

CORSO DI LAUREA IN MARKETING

BUSINESS ENGLISH - 2019

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Introduction – A note about the examination

The material contained in the following pages covers the subjects dealt with in the course of the lessons.

In order to assess both written and spoken English, there will be an initial written test (lasting about 90 minutes) and, if the candidate is successful, there will then be an oral examination some days later.

There will be two parts to the written test. In the first part, the candidates will be required to respond to a task by writing an email or letter. In the course, different types of correspondence have been studied, ranging from the informal simple message sent to a colleague you know well, to the much more formal and elaborate job application letter. Assessment of this part of the test will consider three criteria - grammatical accuracy and the range of vocabulary used, the appropriateness of the language (use of standard forms and the correct “register” i.e. formality/informality according to the context) and finally the “task completion” (i.e. is the message clear? Have all the points in the task been covered? Is the length of the message suitable to the type of correspondence? It is not always necessary to write a lot. A brief email which transmits the relevant points may well score higher than a longer message and it will leave more time for the writing of the essay in the second part of the test - there will also be fewer risks of making mistakes!).

The case of the job application is different. The letter will usually be longer as you will need space to “sell yourself”. In this case, as the letter will take more time, the task in the second part of the exam will be simpler.

The second task will be a short essay on the topics covered in the course or a brief business report. Assessment will consider the accuracy and range of grammar and vocabulary, discourse management - i.e. how the essay is organized and how “fluent” the language is (it is a good idea to take the time to plan your answer before you start to write) – and finally, again, “task completion” (has the candidate answered all the points covered in the task? How clear is the answer?).

It is also well worth finding time to check your answer - also for minor grammatical errors that may have escaped you when you were concentrating on the content of what you were writing.

Successful candidates will be “invited” for the oral test. This will be a conversation on topics covered in the course - including that covered in the written exam. Sometimes it is necessary to clarify points made in the essay. No final grades which will count towards the average final degree mark is foreseen for the examination. The result will be a simple pass/fail (*idoneità*).

Language Skills – Building a Business Relationship (Getting to know you)

Introduction

Discuss these points:

How do you feel about meeting people for the first time?

What topics do you talk about when you meet people for the first time?

Which topics can you talk about with other students or your colleagues at work?

Listening 1 – Meeting people and making small talk

Listen to three different extracts from business conversations. What is happening in each conversation? Write the correct conversation number;

- a. Some of the people are meeting for the first time.
- b. Business partners who have met before are making small talk before a meeting.
- c. Two colleagues are meeting

Read Audio Script Listening 1 Conversation 2 and complete the following table with suitable phrases:

1. Introduce yourself _____ _____	2. Introduce someone else _____ _____
3. Respond to an introduction _____ _____	4. Greet someone _____ _____
5. Respond to a greeting _____ _____	

Listen to the three conversations again. What topics do the people discuss in each conversation?

Conversation 1.....

Conversation 2.....

Conversation 3.....

Which of the topics used in the conversations would you use to make small talk?

Are the topics in Conversation 3 suitable in all business conversations?

Look at the list of topics below. Would you consider them to be suitable for small talk in your country?

Which of them would you feel comfortable talking about?

The weather	Sports	your salary	your family	your age
jokes	religion	your hobbies	food	politics
embarrassing experiences you have had				

Are the topics always appropriate or never appropriate? What do you think it depends on?

Listening 2– Making successful small talk

Conversation 1

Alan is welcoming Belinda to his company for a meeting.

Is this successful small talk?

If you were Belinda, what would you think of Alan?

If you were Alan, what would you think of Belinda?

Compare this conversation with Conversation 2 below (It is a similar situation – Jean-Luc and Francine are visiting Dave’s company and are making small talk before a meeting).

What is different about the way the speakers make small talk compared to the conversation you just listened to?

Conversation 2

Dave: If you’d like to hang your coat up, Jean-Luc, there’s a rack in the corner.
Jean-Luc: Here?
Dave: Yeah
Dave: We’ll just wait for Paul. He’s making a cup of tea.
Francine: So no rain today, then?
Dave: Not at the moment. The weather forecast is for nice warm weather for the next couple of days anyway.
Francine: Oh, that’s good.
Dave: So it makes a change from rain, doesn’t it?
Francine: Yes.

Showing an interest and keeping a conversation going

There are strategies you can use to keep a conversation going

- Use an expression that shows interest
- Add some information after answering a question
- Make further comment on the same topic

What strategies are being used in these two extracts from the conversations in Listening 1 and 2?

Extract 1

Francine: So no rain today, then?
Dave: Not at the moment. The weather forecast is for nice warm weather for the next couple of days anyway.
Francine: Oh, that's good.

Extract 2

Maria: A lane had been closed off and nobody was doing anything about it.
Luke: Really?
Maria: We must have been waiting for half an hour

What other expressions can you use to show interest?

<u>Expressions to show interest</u>
Oh really That's great

Working with a partner (or in groups) change the conversation in Conversation 1 to make it more successful. Think about:

- Using expressions to show interest
- Adding some information after answering a question
- Making further comment on the same topic

Practice the conversation, then listen to a good example:

Listening 3

Practice

You are meeting a business partner for the first time. Choose some of the topics listed above on page 6 for small talk.

How would you introduce these topics to “break the ice”?

What further comments would you make about them?

You are at an evening reception for a business conference. You want to use the occasion as an opportunity to make new business contacts. Working with the rest of the class, try to speak to as many people at the reception as possible. In doing so you should:

- Introduce yourself
- Talk about one of the small talk topics you prepared earlier
- Show interest in what other people say

Language Skills - Gender neutral language

Many organizations today ask their staff to use gender neutral language, so that neither men nor women feel excluded. Is there sensitivity towards this in the place where you work or study?

It is certainly something you should bear in mind in your business contacts, both face-to-face and in correspondence. Don't automatically assume that a manager is a man; avoid "he/him/his".

Some examples to avoid:

- A good manager should always treat his staff with respect; they should feel they can come to him with their problems
- Single mothers often find it difficult to combine a job with family life.

More inclusive language strategies:

- Every manager should do his/her best to understand the employees of a company.
- When the manager takes up a new position, they should try to meet as many of the staff as possible in the early days
- When ~~the manager takes~~ managers take up a new position, they should try to meet as many of the staff as possible in the early days.

We often use they to mean he or she.

- Your driver will do their best to help you.

Use these strategies to change the examples to avoid mentioned above.

Do you think there is gender neutrality in your language?

Culture

Culture is “the way we do things around here”. “Here” might mean a country, an area, a social class or an organization like a company or an educational establishment. It includes the values people consider to be important and their beliefs

Culture is defined as the collective mental programming of the human mind which distinguishes one group of people from another. This programming influences patterns of thinking which are reflected in the meaning people attach to various aspects of life and which become crystallized in the institutions of a society.

This does not imply that everyone in a given society is programmed in the same way; there are considerable differences between individuals. We can, nevertheless, still use country scores based on the law of the big numbers, and on the fact, most of us are strongly influenced by social control.

See: <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/product/compare-countries>

The word culture is often assumed to be related to the customs and traditions of a particular nation. In fact we all belong to many different cultures - which of the following cultures do you think have the most influence on you?

The culture of:

The area you live in

Your age group

Your profession

Your interests

The organization you work for / the University

Corporate Culture

What is corporate culture? There are two answers to this question, one non-academic and one academic. In the non-academic approach, the basic definition of corporate culture is 'the personality of an organization', or simply "how things are done around here". It includes;

- core values and beliefs
- corporate ethics
- rules of behaviour.

Corporate culture can be expressed in the company's mission statement and other communications, in the architectural style and interior decoration of offices, by what people wear to work, by how people address each other, and in the titles given to various employees.

Then, there is the academic approach to corporate culture (often called organizational culture in this context) Perhaps the best known expert in this field is Geert Hofstede. He has developed a Culture Orientation Model which classifies cultures in the following terms:

1 Individual vs. collective

This index explores the "degree to which people in a society are integrated into groups." In individualistic societies people will see themselves as single independent actors, related only to their immediate family. They emphasize the "I" versus the "we." On the other hand, in collective societies, people feel they are tightly-integrated into groups.

2 Power distance

The power distance index is defined as "the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions (like the family) accept and expect that power is distributed unequally." Hierarchy is a characteristic of most human groups and organizations, but in some societies the gap between those with a lot of power and those with a little power is wider, and power is concentrated on a smaller number of people who make most of the decisions. In a society with a high power distance there is less expectation of movement between classes or levels. In cultures where power distance is low, people tend to assume that those in a position of power have earned it. They also expect power relations to be more democratic. A higher degree of the Index indicates that hierarchy is clearly established and executed in society, without doubt or reason. A lower degree of the Index signifies that people question authority and attempt to distribute power.

3 Uncertainty avoidance

The uncertainty avoidance index is defined as “a society's tolerance for ambiguity,” in which people embrace or avert an event of something unexpected, unknown, or away from the status quo. In some cultures, people prefer to have everything presented in detail so there will be few if any surprises. Societies that score a high degree in this index opt for stiff codes of behavior, guidelines, laws, and generally rely on absolute truth.. A lower degree in this index shows more acceptance of differing thoughts or ideas. Society tends to impose fewer regulations, people are more relaxed about the unknown and are not worried when they don't have all the details..

4 Masculinity vs. femininity

In this dimension there is a gender gap, but we are not talking primarily of equality of opportunity, or of “women's rights”. Rather we are talking about the values associated with the two concepts. Masculinity is defined as “a preference in society for achievement, heroism, assertiveness and material rewards for success.” Looking out for Number One! Its counterpart, Femininity, represents a preference for cooperation and building relationships, reaching agreements through communication, modesty, caring for the weak and quality of life. Women in the respective societies tend to display different values. In feminine societies, they share modest and caring views equally with men. In more masculine societies, women are more emphatic and competitive, but notably less emphatic than the men. In other words, they still recognize a gap between male and female values.

5 Short-term vs. long-term.

Long-term orientation vs. short-term orientation (LTO): Long-term planning, saving and hard work are valued in societies with Long-term orientation while living for the moment is more important in societies with short-term orientation .

Hofstede's Dimensions have been used as a basis for a comparison of the cultures of different countries (see <https://geerthofstede.com/...hofstede...hofstede/6d-model-of-nati...>) so, for example, Sweden is a low power distance country. Managers are accessible and approachable and there is a tradition of employee involvement in the decision making process as part of a team of equals. France is a high power distance country in which managers tend to be more distant and remote. Employees are expected to show deference towards their managers and to follow decisions rather than participating in them.

Company culture affects employees in many ways. For example:

- the hours you work, including options such as flexitime and teleworking

- the work environment, including how employees interact, the degree of competition, and whether it's a fun or hostile environment.
- the dress code, including accepted styles of clothing and things such as casual days..
- the office space, including things such as cubicles, window offices, and rules about display of personal items.
- training and skills development available to employees.
- onsite perks, such as break rooms, gyms, daycare facilities, etc
- the amount of time outside the office you're expected to spend with co-workers.
- interaction with other employees, including managers and top management.

Another key issue is whether the company hierarchy is “tall” (with many layers) or “flat” (with few layers!). This links to the issue of delegation (or not) of responsibilities.

The importance of corporate culture is growing as the result of several recent developments, some of which are listed below.

- Companies are encouraging employees to be more responsible and to act and think like owners.
- With the decline of more traditional communities (e.g. neighborhoods) companies are filling their employees' need to belong to a community.
- Companies are encouraging teamwork.

For all these reasons, organizations need to make their culture explicit, and it is increasingly referred to in mission statements and emphasized in company-sponsored training and company communications.

How do you think Hofstede’s Dimensions of Culture might be reflected in company culture^

Think about:

- At what level in the organization is behaviour regulated?
- Do less powerful parties accept the existing distribution of power?
- Do employees feel threatened by ambiguity? How important are rules?
- Do employees expect immediate or deferred participation?
- What is the relationship between competition and collaboration within the company

Attitudes towards time also vary greatly between different cultures. Look at this information about France:

1. Working hours

People start work at 8.30 or 9.00 and officially finish at 6, though many managers start work earlier and stay at work much longer. There is, in some cases, a culture of presenteeism – being at work when it's really not necessary.

2. Holidays

Employees take five weeks holiday a year – and often take four of them in August. Many companies close down completely for that month. There are about 15 public holidays during the year.

3. Meals and entertaining

The lunch break is important and a lot of business is done over restaurant lunches. There are no snacks between meals, just coffee. Lunch, more than dinner, is an important occasion for discussing business. The working breakfast is rare.

4. Punctuality

If you arrive five minutes after the time given for meetings, nobody minds or comments on it. If you are invited to someone's house, arrive between 15 and 30 minutes after the time given.

5. Boundaries between work and private life

Avoid phoning people at home about work - and don't phone them at all after 9 p.m.

(Source: Business Vocabulary in Use by Bill Mascull)

Write a description of your own country compared to the above description of business life in France.

Cross cultural communication

There are a number of sources of potential cultural misunderstandings:

- a) **Distance when talking to people** - What is comfortable?
- b) **Eye contact** – How much of the time do people look directly at each other?
- c) **Gesture** – Do people make a lot of facial gestures? How much do they move their hands and arms?
- d) **Greetings/goodbyes** – Do people shake hands every time? Are there fixed phrases to say?
- e) **Humour** – Is this a good way of relaxing people? Or is it out of place in some contexts?

f) **Physical contact** - How much do people touch each other?

g) **Presents** – When should you give them? When should you open them? What should you say when you receive one?

h) **Rules of conversation and the role of silence** - How long can people be silent before they feel uncomfortable? Is it acceptable to interrupt when others are speaking?

(Source: Business Vocabulary in Use by Bill Mascull)

Think about the area where you live, the organization you work for or the University- What tips would you give about the culture of the country or organization to anyone who wanted to do business or study there?

How independent are you? Do you like to make your own decisions? Who do you ask for help and advice?

Are you a person who likes to plan their future in detail? For example, how much time do you spend planning your holidays? Do you prefer to have all the details in advance – or do you prefer to be more flexible?

Would you prefer to have a manager who is a strong leader and makes all the decisions? Or would you prefer a manager who listens to everybody's opinion before making a decision? What about a teacher^

Discuss how the following elements might be important in a culture of work

teamwork planning dress code punctuality formality in how people speak to each other socializing outside working hours using mobile phones
--

Using the vocabulary studied in this unit, prepare a questionnaire you could use to find out about the culture of someone's place of work or study.

Use your questionnaire to ask someone else in the class about their place of work or study. What do their answers tell you about the work culture of those places of work or study? Would you like to work or study there? Why (not)?

Living and working in another country

Are you attracted by the idea of living and working in another country? Or studying?

What do you think would be the biggest difficulties you would face?

What questions would you ask if you had to go to live and work in another country? For example ask about:

The people

The food

The language

Schools

Health care

Other questions.

If someone asked you these questions about your country, what would you reply?

Listening 4 – Preparing to work abroad

How can a company help to prepare its employees so that the experience of relocation is easier?

Bob Neidermire is a manager with extensive experience of working abroad. In the first part of the following interview he talks about how his company prepares staff for relocation.

Listen to the extract and tick which of the following things he talks about

- On-the-job training _____
- Cultural training _____
- Basic language training _____
- A health insurance package _____
- An expatriate financial package _____

Listening 5– the challenges of relocation

We considered earlier what you think might be the biggest difficulties you would face in moving abroad – now listen to Bob to see whether he mentions the same things.

Listen again. Are the following statements true, false or not mentioned:

1. It is necessary to think about the employment of the employee's partner. _____
2. It's easy for children to move. _____
3. Employees may not be able to move because they or someone in their family has a health problem. _____
4. Expatriates should remember that they are guests in the host country. _____

Listening 6 – Coming home

People who have worked or studied abroad often say that coming back to their own country was difficult. Statistics show that 60% of repatriated people leave their company within one year of returning home. This damages the company because it loses the experience of the employee in whom they have often invested a great deal - and it means they must find a replacement.

Many companies have repatriation programs to help employees after their return. This is one of the many functions of Human Resource management we will discuss later in the course.

What do you think might be the most difficult challenges faced on return from working or studying abroad?

Listen to Bob talking about his experience and make notes to answer the following questions:

1. Was it more difficult for Bob to move from the USA to Asia or to return to the USA from Asia?
2. What were his responsibilities when he was in Asia?
3. Why was he unhappy at work after he returned home?

Communicative task 1

You work for a multinational company with subsidiaries on different continents.

Work in two groups using the communicative task information.

Language Skills: Making a Presentation – Tourism and Business

Structuring a presentation.

Tell your audience what you're going to say, say it, then tell them what you've said"

Dale Carnegie (after Aristotle).

In order to be effective, a presenter must make the audience understand why the topic is important to them. It's also important to make your points short, simple and clear. Remember to KISS (Keep It Short and Simple).

