



## LESSON THIRTEEN

# COMPLAINT

## PREVIEW AND PREPARATION

*Look up the meaning of any unfamiliar words or phrases in the preview table.*

complain/complaint

original bill

the table over there

a glass of the house white (wine)

chicken Caesar salad

Greek salad

quite sure

work out

charge for

add onto

add up

take a look at

pay for

come to

I think there's a mistake in the bill.

You ought to be more careful.

Take a closer look at the bill.

This bill goes to the table over there.

I would be paying too much.

I thought there was something wrong.

I didn't order either of these items.

Let me know what the bill comes to.

Are you sure that's what I owe you?

It's been a long shift.

That's nearly \$40 you've added onto my bill.

I must have given you the wrong bill.

I guess my mind must have wandered.

Don't worry about it.

Any chance we can just forget this conversation?

My mistake.

# LISTENING PRACTICE

*Listen to the audio program and try to answer these questions.*

*Note: Starting from this lesson, questions are asked as if these dialogues were happening around us in order to practice the way verbs are used in everyday, real-life contexts.*

Who made the mistake with the bill?

- a. Michael.
- b. The waitress.

How many people were eating with Michael?

- a. One.
- b. Two

What was actually wrong with the bill?

- a. The bill didn't add up.
- b. It wasn't Michael's bill.

At the end, which bill did Michael end up paying?

- a. The right bill.
- b. The wrong bill.



# THE BILL DOESN'T ADD UP

*Dialogue between Michael (M)  
and a waitress (W).*

- M: Excuse me, waitress. 1
- W: Yes, sir?
- M: I think there's a mistake in the bill. You've charged me for the Greek salad and a Coke, but I didn't order either of these items. 5
- W: You didn't?
- M: No. That's nearly forty dollars you've added onto my bill.
- W: I'm sorry, sir. I'm not sure how... Oh, I see. I must have given you the wrong bill.
- M: Yeah, I thought there was something wrong. 10
- W: Yes, this bill goes to the table over there. My mistake. I'll have to work your bill out again. You had the pasta and the white wine, right?
- M: Right. And my friend here had the chicken Caesar salad and a glass of the house white. 15
- W: Of course. Let me just add that up.
- M: You really ought to be more careful. If I hadn't taken a close look at the bill, I would be paying for food I never ordered.
- W: I'm sorry, sir. It's been a long shift. I guess my mind must have wandered. 20
- M: Don't worry about it. Just let me know what the bill comes to.
- W: Okay. Your bill comes to \$131.45.
- M: We didn't order very much. Are you sure that's what I owe you? 25
- W: Quite sure. You see, the wine is \$19.95 per glass.
- M: Right. Now, how much was the first bill you gave me?
- W: That one came to \$116.35, sir.
- M: Any chance we can just forget this conversation, and I'll pay the original bill? 30

# STUDY GUIDE

1. *W: You didn't?*

*M: No.*

The full meaning of Michael's reply is "No. I didn't." or "Yes, you are right. I didn't." In English, you are expected to state your case in your reply, regardless of whether you are asked with a positive question (you did?) or a negative question (you didn't?).

In Michael's case, he did not order these items, so he said "no."

2. *I must have given you the wrong bill.*

"Must have given" is guessing what must have happened just now. If she used the present tense "I **must give** you the wrong bill." it means that is what she is going to do.

Compare with this sentence: I guess my mind must have wandered.

3. *I thought there was something wrong.*

Michael was explaining why he said "There's a mistake in the bill" just now, so he used "thought" instead of "think."

4. *If I hadn't taken a close look at the bill, I would be paying...*

The fact is Michael knows that he **has taken** a close look at the bill. So when he is making a hypothetical assumption (different from the truth), he needs to say "**if I hadn't taken... I would be paying...**"

Pay attention to how the tense of the verb changes in a hypothetical statement:

Facts:

I am going to watch the movie.

I am watching the movie.

I have watched the movie.

I watched the movie.

Hypothetical Statements:

If I were not going to watch the movie, I would..."

If I were not watching the movie, I would..."

If I hadn't watched the movie, I would..."

If I hadn't watched the movie, I would..."

5. *Just let me know what the bill comes to.*

Here, the word "**what**" is interchangeable with "**how much**." He is using a statement. He could also ask it as a question, "What does the bill come to?" or "How much does the bill come to?"

Compare with these sentences:

Are you sure that's **what** I owe you?

**How much** was the first bill you gave me?

# COMPREHENSION PRACTICE

Referring back to the dialogue,  
answer the question.

- M: You have charged me for the Greek salad and a Coke, but I didn't order either of these items.*  
Didn't Michael order the Greek salad and a Coke?

