



**APEX ENGLISH**

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**B1 · BUSINESS ENGLISH**

**UNIT 5 · B1·5B**

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# Logistics, delivery and delays

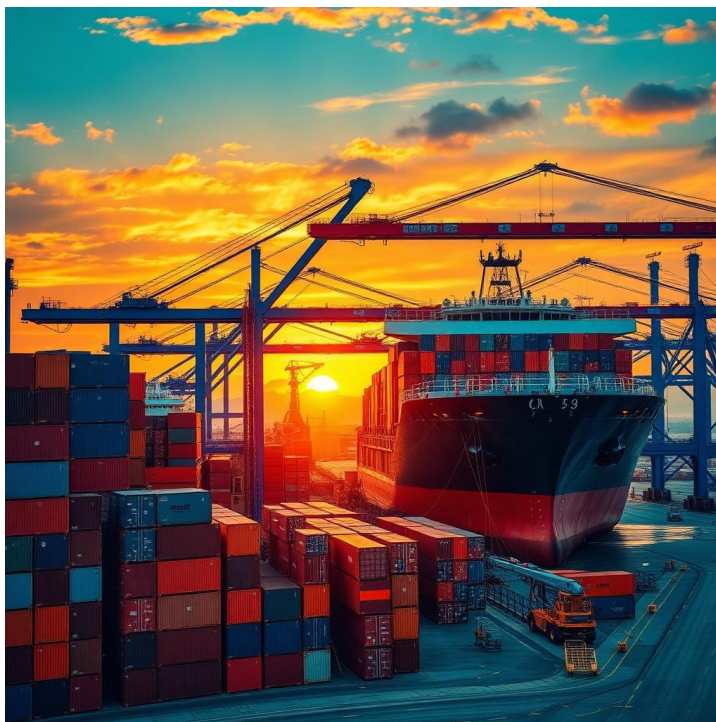
*Theme · Travel & logistics*

Unit 5 · B1·5B

# Logistics, delivery and delays

Theme: Travel & logistics

B1 · Business English



## Learning objectives

- Talk about deliveries, delays and shipping status using present perfect with 'just / already / yet' and 'for / since'.
- Update a customer politely when a shipment is late.
- Compare shipping options: sea, air, road, courier.

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class



## Class Book

### Warm-up · Order status flash cards

Read each status out loud in a natural sentence starting with 'Your order...'. Time yourself: under 45 seconds for all six.

shipped 2 days ago

cleared customs this morning

out for delivery

delayed at the port for 4 days

lost in transit

delivered and signed for

### Lead-in · Match the delivery scenario to the phrase

Match each phrase to the situation.

1. "Your order has just been shipped."

2. "The container has been stuck at customs for 3 days."

3. "We haven't received the goods yet."

4. "The package has already been delivered."

5. "There's been an issue at the port — we'll update you today."

**followUp:** Which of these do you HATE getting most as a customer? Why?

### Reading · Why 'the last mile' costs more than the first 10,000 km

A container of headphones can travel 10,000 km from Shenzhen to Rotterdam for less than 2 euros per unit. Ocean freight is astonishingly cheap. The problem is what happens next.

The 'last mile' — the final delivery from the local warehouse to the customer's door — is where the money disappears. A small van, a driver, traffic, one missed doorbell, one redelivery: it can cost more than the entire trip across the ocean.

That's why supply-chain teams spend so much energy on this final step. If the last mile has been optimised — right delivery windows, right address data, an unlocked delivery box — the whole chain works. If it hasn't, all the earlier savings are lost.

