

Think of a product you use that could be improved. For example, it might not last long enough, be too difficult to operate, break easily, or be poorly packaged. Write a letter to the manufacturer about the product and its problem. Tell what you liked and disliked about the product in your experience and make suggestions for improving the product.

(Expected essay length: 150 - 650 words.)

Dear Managing Director,

I just want to tell you about my experience with your Cock-a-doodle-doo alarm clock. It looks really good in the advertisements on television, but the one I bought in Bloomington Arcades last week was very different.

For a start, the packaging is so good, so cleverly designed to be theft-proof, that it took me 27 minutes to open the box. But the sun was high and I had little else to do. To boldly go where no man has boldly gone before one must be bold. So it was that I was bowled over, head over heels. Heals is a department store in Tottenham Court Road. Nevertheless, this is not where I bought the clock.

The instruction manual is thorough, telling me everything I need to know about operating a Westclox lawn-mower. I think this could have been a mistake, but I did it my way. Time changes everything but nothing changes time. David Bowie, however, might have been changed by time, but he could not trace the cause. This does not combat climate change, but can anything?

Unfortunately, the product I bought, the product in the box, was not a Westclox lawn-mower. It was a Cock-a-doodle-doo alarm clock. The dairy from the diary was not the source, not even the sauce, of the chalice from the palace. That was a Danny Kaye line. He probably never used a Westclox lawn-mower. I wonder if he knew. New Zealand was unexplored for many years, until it was explored. That was a good time, the like of which has not been seen until the advent of the Cock-a-doodle doo alarm clock. This needs to be protected from the likes and dislikes of Slim Jim, the last of the Mower fans, famed for the stripe in his hair as well as the stripe in his lawn which was caused by forgetting to raise a laugh in the drain when he ran out of bread just before the long weekend when all the shops were shut and there was nobody to whom one might complain or explain.

Fortunately, I was able to find a 40-minute how-to video on YouTube, which enabled me to get started. Shakespeare may well have said it best, in Sonnet 19:

Devouring Time, blunt thou the lion's paws,  
And make the earth devour her own sweet brood;  
Pluck the keen teeth from the fierce tiger's jaws,  
And burn the long-lived phoenix in her blood;  
Make glad and sorry seasons as thou fleets,  
And do whate'er thou wilt, swift-footed Time,  
To the wide world and all her fading sweets;  
But I forbid thee one most heinous crime:  
O, carve not with thy hours my love's fair brow,

Nor draw no lines there with thine antique pen;  
Him in thy course untainted do allow  
For beauty's pattern to succeeding men.  
Yet, do thy worst, old Time: despite thy wrong,  
My love shall in my verse ever live young.

I think it would be a good idea to produce a product that lasts longer than 12 hours. Alternatively, I would suggest a different theme for this essay.

Yours sincerely,

Michael