



Unit 14 — Difficult Office Situations

Reading: Email exchange between an office worker and HR manager

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Subject Line: Formal Complaint regarding Chuck Baker

To HR,

I am writing to formally report someone on my team in procurement, Chuck Baker.

Chuck has drawn a lot of attention with his negative behavior and attitude ever since he started working with us, which is what prompts me to now issue a formal complaint about him.

Chuck has taken credit for my work on several occasions. He has also repeatedly made inappropriate comments about my gender and color, which have made me feel uncomfortable and unwelcome at work. He routinely interferes with my workflow by approaching me with derogatory comments which he claims are “just for fun”. This is making it extremely difficult for me to adequately complete my work and to effectively move forward with the team.

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Thank you for your interest!

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Discussion Questions

Imagine you are an HR manager working with Dave and you hear about Harriett’s case. How would you react to Harriett’s complaint? Discuss your reasoning.

Can you remember an incident at work or at school where you felt mistreated? Write a formal complaint about the situation and address it to the person in charge. Be sure to include concrete examples.

Discuss: How often do uncomfortable situations arise at the office and how often are they addressed? If there is a discrepancy, why do you think that is? Do you believe that professional misconduct should always be reported? Why or why not?