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class



1. What is the 'last mile' in logistics?
  - (A) The last km of the ocean journey
  - (B) The final delivery from local warehouse to the customer
  - (C) The mile before the port
2. Why is the last mile so expensive?
  - (A) Ocean freight is cheap; small vans, traffic and redeliveries are not
  - (B) Because of import taxes
  - (C) Because ships are slow
3. What is the article's main point?
  - (A) Ocean freight is a scam
  - (B) The final step decides whether the whole chain is profitable
  - (C) Customers should collect their own parcels

### Vocabulary in context

*Find these words in the text and match them to the meaning.*

**freight** — goods being transported in bulk

**warehouse** — a large building where goods are stored

**supply chain** — the full path a product travels from factory to buyer

**redelivery** — a second attempt to deliver a parcel

### True / False / Not Given

*Based only on the text, choose the correct option.*

1. Ocean freight is more expensive than local delivery per unit.
  - (A) True
  - (B) False
  - (C) Not Given
2. The last mile is often the most expensive step.
  - (A) True
  - (B) False
  - (C) Not Given
3. Delivery boxes solve the last-mile problem completely.
  - (A) True
  - (B) False
  - (C) Not Given

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4. Traffic and missed doorbells cost money.
  - (A) True
  - (B) False
  - (C) Not Given
5. The article gives the exact cost of a redelivery.
  - (A) True
  - (B) False
  - (C) Not Given

### React to the text

*Discuss briefly. There is no single correct answer.*

1. As a CUSTOMER, what's the most annoying last-mile experience you've had this year?

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2. For YOUR business, is the last mile a real cost, or is it invisible? Should it be?

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### Scan for meaning

*Find the phrase in the text that matches each definition.*

1. goods being transported in bulk

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2. the full path a product travels from factory to buyer

---

3. a second attempt to deliver a parcel

---

4. a large building where goods are stored

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### Vocabulary · Logistics and delivery

**shipment** — the goods being sent in one delivery

**consignment** — a batch of goods sent to one customer

**carrier** — the company that transports the goods

**tracking number** — the code that shows where a shipment is

**invoice** — the bill for the goods

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**customs** — the official check at the border

**ETA (estimated time of arrival)** — when the shipment is expected

**in transit** — on the way, not yet delivered

**out for delivery** — with the local driver today

**delayed** — late compared to the promised date

**lead time** — days from order to delivery

**backlog** — a build-up of unfulfilled orders owing to processing bottlenecks

### practice

*Complete each sentence with ONE word or phrase from the lists.*

1. The \_\_\_\_ has been \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ since Tuesday, but nothing has moved.

2. Please send me the \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ so I can check where the box is.

3. The container has been stuck at \_\_\_\_ for 4 days.

4. Our new \_\_\_\_ is much faster than the old one — 3-day delivery to Germany.

5. The \_\_\_\_ has grown to 200 orders because our packing team is short-staffed.

6. The \_\_\_\_ is Friday afternoon — I'll confirm as soon as it lands.

### Collocations · logistics verbs

*Match each verb with the noun it usually goes with.*

**ship** — an order

**track** — a shipment

**clear** — customs

**confirm** — delivery

**reduce** — lead time

**file** — a claim

### Odd one out

*Choose the word that does NOT belong.*

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1. shipment · consignment · parcel · payment

(A) shipment

(B) consignment

(C) parcel

(D) payment

2. carrier · courier · van · budget

(A) carrier

(B) courier

(C) van

(D) budget

3. customs · warehouse · port · discount

(A) customs

(B) warehouse

(C) port

(D) discount

### Word building · verb ↔ noun

*Complete the pair.*

1. to deliver → a \_\_\_\_

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2. to ship → a \_\_\_\_

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3. to import → an \_\_\_\_

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4. to export → an \_\_\_\_

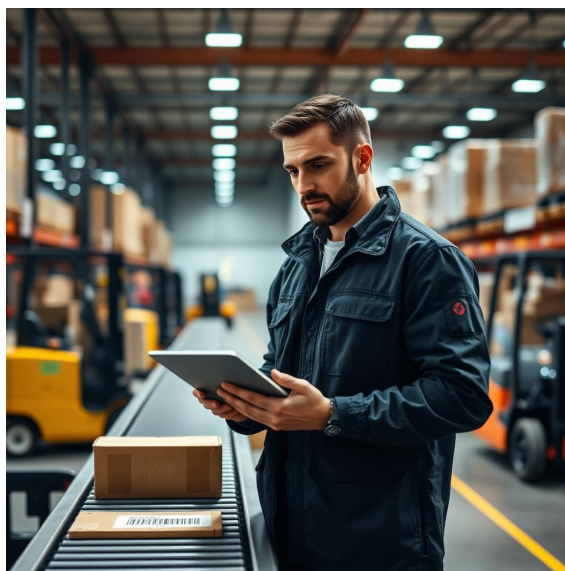
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5. to store → \_\_\_\_