Use this outline to prepare a short talk about your town or area and why it is a good place to develop as a tourist resort and business centre. If you don't want to talk about your own town, choose another place you know well. Bear in mind your relationship with the audience - this will affect the kind of language that you use.

Introduction:

- 1) Welcome the audience.
- 2) Introduce yourself.
- 3) Introduce the topic and give an overview of your talk.
- 4) Tell the audience why they should be interested in the topic.
- 5) If possible, tell a short personal anecdote

Some language:

Good morning/Hello everyone (or more formal - ladies and gentlemen).

It's good to see so many of you here today / so many of you were able to come.

Let me start by introducing myself. My name's _____, I'm _____

Today I'm going to talk about..... We'll look at the tourism and business facilities that it has today, and ways that it could be improved in the future.....

There are four main points I'd like to talk about / cover today....

I'll then go on to outline.....

Finally, I'll...

There'll be a few minutes at the end for any questions.

Main points:

The place – Where it is.
It's size (big, small, population).
Climate

Facilities – (now) Talk about the facilities that make it a good place for tourism or business. (Think about accommodation, infrastructure and attractions in the area).

Facilities that the place does not have: (*Unfortunately, at present the area doesn't have...*)

Recommendations for the future: Talk about 2 or 3 facilities that need to be improved in the future
To promote this as a tourist resort and business centre in the future, we need to improve the following areas.

Conclusion: Summary
Final “bang” to leave the audience with a strong final impression.
Thank the audience..

Language:

Linking phrases:

- *So, to start with....*
- *This brings me to....*
- *This leads (directly) to...*
- *Now let's move on to.....*
- *As I mentioned earlier*
- *To summarize....*
- *Finally.....*

A good job

There are many reasons why people work these include:

- To earn money
- To help other people
- To get more qualifications
- To be praised by other people
- To be part of a team,

What motivates you to work or study? Rank the above motivations in order of importance for you.

Sometimes we do things because we like doing them (**intrinsic motivation**) and sometimes because we want to get something as a result (**extrinsic motivation**).

Are the reasons mentioned above intrinsic or extrinsic or both?

The Two Factor Theory

This theory, also called the **Motivation-Hygiene Theory** or the **Dual-Factor Theory**, was created by Frederick Herzberg (1923-2000). Herzberg was a clinical psychologist and is one of the major writers in management and motivational theories. He was one of the most influential management teachers and consultants of the years after World War II. His theory explains the specific things that motivate an individual at work.

He conducted his research by asking a group of people, specifically 200 accountants and engineers working for companies in the USA, about their good and bad experiences at work. He was surprised that the group answered questions about their good experiences very differently from the ones about their bad experiences.

Based on this, he developed the theory that people's job satisfaction depends on two kinds of factors. Factors for satisfaction (motivators/satisfiers) and factors for dissatisfaction (hygiene factors/dissatisfiers).

Performance, recognition, job status, responsibility and opportunities for growth all fall under motivators/ satisfiers. Hygiene factors/dissatisfiers are about salary, secondary working

conditions, the relationship with colleagues, physical workplace and the relationship between supervisor and employee.

Reported good feelings about work were usually associated with job experiences and job content. Reported bad feelings were associated with the surrounding or peripheral aspects of the job - the job context.

In his theory, Herzberg claims these factors function on the same plane. In other words, satisfaction and dissatisfaction aren't polar opposites. Taking away an employee's dissatisfaction – for example by offering a higher salary – doesn't necessarily mean the employee will then be satisfied. The employee is just no longer dissatisfied - a higher salary will simply help the employee accept a job he might hate!

Herzberg's theory provided a new view of work motivation. Previously, most managers had concentrated on hygiene factors. When dealing with a motivation problem, the typical solution was increased pay, more fringe benefits and better working conditions. They did not understand that by focusing on these extrinsic factors, they were really improving levels of motivation.

On the basis of this text, decide whether the following statements are true or false:

1. The subjects of Herzberg's study who felt good about their work talked about what they did in their job? _____
2. The people who were unhappy in their job focused on the job content. _____
3. Hygiene factors help to avoid dissatisfaction. _____
4. Managers need to focus on job content as well as on job context to motivate their staff. _____

Vocabulary of motivation and demotivation

The two lists show some of the top factors that can cause satisfaction and dissatisfaction in work:

Hygiene	Motivation
Company policy	Achievement
Supervision	Recognition
Relationship with the boss	Work itself
Work conditions	Responsibility
Salary	Advancement
Relationship with peers	Growth

Decide which of the above factors the following examples belong to. Then decide if they are hygiene factors or motivation factors:

1. A lot of bureaucracy
Company policy - Hygiene
2. Rude colleagues
3. Praise
4. Promotion
5. Low pay
6. A job you enjoy
7. The chance to learn new skills
8. Only a few days of annual leave
9. Not enough support in the job
10. An aggressive manager
11. Getting good results
12. The chance to manage a team

Activity

You are the Human Resource Manager of a company which is experiencing a fall in productivity. You have received a memo from the Managing Director indicating that there are problems with staff motivation. He notes the following points:

“...too many employees are calling in sick on Monday mornings...a lot of workers don't think we listen to them, but we do...we increased the pay and the staff are still not motivated...the staff seem to have time to do their jobs. Why are they complaining?...a few of the factory workers complain that they can't get promoted - but they are well paid, and some of them earn more than the managers”.

If you were a manager or an employee in this situation, how do you think you would feel?

Do you think the problems are related to motivation or hygiene factors?

The company has thought of some ideas to improve motivation. Discuss whether these ideas will help motivation or not:

- Reduce working hours - the staff are working too many hours
- Increased wages have not worked - perhaps the threat of less money will motivate them.
- Workers need to feel they are part of the company. We should organize workshops to show them how valuable their work is.
- Increase communication between managers and workers. How?
- Employee counseling will help to cut down the number of people missing work.

Design a questionnaire to distribute in the company to discover the reasons for the lack of motivation and consequent fall in productivity.

Creating a positive work environment - How does a successful company motivate its staff?

Working conditions, rewards and the ideal workplace.

Discuss the following questions:

- What makes a company or organization a good place to work?
- What rewards would you expect for doing your job well?

- Would you be happy if you achieved something at work and had to share the rewards with all of your team?

In the following interview a Human Resource Manager, Pia Orskov, will talk about her company, Creativ, which sells art and hobby materials in Denmark and won an award as one of the best companies in Europe to work for.

Listening 8 – Creating a positive work environment

Listen to the first part of the interview with Pia Orskov and answer the following questions:

1. What reasons does Pia Orlov give for Creativ being a good place to work?
2. How is the way they communicate at Creativ different from many other companies?

Listening 9 – Rewarding employees

- 1) Write a list of things companies can do to reward their employee.
- 2) Listen to the next part of the interview and answer the following questions:
 1. What is special about the way the company rewards its staff?
 2. Does Creativ use any of the systems of rewards you thought of?
 3. What does Pia Orskov say is the main way in which Creativ treats its staff better than other companies?

Listening 10 – Developing listening skills

It's not always necessary to understand every word of what a person is saying, sometimes it is enough to "***get the gist***": to get a general idea of what someone is talking about. Sometimes you need to understand ***specific information***, but it is still not necessary to understand everything.

When we listen we use our background knowledge about the topic or situation to help us understand.

Think about these questions:

- 1) What do you already know about how Creativ treats its staff?
- 2) Would you expect the management to have very strict rules?
- 3) How might the importance Creativ gives to face-to-face discussions affect the number of rules the company has?

Listening for gist

Listen to the next part of the interview. Which is the best summary of what Pia Orskov says:

- a) Employees often abuse the system so employees need a lot of rules.
- b) Employees don't often abuse the system because it is based on trust: therefore there are only a few rules.
- c) Employees usually follow the rules because there are severe punishments if they don't.

Listening for specific information

Listen again and see if you can understand some more specific information.

- a) What are the three important rules which Pia says the company has?
- b) What does she say employees like best about working for the company?

Discussion:

Do you think it is a good idea for employees to meet face-to-face for a few minutes every day? Why might some people not like it?

1. What does the interviewer mean when he says many companies "pay lip service" to team building?
2. In the interview Pia Orskov says, "We think it's important to have a 'we' spirit instead of a 'me' spirit". Do you agree? Would you like to work in a company where the team rather than the individual is rewarded?

Vocabulary on pay and work conditions.

Salary	career opportunities	glass ceiling	fringe benefits	
work-life balance	open-plan office	effort-reward balance		
commission	appraisal system	tip	bonus	severance package
mentoring system	flexitime			

Match the words and phrases above with their definitions:

1. A system where people work a set amount of hours in a period of time, but choose the times when they start and finish. _____
2. A fixed amount of money which an employee receives. _____
3. A working space where everybody has a desk, but nobody has their own individual office.

4. A barrier that stops certain groups of people being promoted to the next level.

5. Chances to improve your position in the company. _____
6. An amount of money you might give to a waiter or taxi driver to say thank you.

7. Payment to someone who sells goods. The more they sell, the more of this they receive.

8. A system where a new employee learns from a more experienced employee at work.

9. This tries to ensure that spend the right amount of time at work and don't work too much.

10. Pay and benefits which someone receives when they leave a job.

11. Extra money someone receives for good performance. _____
12. A way of measuring how successful an employee has been. _____
13. Extras to the money an employee receives - a company car, free health care.

14. Where the company tries to make sure the employees receive the right amount of money for the work they do. _____

Do the words and phrases refer to pay and rewards or to working conditions? Complete the table:

Pay and rewards	Working conditions

Discussion

What is most important for you, a high salary or career opportunities in the future?

What examples of “glass ceiling” can you think of?

What are the most common fringe benefits in your country or in the organization you work for?

What do you think makes a good work-life balance? Would you prefer to work in an open-plan office or would you prefer it if the managers had their own individual office? Why?

Which people benefit the most from being able to work flexitime? Can you think of jobs where flexitime is not possible?

Presentation - the ideal workplace.

What would your ideal workplace be like? Think about:

- Flexible working hours and the possibility of working from home
- Career prospects
- Opportunities for training and taking time out of work for further education
- Rewards and fringe benefits (Are they important for you?)
- Working in team or working on your own
- Social events at work
- The layout of the offices and how they are decorated.

Now prepare a presentation on “The Ideal Workplace” to present to colleagues and managers at work.

Meetings

There are many different types of meeting. These range from an informal chat with friends or colleagues to different types of business meetings (meetings with customers or suppliers, project meetings, department meetings a board meeting or an AGM (annual general meeting) where shareholders discuss the company's annual report.

What types of meeting do you participate in your place of work - do you find them useful?

A meeting might be **productive**, or it might be **a waste of time**. It might be **useful**, it might **cover a lot of ground** What elements make for a successful meeting?

Meetings related language

Arrange Set up Fix	a meeting	
Bring forward		
Put back Put off Postpone		
Call off Cancel		
Run Chair		
Attend		
Miss		

The Chair

One factor which can determine the success or failure of a meeting is how the role of the chair is interpreted. If some participants are rambling and wandering off the point, it's the job of the Chair to keep things moving along and to make sure people stick to the point.

What is the role of the chair ?

Before the meeting

The chair (or chairman/chairwoman) has important functions before the meeting. They must ensure that the agenda is complete by asking those concerned what should be discussed at the meeting. The agenda

should then be circulated to those who will attend. They should check the venue and make sure that the room will be free without interruptions until the end of the meeting.

Running the meeting

<u>Role</u>	<u>Language</u>
The chairperson should be a good timekeeper They should make sure the meeting starts on time	Let's make a start
They should appoint a minute-taker to record the decisions taken and opinions expressed	Would you mind taking the minutes, John?
The chair should ensure that each participant has the opportunity to make their point. Disagreements should be dealt with tactfully, so that each side feels their point of view has been noted. Digressions - when people get off the point - should be tactfully avoided.	I think you wanted to say something about this, Susan. Let's talk about this calmly
They should make sure each point on the agenda is allocated the amount of time it deserves. Sometimes it's necessary to move on to the next point even when the current item has not yet been completely resolved.	I think we've covered this item. We can return to this issue at the next meeting. Let's move on to the next item.
The chair should make sure the meeting finishes on time.	OK. Time's up. Thank you for coming.

Follow-up

It might be necessary to circulate the minutes of the meeting so that the participants are clear about what was decided - and who is responsible for acting on decisions taken.

At the next meeting the chair should ask the minutes to be read out and they should make sure that all agree that the minutes are an accurate account of what was decided. They should see if there are any matters arising - points pending from the previous meeting that are not on the current agenda but which need to be clarified.

Are you good at, or do you think you would be good at chairing meetings? Why (not)?

Language of meetings

Getting started

OK. Let's get started

Let's begin, shall we?

Shall we make a start?

Let's make a start.

It's time to get started.

Let's get down to business.

I've called this meeting to discuss...

I've arranged this meeting to...

I've organized this meeting to...

The purpose of this meeting is to...

The main objective of this meeting is...

Asking for and expressing opinions

Opening;

Would you like to open the discussion, Peter?

Would you like to kick off?

Would you like to get the ball rolling?

During the meeting – involving other participants

What about you, Jim? What do you think?

How about you, David?

Introducing opinions

In my opinion...

Personally, I think...

My standpoint is...As I see it...The way I see it...

Obviously/ of course... (these expressions are used when we assume people will agree with us,

They should be used with care, as they can sound rude if people don't agree!)

NB. We don't say "According to me..."

Agreeing and disagreeing

Agreeing

You're perfectly right.

You may be right there.

I couldn't agree more.

Precisely

Exactly

Absolutely.

Reluctant agreement

That's true, I suppose... but...

I suppose so.

Disagreeing

That's not really how I see it

I don't really agree

I can't go along with you there

I think you are mistaken

I'm afraid I can't agree with you there.

I'm sorry but that's out of the question.

Of course not

That's absurd (strong disagreement)

That's ridiculous (strong disagreement)

To soften disagreement and avoid direct confrontation it can be useful to prefix your comment with something like

I see your point, but....

There may be some truth in that but.

I see where you are coming from but...

I partially agree with you, but...

I take your point. However...

I understand what you are saying, but

I see/know what you mean, but

With respect...

Interrupting

If I can just stop you for a moment.

Can I just come in here?

Sorry to interrupt you, but,,

Checking understanding

Are you saying that...?

If I understand (you) correctly...

If I follow you...

Referring back

To go back to what you were saying earlier...

As we were saying earlier...

To go back to what I was just saying...

Concluding

We've covered a lot of ground

It's been a very interesting discussion

We're running out of time.

To sum up...

We're going to have to agree to disagree.

To go over what's been said....

Unless anyone else has anything else to aff...

We're going to have to stop there.

I think that's it. Thank you all for coming.

Outcomes

An agreement

A compromise

A consensus

Meetings to deal with problems.

Look at this list of business problems. What would you try to do in each situation? Which situations do you think are the most difficult to solve?

- You don't have enough free time as you have too much work
- Customers complain about the quality of your products
- A colleague needs your help to understand a new process.
- Your shop is in a bad location
- One of your colleagues is rude to you
- A colleague who is also studying for a business course is having problems with their studies.
- You don't think your salary is enough.

Language used in proposing solutions

- *We could look at...*
- *I think we could...*
- *I think we can...*
- *We could certainly do something...*
- *We may be able to...*
- *I think we need..*
- *I think my biggest concern is...*
- *I was thinking...*

Using idioms

Idioms are phrases of two or more words with a meaning that is often different from the individual words.

Some examples - what do you think these idioms mean?

The furniture wore out because it was being used day in day out by the staff.

Going upstairs where there is a closed door approach

I think this will actually switch quite a few people off.

Do you think the following examples refer to problems or solutions?

1. *It's a bit tricky to answer your question as I haven't seen the sales figures.*

2. *I've got to try and figure out what we can do about this problem.*

3. *I can't believe he messed up the contract. He's usually so careful.*

4. *A: Oh well. Somebody obviously brought the wrong tool and then used the wrong one.*

B: Well, something's gone wrong, obviously.

5. *Well, this afternoon I'm just going to sit down and go through everything and see what we can do.*

6. *I knew it wasn't going to work, but we want to come up with a solution.*

Which of the words/phrases a - f is closest in meaning to the idioms 1 – 6? There may be more than one solution.

mess up	a. difficult
figure out	b. make a mistake
go wrong	c. find
a bit tricky	d. take time to do something
come up with	e. find a solution by thinking about it
sit down (and)	f. fail

Meetings to resolve problems

Stage 1

Work in small groups.

Your restaurant is having the following problems:

- A high staff turnover, your chefs and serving staff keep resigning.
- You are not attracting enough customers and are therefore losing money.
- When the weather is bad your restaurant is often empty.
- You need new kitchen equipment, but don't have enough money.

