

Business



Writing Exercise – Responding to a complaint

Scenario: The children's book "Pilchard Steals the Show" has a grammar mistake and you have received a complaint.

Read the email quickly

1. What is the grammar mistake?

Read the complaint in detail and discuss the following:

1. Do you think it is acceptable for children's books to have grammar mistakes in them?
2. Do you think this is a serious complaint?
3. All of the books printed have this mistake; do you think other people will also spot this mistake?

To: info@bbc.co.uk
Date: 28/05/2006
From: Joe Blogs
Email: joe@hotmail.com

Subject: Grammar mistake in Bob The Builder book

This is regarding the Bob The Builder book 'Pilchard Steals the Show'

On page 29 there is a verb/tense agreement mistake. It says '...when Mrs Percival place(d) the trophy in Pilchard's paws.'

I have to say that I'd expect better from the BBC, it's bad enough that books from small publishers have elementary grammar mistakes, but I expect the BBC to proof read their books more carefully.

It's especially important to proof read material for young learners, as responsible parents we do try to check the material we give our children, but it becomes much more difficult when even the BBC are making mistakes in their books designed for young children.

This is clearly a matter of quality control and something that NEEDS to be improved radically!

Writing Exercise

Imagine you receive this complaint at the BBC and write a response.

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Teacher's Notes

Bob the Builder is a series for young children and the Website can be found at: <http://www.bobthebuilder.com/>

Quick Read answer

place should be placed (verb/tense agreement mistake)

Discussion points

- At what level are English students likely to make these mistakes?
Elementary / Intermediate / Advanced
- Do you think it is acceptable for children's books to have grammar mistakes in?
- Do you think that the BBC should withdraw this book from sale?
- Do you think the BBC would lose a lot of money if they did that?

Grammar points

- Use of words and phrases for emphasis
- Emails use shorter paragraphs than letters (1-4 sentences rather than the usual 4-6 sentences)
- Verb/tense agreement. What is it?

What happened in real life?

In reality the BBC passed responsibility around, but after two months they did find the appropriate people and sent more Bob the Builder Books out as compensation.

They did not withdraw the book, but are not planning to reprint it, but if they had then they would have lost a lot of money and the public would know of the grammar mistake. By keeping it reasonably quiet, they hope that not many parents will notice the mistake and the brand won't be damaged.