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## Grammar · Present perfect with 'just / already / yet · for / since'

1. **'just'** → **something happened a very short time ago** — • Your order has just been shipped. • The driver has just left the warehouse.
2. **'already'** → **sooner than expected (positive)** — • The parcel has already been delivered — check reception. • We've already cleared customs — surprisingly fast.
3. **'yet'** → **not up to now (in questions and negatives)** — • Has your order arrived yet? • We haven't received the goods yet.
4. **'for' + a duration · 'since' + a starting point** — • The container has been stuck for 3 days. • The container has been stuck since Monday.
5. **Word order to remember** — • just / already → between HAVE and the past participle. • yet → at the END of the sentence. • for / since → after the main verb: 'we've waited for a week / since Monday'.

### Exercise A — 'just / already / yet'

Complete with *just*, *already* or *yet*.

1. Great news — the parcel has \_\_\_\_ been delivered.

2. Have you shipped the container \_\_\_\_?

3. We haven't received the invoice \_\_\_\_.

4. The driver has \_\_\_\_ left — 30 seconds ago.

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5. You don't need to send it — I've \_\_\_\_ received a copy.

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### Exercise B — 'for' or 'since'?

Complete with *for* or *since*.

1. The container has been at customs \_\_\_\_ 4 days.

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2. We've been waiting for a tracking update \_\_\_\_ Tuesday morning.

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3. I've worked with this carrier \_\_\_\_ 8 years.

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4. They've had a shipping backlog \_\_\_\_ the port strike started.

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### Exercise C — Find and fix the mistake

Each sentence has *ONE* mistake with *just* / *already* / *yet* / *for* / *since*.

1. The parcel has yet arrived.

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2. We are waiting since Monday.

---

3. I've worked here since 8 years.

---

4. Have you already sent the invoice yet?

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### Exercise D — Write the sentence

Write *ONE* sentence for each situation.

1. Container: still at customs · 5 days · use 'for'

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2. Driver: left the depot 2 minutes ago · use 'just'

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3. Invoice: still not sent · use 'yet'

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4. Order: delivered earlier than promised · use 'already'

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### Exercise E — Update the customer

Write *ONE* polite customer-facing sentence for each real logistics moment.

1. The shipment has just cleared customs.

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2. The driver hasn't reached the depot yet.

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3. The parcel has already been delivered — it's at reception.

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### Exercise F — Complete the logistics dialogue

Complete each answer.

1. — Any news on order 4477? — Yes — it's \_\_\_\_ (just) been shipped. ETA is Thursday.

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2. — Have you cleared customs \_\_\_\_ (yet)? — Not \_\_\_\_ (yet), but the paperwork has been with them \_\_\_\_ (since) Monday.

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### Listening · A delivery-status call with an unhappy customer

A logistics coordinator explains a delay to a customer whose order is late. Listen for how she uses present perfect + just / already / yet / for / since.

#### pre

What's the **WORST** way a supplier has ever told you 'your order is late'?

When a shipment is late, what are the **FIRST** 3 things you want to hear from the supplier?

#### gist

1. What is the customer's main complaint?

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2. What is the real cause of the delay?

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3. What compensation does the coordinator offer?

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#### detail

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1. When did the container arrive at the port?

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2. How long has it been at customs?

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3. What is the new ETA?

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### Third listen — read between the lines

*Answer from what is IMPLIED.*

1. Is the customer likely to order again? Why?

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2. Where does the blame actually sit?