Brainstorm reasons for these problems.

Stage 2

Hold a meeting

Present each problem and then work together to come up with a solution.

Use the language studied in this lesson.

Human Resource Management

Human Resource Management (HRM) is the term used to describe formal systems devised for the management of people within an organization. The responsibilities of a human resource manager fall into three major areas: staffing, employee compensation and benefits, and defining/designing work. Essentially, the purpose of HRM is to maximize the productivity of an organization by optimizing the effectiveness of its employees.

<https://www.inc.com/>.

HR tasks

Recruiting new staff

Salaries

Pensions

Working with departments to help bring about change

Advertising for new staff

Developing staff abilities

Informing staff about developments

Supporting heads of departments in getting the best from their staff

Match the above tasks with the following specific activities

Human Resource Activities

Compensation for employees

Benefits packages

Hiring staff

Maintaining contacts with universities

Performance management

Organizing training

Setting up a system of employee reports

Organization development

Organizing inter-team or interdepartmental meetings

Safety

Listening 11 – Retaining staff

Ursula Knorr is the head of the Institute for leadership and Human Resourced Management at St. Gallen University in Switzerland. You are going to listen to an interview with her.

Before listening discuss the following questions:

1. How do you think companies can retain staff?
2. Do you think companies should share talented employees with other companies or should they try to keep their best employees for themselves?

Listen to the first part of the interview and answer these questions:

1. What is the first way of retaining staff that she mentions?
2. What is a talent alliance?
3. What examples does she give regarding life-cycle oriented HR management?

What problems might there be with talent alliances? Would you like to work in this way?

Listening 12– Employer Branding

Before listening discuss the following questions:

1. What is employer branding?
2. Why is it easier for companies like Porsche and Rolls Royce to attract employees than some other companies?
3. Why shouldn't companies lie about how great their company is to work for?
4. What problems do small companies have with attracting employees? What can they do about this problem?

Skills - Telephones

When did you last use English on the telephone? Do you ever talk to people over the Internet? How confident do you feel about making phone calls in English?

Discussion topics:

- How is speaking on the telephone different from speaking face-to-face?
- How does this affect the language people use on the telephone?
- What are the advantages of speaking on the telephone and speaking face-to-face?
- Is it easier in a foreign language to speak face-to-face or on the telephone? What are the differences?

What do you think have been the main effects of the introduction of mobile phones on business?

Do you have a mobile phone? What do you use it for? What things do you take into account when you buy a mobile phone?

Here are some tips to help you speak English on the phone:

- Plan your call before you make it. Make notes and write some questions you want to ask or useful phrases that might help you. Practice what you are going to say.
- As you make calls write down any useful expressions that might help you in the future.
- If the speaker is difficult to understand, ask him to speak more slowly (please!).
- At the end of the call summarize what you have agreed so as to avoid misunderstandings.

Telephone etiquette

There are some basic rules to remember when you make business calls, just as there are in written communication. Also in telephoning, the type of language you use will be affected by how well you know the person you are speaking to. In the case of a formal relationship:

- When you answer a call you should first identify yourself and name your company.
- If you are the caller you should identify yourself and explain why you are calling.
- Both in calling and answering, you should use formal language.
- Avoid having the caller wait a long time on the line.
- Don't eat, chew gum etc. when you are on the phone.
- At the end of the conversation thank the caller.

Useful language

Answering the phone.

- Banks Brothers, this is Julia Clifford speaking. How can I help you?
- Good morning, this is Guy Lawrence. How can I help you?

Identity of caller

- This is Mary Peal of Grays Brothers. I'm calling about... / I'm phoning to ask if.../I'd like to speak to....., please. Could I speak to....., please?

Indirect questions

In formal language we often avoid direct personal questions (e.g. What's your name? How old are you? Who are you?).

It is preferable to use indirect questions:

- Could you give me your name, please?
- Could you tell me your date of birth, please?
- Who's calling? Who should I say is calling? (When you must pass the call on to a colleague)

Absent colleague

When the caller wants to speak to a colleague who is not in the office or can't come to the phone you should use expressions such as:

- I'm afraid/I'm sorry is not in the office at the moment/is in a meeting. I'll have him/her call you back as soon as....
- Would you like to leave a message?

Exercises

- 1) Read this phone conversation. Do you think it is a successful phone call) Why/Why not? (B. is the caller).
A. Hi.
B. Is John there?
A. Who?
B. John Smith
A. No.
C. OK. Bye
Rewrite the dialogue using the rules studied above.
- 2) Write the following conversations:
 - a) Mary Peal of Grays Brothers calls Frank Mathews of Blacks and Co. His secretary asks her to hold the line while she puts her through. Write the conversation between Mary and the secretary.
 - b) You receive a call from someone who is looking for Ruth Gladsby. As there is nobody in your office of that name, explain to the caller that they have the wrong number.
 - c) A caller asks for Mary Peal who is out to lunch at this moment.
 - d) The telephone receptionist receives a call from Kenneth Gunashil for your head of department. She is out at the moment. The receptionist asks the caller to spell his surname.

Writing reports

Clearly, many of the suggestions made in relation to business reports can be applied to other forms of academic writing. Also the language suggested in relation to graphs and statistics can be employed in the case of Presentations.

Hints and useful language 1

A report may be written for a superior (e.g. a boss or college principal) or a peer group (e.g. club members or colleagues).

Hints

- Begin by stating the **purpose of your report**.
- Use a clear layout with:
- **Headings**. They will make it clear that your report is not an essay or review.
- Lists of **numbered points** or **bullets** where appropriate. (For the purposes of language assessment in the written exam, DON'T overdo it. If you use them in more than one section, you won't be able to show the full range of structures and vocabulary you know.)
- Divide your report into **sections according to the task input**.
- **Develop the ideas** in the task input.
- Include a **sentence summarising your opinion** at the beginning of the final section of your report.
- Use an **impersonal, formal style**.

Useful language for a report

Stating the purpose of the report

- *The principal aim/objective/purpose of this report is to provide a description of... / to provide/to present results of/to assess the importance of ...*
- *In this report I will provide a description of ... / I will provide/present results of .../ I will assess the importance of...*
- *This report describes/provides an assessment of... / describes/provides/presents results of...*

Describing how you got the information

- *I conducted a survey of/ I conducted interviews with local council officers ...*
- *... responded to an online questionnaire.*
- *I visited three of the most popular ...*
- *... were invited to attend a focus group...*

Reporting your results

- *Most of those responding to the survey stated that/expressed the opinion that ...*
- *According to ...*
- *A large/considerable/significant/ proportion of respondents/informants/those surveyed said that ...*
- *Nearly three quarters of the ...*

Presenting a list

- *The arguments against ... are the following:*
 1. ...
 2. ...
- *The following were the main reasons given for supporting ...: firstly, ..., secondly, ...*
- *Points our informants mentioned in favour of/against ... were:*
 1. ...
 2. ...
- *There are several ways in which ... might be ... :*
 1. ...
 2. ...

Making recommendations

- *Taking all the factors mentioned into account/In the light of the results of the survey/questionnaire, ... would appear to be the most viable solution/option/approach.*
- *I would therefore recommend*
- *Clearly, more could be done to I would make the following recommendations:*
 - ...
 - ...
 - ...

Justifying recommendations

- *the reason I believe that is...*
- *the facts suggest...*
- *the evidence shows...*
- *taking into account what I have seen...*

You can justify your opinion more effectively by being more specific:

- *The first reason I believe this is...*
- *The main reason I feel this way is...*
- *There are several reasons I believe this. The first is...*

Model questions and answers

Report - Model question 1

TASK

An international development agency has been looking into attitudes to aging around the world. The research director has asked you to conduct a survey and write a report. Your report should discuss how young people where you live feel about older people in the community and the prospect of growing older themselves. You have also been asked to make recommendations about how attitudes could be changed.

Write your **report** in **220-260 words** in an appropriate style.

Report - Model answer 1

Introduction

The main objectives of this report are to describe how young people in Gava feel about elderly people in their area and aging themselves. I will present results of a survey I conducted with a random selection of 200 young people at a local high school and in the final section I will include recommendations as to how attitudes could be improved.

Attitudes to older people

According to my survey, a significant proportion of young people never or hardly ever spend time with someone aged 65. Reasons that respondents gave for this included: they have nothing in common, the elderly don't like teenagers and lack of time. More promisingly, nearly three quarters of those surveyed (74 percent) agreed that they could probably 'learn something' from older people.

Attitudes to aging

Those responding to the survey were almost equally split between preferring to think about it as little as possible and those who never thought about it. For those who did think about it, the prime concerns were loneliness, poor health and boredom.

Recommendations

Clearly more could be done to bridge the gap between young and old in our community. I would make the following recommendations:

- Set up volunteer tutoring opportunities for elderly citizens to help younger people at the high school with academic work or practical skills.
- Invite young people to tutor old people in technology use, e.g. how to text/send emails in return for a donation to be used for social events.

Hopefully, increased contact between the groups will lead to greater understanding and more positive attitudes.

Report - Model question 2

TASK

An international market research company has asked you to write a report on advertising in your country. The company that has commissioned this report wants to know about the most common approaches used and how consumers respond to them. You are also asked to suggest changes to current approaches or alternative approaches which you believe would be more effective.

Write your **report** in **220-260 words** in an appropriate style.

Report - Model answer 2

Introduction

In this report I will provide a description of common types of advertising in Australia and present results of consumer responses to these. The final section makes recommendations for possible changes to increase the effectiveness of campaigns.

Common approaches

Television and radio continue to play an important part in advertising campaigns and celebrity endorsements often feature prominently. Print media, including billboards, posters and flyers, are also ubiquitous, especially in large cities. Some companies target consumers by giving away samples in public places and supermarkets, aggressive telemarketing or door-to-door sales. Many companies use social media strategies such as online competitions or special offers for 'likers'.

Consumer responses

I conducted an online survey with 200 Australian contacts. An overwhelming majority cited that they found telemarketing and door-to-door sales people intrusive, annoying and rude. Nevertheless, over half admitted to buying something from someone through one of these channels. People generally said that they liked advertising when it was suited to their interests or used humour. A number of respondents mentioned that they 'loved free stuff' and would tell others about something they had been given.

Recommendations

In light of the results above, I recommend the following:

- Make sure telemarketers and door-to-door salespeople have adequate customer service training.
- Target young people such as university students for giveaways as this will likely result in positive word-of-mouth advertising and online reviews.

Report - Model question 3

TASK

Your local council is conducting an enquiry into the volume of visitors to the centre of your town or city with a view to encouraging more people to make greater use of shops, restaurants, cafés and entertainment facilities there. You agree to write a report describing the existing situation, including factors which discourage people from coming to the city centre and recommending ways of attracting more visitors.

Write your **report** in **220-260 words** in an appropriate style.

Report - Model answer 3

Introduction

The principal aims of this report are to provide an overview of the volume of visitors using services in our city centre and to identify factors which deter people from using them. The final section makes recommendations as to how the situation could be improved.

Current situation

I conducted interviews with a random selection of shoppers and customers in local restaurants and cafés. Fewer than half regularly visited the city centre. Among those who did make frequent use of what is on offer, most cited the pedestrianised Mitchell Mall as their favourite area. Smaller numbers enjoyed shopping or dining around Holmes Square, though several people said they found the traffic noise disagreeable.

Factors preventing greater use of city centre services

There was a clear division between those who regularly visited the city centre and those who so infrequently. The latter cited traffic congestion and pollution along with inflated prices for goods as factors that acted as a deterrent. For those who frequently came into town, on the other hand, the pedestrianised area and the outdoor café were a major attraction.

Recommendations

Clearly more could be done to attract people to our city centre. I would make the following recommendations:

- extend the pedestrianised area to include the streets surrounding Holmes Square so as to capitalise on what is already an attractive area.
- encourage shops, cafés and restaurants to offer discounts to regular customers.
- maintain access to the pedestrianised areas for cyclists.

This final recommendation will encourage those who currently cycle into town to continue to do so, while reducing noise and pollution from motor traffic.

The style of business reports 1

Look at these sentences that come from a report on investment advice. What do you think of the writing style?

- 1 The US stock market will rise next year.
- 2 Property is a very cyclical market.
- 3 Analysts believe that the telecomms sector has better potential than the rest of the market
- 4 Inflation is less dangerous now than in the 1970s.
- 5 Bonds are a safer investment than shares. Shares give a better return in the long term.
- 6 Gold prices will not go any lower,
- 7 Young people invest for capital growth and old people invest for income, but this is not always true.
- 8 The best option is to spread your money over several forms of investment

Rewrite the eight sentences using the techniques in the table. These techniques will help you to create a balanced style that shows you have considered the points carefully.

Giving both sides of an argument	<i>In general... , however On the whole ... , but ..</i>
Making a statement less general	<i>Many / Some / usually / typically / often</i>
Making a statement less certain	<i>It is possible / probable that... It seems / appears that... ...tends to beis likely to / is expected to / will probably / might... .. probably will not / is not expected to / is unlikely to</i>
Making a comparison	<i>++ substantially / considerably / much slower growth</i>
more/less strong	<i>+ a significantly / relatively more risky investment - a marginally / slightly more expensive option</i>
Concluding	<i>On balance, . Taking everything into consideration,</i>

Choose one of the topics below and write a short report. Use the techniques studied to keep your style impersonal and balanced.

- 1 Write a short report describing the economic and political outlook for your country over the next year.
- 2 Rewrite this short report about the future of the Internet. You can change the original and introduce your own ideas :

The Internet is the most important technological advance since the wheel. Soon you will never have to leave home. Cinemas will disappear as people download movies on demand, shops will disappear as people walk through virtual supermarkets and order goods with a click of the mouse. In the service sector everyone will work from home and videoconferencing will replace meetings. People will meet future husbands and wives through on-line chat areas that select people with similar interests. Most people will live inside Information Villages with green spaces and high walls. The remainder will live outside the walls where armed guards will feed them soup and give them blankets during the winter.

Linking words and paragraph structure

Linking words join one idea to another and help the reader to see how your argument is developing.

1) Underline five linking words or phrases in this report extract about **Kalia**, an imaginary country.

Finally, the Kalian government **is** giving more control of economic policy to the regions. For instance, foreign companies do not need a license from the Industry Ministry. Moreover, these companies pay part of their taxes directly to the region where they are based rather than pay the whole amount to central government. On the whole **this** has made investing in Kalia much easier. However some problems, like the reform of agriculture, can only be dealt with at a national level.

2) Now complete the table with the words you underlined.

Showing a sequence	<i>First Secondly After that</i>
Talking generally	<i>In general Typically</i>
Making a contrast	<i>On the other hand Nevertheless</i>
Adding another point	<i>In addition to this</i>
Giving an example	<i>For example e.g.</i>

3) Match each word or phrase from the left box with one from the right box

<i>In fact</i>	<i>i.e.</i>	<i>As a result</i>
<i>In particular</i>	<i>Obviously</i>	

<i>Therefore</i>	<i>Of course</i>	<i>Actually</i>
<i>Above all</i>	<i>That is to say</i>	

Now complete the table by adding the ten words.

Giving real/true/surprising information	<i>As a matter of fact</i>
Saying something is obvious	<i>Clearly</i>
Giving the most important example	<i>Especially</i>
Rephrasing in a different way	<i>In other words</i>
Giving a result/consequence	<i>For this reason</i>

4) Choose the correct words in this report extract. Look carefully at the whole context.

How to Cut the Time You Spend On Reports

Does information technology mean the end of paper in our offices? (1) In fact/Moreover, the amount of paper used in business is slowly going down, but not in all areas. (2) For this reason/In particular, the number of reports actually seems to keep growing. (3) Clearly/Nevertheless some reports are essential and need to be studied carefully, but (4) above all/in general reports are only read very quickly and some are never read at all.

What can you do to reduce the amount you read and write? (5) First/As a matter of fact, see if each report is really needed. (6) That is to say/However, ask yourself 'If this report was destroyed in a fire tomorrow, what would be the result?'. The answer might surprise you. (7) For example/Second, keep your reports short and easy to understand. Can you use a graph instead of text? Is the writing clear and simple? (8) Typically/Above all, think of your readers: are you telling them more than they need to know? One suggestion is only to circulate the summary and recommendations. Your readers may miss some of the details, but (9) especially/on the other hand if they want the full report they can ask for it.

(10) In conclusion/Nevertheless, it is possible to save time on reports, but it may mean there is less information in circulation.

The style of business reports 2

Producing an impersonal, balanced style - passive voice, compound nouns and vague language.-

It was suggested that our maintenance contract could be changed

Is this sentence written in a formal or informal style?

What elements make it formal or informal?

It + passive/compound noun/passive

Underline the examples of these elements in the following sentences:

- It is recommended that sales reports are produced on a monthly basis
- It is vital that the construction project is managed properly.
- The planning decision will be made in July.

