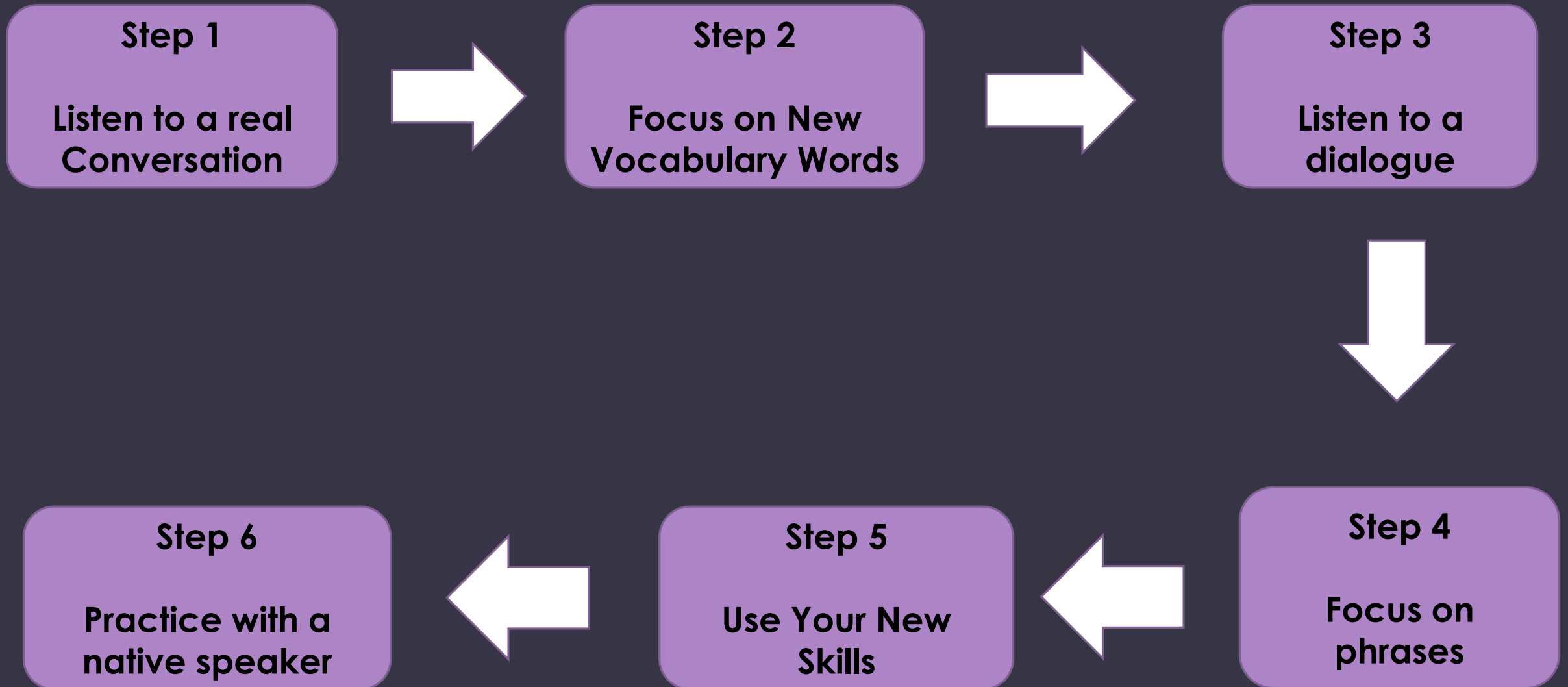


4 Ways to Complain in a Restaurant in English

A Vocabulary Lesson



Our Method



Step 1: How to Make a Complaint in a Restaurant



Please listen to Audio Step 1-How to Make a Complaint in a Restaurant

If something goes wrong in a restaurant, how can you make a complaint in English that is polite, but direct enough to get your point across? Find out here

Please view Transcript Step 1-How to Make a Complaint in a Restaurant

Step 2: Focus on New Vocabulary Words

**“Excuse me,
this isn’t what
I ordered.”**

**“I’m sorry to
bother you
but the food
is quite
cold.”**

**“I’m really sorry
to bother you,
but we have
somewhere to
be and it’s
been a while.
Do you think
you could
check on our
food?”**

**“I’m sorry,
but I ordered
a mild
version of
this dish and
this is quite
spicy.”**

**“Excuse me,
this isn’t what
I ordered.”**



When the server brings you the wrong order, you can use this phrase.

Putting “Excuse me” at the beginning of your phrase is a great way to make it sound polite.

**“I’m sorry to
bother you
but the food
is quite cold.”**



This phrase sounds polite.

“I’m sorry to bother you” is similar to “Excuse me.”