\_\_\_\_\_

(Yes/No)     (he did/he didn't)
- M: If I hadn't taken a close look at the bill, I would be paying for food I never ordered.*  
Didn't Michael double-check the bill?

\_\_\_\_\_

(Yes/No)     (he did/he didn't)
- M: I think there is a mistake in the bill.*  
At this point, was it clear what was wrong with the bill?

\_\_\_\_\_

(Yes/No)     (it was/it wasn't)
- M: I thought there was something wrong.*  
At this point, did they find out what was wrong with the bill?

\_\_\_\_\_

(Yes/No)     (they did/they didn't)
- W: This bill goes to the table over there.*  
Isn't this the correct bill for Michael's order?

\_\_\_\_\_

(Yes/No)     (it is/it isn't)
- W: It's been a long shift. I guess my mind must have wandered.*  
The waitress must be very tired by now. Is she?

\_\_\_\_\_

(Yes/No)     (she is/she isn't)
- M: Any chance we can just forget this conversation, and I'll pay the original bill?*  
Michael doesn't sound too happy with the result, does he?

\_\_\_\_\_

(Yes/No)     (he does/he doesn't)

## IN OTHER WORDS

1. *Excuse me, waitress.*
  - a. My mistake, waitress.
  - b. My apologies, waitress.
  - c. Do you have a second, waitress?
2. *I didn't order either of these items.*
  - a. I didn't want to order anything.
  - b. I didn't order both of these items.
  - c. I didn't order these two items.
3. *That's nearly forty dollars you've added onto my bill.*
  - a. You've almost charged me over forty bucks.
  - b. You've over charged me about forty bucks.
  - c. The bill is added up to close to forty bucks.
4. *I thought there was something wrong.*
  - a. I knew some of the mistakes.
  - b. I knew there was a question in the bill.
  - c. I knew there was a problem with the bill.
5. *I'll have to work your bill out again.*
  - a. Let me add your bill up again.
  - b. Let's work it out again.
  - c. I'll have to bill you again.
6. *Just let me know what the bill comes to.*
  - a. Just let me know where my bill is.
  - b. Just give me the total amount.
  - c. Just tell me how it is added up.
7. *It's been a long shift.*
  - a. It's been a late shift.
  - b. It's been a long day.
  - c. My shift is too late.
8. *Any chance we can just forget this conversation?*
  - a. Can we start the conversation all over again?
  - b. Can we start speaking to each other again?
  - c. How can we possibly forget our conversation?

*Referring back to the dialogue,  
choose the expression that has the  
closest meaning.*

## IN ANOTHER CONTEXT

Practice the following sentence patterns by reading them aloud to the class.  
Try to make one new sentence for each pattern using your own words.

I	think there is thought there was	a mistake in a problem with a question about a change in	the bill. our orders. our schedule. the menu.
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Are you sure	that's what this is how much this is exactly how much	I owe you? we have ordered? the bill comes to? the food adds up to?
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Any chance	we can just we could simply	forget about this conversation? walk out of here? pay for the first bill? stop right here?
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I	guess think believe figure	I must have	given you the wrong bill. ordered the wrong dish. placed the wrong order. paid for the wrong table.
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I	didn't order _____ did order	either of any of both of a couple of	these items.
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# CONVERSATION PRACTICE

*Role-play the following dialogue with a partner.*

*If you can't remember every word, use your own words to say the same thing.*

- a. I think there's something wrong with our bill.
- b. Let me take a look. You ordered the CPU, the keyboard, the mouse...
- c. No, I didn't order the mouse. It's supposed to come with the keyboard.
- d. Are you sure? Let me double check for you.
- e. It says "Buy one get one free" in your ad.
- f. I am sorry, but that special offer ended last week.
- g. Oh, I must have overlooked the date. Any chance I can get the same offer?
- h. I'm afraid not. But we still have a special deal on wide screen TVs.  
Any chance you will need one?

*Now work with a classmate and make up a dialogue according to the new situation described below. Try to include at least eight of the new expressions in the table:*

pay for	I think there is a mistake in the bill.
add onto	If I hadn't taken a close look...
add up	Are you sure that's what I owe you?
work out	It's been a long shift.
charge for	I must have (given)...
come to	I guess my mind must have wandered.

**Situation:** The bill A gives to B has all the food B ordered, but A added the wine twice, which makes the bill nearly twenty dollars more than what B should be paying.

- A: \_\_\_\_\_
- B: \_\_\_\_\_
- A: \_\_\_\_\_
- B: \_\_\_\_\_
- A: \_\_\_\_\_
- B: \_\_\_\_\_
- A: \_\_\_\_\_
- B: \_\_\_\_\_
- A: \_\_\_\_\_
- B: \_\_\_\_\_