Try rewriting the sentences without using the techniques. Is it always possible?

You will see that it is almost impossible to complete the sentences without more information. Although the language is more formal, the use of these techniques makes the sentences easier to understand and eliminates the need to add unimportant information that it is not necessary to mention.

These two passages have the same meaning. What is the difference between them?

Effective report writing depends on good planning and the writing technique of the author. While writing, a good English – English dictionary should be used, and the habit of looking carefully at the example sentences must be developed. It can be said that there are no easy rules for report writing, but an ideal improvement opportunity is to do some writing practice on a Business English course, Improvements will only be made after a few reports have been written and the problem areas have been worked on.	The writing of effective reports depends on good planning and the technique of writing of the author. While writing, you should use a good English – English dictionary, and you must develop the habit of looking carefully at the sentences which are examples. I can say that there are no easy rules for the writing of reports, but an ideal opportunity for improvement is to do some practice in writing on a course of Business English. You will only improve after you write a few reports and work on the areas which are a problem.
--	---

Write a third text with the same meaning, using a combination of phrases from the other two texts. Choose the phrases which you think are the simplest and clearest. The correct answer is a question of personal opinion.

Rewrite the following sentences in a formal impersonal style:

- 1) We prohibit smoking in the areas which are public.
Smoking _____
- 2) Somebody suggested that the campaign for the advertising should run for a period of six months
It was suggested that _____
- 3) We might consider using a different format for the sales account that we make annually
A different format _____
- 4) We agreed we should give the contract for cleaning the offices to KleanUp.
It was agreed _____
- 5) We delayed the project to construct a dam because of regulations about planning.
The dam _____

Hints and useful language 2

Title:

To:

From:

Subject:

Date:

Reason for writing (Introduction)

- The aim/objective/purpose of this report is to compare/examine/evaluate/describe/outline (some suggestions)/analyse (some suggestions)/expose/present/give information on/regarding the/recommend/consider/suggest
- This report aims to... etc.
- Nouns: information (remember: not informations), ideas, suggestions, situations, conditions, comments
- in order to improve/decide
- In case of survey/discussion: It is based on a survey conducted among/It is the result of a discussion which took place among

Body (2 paragraphs maximum)

- Headings from the task
- It should be considered, it is worth considering
- The first observation to make is (concerns)
- First of all/Firstly
- Secondly/ Furthermore/Moreover
- Lastly/Finally
- In fact
- According to (the majority of respondents)
- However, although, alternatively
- In spite of (the fact [that])/Despite (the fact [that]) + Noun, Pronoun or ...ing
- Predicting the future: The outlook for ... is (far from [+ing])
bright/optimistic/depressing/daunting
- The future looks bleak/remains uncertain/is promising
- This seems unlikely in the near/foreseable future
- It has been stressed that

Making/giving recommendations

- I would strongly recommend that ... should + bare infinitive
- In the light of the results of the survey I would advise against...
- I feel it would be to our advantage if...
- The best solution is/would be to...
- This will have an impact on + noun

Conclusion(s)

- As long as/provided that these recommendations are taken into consideration
- In conclusion...
- The research shows/demonstrates
- From the research/the evidence we conclude that

The automatic use of the language suggested here for report writing will only come with practice. Some writing tasks have been given in the additional material section.

Describing Graph Trends

Language of Change

This exercise introduces some common vocabulary and grammar needed for describing graph trends.

The language that can be used for describing graphs is extensive..

Vocabulary for Describing Graph Trends

Word	Part of Speech	Example Sentence
increase	<i>verb</i> : to increase, is increasing, has increased, increased	Total expenditure increased from \$33,611m to \$39,165m from 1995 to 1996.
	<i>noun</i> : an increase of \$5,554m an increase in spending of \$5,554m	From 1995 to 1996 there was an increase in expenditure of \$5,554m.
decrease	<i>verb</i> : to decrease, is decreasing, has decreased, decreased	Expenditure on primary education decreased from 22.2% to 21.5% from 1995 to 1996.
	<i>noun</i> : a decrease of 0.7% a decrease in spending of 0.7%	From 1995 to 1996 there was a decrease in expenditure of 0.7%.
rise	<i>verb</i> : to rise, is rising, has risen, rose	Total expenditure rose from \$33,611m to \$39,165m from 1995 to 1996.
	<i>noun</i> : a rise of \$5,554m a rise in spending of \$5,554m	From 1995 to 1996 there was a rise in expenditure of \$5,554m.
fall	<i>verb</i> : to fall, is falling, has fallen, fell	Expenditure on primary education fell from 22.2% to 21.5% from 1995 to 1996.
	<i>noun</i> : a fall of 0.7% a fall in spending of 0.7%	From 1995 to 1996 there was a fall in expenditure of 0.7%.
drop	<i>verb</i> : to drop, is dropping, has dropped, dropped	Expenditure on primary education dropped from 22.2% to 21.5% from 1995 to 1996.
	<i>noun</i> : a drop of 0.7%	From 1995 to 1996 there was a drop

	a drop in spending of 0.7%	in expenditure of 0.7%.
-ing forms	After an introductory clause that includes some analysis; e.g. 'Spending rose in all three years', an '_ing' form can be used to describe numbers and dates.	Spending rose in all three years, increasing from 17.6% to 18% from 1995 to 1996, and then rising again to 18.2% in 1997-8.

Practice

Have a look at the table below.

Then, to help you with describing graph trends, decide which word should go in the gap in the example answer.

Expenditure on Education in Hong Kong 1995 to 1998

Breakdown of spending	1995-6	1996-7	1997-8
Total expenditure (\$ million)	33,611	39,165	45,315
As % of government budget	17.6%	18%	18.2%
% spent on			
primary education	22.2%	21.5%	21.6%
secondary education	33.7%	33.2%	33.5%
tertiary education	35.9%	36.7%	35.9%

Describing Graph Trends - Gap Fill

Public expenditure on education in Hong Kong (1) _____ continuously from 1995 to 1998. In academic year 1995-6 it (2) _____ HK\$33,611 million, (3) _____ to \$39,165 million in 1996-7 and \$45,315 million in 1997-8. As a percentage of the government's budget spending on education also (4) _____ each year, from 17.6% to 18% and then to 18.2%.

However, the percentage of expenditure spent on primary, secondary and tertiary education did not show the same consistent (5)_____ . In 1995-6 expenditure on primary education was 22.2% of the education budget, 33.7% (6)_____ on secondary, and 35.9% on tertiary.

In 1996, (7)_____ of 0.8% in spending on tertiary education was financed by a (8)_____ in spending of 0.7% in primary and 0.5% in secondary schooling.

In 1997-8 tertiary spending as a percent of the education budget (9)_____ to its 1995-6 level.

The percentage spent on primary education (10)_____ to 21.6% and that on secondary to 33.5%, both figures being less than 1995-6 levels.

Choose the correct word to fit in the gap

1. increases
increased
increasing

2. was
rose to
reached

3. increased
dropping
rising

4. an increase
increased
increasing

5. rise
rose

rising

6. spent

- spending

was spent

7. an increase

increase

was increased

8. increase

drop

dropped

9. dropped

increased

returned

10. rised

rose

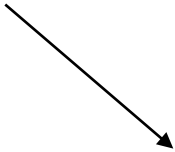
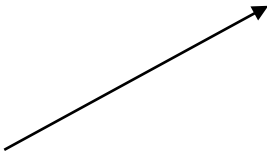
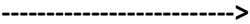
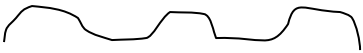
increase

This lesson will hopefully have helped you with the basics of describing graph trends and some of the different structures you can use.

Remember though this example has only used a few of the words possible for describing change.

It's important to vary your language so look around, for examples, to see what other language you can use.

Useful language: describing trends

Meaning	Verb	Noun
<p>Go down</p> 	<p>Decrease</p> <p>Fall</p> <p>Drop</p> <p>Decline</p> <p>Plunge (big change)</p> <p>Plummet (big change)</p>	<p>The same</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p>
<p>Go up</p> 	<p>Increase</p> <p>Rise</p> <p>Grow</p> <p>Double</p> <p>Treble</p> <p>Rocket (big change)</p>	<p>The same</p> <p>Growth</p> <p>Doubling in + noun</p> <p>Trebling in + noun</p> <p>-----</p>
<p>No change</p> 	<p>Level off</p> <p>Remain the same</p> <p>Remain stable</p> <p>stabilize</p>	<p>A levelling off at</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p>
<p>Constant change</p> 	<p>Fluctuate</p>	<p>Fluctuation in + noun</p>

Position \wedge \vee	Reach a high/ peak of Reach a low of Stood at	A high of A low of -----
	Adjective/ adverb	
Small change	Steady(ily) Slight(ly) Gradual(lly)	
Large change	Considerable(ly) Sharp(ly) Dramatic(ally) Significant(ly) Substantial(ly)	
examples	Time phrases	
There was a substantial increase in students in 2006. The number of students increased substantially throughout the period from 2002 to 2006.	From 2000 to 2005 From 150 to 200 units In 2006 For 5 years Between 2000 and 2005 During/throughout the period from 2000 to 2005	
finish.		
To sum up, the main trend of the graph (diagram) is to show ...		

Describing graphs

I. Put the words in the appropriate column.

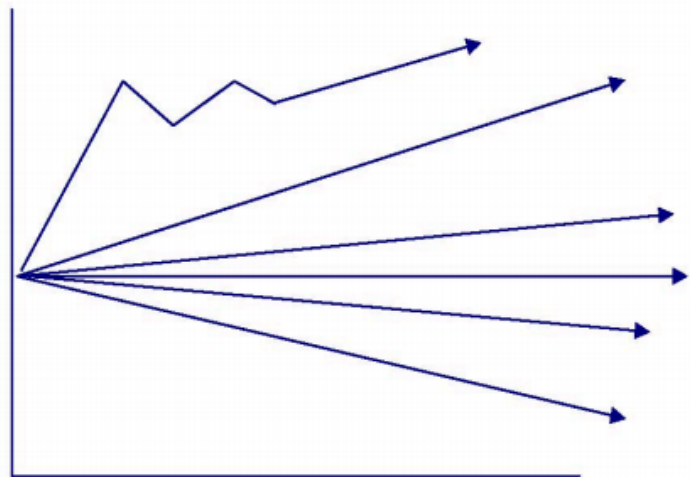
increase
fall
decrease
climb
drop
decline
lift
rise

Go up

Go down

Match the phrases below to the lines on the right.

remain steady
fluctuate
increase slightly
decrease sharply
decrease slightly
increase sharply
drop sharply
stay the same
go up a little
go down slightly



•
•

Exercises

Sales results

Choose the correct words in italics to complete the report.

Sales began the year at 30,000 units in January and increased *slight / slightly* to 32,000 units in February. There was a *sharp / sharply* rise to / by 38,000 in March *due / led* to the introduction of a new price discounting scheme. This was followed by a *slight / slightly* fall in April when sales dropped to 36,000 units. Our competitors launched a rival product in the spring and this resulted *in / from* a *dramatic / dramatically* fall to 25,000 in May. But we ran a summer advertising campaign and sales increased *steady / steadily* to / by 2,000 units a month throughout June, July and August until they stood *in / at* 33,000 in September. The *dramatic / dramatically* rise to 45,000 in October resulted *in / from* the launch of our new autumn range. But then we experienced problems meeting demand and sales fell *sharp / sharply* in November and remained *steady / steadily* at / by 39,000 in December.

There is one mistake in every sentence. Find the mistake and correct it.

1. Our supplier's prices increased at 7% last month.
2. Their market share remained steadily between 2003 and 2007.
3. We lent a lot of money from the bank last year.
4. We spent too much money in advertising.
5. Our poor performance last year was resulted to increased competition.
6. There was a sharp increase on sales last year.
7. This graph shows our sales numbers for the past month.
8. Can we cancel our meeting until next week, please?
9. We hope to achieve a steadily growth in sales.
10. Salaries felt by a small amount last year.

Correspondence 1

First Contact

Making first contact in a business relationship and building a business relationship through an exchange of emails.

The email is generally less formal than the business letter and it is increasingly rare to use very formal types of business correspondence today. However, in the case of a first contact email, when you write to a potential customer or business partner for the first time, a semi-formal style is preferable, and certain rules of style and language should be followed - it is very important in creating a good impression when you write to someone for the first time.

How important do you consider the following rules to be?

- There should be no grammar or spelling mistakes.
- You should ask the person lots of questions to show then you are interested in them.
- You should have a clear subject line in the email so that the person knows what it is from the start.

Look at the following email sent by a buyer of LCD monitors for the Scandinavian market.

Complete the email using the expressions below:

1. We met at the Taipei computer applications show
2. Best regards
3. Dear Mr. Zhang
4. Please send us your price list and a draft of your Distributor Agreement
5. We manufacture and distribute matron DVR
6. I look forward to hearing from you

Email

From: Nordstrom, Ole

To: Zhang Xaiopen

a) _____

b) _____ and discussed our interest in importing your PRO Expert monitors for the Scandinavian market.

c) _____, as well as distributing Security Products in Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, the Baltic countries and the United Kingdom (we have an office in London). See

our homepage at www.secpro.dk. I found your products of very high quality and I understand that you could supply the CCTV LCD monitors from 1 November.

I would like to place our first order as soon as possible. d _____, and let me know which of the countries mentioned above you would like us to distribute your products in.

e _____.

f. _____.

Ole Nordstrom

When you make first contact with someone, there are different ways you can open your email or letter. In the case of the Nordstrom email above, he refers to a previous meeting with Mr. Zhang. If you haven't met the person you are writing to before, you can begin by:

1. Introducing yourself.
2. Referring to someone you both know
3. Saying who recommended you contact the person you are writing to.

Look at the beginning of 3 emails. Choose an appropriate opening sentence for each email (a – c).

- a) I'd like to introduce myself as the head of the project management team which will handle the restructuring of the department.
- b) My husband attended one of your courses last month and he has told me how informative it was.
- c) I got your contact details from Marcus Berger in Singapore who suggested I get in touch with you.

Dear Alan

We at Nova Tec have been looking for a public speaking course for some of our staff to attend. Can you let me know if you will be running any courses in the near future

Dear Ms. Alvarez

My name is Ramesh, and I will act as your main point of contact in the coming months as we work through the process with your department...

Dear Mrs. Singh,

He said you might be able to recommend an agent to handle our exports in South East Asia....

Building a business relationship

Look at the reply from the seller in Asia to the Scandinavian buyer after speaking to him on the phone. How do you think he could improve the email?

<p>Email</p> <p>From: Zhang Xaiopen</p> <p>To: Nordstrom, Ole</p> <p>Dear Mr. Nordstrom</p> <p>1) _____</p> <p>2) _____.</p> <p>Since we already have distributors in Finland, Norway and the Baltic countries for our LCD monitor, the areas we can grant you are Denmark, Sweden and the UK only.</p> <p>Concerning the delivery, as per my explanation on the phone, most of our CCTV LCD monitors are selling under the OEM brand with exclusivity. We can take the order now and deliver it in January.</p> <p>If you want to test our samples, we can send our OEM models to you.</p> <p>The draft agreement and relevant documents well be forwarded to you by my European sales Representative MS. Sylvia Yeh. I will ask her to contact you for relevant business.</p> <p>3) _____</p> <p>4) _____</p> <p>Best regards</p> <p>Zhang Xaiopen</p>
--

Complete the email above choosing one of the following sentences (a – d) to fill each gap in the email. The purpose of these sentences is to make the message sound more friendly:

- a) I am interested in doing business with you and would like to invite you to be our distributor.
- b) I hope to visit Denmark again soon and look forward to seeing you there.
- c) Please feel free to contact me if you need my services or assistance.
- d) Thanks for your call - it was nice to talk to you.

Communicative task 2

Work in two groups. You have found out from a Trade Fair or from the Internet about a company whose products you would like to distribute in your country.

Work in pairs to write an email to the sales manager of the company. In the email

- Explain that you have experience selling to the relative retail sector or consumer group
- Ask for more information about particular product ranges
- Ask for a price list
- Suggest that you would like to be the sole distributor for your country

Before you begin, decide on a name for your company. In your email you should:

- include a subject line and introduce yourself
- include a friendly comment in order to build a business relationship
- use the Zhang /Nordstrom emails to help you.

When you have finished exchange your email with someone who wrote to the other company. Look for any mistakes in your colleagues' email and listen to the feedback on the email you wrote. Make any necessary changes.

Skills – Writing Enquiries

The purpose of a letter of enquiry is to request information about services, prices and offers. They are frequently written in response to advertisements found in magazines or on the Internet, There are a number of points that are to be included in the enquiry. You should:

- Say where you saw the advertisement, or where you learnt the name and address of the person or company you are writing to.
- Identify yourself and say why you are writing.
- Explain your particular needs.
- Request any other and more detailed information.
- Thank your correspondent and ask for a reply.

