

Class 1: Writing an E-mail

1. Begin with a greeting

Always open your email with a greeting, such as "Dear Lillian" if you are close. If your relationship with the reader is formal, use their family name (eg. "Dear Mrs. Price"). If you don't know the name of the person you are writing to, use: "To whom it may concern" or "Dear Sir/Madam", but only when writing a collective e-mail to many people, never to someone specifically because it will seem very impersonal. You can also start greeting with Good Morning/Afternoon/Evening followed by the person's name. Or even with the person's function like "Dear Supply Chain Manager" if you couldn't find the person's name.

2. Introduce yourself if necessary

If you are writing to someone you don't have an existing relationship with, such as a new customer, hiring manager, or government official, tell them who you are and why you are writing. Do this in the first sentence or two of your email using for example "My name is Mr./Mrs. Williamson, I'm the General Manager at ABC Company...".

3. Thank the recipient

If you are replying to a client's inquiry, you should begin with a line of thanks (before or after introducing yourself). For example, if someone has a question about your company, you can say, "Thank you for contacting ABC Company". If someone has

replied to one of your emails, be sure to say, "Thank you for your prompt reply" or "Thanks for getting back to me" (more informal). Thanking the reader puts him or her at ease, and it will make you appear more polite.

4. State your purpose

If you are starting the email communication, it may be impossible to include a line of thanks. Instead, begin by stating your purpose. For example, "I am writing to enquire about ..." or "I am writing in reference to ...". Make your purpose clear early on the email, and then move into the main text of your email. Remember, people want to read emails quickly, so keep your sentences short and clear. Be objective! You'll also need to pay careful attention to grammar, spelling and punctuation so that you present a professional image of yourself and your company. Don't ever use slangs, informal vocabulary, jokes, unnecessary religious or personal opinions or unnecessary contractions.

5. Add your closing remarks

Before you end your email, it's polite to thank your reader one more time and add some polite closing remarks. You might end with "I appreciate" or "Thank you (again) for your patience / cooperation / attention / collaboration / help / consideration / time," and then follow up with, "If you have any questions or concerns, don't hesitate to let me know" or "I look forward to hearing from you / I will be waiting for your reply".

6. End with a closing

The last step is to include an appropriate closing like "best regards", "Sincerely", "Respectfully", "Grateful" or "Yours truly" (all of these are very professional), followed by your name, your job description and contact information (basically, your digital signature). Avoid closings such as "Best wishes", "Cheers", "Peace", "Your friend", "Chat soon" unless you are good friends with the reader. Finally, before you hit the send button, ALWAYS review and spell check your email one more time to make sure it's truly perfect!

7. Example of a poorly written / informal e-mail

Hi Carl! How you doing? I will have a travel next week so I was wondering if you could tell me if the meeting is next week or not. Because if it's really next week then it

will be a problem because I won't be able to come to the meeting because I will be travelling. But tell me when it's gonna be and I'll try to change my travel ok? Thanks a bunch!!!! Cheers!!!

8. Example of a well written professional e-mail:

Dear Mr. Johnson,

My name is Robert White and I am the manager in charge of the expansion of the new plant and I would like to know if the meeting for the hiring of the new staff will be this or the next week so I can program my schedule to be available for the meeting.

I will be waiting for your reply.

Respectfully,

Robert White

General Manager

robertwhite@abccompany.com

Activity

Now it's your turn! Write a fictitious formal e-mail to someone you work with asking them for something or just informing them about a current situation: