B2 · CUSTOMER SERVICE ENGLISH · STUDENT WORKSHEET

The Three-Step De-escalation Model

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Name: _____ Date: _____

1. The model

Step 1 — ACKNOWLEDGE the customer's perspective: "I understand why this is frustrating."

Step 2 — IDENTIFY what you can actually do: "What I can do right now is…"

Step 3 — COMMIT clearly, with a time: "I'll update you by 3 p.m. tomorrow."

Golden rule: only promise what is within your scope, and record every promise.

2. Vocabulary match

1. query ____	a) the agreed standard for response times, delivery and quality
2. SLA (service-level agreement) ____	b) keeping customers over time
3. resolution time ____	c) a question or request from a customer
4. escalation pathway ____	d) the route a problem follows to more senior people
5. de-escalation ____	e) how long it takes to solve a problem
6. resolution protocol ____	f) calming a tense situation
7. retention ____	g) a standard procedure for solving issues
8. client satisfaction ____	h) how happy a client is with the service

3. Complete with a modal: can · could · would · will · I'll make sure

1. _____ you tell me your order number, please?

2. I _____ check the tracking information for you right now.

3. _____ it help if I sent you a written update every afternoon?

4. _____ your case is marked as high priority.

5. The technical team _____ contact you before 5 p.m.

4. Make it indirect (more polite)

1. What happened before the error? → Could you tell me _____?

_____

2. When did you place the order? → Do you remember _____?

_____

3. Why didn't you call earlier? → I was wondering _____.

_____

5. Use the three steps

1. A shipment is three days late and the client's warehouse is waiting.

_____

2. The platform has been down for two hours during month-end closing.

_____

3. A customer says your team promised a refund last week, but nothing has happened.

_____

6. Discuss

1. How do you usually handle complaints in your job? Which channel do you use: email, chat or phone?
2. Who handles a problem first in your company, and where does it go next?
3. Have you ever made a promise to a client that you couldn't keep? What happened?

Answer key

2. Vocabulary match

1 c · 2 a · 3 e · 4 d · 5 f · 6 g · 7 b · 8 h

3. Modals (model answers)

1 Could · 2 can · 3 Would · 4 I'll make sure · 5 will

4. Indirect questions (model answers)

Could you tell me what happened before the error?

Do you remember when you placed the order?

I was wondering why you didn't call earlier.

5. Model answer (shipment)

"I completely understand that your warehouse is waiting, and I'm sorry for the delay. What I can do now is confirm the new delivery slot with the carrier and send you the tracking link. I'll call you by 11 a.m. tomorrow with the confirmed time."

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