Look at how these elements are included in this example.

Mondo Travel
Via Monopoli 2
Bari, 70100
Tel 080 XXXXXXXXXXXX – FaxXXXXXXXXXX
www.XXXXXXXXXXX, @XXXXXX.it

Ref. DS/41

21st May 2015

Hays Travels
16 Wilson Place
London NW1 5LP
United Kingdom

Dear Sir/Madam

Request for information about package tours

I saw your advertisement on your company website.

I work for a travel agency in Bari and would like some information about the package tours you organize in the West Country.

In particular, I would like more detailed information about the type of accommodation you provide on your tours. Could you please send me brochures about the hotels and B&Bs you use?

As many of our clients like to spend some extra days in London, please send me literature and quotations for medium-priced accommodation in London

Thank you in advance.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully
Luca Marchese
Manager

Exercises

1) Put the sentences from the following email into the right order

we are particularly interested in skiing holidays in the Italian Alps
dear Sirs,
we look forward to your prompt reply
we are a UK-based travel company and we are at present planning our programme for the coming winter.
we would also appreciate information about prices and discounts offered for group bookings.
as there may be more than 25 people in each group.
we saw your advertisement in the September edition of "Travel".
best regards
could you please send us some literature about hotel accommodation with details of prices and services.

Peter Hunter
Manager

2) Use the guidelines to write a letter of enquiry

You work for a London-based company. Your manager is going to go to Bari for business. He has asked you to contact Mondo travel in Bari to ask for information. Specifically:

- Information about hotels in the area;
- The possibility of car rental from the airport;
- Some typical restaurants where he can try the local specialities (he would like to invite his customers in Bari).

3) Use the guidelines to write a letter of enquiry

You work for a marketing company in Rome. Your manager, Mr. Bisceglie has read about the a Marketing Fair and has asked you to find more information about the next edition to be held in Manchester in May. Write a letter to a Manchester travel agency. Include all the points included in the model, but more specifically ask:

- How you can receive a registration form so your manager can go to the fair;
- For more detailed information about local accommodation;
- For information about airport transfer;
- The possibility of excursions.

4) Use the guidelines to write a letter of enquiry.

You work in the marketing department of an Italian University. You would like some information about the possibility of holding an academic conference in London in the Spring. You have found the name of a London company who work in conference organization. Write an enquiry to ask about:

- The location and availability of medium-priced hotels;
- The most convenient way to arrive from the airport;
- The location of conference centres;
- The possibility of excursions.

Useful Language

How you learnt about your correspondent:

- I found your address in..... /on the Internet
- Your address was given to us by.....
- I was given your address by.....

Identify yourself

- We are a large tour operator based in.....
- I work in/for a company in.....
- My name is..... I work for.....
- I am the manager of.....
- I/We have been working in this field for XX years.
- We are a small family business
- I am writing on behalf of

Why you are writing

- I am interested in your offer
- We would like to receive information about.....
- I am planning to spend a week in XXXXXX next month.
- We would be grateful if you could give us more information about the services you provide.
- I/We am/are organizing a conference in Italy next summer.

Your specific needs

- Could you please let us have your best quotation for.....
- Could you please send us your summer programme for.....
- I would like to know what services are included in the price.
- Please send me.....
- We would appreciate it if you could send us.....
Could you please send us some literature /more detailed information about.....

Request further information

- I would also like to receive information about.....
- Is it possible to have.....
- We would also like to know if

Closure

- Thank you very much for your help.
- Thank you in advance.
- We are looking forward to your early reply.
- I look forward to receiving your prompt reply.
- I hope to hear from you soon.

Skills - Replies

As your aim in replying to customer's enquiries is to encourage them to do business with your company, it is essential that you try to give a positive impression. Your letter should answer all the questions asked, and it is important that it is well written.

The following points should be included:

- You should thank the correspondent for their enquiry and mention the date of their letter and/or the subject;
- Confirm whether you have the services they have requested (if you don't have them you should either suggest an alternative or refer them to someone else);
- Give information about your company – also give the customer more information about the services that you offer and any special offers;
- Encourage them to reply, or to make further enquiries to you.

Hays Travels
16 Wilson Place
London NW1 5LP
United Kingdom
Tel +44 XXXXXXXXXXXX – FaxXXXXXXXXXX
[@XXXXXXXX.it](http://www.XXXXXXXXXX.XXXXXXXXXX)

Your Ref. DS/41

Our Ref. DC/ru

29 May 2015

Mondo Travel
Via Monopoli 2
Bari, 70100

Dear Mr. Marchese

Reply to your enquiry of 21 May

Thank you very much for your enquiry of 21st May. I am very happy to give you information about the package tours we organize in the West Country.

We have more than 20 years' experience in this field, and we are able to meet the many different needs that foreign visitors to Britain might require.

The accommodation offered as part of our West Country package tours includes a range of medium-priced hotels and family-run B&Bs. We guarantee the friendly and comfortable environment in all these establishments.

I am also sending you some information about hotels in London. Please also note that, for a small extra cost, we are able to organize airport transfers to and from the centre of London.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

David Clarke

Director

Enclosures

Brochure and Price list for West Country Tours;

4 Brochures about London hotels with price lists;

Price-list for airport transfer transport.

Exercises

1) Use the guidelines to write a letter of reply.

You work in the Tourist Information Office in Brighton. You have received a request from a German travel agency requesting information about study holidays in the Brighton area. They ask for information about language schools, accommodation and the possibility of visiting London. In your reply:

- Tell them that your agency can organize the students' visit;
- Give them the names of two schools;
- Explain that accommodation is available with local families or on the University campus, and there is a choice of either half or full board;
- The schools organize a trip to London (as well as other excursions) as required;
- Send brochures, price list and other information.

2) Use the guidelines to write a letter of reply.

You work for a company supplying air conditioning units. You have received a request for information about possibility of your company supplying 10 units by the end of the month. You would like to supply the goods requested but cannot respect the required date. Explain this in your reply and suggest some alternatives.

Useful language

Thanks for the enquiry

- Thank you for your letter of July 15th requesting information about.....
- I was very glad to receive your request for information...

If you have the services required

- We are very glad to help you in organizing your publicity campaign
- We have availability on the dates you requested.
- We are able to complete the work in the period you requested.
- We can provide.....

Give information about your company

- We have been working in this field for more than 20 years.
- We have been working in this field since 1998.
- We specialize in.....
- Our company was founded in 1995.

Encourage the customer to do business with you.

- I am sending you a brochure with full details of all the services we provide / of all our products and offers.
- I am sending you a quotation with our best offer.

If you cannot provide the services requested, offer suitable alternatives

- We no longer have availability but I can suggest.....
- Unfortunately, our products will not be available by the dates you request. May I suggest when I can grant you an advantageous/special discount.
- We do not organize but as an alternative we do offer

Refer to another company

- We are very sorry we do not..... May we suggest contacting
- Unfortunately, we no longer offer this service but you could contact who specialize in this field.

Encourage further contact

- Please do not hesitate to contact me for any further details you may require.
- I am at your disposal for
- We hope to count you among our customers in the future.
- We look forward to receiving your future orders.
- We hope to hear from you again in the near future.

Correspondence 2

Everyday business emails

Introduction

There are many different forms of written communication:

- Letters
- Emails
- Text messages
- Online instant messaging
- Social networking sites

1. Which of these do you use in your study, work or everyday social life?
2. Which do you use most/least frequently?
3. What differences are there in the way you write in the different situations?

Formal and informal style in correspondence

Look at the following pairs of sentences from letters and emails. Decide which are formal style and which are informal:

1. a. We would appreciate your letting us know which models you can make available, as well as the quantities and unit prices thereof. _____
b. Pls email us your inventory and price lists. _____
2. a. Many thanks! _____
b. Thank you very much for agreeing to work on this project. _____
3. a. Should you have any queries at all about the review or what to include in your report, please do not hesitate to contact me. _____
b. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions. _____

Looking at these sentences again, which of the following features are most common in formal communications, which are more common in informal ones?

1. Simple sentences
2. Long complex sentences
3. No contractions and abbreviations
4. Contractions and abbreviations.

The formal sentences come from letters and the informal lines from emails. Emails generally have a less formal style than letters. However, there are also “semi-formal” emails, as when you write a first contact email to person you do not know, or perhaps to a person in a higher position in your company hierarchy, and there are also less or much less formal emails when you write to someone you know well.

If we look at the two emails below, we can note a number of differences between them which reflect how well the writer and the addressee know each other. The relationship between them influences the language used. In particular note

- The greeting
- The topics
- The amount of information provided
- The formality of the language used.

Which email is more informal?

What examples of informal language can you find in the more informal email?

Email 1

Dear Mike

Thank you for your email. You may use one of our logos. Please visit our brand guidelines website where you can download the version you would like: abbrandguide@org.uk and click on downloads.

As you are running an event, please can *in aid of* or *in support of* appear next to our logo. As you are featuring our logo, please can you send us an image of how it is being used so we can ensure it is being reproduced correctly.

Please do get your friends to get in touch with our events team if they need any support (tel.0225 834202).

Please let me know if you have any other questions.

Many thanks

Sam

Samuel Spade

Brand manager

Email 2

Hi Jeff

Got all your bills this morning.

Many thanks.

I'm sorry about that one from January that didn't get paid. You're quite right – in the confusion about the invoice numbers, we forgot to pass the new version on to accounts, but just filed it away... a brilliant way to save money!

Anyway, accounts have it now, so it will be paid with the other ones at the end of the week.

Did you see the game last night? I didn't see the game, but saw the penalty shoot-out. Very tense. It's always fun when we beat the Italians!

Cheers

Matt

Communicative task 3 – Business emails

Read the instructions in the communicative task information

Before you write your email decide what style (formal/informal) is most suitable in the context.

Write your email and give it to another student.

Reply to the email you receive.

Correspondence 3

Writing group emails

Do you ever write emails to a group of people? Do you often receive emails that have been sent to a group?

How do you feel when you receive an email from friend who has sent it to a group of people?

What do you think are the main differences between sending an email to one person and to a group of people?

Dos and don'ts of writing group emails

Here is a list of tips for writing group emails - decide if they are dos or don'ts:

- Use acronyms and abbreviations
- Give the details before the main point
- Include a clear subject line
- Be polite even if the message is firm or strict
- Write all the information in the same paragraph
- Give key information at the beginning
- Use bullet points
- Use long complicated sentences
- Include more detailed information in a separate attachment
- If you have included an attachment, mention it at the end

Read the following email. On the basis of the list of dos and don'ts, decide how you could improve it.

Rewrite the email using the list of dos and don'ts and compare your version with the example.

Subject: Yesterday's meeting

We had a very useful meeting yesterday, in which we brainstormed ideas for new products. As we discussed, we are looking specifically for ideas that would generate (significant) money. Erika has very kindly collated a list of the topics we discussed, and as you can see the list contains very short summaries of each of the ideas that came up yesterday. I've asked the people who proposed them to provide a more detailed (max. one page of A4) concept of their ideas. Could you please include what the product is

(content), what form it is in (print, audio, online etc.), who it is aimed at, how often it will appear (if relevant), what the payment/business model is. Can I ask you to please look at the ideas and feel free to add to them, adapt them, expand them, or come up with completely different ones, and to send your ideas to me as soon as possible.

James

PS: the list is attached.

From: "McCullen James" J.Mcullen@alpinevistas.com

To: Marketing team

Subject: Brainstorming for new products

Hi all

Attached is a list of ideas generated at yesterday's meeting for new products. (Thanks to Erika for collating)

Specifically, we are looking for ideas that would generate (significant) money.

The list contains very short summaries of each of the ideas that came up yesterday. I've asked the people who proposed them to provide a more detailed (max. one page of A4) concept for their ideas. This should include:

- What is the product?
- What form does it have (print, audio, online etc.)?
- Who is it aimed at?
- How often will it appear (if relevant)?
- What is the payment/business model?

Please look at the ideas and feel free to add to them and feel free to add to them, adapt them, expand them, or come up with completely different ones.

Please send your ideas to me as soon as possible.

Many thanks

James

Structuring information

When you write a letter or email it's important to structure the information so that it is easy to follow and understand. You should ask yourself the following questions:

Who is it for?

What is the message?

Why are you writing? What is the purpose?

Read the following email sent by the new head of the department.

1. Answer the questions Who? What? Why?
2. The email is divided into three main paragraphs. What key information is contained in each paragraph?

Dear Colleagues,

This is to let you know that on 1st September I started officially as the Head of the Human Resources Department. I look forward to working with you in what promises to be an exciting yet also challenging time for our company.

I hope to get to know all the staff as soon as possible – I will try to achieve this through a series of small group meetings in the next few months. These meetings will be informal and will give me the opportunity to understand your concerns and aspirations for the company better.

My office is located on the ground floor until further notice. Sally Owen, who acts as my PA, is located in Room G2. I can be contacted through her. Her telephone extension is 2345 and her email is sallyowen@geoup.com.

Thank you for making me feel welcome. (Pity about the weather and the coffee - but I'm working on the coffee!!).

Maggie Anders

Communicative task 4

Stage 1

You work in the logistics department of a big company. Work in two groups A and B.

Look at the information:

Stage 2

Give your email to someone from the other group. You will see that there is a problem. As the head of department is away on holiday and asked not to be contacted, decide how you can solve the problem.

On the basis of what you decide, write a reply.

Stage 3

Read the emails you received again. Did they follow the dos and don'ts rules studied earlier? What did you like about the way the emails were written? How could they be improved? Give your feedback to the other group and listen to their feedback on what you wrote

Correspondence 4 - Formal letters

Job Applications

Think of any experience you have had of applying for a job. Which of the following documents did you have to present:

- A curriculum vitae (CV) or résumé.
- An application form
- Certificates or diplomas
- A covering letter

Did you apply for the job by post/email/online.

Put the following elements into the order they should be found in a cover letter

- a) Your address and contact details ____
- b) Your name ____
- c) When you are available for an interview ____
- d) Your qualifications ____
- e) Your employment history ____
- f) Your personality ____
- g) The position you are applying for ____
- h) Where you saw the advertisement ____
- i) Why you are interested in the job ____

Which of the above should you give more details of in your CV or on the application form?

Which information about your personality should you give when you apply for a job?

The cover letter will use more formal language than is usually the case in emails, which tend to use more complex language and, without going too far, tend to be longer as some space is necessary for the candidate to “sell themselves”. It is important, though, to focus only on information which will support your application

Cover Letter Format

Most cover letters follow a basic format. Use the following example to customize your information

	Your name
	Your address
	Your City, Province, Postal Code
	Date of letter
Employer's name	
Employer's title	
Company name	
Company address	
(Company City, Province, Postal Code)	
Dear Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms (name of employer) Sirs, Sir/Madam	
Re. Position you are applying for with the company	
Introduction: Explain why you are writing. Name the position for which you are applying and indicate how you heard of the opening.	
Body of Letter: Tell the employer what you can do for him/her. This is an opportunity to outline your qualifications and skills as they relate to the job. Use ' <u>résumé verbs</u> ' (planned, organized, completed) to describe your skills.	
When replying to an advertisement, be sure to include in the paragraph(s) all the requirements listed in the ad (e.g. academic qualifications, skills, qualities etc.). This makes the task of matching you to the job easy.	
Refer to the enclosed résumé so that it doesn't get lost in the shuffle, or is in an attachment that remains unopened.	
Closing: Use an appropriate closing to pave the way for the interview. Provide opportunity for an immediate and favourable response. When using a broadcast letter, enclose a return envelope if you are requesting an application or more information. You may also wish to take the responsibility for contacting them, stating a specific date when you will call. Also thank them for taking the time to read your letter.	
Sincerely yours (Yours sincerely)	
<i>Your signature</i>	
Your name (typewritten)	
Enclosure (indicates your résumé is in the envelope with your letter)	

Look at the job advertisement below for an associate manager in human resources at P and G in China. What kind of person are they looking for? Consider, in particular, qualifications, work experience and personality.

Job description:

Associate manager in Human Resources Department in China.

Description

Responsible for:

- Supporting one or more specific core HR systems and processes at the corporate level or on a site.
- Helping line management in preparing their organization to deal with change, which is the real constant in a very competitive global marketplace.
- Working with line management to increase the employees' capability and commitment to the company.
- Ensuring that the programs designed to attract and retain our employees are carried out in a high quality and "zero defect" manner.

Primary work location: Beijing/Shanghai

Qualifications

- Bachelor degree or above
- Shows strong leadership, direction-setting and guiding others
- Excellent critical thinking/problem solving abilities
- Strong skills in creativity, innovation, initiative, follow-through communication and priority setting
- Solid interpersonal skills and team-building abilities
- Strong English communication skills

Now look at the opening paragraph of a cover letter for the job. Why is not a strong opening? What are its faults?

