

# Talk a Lot

## Hotel – Which customers will walk out first?

### Student A

Ask and answer questions to complete the gaps, and find out information about customers at four different tables in a restaurant at a four-star hotel in Brighton. It's 6.45pm and there is only one waiter working at the moment (due to food poisoning) so service is rather slow. Which party [group] do you think will walk out (i.e. leave before their food arrives) first? Why?

	Table 4	Table 10
No. in Party / Type of Party		14 / 2 mums + kids' birthday party
Location in Restaurant	behind a large pillar by the bins	
Length of Wait Since Ordering	40 minutes	30 minutes
Problems with Order		kids keep changing their minds
Specific Time Pressure	football practice starting at 7.30pm	
# Times Asked for Manager		
Personal Problem in Party		lack of bladder control (among kids)
Specific Threat Made to Waiter	to contact the Waiters' Guild	

	Table 16	Table 9
No. in Party / Type of Party	16 / an entire rugby team + mascot	
Location in Restaurant		near the toilets
Length of Wait Since Ordering	28 minutes & 19 seconds precisely	
Problems with Order		the chive and leek soup isn't available
Specific Time Pressure	pub quiz starting at 7.45pm	
# Times Asked for Manager	6	0
Personal Problem in Party		the discovery of tattoos revealing names of previous romantic partners
Specific Threat Made to Waiter		



### Student B

Ask and answer questions to complete the gaps, and find out information about customers at four different tables in a restaurant at a four-star hotel in Brighton. It's 6.45pm and there is only one waiter working at the moment (due to food poisoning) so service is rather slow. Which party [group] do you think will walk out (i.e. leave before their food arrives) first? Why?

	Table 4	Table 10
No. in Party / Type of Party	4 / parents with two teenagers	
Location in Restaurant		beside the (very) loudspeakers
Length of Wait Since Ordering		
Problems with Order	not enough vegetarian options	
Specific Time Pressure		get kids fed and home to bed ASAP!
# Times Asked for Manager	2	4
Personal Problem in Party	parents are planning to separate	
Specific Threat Made to Waiter		to leave noisiest kid at the restaurant

	Table 16	Table 9
No. in Party / Type of Party		2 / a couple on their first date
Location in Restaurant	opposite the kids' birthday party	
Length of Wait Since Ordering		25 minutes
Problems with Order	not enough menus to go round	
Specific Time Pressure		car parking will run out at 7.32pm
# Times Asked for Manager		
Personal Problem in Party	they lost their match this afternoon	
Specific Threat Made to Waiter	to leave without paying	to not leave a tip and never return

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## Hotel

### Information Exchange

#### Answers

#### Hotel – Which customers will walk out first?

Task: "Ask and answer questions to complete the gaps, and find out information about customers at four different tables in a restaurant at a four-star hotel in Brighton. It's 6.45pm and there is only one waiter working at the moment (due to food poisoning) so service is rather slow. Which party [group] do you think will walk out (i.e. leave before their food arrives) first? Why?"

	Table 4	Table 10
No. in Party / Type of Party	4 / parents with two teenagers	14 / 2 mums + kids' birthday party
Location in Restaurant	behind a large pillar by the bins	beside the (very) loudspeakers
Length of Wait Since Ordering	40 minutes	30 minutes
Problems with Order	not enough vegetarian options	kids keep changing their minds
Specific Time Pressure	football practice starting at 7.30pm	get kids fed and home to bed ASAP!
# Times Asked for Manager	2	4
Personal Problem in Party	parents are planning to separate	lack of bladder control (among kids)
Specific Threat Made to Waiter	to contact the Waiters' Guild	to leave noisiest kid at the restaurant

	Table 16	Table 9
No. in Party / Type of Party	16 / an entire rugby team + mascot	2 / a couple on their first date
Location in Restaurant	opposite the kids' birthday party	near the toilets
Length of Wait Since Ordering	28 minutes & 19 seconds precisely	25 minutes
Problems with Order	not enough menus to go round	the chive and leek soup isn't available
Specific Time Pressure	pub quiz starting at 7.45pm	car parking will run out at 7.32pm
# Times Asked for Manager	6	0
Personal Problem in Party	they lost their match this afternoon	the discovery of tattoos revealing names of previous romantic partners
Specific Threat Made to Waiter	to leave without paying	to not leave a tip and never return

"Which party do you think will walk out first? Why?" Answers will vary. When they have completed filling the gaps, students should discuss which party they think would walk out first, and why. They should produce appropriate reasons for their choices – why they would choose one party rather than another. For example: "I think the couple would walk out first, because they would have a massive row about the tattoos..." Or... "I think the mums with the kids would walk out first, because the mums would get so stressed by the loud music and the kids wetting themselves that they would have to leave..." [etc.]

#### Sample Questions

How many people are in the party at table \_\_\_\_\_?  
 What type of party is there at table \_\_\_\_\_?  
 Where is table \_\_\_\_\_ located?  
 Where is / are \_\_\_\_\_ sitting?  
 How long has table \_\_\_\_\_ been waiting since ordering?  
 What problems has table \_\_\_\_\_ had with its order?  
 What specific time pressure is table \_\_\_\_\_ under?  
 Is table \_\_\_\_\_ under a specific time pressure?  
 How many times has table \_\_\_\_\_ asked for the manager?  
 What personal problem does the party at table \_\_\_\_\_ have?  
 What specific threat has the party at table \_\_\_\_\_ made to the waiter?  
 Has the party at table \_\_\_\_\_ made any specific threats to the waiter?

#### Sample Answers

\_\_\_\_\_  
 There is / there are \_\_\_\_\_.  
 Table \_\_\_\_\_ is located \_\_\_\_\_.  
 They're sitting \_\_\_\_\_.  
 They've been waiting for \_\_\_\_\_ minutes since ordering.  
 \_\_\_\_\_.  
 \_\_\_\_\_.  
 Yes, \_\_\_\_\_.  
 Table \_\_\_\_\_ has asked for the manager \_\_\_\_\_ times.  
 \_\_\_\_\_.  
 They've threatened \_\_\_\_\_.  
 Yes, they've threatened...

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#### Examples

What type of party is there at table four?  
Where is the rugby team sitting?

There are some parents with two teenagers.  
They're sitting opposite the kids' birthday party. *or*  
They're sitting at table sixteen, opposite the kids' birthday party.

What problems has table nine had with its order?

The chive and leek soup isn't available.

[etc.]

#### Extension 1:

You could try to encourage some comparative/superlative questions and sentences, for example:

Which table has the largest party?  
Which party has been waiting the longest?

Table sixteen has the largest party.  
The parents with two teenagers have been waiting the longest.

Who has made the most serious threat to the waiter?  
Why?

*[This is rather subjective, so answers may vary, e.g.]*  
The parents with two teenagers have made the most serious threat to the waiter, because their actions could possibly damage his career.

[etc.]

#### Extension 2:

You could encourage students to develop short role plays or dialogues using the situations. For example, each small group of students could choose one party to portray, with one student playing the waiter. Depending on the number of small groups you could try to enact all of the situations at once, with one (increasingly flustered / jumped-up / nonchalant, blasé, etc.) waiter moving between the tables.

[etc.]

#### Extension 3:

Students work in pairs. One student plays any of the diners above, while the other student plays a friend who wasn't present at the restaurant. The diner describes what happened to them at the restaurant, how they behaved, how they felt about it at the time, how they feel about it now, and whether they are planning to take any further action regarding what happened. Encourage students to use a variety of different past, present, and future verb forms.