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### Useful language from the audio

*Match each phrase to what it does in the call.*

**"The container has been at customs for 4 days."** — explains the delay with 'for' + duration

**"Nothing has moved since Saturday."** — uses 'since' + starting point

**"Your goods haven't left the port yet."** — honest update with 'yet'

**"I've just spoken to our customs broker."** — shows action was taken 'just' now

**"We'll ship your next order by express at no extra cost."** — offers a concrete compensation

**Voice A:** I'm calling about order 4477 — you promised Monday, and it's Wednesday. Nobody has told us anything.

**Voice B:** You're absolutely right, and I'm sorry. Let me give you the full picture. The container has been at customs for 4 days — nothing has moved since Saturday morning.

**Voice A:** For 4 days? Why?

**Voice B:** A paperwork error on our side. I've just spoken to our customs broker — everything has now been corrected, and the container is scheduled to clear this afternoon. Your goods haven't left the port yet, but the new ETA is Thursday afternoon.

**Voice A:** Thursday. That's already 3 days late. Our production line is idle.

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class

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**Voice B:** Understood. Two things: we'll ship your next order by express at no extra cost, and we'll issue a €200 credit note on this invoice. I'll email the confirmation within the hour.

**Voice A:** OK. I appreciate the honesty. Please make sure Thursday is Thursday.

**Voice B:** You have my direct line. I'll call you the moment it leaves the port.

### Fourth listen — fill the gaps

*Complete the exact phrases from the call.*

1. The container has been at customs \_\_\_\_ 4 days.

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2. Nothing has moved \_\_\_\_ Saturday morning.

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3. Your goods haven't left the port \_\_\_\_.

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4. I've \_\_\_\_ spoken to our customs broker.

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### Speaking · Update your customer

*Choose ONE of the situations. Prepare a 60-second oral update. Use AT LEAST 'just', 'already', 'yet', 'for' and 'since' at least once each.*

**Scene:** A B2B customer whose 500-unit order is 3 days late

A: You: the logistics coordinator. Explain what happened, where the shipment is now, and offer ONE concrete compensation.

B: You: the customer. Push for a specific new ETA and hold them to it.

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**Scene:** An online customer waiting for a €800 parcel

A: You: customer service. The parcel has been out for delivery TWICE — nobody at home. Offer 3 solutions.

B: You: the customer. You need it by Saturday for a gift; today is Thursday.

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**Scene:** A raw-material supplier stuck at customs

A: You: the production manager. Your line stops in 48 hours. Talk to the supplier and set a hard deadline.

B: You: the supplier. You can offer an air-freight backup — but you need the customer to accept a €4/kg surcharge.

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Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class

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## Discussion · your worst delivery experience

*Choose 2 questions and speak for 30–45 seconds each.*

What's the LONGEST you've ever waited for a business-critical delivery?

In your industry, is sea freight, air freight, road or courier the most common? Why?

Have you ever had to explain a big delay to an angry customer? How did you handle it?

Which carrier or courier do you trust most? Why?

## Role-play · The 'production line will stop' call

*Read your role, prep 30s, run the 3-minute call. Aim to end with a clear, agreed next step.*

**Scene:** Container stuck at customs; buyer's line stops in 48 hours

A: You: the buyer. You need parts by Friday morning or 40 workers stop. Prepare ONE ultimatum AND ONE compromise you'd accept.

B: You: the supplier. Customs will clear tomorrow, air-freight would arrive Thursday night. It costs you €3,000 but keeps a €150,000 client.

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**Scene:** First order to a new key account — carrier lost the parcel

A: You: account manager. Your first-ever order to a promising new client has been lost by the carrier. Prepare an apology + a real recovery plan.

B: You: the new client. You're already unimpressed. Decide during the call whether you'll place order #2 or walk away.

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## Mini-presentation · 60-second 'the delivery that changed a customer'

*Deliver a 60-second talk about ONE delivery moment that made — or broke — a customer relationship. Use the 4-beat structure.*

Beat 1 (10s) — WHAT was being delivered and to whom.

Beat 2 (15s) — What went wrong (or surprisingly right).

Beat 3 (20s) — How your team handled it (use 1 present-perfect sentence).

Beat 4 (15s) — What the customer did next.