How can you change it?

Dear Sir,
As I was browsing the Internet this morning, as I usually do, I came across your advertisement for an associate manager in human resources in China, which grabbed my attention. I have always been interested in China, and would love to have the opportunity to live there. But let me begin by introducing myself: my name is Martyn Cooke and I am 25 years old ...

A Strong Opening

How you open your job application letter can be very important in capturing the interest of the person reading your application. There are also certain rules to observe in this:

Your opening sentence should say what position you are applying for and where/when you saw the advertisement or heard about the opportunity. So:

I would like to apply for the position of ... advertised in the (name of newspaper) /on the website of... on (date).

Then say in a couple of sentences why you are the right person for the job. The two examples which follow give examples from two application letters – one is from a less experienced applicant and the other from an applicant with more experience:

I have recently graduated with honours from the London School of Economics, and have just completed an internship with the Nationwide Building Society. My qualifications and recent experience, as well as my organizational and communication skills make me an ideal candidate for the position.

With a proven track record of success in finance, I believe my experience would contribute greatly to the continuing success of your company. I have enclosed my résumé to provide an overview of my achievements and qualifications.

Highlighting skills and achievements

In the body of your letter you should highlight your key skills and achievements, and tell the employer what you will contribute to the company. Use “positive action verbs” where possible such as: achieve, lead, build, develop, contribute to, acquire, manage, gain. The use of verbs like complete stress that you follow through on your actions, as in “*I completed the course*” rather than “*I followed the course/I attended the course*”.

Exercise

Underline the best verb form to complete the following sentences:

1. In my present position I have achieved / gained / led good computer skills.
2. During my studies I acquired / managed / implemented a wide knowledge of marketing strategies.
3. In my previous position as Team Leader, I contributed to / managed / implemented a team of assistants who reported to me.
4. As Assistant Manager, I was responsible for acquiring / leading / implementing the strategies adopted by the company.
5. Graduating at the top of my class, I achieved / built / contributed to one of the highest marks on my final project.
6. As a student I regularly built / contributed to / managed the university magazine.
7. My work in this area has enabled me to build / contribute to / lead the skills needed for my job.

Sometimes it is a good idea to use bullet points to summarize some of your key points, or to make a list easily readable, especially if you have a lot of previous experience:

As indicated in my CV, my contributions in my previous post include:

- Training and monitoring
- Preparing and presenting monthly reports
- Contacting prospective customers

Imagine you are applying for the job in the advertisement, what three points would you list in support of your application?

Look at the following extracts from cover letters. Would you write these things in your letter? Why/Why not? Does it depend on which country you are applying for the job in?

I have wanted to be a successful business person since I was a child.

In my previous job, I learned the virtue of discipline and the importance of a strong work ethic.

I performed as a self-starter and became indispensable to my department.

I am confident that I will be able to make an immediate and positive impact on your company after I join.

Activity

Write a cover letter for your application for the job in China.

Your letter should contain the following:

- A strong opening: state what job you are applying for, where you saw the advertisement, why you are interested in the position and are a suitable candidate for the job.
- A main body: highlight your skills, experience, achievements and relevant personal characteristics.
- A conclusion: state where and when you will be available for an interview, how and when you can be contacted and close politely (for example say you look forward to an interview, and/or thank them for considering your application).

Exchange your letter with another student and give each other feedback. What are the strong points of the letter How can it be improved?

Exercises

1) The language we use often consists of fixed expressions considered appropriate to the situation. This is especially true of formal letters, where it is necessary to use the correct phrases.

What expressions could you use in your application letter to:

1. Explain why you are writing. Name the position for which you are applying.

-
2. Refer to your attached résumé

-
3. Use an appropriate closing to pave the way for the interview

-
4. Thank them for taking the time to read the letter
-

2) The following letter suffers from a variety of faults in layout and style, identify the faults and suggest improvements. It was written in reply from a Swiss Tour Operator who are looking for administrative staff to organize their tours.

Swiss Tours
CH – 4002 Basle
Via Garibaldi 11
PARMA
1 – 43100

Dear Sirs

I have a degree in Marketing and have five years' experience working in a marketing agency. I have a strong knowledge of computer sciences. I speak English, French, German, and Italian fluently.

You can call me at any time on my mobile phone (0337 123456) but please not too early in the morning. I would love to work for your company as I have a Swiss girlfriend who is a skiing instructor. I see from the newspaper that you are looking for an administrative assistant, and this would suit me.

Please let me know what you think.

Yours truly

Giovanni Rossi

Parma 6 April 2016

1) Write job application letters for the following positions.

- All Marketing have advertized in Jobs for You magazine. They are looking for a recent University graduate with an appropriate degree to work in their London offices organizing relations with clients in the north of Italy. Computer literacy is preferred.
- Mansfield Park Hotel in Bath have advertized on the Bath Chronicle website. They have a position available for “an energetic foreign-language speaker” who would work on reception.
- The Holbourne Museum in Bath have advertized on their website for voluntary staff to act as museum guides.
- Speakeasy Language School are offering places for tour guides in the Brighton area to accompany foreign language students.

The Interview

Discussion

What sort of information does a job advertisement contain?

Look at the advertisement below for a job in a Singapore hotel and discuss the questions

1. What qualities are required of the applicant? Do you think they are relevant for the job?
2. What other qualities do you think are important?

Company name: Blue Ocean Consultancy

Employer type: Hotel/resort jobs

Position type: Front desk

Job title: Front Office Officers

Location: Singapore

Salary: SGD 1,500 monthly

Job description: You must be eloquent, have good English communication skills and experience of customer service in the hospitality industry

You must possess relevant experience in Front Office operations in a reputable hotel

You are expected to provide professional customer services for our clients

Job requirements: Must possess the following:

- 1) a bachelor's degree in HRM
- 2) three or more years of relevant work experience with employers' testimonials

Benefits and other information: Annual leave, uniforms, medical leave, hospitalization and health insurance cover, training and development.

Group A: You are responsible for recruiting the right person for the above job.

Group B: You are applying for the job.

1. In each group write down the questions you would ask.
2. Swap papers and make notes about how you would reply to the questions.
3. Share your questions and answers with the rest of the class

Language - Collocations for job applications

Some collocations like future career are often used in job interviews and in applications in general. You can make other common collocations by matching the numbered words in the first column with a – g in the second

1. career	a. a responsibility
2. attracted to	b. points
3. make	c. a job
4. interpersonal	d. a decision
5. take on	e. skills
6. handle	f. a problem
7. strong	g. prospects

Listening 12 - Job interview at a hotel

You are going to listen to some extracts from job interviews. You will hear some graduates from a Hotel and Catering Management course being interviewed for a job in a Hong Kong hotel. The job is for trainees who want to work in front office in a hotel.

Listen and note down the questions asked by the interviewer. Compare the questions with those you prepared in the exercise on the Singapore job.

Listen again and answer these questions:

1. What answers does the interviewee give?
2. Are any of the answers the same as those you prepared in the exercise on the Singapore job?
3. Do you think she answered them well?

Listening 13- Talking about your weaknesses

One frequent, and difficult, question candidates are asked is to talk about their weaknesses.

Listen to two candidates talking about their weaknesses. Which one do you think gives the best answer?

Listening 14– Questions for the interviewer

If you were a candidate for the Hong Kong job, what questions would you ask the interviewer? What questions would you not ask?

Listen and see if the questions are the same as yours:

Listen again and answer the following questions:

1. What mistake does Candidate 1 make regarding where she wants to work?
2. What is Candidate 1's second question? Do you think it is a good question?
3. What answer does the interviewer give her?
4. What question does Candidate 2 ask?
5. What does the interviewer say she will do?
6. Why does the interviewer have to do this?

Language - asking questions diplomatically

There are ways of asking difficult questions in an interview which make them more acceptable.

Look at the following two ways of asking the same question and then answer the questions below.

- a. *What are your strengths and weaknesses?*
 - b. *What do you think your strengths and weaknesses are?*
1. Which one is better in an interview? Why?
 2. Which one is an indirect question?
 3. What happens to the verb in an indirect question.

If you are an interviewer you can begin a diplomatic question with *What would you say?/What do you think?* As in the examples above

If you are a candidate you begin a diplomatic question with *I would like to know about /if ... Could you tell me about...?*

For example, instead of saying *How can I get promotion quickly?*, you could say:

I would like to know about the possibilities for promotion.

Could you tell me about the possibilities for promotion?

Look at the following questions and decide if they are asked by the Interviewer or the candidate.

1. How much money do you want to earn? _____
2. Are there any opportunities for training? _____
3. What will I have to do in the first three months if I get the job? _____
4. What was the most difficult situation you have ever handled? _____
5. Why should we hire you? _____
6. How is the department organized? _____
7. Will I be able to work at the front desk? _____

Now make these questions more diplomatic using indirect language and changing some of the words where necessary.

Discussion

What should you wear for a job interview?

Should you try to avoid small talk?

When the interviewer asks you about your achievements, should you be modest or should you “sell yourself” even exaggerating your experience and achievements a little?

What topics should you avoid asking the interviewer about?

Do you think the answers to these questions might depend on the culture of the country or the organization you are in?

Activity

Prepare an interview for the position of Associate manager in Human Resources Department in China in the advertisement above

Group A - Interviewers: prepare the questions you want to ask the candidates.

Group B - Interviewees: Think of the questions the interviewer might ask you, and prepare some questions for you to ask the interviewer about the job.

Audio scripts

Building a Business relationship

Audio Script Listening 1 - Meeting people and making small talk.

Conversation 1

Dave: If you'd like to hang your coat up, Jean-Luc. there's a rack in the corner.
Jean-Luc: Here?
Dave: Yeah
Dave: We'll just wait for Paul. He's making a cup of tea.
Francine: So no rain today, then?
Dave: Not at the moment. The weather forecast is for nice warm weather for the next couple of days anyway.
Francine: Oh, that's good.
Dave: So it makes a change from rain, doesn't it?
Francine: Yes.

Conversation 2

Baz: Hi folks
Stella; This is Baz
Janek Hi, Baz
Maria: Baz, hi. Nice to meet you. I'm Maria.
Baz: Hi.
Luke: Hi.
Maria: Hi Luke. How are you?
Luke: Very well, thanks. Yourself?
Maria: Good, thanks.
Luke: Good, good, good.
Maria: Luke, this is Janek.
Janek Hi, I am Janek.
Luke: Nice to meet you. How are you doing?
Janek I'm fine.
Luke: Right, have you started at all?
Stella; No. We were just talking about the traffic.
Maria: It was a pain getting here.
Luke: Oh, was it?
Maria: A lane had been closed off and nobody was doing anything about it.
Luke: Really?
Maria: We must have been waiting for half an hour
Luke: Oh, It's infuriating isn't it?
Maria: It sure is.
Janek Yes

Conversation 3

Helga: HI.
Gene: Thank you for your card.
Helga: Oh., happy new year!

Gene: I was thinking of including a family newsletter with my card but you know most of my news already. You know about our new grandson?

Helga: Yes, that's really wonderful. How old is he now?

Gene: Well, he's about three weeks old.

Helga: That's nice.

Audio Script Listening 2 - Making successful small talk.

Alan: How is your hotel?

Belinda: Fine

Alan: The flight was OK?

Belinda: Yes.

Alan: Did you get a taxi OK this morning?

Belinda: Yes.

Alan: The traffic is usually OK this time of day. Would you like some coffee?

Belinda: Yes, please.

Audio Script Listening 3 Example of successful small talk

Alan: How is your hotel?

Belinda: Fine, thanks, It's a bit noisy because it's in the centre, but it's quite convenient for sightseeing if I get a chance later.

Alan: Oh yes. You should visit the old town, and the restaurants are really good. Did you get a chance to go anywhere yesterday evening?

Belinda: No, the flight didn't arrive until really late.

Alan: Really! Was the flight OK?

Belinda: It was all right, but we were delayed because of bad weather in Frankfurt.

Alan: That's a pity. But at least you're here now, Did you get a taxi here OK this morning?

Belinda: Yes, the traffic wasn't too bad..

Alan: Would you like some coffee before we start?

Belinda: That would be lovely. Milk and no sugar please.

Culture - Relocation

Audio Script Listening 4 - Preparing to work abroad

Interviewer: How does the company prepare its employees for work abroad?

Bob Neidermire: We provide cultural training for the employee and the family, as well as some basic language training. Some of that can be done before or after the person is relocated depending on the situation and the timing. And obviously from a financial standpoint you have a basic expatriate package which covers the difference in housing costs or tax costs. The whole concept from a financial standpoint is to keep the employee as if they were living in their home country. So if there are any costs that are higher than what that person might have in their home country, the company pays for that. That is the general rule of the company.

Audio Script Listening 5 – The decision to relocate

Bob Neidermire: I think the number one challenge - and I'm speaking from experience - is family considerations. I think it's always easy for the employee to make a move to improve their career, but whether that person makes the move or is successful in it I think has a lot to do with whatever the family circumstances are. Whether the partner has a job somewhere they will be walking away from or what the ages of the children are and what the move will mean to them. Or if there are any health issues and so forth that might prevent someone from relocating. So I think these are the kind of things people look at before they make the decision to move abroad. I have lived for many years overseas and people have asked me the question, "How do you adapt to different cultures?" And I say, "The first thing you have to put in your mind is that you are a guest in your host country - of whatever country you are in. Whether you are living there or whether you are on business. And you have to be open to doing things differently. It may not be done in the same way in the culture you have moved from but it doesn't necessarily make it wrong, it's just different"

Audio Script Listening 6 – Coming back

Bob Neidermire: When I moved back to the USA after living in Japan and Singapore, I found it much more difficult than when I moved from the USA to Asia. And that was because of my personal work experience. By that I mean in Asia I was used to a management role, where I dealt with government officials. I dealt with every aspect of the business and was kind of the CEO of my company in that particular country. And I had to make decisions quickly. And then I went back to my own country and went from making decisions, even important decisions, in a relatively short period of time and came back to a corporate situation where time stood still; it took forever to move and get someone to make a decision on things.

Motivation

Audio Script Listening 7 – Creating a good work environment

Interviewer: So you've been named as one of the best companies in Europe to work for. Why do you think this is?

Pia Orskov: Well I think there are a number of reasons, but I think one of the main reasons is that people are very much involved in processes related to the job and the workplace and we seldom do anything until we have talked about it, and people are involved in it at all levels in our organization. Also we have a very high degree of information and dialogue with people. For example, we have staff meetings every day.

Interviewer: Oh right.

Pia Orskov: ... where top management and employees share information about business and everyday life. So that's where people really have a possibility to hear thoughts and ideas from everybody who's involved.

Interviewer: And so do you think that this information sharing is the most important way of making a company successful and making people work together well as a team?

Pia Orskov: I think it's a very important thing to do and it's something that people here attach very high importance to when they talk about their workplace because usually companies send emails around and do things like that rather than speak face-to-face.

Interviewer: Yes

Pia Orskov: But we find it very important to look at each other every day and share our thoughts and missions and practical things too.

Interviewer: Yeah, I think a lot of companies pay lip service to this, they say they do it, but it's quite unusual, isn't it, to find companies that really do take this sort of team-building and meeting face-to-face very seriously?

Pia Orskov: Well, we take it very seriously actually. Everybody meets in their teams for a few minutes every morning and every Monday we have a team meeting that lasts maybe half an hour and there are other face-to-face meetings besides these, of course.

Audio Script Listening 8– Rewarding employees

Interviewer: And what about rewards and other ways of motivating staff? What systems of reward and motivation do you have for employees?

Pia Orskov: Well, we don't really have systems. I think it's part of the company spirit that we don't want systems! Rather we just do things in a way that just feels right and we don't put in systems, and we don't put people in systems and boxes. But, of course we want to reward a special effort or a special result, but usually we do it as a group and seldom just as one person. We think it's important to have a 'we' spirit instead of a 'me' spirit.

Interviewer: OK.

Pia Orskov: So at staff meetings we celebrate and applaud a good effort or good result of a group or a team, and as a company we reward all the employees when we reach a certain goal

Interviewer: Oh, right.

Pia Orskov: For example, we might pay for everyone to go for a meal or get a few boxes of chocolates for everyone, or perhaps put an extra amount of money on the next month's pay cheque or something like that, but that would be for everyone when we reach something together.

Interviewer: Right, so everything shared amongst the people involved. Do you think this is the main way or are there other ways in which you think your employees are treated better than they are in other companies?

Pia Orskov: Well, I think that the number one reason is that we see people as whole people and try to treat everyone as a special person with personal needs depending on where in life they are.

Interviewer: Right.

Pia Orskov: So things like work hours and skills and dreams are discussed several times a year with everyone, and also we listen a lot and we act when we've finished listening.