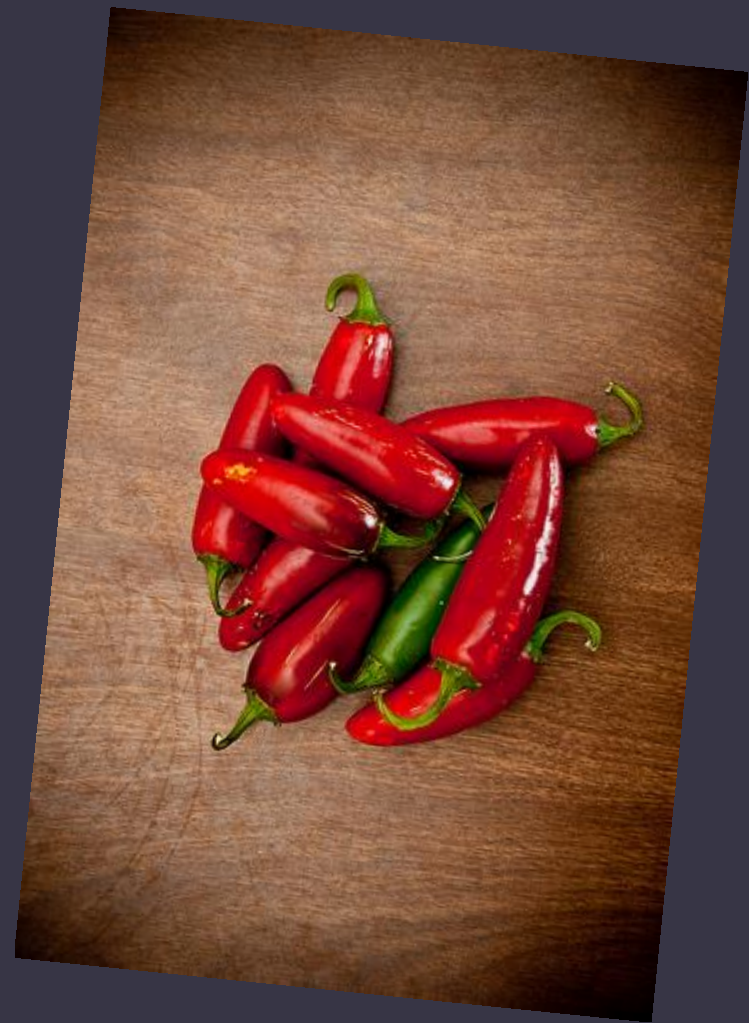
“I’m really sorry to bother you, but we have somewhere to be and it’s been a while. Do you think you could check on our food?”



“It’s been a while” means that you have been waiting for a long time.

If you start your question with “Do you think...,” your question will sound more polite.

“I’m sorry, but I ordered a mild version of this dish and this is quite spicy.”



The word “mild” means without strong flavors or spices. If you don’t like spicy food, it is important to say that you want your dish to be made “mild.”

Bonus!

Cultural Etiquette Tips for Dining in the US

DO

- Ask your server about any specials if they don't announce them
- Call in advance to make a reservation if it's a popular or fancy restaurant
- Let them know if you need to cancel your reservation

Don't

- Snap your fingers to get the server's attention
- Yell across the restaurant to get the server's attention
- Leave without paying a tip (see module 1)
- Use a "come- here" gesture to get your server's attention as if you were calling a child. It's disrespectful.

Step 3: Four Restaurant Scenarios

What should you do in these situations?

- Your food is cold
- The service is slow
- You get the wrong order
- You don't like your dish

**Listen to Audio Steps 3 and 4-
Four Restaurant Scenarios**



Step 4: Focus on the Vocabulary Phrases

Learn the new vocabulary in context!

Please open Transcript Steps 3 and 4 – Four Restaurant Scenarios

- “I’m sorry to bother you but the food is quite cold.”
- “Excuse me, this isn’t what I ordered.”
- “I’m really sorry to bother you, but we have somewhere to be and it’s been a while. Do you think you could check on our food?”
- “I’m sorry, but I ordered a mild version of this dish and this is quite spicy.”

Bonus! Say It Another Way!

Learn how to say the phrases in a different way!

Click on the file “Say It Another Way”

Step 5: Use Your New Skills

**"Excuse me, this
isn't what I
ordered."**

**"I'm sorry to
bother you but
the food is
quite cold."**

**"I'm really sorry to
bother you, but
we have
somewhere to be
and it's been a
while. Do you
think you could
check on our
food?"**

**"I'm sorry, but I
ordered a mild
version of this
dish and this is
quite spicy."**

A: Excuse I'm sorry to __1__ you, but the food is quite cold.

B: Oh I am so sorry about that. I will __2__ it up for you right away.

A: Excuse me, but I ordered a __3__ version of this dish and this is quite spicy.

B: Oh no. I will have the chef make a new one right away.

A: Excuse me, this isn't what I __4__.

B: Oh I'm sorry. I'll bring you the right dish as soon as possible.