**sample:** Last year we shipped 800 uniforms to a hotel chain opening a new resort. The container has been stuck at customs for 5 days because of a labelling error our side. We've just chartered a small plane at our own cost to fly 200 uniforms for the opening day. The rest arrived a week late. The client didn't leave — in fact, they doubled the annual order six months later, because we owned the mistake and paid for the fix.

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class



## Writing · A 5-line 'delay' update email

Write a 5-line email to a customer whose shipment is late. Include: subject with order number, ONE sentence with 'has been ... for/since', ONE clear new ETA, ONE concrete compensation, warm sign-off. Max 80 words after the subject.

**bonus:** Bonus task — write the SAME email in a much MORE formal tone (first-contact enterprise customer) and in a much MORE informal tone (a long-standing SME customer you know well). Compare the two.

## Wrap-up · What did we cover?

'just' = a moment ago. 'already' = sooner than expected. 'yet' = not up to now (?/-).

'for' + duration (for 4 days). 'since' + starting point (since Monday).

The last mile is where the money is made or lost — treat it like the priority it is.

When it's late: own it, name a NEW ETA, and offer ONE concrete compensation.

## Quiz

1. Choose the CORRECT sentence.  
(A) Has the parcel arrived already?  
(B) Has the parcel arrived yet?  
(C) Both are correct.
2. 'The container has been at customs \_\_\_\_ 4 days.'  
(A) since  
(B) for  
(C) just
3. 'We've been waiting for a tracking update \_\_\_\_ Tuesday.'  
(A) for  
(B) since  
(C) yet
4. 'The driver has \_\_\_\_ left the depot.'  
(A) yet  
(B) since  
(C) just
5. The 'last mile' is:  
(A) the last km of the ocean journey  
(B) the final delivery from local warehouse to the customer  
(C) the mile before customs

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class



## Workbook — home practice



### 1. Vocabulary gap-fill

Complete each sentence with **ONE** phrase from the box.

**Word bank:** ETA · tracking number · customs · backlog · in transit · carrier

1. Please send me the \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ so I can see where the box is.

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2. The container has been stuck at \_\_\_\_ for 4 days.

---

3. Our new \_\_\_\_ delivers to Germany in 3 days — much faster than the old one.

---

4. The \_\_\_\_ has grown to 200 orders because our packing team is short-staffed.

---

5. The order has been \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ since Tuesday morning.

---

6. The \_\_\_\_ is Friday afternoon — I'll confirm as soon as it lands.

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### 2. just / already / yet · for / since

Complete each sentence with the correct time word.

1. The parcel has \_\_\_\_ been delivered — check reception (2 minutes ago).

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2. Have you cleared customs \_\_\_\_?

3. We haven't received the invoice \_\_\_\_.

4. The container has been at customs \_\_\_\_ 4 days.

5. Nothing has moved \_\_\_\_ Saturday morning.

6. You don't need to send it — I've \_\_\_\_ received a copy.

### 3. Make it politer

*Rewrite each blunt sentence into a polite customer-facing update.*

1. Your order is late. Deal with it.

2. Customs is slow, not our problem.

3. We don't know where it is.

4. Just wait.

### 4. Find and fix the mistake

*Each sentence has ONE mistake with present perfect or logistics vocabulary.*

1. The parcel has yet arrived.

2. We are waiting since Monday.

3. I've worked here since 8 years.

4. The container has been in the customs since 4 days.

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class



## 5. Listening — three ways to break bad news

Three logistics reps call a customer to say the same shipment is late. Notice who owns the problem and who hides behind excuses.

1. Who sounds MOST professional?

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2. Who is HIDING?

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3. Who is OVER-PROMISING?

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**Voice A:** Yeah, so, customs is slow and the carrier isn't answering. It should arrive soon.

**Voice B:** I'm sorry — your container has been at customs for 4 days due to a paperwork error on our side. Everything has just been corrected; new ETA is Thursday afternoon. We'll ship your next order by express at no extra cost.

**Voice C:** Don't worry, it'll be there tomorrow, guaranteed.

## 6. Writing — a 5-line 'delay' update email

Write a 5-line email to a customer whose shipment is late. Include ONE 'has been ... for/since' sentence, ONE new ETA, and ONE concrete compensation. Max 80 words.