Interviewer: Right! That's the most important part, isn't it?

Pia Orskov: Yes, but er.. also I think the positive spirit we have is very important, it's a kind of a family spirit, and we take care of each other and we give everyone the possibility of modeling a dream job and also give career possibilities if that's what they are looking for.

Audio Script Listening 9 – Developing listening skills

Interviewer: Do people ever abuse the system at all, though? I mean, do people ever take advantage of this attitude to work or have you ever had problems with that?

Pia Orskov: Well, I think that our way of seeing people is based on trust and of course you can always abuse that. But I think employees are very focused on keeping it that way and not abusing it. Because if we find that people abuse it, we'll just stop having these good things and nobody wants that to stop.

Interviewer: No, of course not.

Pia Orskov: But if we see people abusing the system, we take action and give them warning. We have three important rules that you have to keep: the first one is, don't talk behind anyone's back, the next one is, don't talk badly about our company, go to the right person instead, and the third one is, don't steal, and this means don't steal time, money or products. And that's something we look very hard at, but we very, very rarely find that people abuse those rules.

Interviewer: OK

Pia Orskov: But we try not to have too many rules so it's easy to follow those rules we have.

Interviewer: Well, yes because, like you said, everyone's an individual so you have to be flexible to a certain extent don't you, but obviously there have to be a few rules in place too?

Pia Orskov: Exactly.

Interviewer: If I asked one of your employees why they like working for your company, what do you think they would say? What do you think they would like most about working for this company?

Pia Orskov: Well, actually, it has to do with pride in the company and being proud of their own contribution to our success.

Interviewer: Right.

Pia Orskov: Of course we ask people every now and then what it is that they find attractive about the workplace, and many people say, "I am so proud of the company, I'm proud of what I can do and I feel that *I'm* important and the company couldn't do it without *me*. And that's very important, I think, and that's why we are considered one of Europe's best workplaces. And also the positive spirit, the family-like spirit - it's something people dream about having in their work life.

Human Resource Management

Audio Script Listening 10– Retaining staff

Ursula Knorr: One way to retain staff is to give people challenging tasks - that way they always feel that they can develop themselves, and when we have our executive seminars for people and management level, some people just say, you know, "we can't always offer our employees the employment opportunities they need". And companies are quite aware of that and a new trend that has grown out of this is talent alliances. For example, Google and Proctor & Gamble work closely together now, and when they can't offer their employees a new challenging position internally, they work with their partner and they send out this employee for two, three years to the other organization where they can actually be developed and then they come back.

Another important development in retaining staff is that companies have started to talk much more about individual- and life-cycle oriented HR management, and the needs of employees change over time and over their life cycle. I mean, the young recruit from university has different needs to a parent of young children or someone whose children have left home. HR management has realized this in recent years and become much more individualized.

Audio Script Listening 11– Employer branding

Ursula Knorr: Well, employer branding is saying what makes our company attractive. Not what makes our product attractive, but what makes our company attractive as a place of work. And obviously it's very closely linked to product branding because, for example, if you think of Porsche or Rolls Royce you think oh wow, great car, so it must be a great place to work. Whereas if you hear "the cement industry", you think of cement as something that is quite boring, but if you work in a boring industry, you still have to make things attractive so that you get talented employees. I mean, it's not lying about how great it is, because this is the first thing that will fail when someone is on board. Employees who are already there will say "Oh look what they are doing in their branding campaign, that's not really the way we are". So the first thing is to find out who you really are and what makes you attractive, what the big cultural things are that make it so unique, and then transfer that message to the job market. However, many small companies in Switzerland and Germany can't really afford very expensive branding campaigns, so what they can do is ask themselves "what makes it unique to work for us compared with the big companies?" But they have to make it interesting for potential candidates.

Audio Script Listening 12 - Job interview at a hotel

Interviewer: So what's your interest in the industry? Why are you attracted to a hotel career?

Interviewee: I've chosen to graduate in Hotel and Catering Management. It's mainly because I think that this course is quite practical and useful and I also know that the hotel industry in this country, the service industry, especially for the hotel industry is going to be a booming industry. There are numerous hotels around the airport and I think that to choose a career in the hotel industry will be a career which has good prospects.

Interviewer: That's correct.

Interviewee: And I also want to choose some kind of career that is service-oriented, which has direct contact with the guest – I can learn interpersonal skills, communication skills and learn how to cooperate with other people. I think that's quite important.

Interviewer: Ok, good. What do you think would be your strong points, your strengths?

Interviewee: I'm enthusiastic. I'm always willing to help ...

Interviewer: OK.

Interviewee: ... and I'm happy to take on numerous responsibilities at any time. I always try my best to complete all tasks up to standard and I'm friendly and willing to help.

Interviewer: How would you handle, for example, a very angry guest at 7 o'clock in the morning who has just come off an 11 hour flight, and has found out that his room won't be ready until 1 o'clock?

Interviewee: I think, firstly, I would calm the guest down or invite him to a private place, because I wouldn't want other guests to hear him complaining, and after that I would listen to his story about what happened so that I have a general idea about his situation. Then, if I could, I would try some methods to calm him down or compensate him for what he has encountered, and after that I would ask the staff involved to investigate what really happened - decide whose mistake it was.

Interviewer: OK. So what position do you see yourself having in five years time?

Interviewee: As I mentioned before, I'm interested in the front office...um so maybe...

Interviewer: Yes. Mm ...

Interviewee: I think in five years time I would like to be the assistant manager ... that is my goal.

Audio Script Listening 13 - Talking about your weaknesses

Candidate 1

Interviewer: So have you ever looked at yourself, at your weaknesses?

Interviewee: Weaknesses?

Interviewer: Rather than your strengths.

Interviewee: Maybe... actually ... sometimes I lack confidence.

Interviewer: Mm...

Interviewee: Maybe I ... when I need to make a decision I need to get support from others.

Candidate 2

Interviewer: Right, good, that's great. What would you say your strengths and weaknesses are?

Interviewee: Strengths and weaknesses? As I mentioned I'm very serious about my work – that's my strength, but it means I always put pressure on my workmates and colleagues, which some people might think is a weakness-

Interviewer: OK. When you say you put pressure on them, what kind of pressure do you apply? Pressure to work harder or pressure to work faster?

Interviewee: I ask them to do their work on time. It must be on time.

Audio Script Listening 14– Questions for the interviewer

Candidate 1

Interviewer: Do you have any questions you would like to ask me, anything you would like to know?

Interviewee: I would like to ask if I will have the opportunity to work in the back of the house, like in the Human Resources Department?

Interviewer: I'm afraid it doesn't say this in the advertisement. I'd put you in the front office, or in food and beverage, we would not put you in an administration departments such as Human Resources because we would like the trainees to concentrate more on the operations side , if you like. Any other questions that you would like to ask me?

Interviewee: I would like to know what the hotel's attitude or your attitude is towards the trainees? What expectations do you have of the trainees?

Interviewer: OK. Now what we expect from the trainee is very basic. Well, if you are supposed to report for duty, then we expect you to be there on time. OK, let's say your working hours are from nine to five thirty, then of course I would like you to report for duty prior to the working hour, let's say five or ten minutes at least.

Interviewee: OK.

Candidate 2

Interviewer: Do you have any questions for me about the work or areas that you really want to concentrate on?

Interviewee: I want to ask if I would have any chance to work as a bartender or do something in the bar.

Interviewer: OK, if you actually want to work as a bartender, we can refer you to Human Resources and they will get in contact with the Beverage Department, because in this hotel the Beverage Department is in charge of the bar and not the front of the house

Additional materials

Writing practice

A sample exam

Essay

On the basis of your personal experience as well as the arguments studied in this course, what do you think are essential elements of the future job you would like.

Group Email

You are visiting England on business next month. Since you will be passing through London, write an email to some London based customers suggesting a brief meeting while you are there.

Topics for practice reports

1. **Tourism opportunities** - Write a report to your colleagues to convince them why they should spend their next holiday in your country/city. Make recommendations about places to visit.
2. **Your career** - A Personnel Officer has just interviewed you for a job. Write her report about you, including your career, your abilities and achievements.
3. **Market report** – write a report analyzing recent changes in the market for a product.
4. **'Hot' topics from your country** - Write a report to your colleagues that describes an economic/political/social/environmental topic that has been talked about recently in your country.
5. **Traffic** – Write a report to the Transport Minister of your country suggesting radical new measures for controlling traffic in the capital city.

Correspondence

This additional material contains a lot more information on correspondence than you will need for this exam - but some of it might be useful to you, and it will help you to develop your fluency in letter/email writing.

Writing An Effective Business Letter

How to write a perfect professional email in English in 6 steps

How to Write Clear and Professional Emails

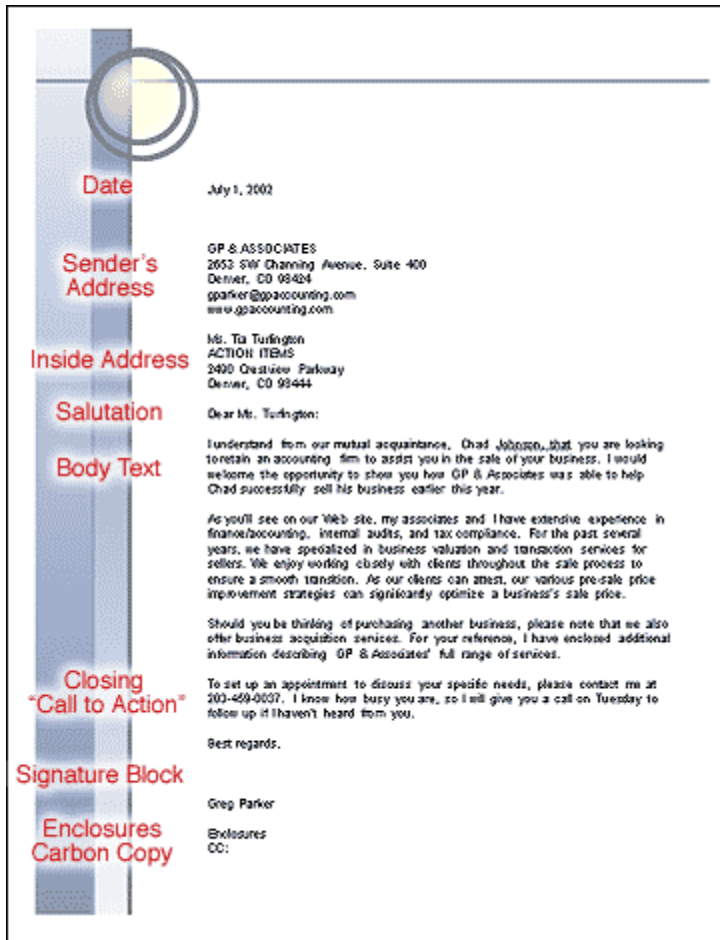
Business Email Writing in English for language students

Business Email Writing in English for language students

10 Things NOT to Tell Your Email Readers

Writing An Effective Business Letter

Although E-mail is a quick and convenient way to communicate daily business messages, the business letter is still used to convey important information. A carefully crafted letter can be a powerful communication tool. To make sure you are writing the most professional and effective letter possible, use the business letter format and template below and follow these basic business letter-writing.



Business Letter Template Fields:

Date: Use month, day, year format, e.g., March 3, 2012 or 3 March 2012

Sender's Address: It is a good idea to include sender's email and url, if available. Don't include this information if it's already incorporated into the letterhead design. This will allow customers to find your small business more quickly.

Inside Address: Use full name. Mr./Ms. is optional

Salutation: Be sure to use a colon at the end of the name, not a comma as in personal letters

Body Text: State why you are writing. Establish any connection/mutual relationship up front. Outline the solution, providing proof in the way of examples and expert opinions. Group related information into paragraphs

Closing "Call to Action": State what the reader needs to do and what you will do to follow up

Signature Block: Sign your letter in blue or black ink

Enclosures: Use if you have an enclosure

Carbon Copy: Use if you are sending a copy to additional person(s)

Use a professional tone.

Save casual, chatty language for email - your printed business letter should be friendly but more professional.

Write clearly.

State your point early in your letter. To avoid any miscommunications, use straightforward, concise language. Skip the industry jargon and instead choose lively, active words to hold your reader's attention.

Organize your information logically: Group related information into separate paragraphs. In a long, information-packed letter, consider organizing information into sections with subheads. You may want to highlight key words to make them "pop".

Be persuasive.

Establish a positive relationship with your reader right away. If you have a connection to the reader - you've met before or have a mutual colleague, for example - mention it in your introductory paragraph. Whether you think your reader will agree with the point of your letter or not, it is important to find common ground and build your case from there.

Understand your reader well enough to anticipate how he or she will react when reading your letter. Address his or her needs or wishes, or a specific problem, and then outline your solution. Provide proof in the way of examples and/or expert opinions to back up your point. Make sure to maintain a friendly tone.

Conclude your letter with a "call to action." State clearly what your reader needs to do or believe to achieve the desired solution and then state what you, the writer, intend to do next to follow up.

Proofread your letter!

All your careful crafting and printing can't cover up spelling or punctuation errors, which leave a lasting negative impression.

La locuzione **Uniform Resource Locator** (in acronimo **URL**), nella terminologia delle [telecomunicazioni](#) e dell'[informatica](#), è una sequenza di caratteri che identifica univocamente l'[indirizzo](#) di una [risorsa](#) in [Internet](#), tipicamente presente su un [host server](#), come ad esempio un [documento](#), un'[immagine](#), un [video](#), rendendola accessibile ad un [client](#) che ne faccia richiesta attraverso l'utilizzo di un [web browser](#).

How to write a perfect professional email in English in 6 steps

As a form of business communication, Email has many advantages. You don't have to be available at the same time as the person you are communicating with. As a result, it allows us to keep projects moving when our co-workers are unavailable or on the other side of the world. The problem is that we are drowning in emails. It has been calculated that the average person using email for business receives and sends over 100 emails a day. On top of that, emails are all too easily misunderstood. A recent study by Sendmail found that 64% of people have sent or received an email that caused unintended anger or confusion. Because of the volume of emails we send and receive, and because emails are often misinterpreted, it's important to write emails clearly and concisely.

For most of us, email is the most common form of business communication, so it's important to get it right. Although emails usually aren't as formal as letters, they still need to be professional to present a good image of you and your company.

How to write a formal email

Follow these six simple steps to make sure your English emails are perfectly professional.

1. Begin with a greeting and (if possible) a compliment.
2. Thank the recipient
3. State your purpose
4. Call to action
5. Add your closing remarks
6. End with a closing

1. Begin with a greeting

Always open your email with a greeting, such as **“Dear Lillian”**. If your relationship with the reader is formal, use their family name (eg. **“Dear Mrs. Price”**). If the relationship is more casual, you can simply say, **“Hi Kelly”**. If you don't know the name of the person you are writing to, use: **“To whom it may concern”** or **“Dear Sir/Madam”**.

Compliment or Plesantry. When you're emailing someone for the first time, then a compliment makes an excellent opener. A well-written compliment can also serve as an introduction. For example:

- "I enjoyed your presentation about [topic] on [date]."
- "I found your blog post on [topic] really helpful."
- "It was good to meet you at [event]."

If you're writing to someone you know, then use a pleasantry instead. A pleasantry is typically a variation on "I hope you're well." Alternatively, you can say thank you for something they've helped you with or for information they sent in a previous email.

2. Thank the recipient

If you are replying to a client's inquiry, you should begin with a line of thanks. 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”**. Thanking the reader puts him or her at ease, and it will make you appear more polite.

3. 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 ...”**, **“I am writing in reference to ...”**, "I'm emailing to ask about..." or "I wondered if you could help with..."

Make your purpose clear early on in the email, and then move into the main text of your email.

4. A call to action.

After you've explained your reason for emailing, don't assume the recipient will know what to do. Provide specific instructions. For example:

- "Could you send me those files by Thursday?"
- "Could you write that up in the next two weeks?"
- "Please write to James about this, and let me know when you've done so."

Structuring your request as a question encourages the recipient to reply. Alternatively, you can use the line "let me know when you've done that" or "let me know if that's okay with you."

Sign-off. This could be "Best Wishes," "Kind Regards," "All the Best," or "Thanks." You should always follow your sign-off with your name.

5. Add your closing remarks

Before you end your email, you should include a closing line. This has the dual purpose of reiterating your call to action, and of making the recipient feel good. It's polite to thank your reader one more time and add some polite closing remarks. You might start with **"Thank you for your patience and cooperation"** "Thank you for all your help with this." or **"Thank you for your consideration"** and then follow up with, **"If you have any questions or concerns, don't hesitate to let me know"** and **"I look forward to hearing from you"**. "I'm looking forward to hearing what you think." or an informal "Does that sound good?"