**“Excuse me, this
isn’t what I
ordered.”**

Prepare Your Vocabulary Cards

**“I’m sorry, but
I ordered a
mild version of
this dish and
this is quite
spicy.”**



**“I’m really sorry
to bother you,
but we have
somewhere to
be and it’s
been a while.
Do you think
you could
check on our
food?”**



**“I’m sorry to bother
you but the food is
quite cold.”**



Step 6: Practice with a Native

Please role play the following situation using these phrases and then switch roles: **"Excuse me, this isn't what I ordered"**

Conversation partner: You are the server in a burger joint

Student: You are dining in a casual burger joint and you notice that you got the wrong order

Bonus Conversation 1: Please use the phrases from Say It Another Way (A= friend, B= friend)

A: (student) _____ (Excuse me, this isn't what I ordered.)"

B: Oh I'm so sorry. Let me check my notes.

A: I asked for a veggie burger, not a cheeseburger.

B: Oh you're right. So sorry. I will bring out the correct dish right away.

Step 6: Practice with a Native

Please role play the following situation using these phrases and then switch roles: **“I’m sorry to bother you but the food is quite cold.”**

Conversation partner: You are a server in an Italian restaurant

Student: You are dining in an Italian restaurant

Bonus Conversation 2: Please use the phrases from Say It Another Way (A= friend, B= friend)

A: (student) _____ (“I’m sorry to bother you but the food is quite cold”)

B: It’s cold? So sorry about that. Do you mean the pasta is cold or all of the dishes?

A: Just my pasta is cold.

B: Ok I will bring out a new, hot dish in a few minutes. I apologize.

Step 6: Practice with a Native

Please role play the following situation using these phrases and then switch roles: **"I'm really sorry to bother you, but we have somewhere to be and it's been a while. Do you think you could check on our food?"**

Conversation partner: You are a server in a diner

Student: You are eating lunch in a city diner during your lunch break from a busy day at work

Bonus Conversation 3: Please use the phrases from Say It Another Way(A= friend, B= friend)

A: *(student)* _____ ("I'm really sorry to bother you, but we have somewhere to be and it's been a while. Do you think you could check on our food?")

B: Oh we are really busy today. Lunch is our busiest meal, but I will ask the chef to speed up your order

A: Yes, that would be great. We have a meeting in 25 minutes.

B: Ok, of course.

Step 6: Practice with a Native

Please role play the following situation using these phrases and then switch roles: **"I'm sorry, but I ordered a mild version of this dish and this is quite spicy."**

Conversation partner: You are a server in a restaurant that serves Southwestern food

Student: You are a customer and you are allergic to pepper

Bonus Conversation 4: Please use the phrases from Say It Another Way(A= friend, B= friend)

A: *(student)* _____ ("I'm sorry, but I ordered a mild version of this dish and this is quite spicy.")

B: Oh I apologize. I thought you said that you wanted extra pepper on your dish.

A: *No I am allergic to pepper. I asked you to hold the pepper.*

B: Ok I'm glad you told me. I will bring out a new dish right away.

Additional conversation questions

- Do you feel comfortable speaking up and making a complaint in a restaurant when something is wrong? Why or why not? Is this common in your culture or not?
- How does the advice given in this module differ from the advice you would give about complaining in a restaurant in your home culture? How is it similar?
- What kinds of restaurants do you like to dine in?
- Do you have a regular ritual of eating out every weekend?

- Describe the best restaurant in your city. Why is it so great? What do you like about it? Please describe the food, the service, the atmosphere, etc.
- Do you agree or disagree with this quote- why or why not? *“Everyone should be a server at least once in their life. It builds humility and helps you understand how hard the job is so that you can keep that in mind when you dine out.”*

Answers quiz step 5

- 1- bother
- 2- warm
- 3- mild
- 4- ordered

Answers to bonus conversations

Bonus Conversation 1: Please use the phrases from Say It Another Way (A= friend, B= friend)

A: *(student) Excuse me. Is this the (type of food) that I ordered?*

B: Oh I'm so sorry. Let me check my notes.

A: *I asked for a veggie burger, not a cheeseburger.*

B: Oh you're right. So sorry. I will bring out the correct dish right away.

Bonus Conversation 2: Please use the phrases from Say It Another Way (A= friend, B= friend)

A: (*student*) "I'm sorry to bother you, but (um) can you help me? My food just came out and it's cold."

B: It's cold? So sorry about that. Do you mean the pasta is cold or all of the dishes?

A: *Just my pasta is cold.*

B: Ok I will bring out a new, hot dish in a few minutes. I apologize.

Bonus Conversation 3: Please use the phrases from Say It Another Way(A= friend, B= friend)

A: *(student) How much longer do you think it will be?*

B: Oh we are really busy today. Lunch is our busiest meal, but I will ask the chef to speed up your order

A: *Yes, that would be great. We have a meeting in 25 minutes.*

B: Ok, of course.

Bonus Conversation 4: Please use the phrases from Say It Another Way(A= friend, B= friend)

A: *(student)* "I'm, I'm really sorry to bother you but I can't eat this..."

B: Oh I apologize. I thought you said that you wanted extra pepper on your dish.

A: *No I am allergic to pepper. I asked you to hold the pepper.*

B: Ok I'm glad you told me. I will bring out a new dish right away.

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- Timer: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/aidanmorgan/>
- Pepper: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/profilerehab/>
- Restaurant: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/uniquehotelsgroup/>
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