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class

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## Answer key — Class Book

### Lead-in · Match the delivery scenario to the phrase

1. the warehouse just handed the box to the courier
2. an official inspection is delaying release
3. the buyer is still waiting after the promised date
4. someone has signed for it — check reception
5. the supplier is proactively warning the client

### Reading · Why 'the last mile' costs more than the first 10,000 km

1. (B) The final delivery from local warehouse to the customer
2. (A) Ocean freight is cheap; small vans, traffic and redeliveries are not
3. (B) The final step decides whether the whole chain is profitable
1. (B) False
2. (A) True
3. (C) Not Given
4. (A) True
5. (C) Not Given
1. Model: the driver rang, I answered in 5 seconds, and he'd already left. Two redeliveries and a trip to the depot to collect it.
2. Model: it's invisible — we outsource all delivery. But every complaint we get is about that last step, so it's clearly not free.
1. freight
2. supply chain
3. redelivery
4. warehouse

### Vocabulary · Logistics and delivery

1. in transit
2. tracking number
3. customs
4. carrier
5. backlog
6. ETA
1. (D) payment
2. (D) budget
3. (D) discount
1. delivery
2. shipment
3. import
4. export
5. storage

### Grammar · Present perfect with 'just / already / yet · for / since'

1. just / already
2. yet
3. yet
4. just
5. already
1. for
2. since
3. for
4. since
1. The parcel has already arrived. / Has the parcel arrived yet?
2. We've been waiting since Monday.
3. I've worked here for 8 years.

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class



4. Have you sent the invoice yet? / Have you already sent the invoice?
1. The container has been at customs for 5 days.
2. The driver has just left the depot.
3. We haven't sent the invoice yet.
4. The order has already been delivered.
1. Good news — your shipment has just cleared customs and is now on its way to your warehouse.
2. The driver hasn't reached the depot yet, but we'll send you the tracking update within the hour.
3. The parcel has already been delivered — please check with your reception; it was signed for at 10:15 today.
1. It's just been shipped. ETA is Thursday.
2. Not yet, but the paperwork has been with them since Monday.

### Listening · A delivery-status call with an unhappy customer

1. The order was promised for Monday and it's now Wednesday — nothing has been delivered.
2. The container has been stuck at customs for 4 days because of a paperwork issue on the supplier side.
3. Free express delivery on the next order and a €200 credit note.
1. Friday morning.
2. 4 days — since Saturday.
3. Thursday afternoon (48 hours from the call).
1. Probably yes — the coordinator was honest, took responsibility, and offered a real compensation, not just words.
2. On the supplier's side — a paperwork error, not the carrier or customs. The coordinator does NOT blame external parties.
1. for
2. since
3. yet
4. just

### Quiz

1. (C) Both are correct.
2. (B) for
3. (B) since
4. (C) just
5. (B) the final delivery from local warehouse to the customer

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class



## Answer key — Workbook

### 1. Vocabulary gap-fill

1. tracking number
2. customs
3. carrier
4. backlog
5. in transit
6. ETA

### 2. just / already / yet · for / since

1. just
2. yet
3. yet
4. for
5. since
6. already

### 3. Make it politer

1. I'm sorry — your order has been delayed. The new ETA is [date], and we'll cover express delivery at no extra cost.
2. The container has been at customs for 4 days. We're actively pushing our broker for a same-day release and will update you within the hour.
3. The shipment is currently in transit; we've asked our carrier for an updated location and will forward it as soon as we have it.
4. Thank you for your patience — I'll call you the moment the shipment leaves the port.

### 4. Find and fix the mistake

1. The parcel has already arrived. / Has the parcel arrived yet?
2. We've been waiting since Monday.
3. I've worked here for 8 years.
4. The container has been at customs for 4 days.

### 5. Listening — three ways to break bad news

1. Voice B — states the cause, the new ETA, and one concrete compensation.
2. Voice A — blames 'customs' and 'the carrier' without a new ETA or a fix.
3. Voice C — 'tomorrow, guaranteed' with no explanation — very risky if it slips again.

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class