6. End with a closure

The last step is to include an appropriate closure with your name. **"Best regards"**, **"Sincerely"**, and **"Thank you"** are all professional. Avoid closings such as **"Best wishes"** **"Thanks."** or **"Cheers"** unless you are good friends with the reader. You should always follow your sign-off with your name.

Finally, before you hit the send button, review and spell check your email one more time to make sure it's truly perfect! Careful attention to grammar, spelling and punctuation will help present a professional image of yourself and your company

How to Write Clear and Professional Emails

Business Email Writing in English for language students

If you are interested, here are some more email suggestions.

How to Write Clear and Professional Emails

Know Your Purpose

Clear emails always have a clear purpose.

Whenever you sit down to write an email, take a few seconds to ask yourself: "Why am I sending this? What do I need from the recipient?"

If you can't answer these questions, then you shouldn't be sending an email. Writing emails without knowing what you need wastes your time and the recipient's time and means you'll struggle to express yourself clearly and concisely.

This is also a good time to ask yourself: "Is this email really necessary?" Again, only sending emails that are absolutely necessary shows respect for the person you're emailing.

Use the "One Thing" Rule

Emails are not the same as business meetings. With business meetings, the more agenda items you work through, the more productive the meeting.

With emails, the opposite is true. The *less* you include in your emails, the better.

That's why it's a good idea to practice the "one thing" rule. Make each email you send about one thing only.

If you need to communicate about another project, write another email.

Practice Empathy

Empathy is the ability to see the world through the eyes of other people. When you do this, you understand their thoughts and feelings.

When you write emails, think about your words from the reader's point of view. With everything you write, ask yourself:

- How would I interpret this sentence, as someone reading it?
- How would this make me feel if I received it?

Thinking of other people will transform the way they respond to you.

Here's an empathetic way of looking at the world to help you get started. Most people:

- Are busy. They don't have time to guess what you want, and they'd like to be able to read and respond to your email quickly.
- Appreciate a compliment. If you can say something positive about them or their work, do so. Your words won't be wasted.
- Like to be thanked. If the recipient has helped you in any way, remember to say thank you. You should do this even when it's their job to help you.

Keep Introductions Brief

When you're emailing someone for the first time, you need to let the recipient know who you are. You can usually do this in one sentence. For example: "It was great to meet you at [X event]."

One way of keeping introductions brief is to write them like you're meeting face-to-face. You wouldn't go off into a five-minute monologue when meeting someone in person. So don't do it in an email.

If you are not sure whether an introduction is needed because you've contacted the recipient before, but you're not sure if they'll remember you, you can leave your credentials in your email signature. This is ideal because:

- It keeps the main email body as short as possible.

- It avoids misunderstandings. Re-introducing yourself to someone who already knows you comes across as rude. If they are not sure whether they know you, they can check your signature.

Your signature should include:

- Your name.
- Your job title.
- A link to your website.

Limit Yourself to Five Sentences

According to Entrepreneur Guy Kawasaki: “*Less than five sentences is often abrupt and rude, more than five sentences wastes time*”.

It won't always be possible to keep an email to five sentences, but in most cases, five sentences are sufficient. If you try to follow the rule, you'll find yourself writing emails more quickly. You'll also get more replies.

In every email you write, you should use enough sentences to say what you need and no more.

Use Short Words, Sentences, and Paragraphs

As people want to read emails quickly, keep your sentences short and clear. 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.

In 1946, George Orwell advised writers to:

Never use a long word where a short one will do.

This advice is especially relevant when writing emails today. Short words show respect for your reader. By using short words, you've done the hard work of making your message easy to understand.

The same is true of short sentences and paragraphs. Avoid writing big blocks of text if you want your email to be clear and easily understood. Again a George Orwell writing rule:

If it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out.

Once you've followed your standard email structure, trim every sentence down to be as short as it can be.

Use the Active Voice

George Orwell again:

Never use the passive where you can use the active.

In writing, there are two kinds of voices, active and passive.

Here's a sentence in the active voice:

I throw the ball.

And here's the same sentence in the passive voice:

The ball is thrown [by me].

The active voice is easier to read. It also encourages *action* and *responsibility*. That's because in the active voice, sentences focus on the person taking action. In the passive voice, sentences focus on the object that's being acted upon. In the passive voice, it can appear that things happen by themselves. In the active voice, things only happen when people take action.

Proofread Your Email

If I had more time, I would have written you a shorter letter.

Blaise Pascal

In other words, writing short emails can be harder work than writing long emails.

Part of the hard work of writing short emails is careful proofreading. Read your email aloud to yourself, checking for spelling and grammar mistakes. Ask yourself:

- Is my request clear?
- Could there be any misunderstandings?
- How would this sound if I were the recipient?

Delete any unnecessary words, sentences, and paragraphs as you proofread.

Remember, You're Not Fifteen Anymore

Don't use emoticons, chat abbreviations (such as LOL), or colorful fonts and backgrounds. While these might have been integral to your emails when you were a teenager, they are rarely appropriate in a professional context.

The only time it is appropriate to use emoticons or chat abbreviations is when you're mirroring the email language of the person you're writing to.

Write Like You Speak

Email is a less formal way of communicating than writing a letter or even making a phone call. Writing as you speak makes you come across as personable and friendly. It also helps you to keep your emails short. After all, few of us speak in extended paragraphs.

Additionally, make sure your emails reflect who you are in the real world. If you wouldn't say something to a person's face, don't say it in an email. And remember to be polite. "Please" and "Thank you" go a long way.

Business Email Writing in English for language students

Most of us in the business world use emails as the main, and in some cases the only, means of written communication. While most of us are happy to write informal emails to friends that might have grammatical mistakes in them, the same is not true when writing to colleagues and clients with whom we want to make a good impression, or where we need to be a bit more careful or more diplomatic than usual.

A useful link with Formal and Informal Email Phrases – from Greetings to Closing Phrases:

<http://www.myenglishteacher.eu/blog/formal-and-informal-email-phrases/>

Here are some **general tips**

1. Subject Line

Always have a subject line that summarises briefly and clearly the contents of the message

2. Simplified Sentences

Don't make your email look overcrowded by trying to use too many technical terms or long words. The most common mistake that many students make is to translate directly from their own language. This can often lead to confusing sentences. A popular rule that you could adapt is to use the KISS Test – Keep It Short and Simple.

3. Think of who your reader is going to be

Is it a colleague, a client or your boss? Should the email be informal or formal? Most business emails these days have a neutral tone. Note the difference between Informal and Formal:

Informal – *Thanks for emailing me on 15th February*

Formal – *Thank you for your email dated 15th February*

Informal – *Sorry, I can't make it.*

Formal – *I am afraid I will not be able to attend*

Informal – *Can you...?*

Formal – *I was wondering if you could....?*

Some emails to colleagues can be informal if you have a long working relationship and know them well. This is the style that is closest to speech, so there are often everyday words and conversational expressions that can be used. For instance, '*Don't forget*', '*Catch you later*', '*Cheers*'.

The reader may also accept or overlook minor grammatical errors in informal emails. However, if the email is going to a client or senior colleague, bad grammar and an over-friendly writing style will most probably not be acceptable.

4. Be very careful of capital letters, punctuation, spelling and basic grammar

While mistakes with these can be tolerated in informal emails, they are very important in business emails as they are a big part of the image you create. Give yourself time to edit what you've written before you push that Send button.

In today's busy world, it's very easy to send out many emails without checking them thoroughly: as an English learner, you should make a conscious effort to double check before sending.

5. Think about how direct or indirect you want to be

In some cultures, it is common practice to be very direct in email correspondence. However, this can cause a problem if you're writing to someone in another country and in a language that is not your mother tongue. They might find your directness rude and possibly offensive.

Consider these:

Direct – *I need this in half an hour.*

Indirect and polite – *Would it be possible to have this in half an hour?*

Direct – *There will be a delay*

Indirect – *I'm afraid there may be a slight delay.*

Direct – *It's a bad idea*

Indirect – *To be honest, I'm not sure if that would be a good idea.*

By adjusting your tone, you are more likely to get a positive response from your reader.

Look at these words: *helpful, good question, agreed, together, useful, I will do my best, mutual, opportunity.*

Now look at these: *busy, crisis, failure, forget it, I can't, it's impossible, waste, hard.*

The words you use show your attitude to life, so choose your words wisely.

7. Get feedback

Try and get some feedback on the emails that you write. This could be from your English Teacher or someone you know whose English is at a good level.

Study the English in any emails you receive. If it is a well-written email, look carefully at some of the language used. Start your own phrase book by collecting a bank of phrases from what you hear or read all around you; they may be useful in the future.

10 Things NOT to Tell Your Email Readers

Sometimes people say things in email that would be better left unsaid. This list of 10 examples will alert you to statements that can weaken your messages and your business relationships.

1. “My manager told me to handle it this way, but I’m not sure he knows what he is talking about.”

Why it’s bad: Telling customers or other individuals that you disagree with your manager diminishes your manager—and the entire company. It suggests the company has bad management and bad decision makers. Besides that, the statement presents you as tactless and arrogant. Criticizing your company’s policies sends the same negative message.

Instead, inspire confidence: “According to my manager, this is the best way to handle your situation.”

2. “I would like to have the contract for you this week, but our legal department takes forever to approve things.”

Why it’s bad: Similar to Number 1, criticizing a department like legal, information technology, or human resources belittles the company. For instance, if legal takes “forever,” it is either understaffed, incompetent, or uncooperative rather than nimble, competent, and responsive. Why would someone want to deal with an organization that has mediocre teams?

Instead, express support: “I will be sure this contract gets to you as soon as possible.”

3. “I am new on the job, and I’m not sure what I am doing yet.”

Why it’s bad: Although admitting inexperience can inspire empathy, it can also diminish your readers’ regard for your company and you. It can make readers wonder why your company did not train you before having you do the job, or why you did not learn from your training.

Instead, show care and common sense: “Let me confirm the best approach before we move forward.”

4. “My assistant does the check requests, and she is out on vacation until the 15th. Then Accounts Payable usually takes a week to cut a check.”

Why it’s bad: Details about your internal processes, especially when processes plod along not focused on customers’ or others’ needs, do nothing to satisfy readers. In fact, they make readers doubt your company’s efficiency: Can’t anyone besides your assistant complete a check request? Why does it take a week to cut a check? Justifying a delay by explaining that you are very busy at a particular time of year does not reassure readers either. It makes them wonder why you could not plan and staff for a predictably busy time.

Instead, accept responsibility: “I will see that your check is processed as quickly as possible.”

5. “I would have had this information for you sooner, but I had a colonoscopy, and it seems to have revealed some problems I was not aware of.”

Why it’s bad: Personal information can embarrass readers and make them feel awkward about how and whether they should respond. Unless you have a close relationship with your readers, personal details such as health concerns, legal problems, and small or grown children’s struggles do not belong in your communications. The information might make readers wonder whether you are able to give their needs sufficient attention.

Instead, be discreet: “Here is the information you requested. I am sorry for the slight delay.”

6. “You could’ve gotten free tickets if you had let me know yesterday, but we gave them all away.”

Why it’s bad: “Could’ve” and “Should’ve” statements make readers feel bad. And the cold words on the screen can suggest that you enjoy letting people know about their lost opportunity. There is no point in sharing information that readers cannot benefit from.

Instead, say nothing or communicate empathy: “I wish I had free tickets for you.”

7. “Your email ended ‘Bet wishes’—what’s that supposed to mean?”

Why it’s bad: Pointing out someone’s typo, inconsequential error, or minor imperfection wins no friends. Your remark may come across as mean spirited and condescending. Such behavior is like pointing out a pimple on someone’s face. There’s not much he or she can do about it. If you are a supervisor who is coaching an employee on eliminating errors, that’s a different story. But you would communicate about the error without sarcasm.

Instead, be tactful and ignore the error.

8. “Why did you ask for Friday off when you know I can’t give it to you?”

Why it’s bad: It’s impossible to ask such a question in email without endangering a relationship. Readers appreciate neither the assumption that they know certain things nor the questioning of their motives.

Instead, respond without suspicion: “I am sorry that taking Friday off is impossible. It’s the start of inventory.” (Provide the appropriate reason.)

9. “You probably don’t need this information, but” (The writer continues with the information.)

Why it’s bad: Readers get bogged down in information they do not need. That means they will not be able to focus on what they do need, and you won’t get the results you seek.

Instead, offer to provide more information: “If you need more information, just let me know.”

10. “I will have this information for you by the end of the day.”

Why it’s bad—sometimes: The statement is bad if you will struggle to meet that deadline and may even miss it. Making yourself struggle and potentially missing the deadline are both bad—if the other person never communicated a required time limit.

Instead, ask about the reader’s degree of urgency: “I will be happy to get this information. When do you need it?”

What would you add to this list?

Here are three other blog posts about potentially damaging email content:

"Who Should Save Face--You or Your Reader?"

"10 Questions to Flag Sensitive Situations"

"Caution: Read the Thread Before You Send"

Communicative task information

Communicative task 1A Solving repatriation problems.

Group A: the repatriated manager

Six weeks ago you returned to your home country after working for three years in another branch of your company in another continent. You had a holiday for three weeks and have now been back working in head office for another three weeks. You are having problems and you want to ask the Human Resource manager for help.

You are still living a hotel which the company is paying for. Your permanent accommodation will not be ready for another three months and your furniture and other goods have not arrived from the other country yet. You are fed up with living in another country.

Your colleagues at work are not interested in the country where you have been living. This surprises you because you think it is interesting and it is very important for the future of the company that there is more understanding between the different global branches.

In your job abroad you had a lot of responsibility and you could make decisions quickly. This job at head office feels very slow and unexciting by comparison. You are bored by work and how slow everything seems.

Communicative task 3A – Business emails

Student A

Freelance business trainer

You are a freelance business trainer. You are going to write an email to Student B in the Human Resources Department of Alpha Inc.

- You did some training for managers at Alpha Inc 3 months ago. You usually do a series of training sessions with them during the year, but you have not heard from them recently.
- You usually have good feedback and want to know what their plans are.
- You know the person in the HR department quite well. Both of you like films and you regularly talk about this topic.

Communicative task 4A - Writing a group email to the staff of your company

Group A

You work in the logistics department of a big company. The head of the department has asked you to organize the summer barbecue for the staff and their partners to be held on Friday 23rd June. You have made all the arrangements and now need to send an email to everyone in the department. Your email should contain the following information:

- Barbecue to begin at 4pm
- Staff can bring partners/families
- Food provided for the barbecue - but staff members can bring their favourite salads/desserts
- Games/entertainment for the children has been arranged
- Meet in space behind the car park

As you write your email, remember to consider the questions Who? What? Why?

Communicative task 1B Solving repatriation problems.

You are the Human Resource manager of the head office of the company. The colleague who is coming to talk to you has just returned from abroad. They are having some problems getting used to life in their own country again and in the head office. You have made some notes about the situation.

- This colleague arrives for work in casual clothes and the dress code at head office is quite formal.
- The colleague does not work the usual working hours. Although the company operates a system of flexitime, managers are expected to be in the office between 10.00 am and 3 pm. The repatriated colleague does not keep to this.
- The colleague often says things like , “Well, in my old job we always did it this way”. The old job and way of life seems much better than here.
- You want to use this person’s experience abroad to help teach other colleagues about different cultures. The other workers are not interested. How can you make them interested?

Communicative task 3B – Business emails

Student B

Human Resource manager

- You work for Alpha Inc. in the Human Resources Department. You are going to write an email to Student C who works for AB Coaching a company which specializes in business coaching.

- You are looking for a new company to provide business training throughout the year
- Until recently you used a freelancer who trained groups of managers. The feedback was good , but you have decided to use a company which provides individual training.
- In the email you should explain what you want and also find out about prices and details of courses.

Communicative task 4B - Writing a group email to the staff of your company

Group B

Writing a group email to the staff of your company

You work in the logistics department of a big company. The head of the department has asked you to organize an important department meeting on Friday 23rd June. You have made all the arrangements to hold the meeting from 2pm until 5pm and need to write an email to all the staff.

Your email should contain the following information:

- The purpose of the meeting is to update all the staff about the latest project developments of the four different teams
- All 4 teams should prepare a five minute presentation to update all members of the department
- Time for questions and discussion after
- Meeting venue - the Conference Room on 1st floor
- Refreshments provided

As you write your email, remember to consider the questions Who? What? Why?

Communicative task 3C – Business emails

Student C

Business Training company manager

You work for AB Coaching, a company which organizes business training courses for individual managers. You are going to write to Student A who is a freelance business trainer

- Your company wants to employ more business trainers as it is expanding
- You do not know Student A, but a colleague worked with him at another company.
- In the email ask about the kind of courses Student A runs, his/her availability, and the prices they charge.