

ING Business Writing Course Summary

Follow the instructions to check how much you have understood from the course – but don't take it too seriously!

At the end you will get the chance to offer feedback on the course you have finished.

Your teacher will also offer comments to your HR department on your performance during the course.

The Difference Between Email and Snail Mail

<u>Email</u>	<u>Snail mail</u>

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<u>Email</u>	<u>Snail mail</u>
digital	paper
fast	slow
concise	long
written quickly	written slowly
easily CC'd	not easily CC'd
cheap (hidden cost)	expensive
more conversational	formal
conventions and style less important	conventions and style important

POINTS TO CONSIDER

Discuss the following statements with a partner.

“Business emails are easy to write”

“A business email is really just a letter on a computer. It doesn’t need to be approached differently”

“Functionality is more important than language in business emails”

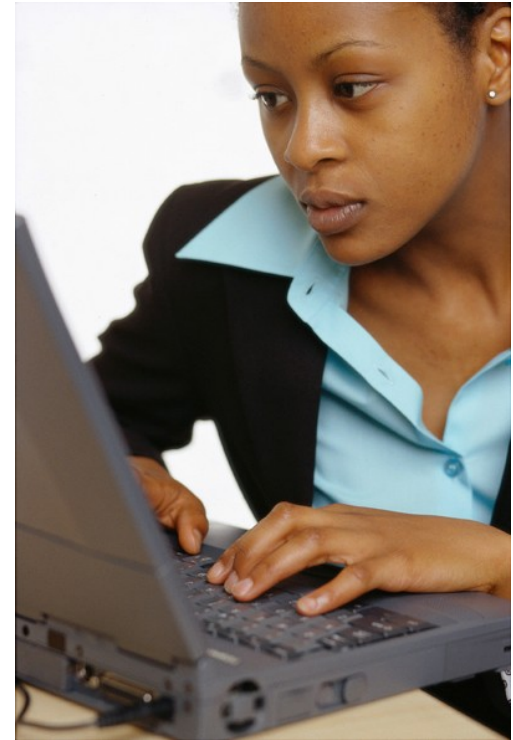


Questions to Ask Yourself

Before you send a business email always think about the following three questions:

1. Why am I writing this email?
2. Who am I sending this email to?
3. What makes a good business email?

Ask your partner why these questions are important when writing a business email.



Business Email Etiquette

These are the 5 main points of business email etiquette. Can you match the following headings with their respective paragraphs?

Be right

Be careful

Be short

Be proactive

Be grammatical

1.

Business email is designed to get a result: to communicate an important fact, or to get a response. You'll get that result better by getting to the point early, and keeping your message short.

2.

One feature that business communication has in common with other types of communication is standard grammar and syntax. Particularly when composing email, business people let their grammar and spelling become sloppy.

So keep your wits about you when writing email. Remember that anyone can read an email message you write, from the CEO on down, so becoming lazy with grammar and spelling may not put forward the impression you want.



3.

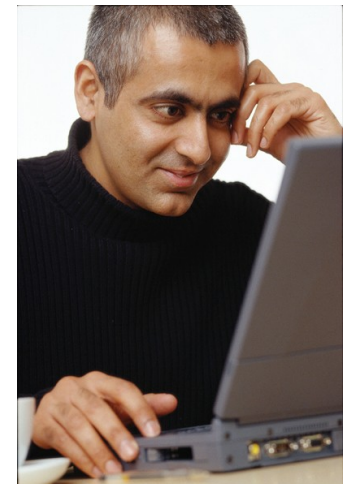
People won't care about the meeting you are throwing about the XYZ product if the product's real name is ABC. They may remember your mistake though. In many areas of writing email (as in much business writing) you are practising persuasion--asking someone to do something. If your reader doesn't trust your knowledge or your good judgement, you'll have more trouble "getting your way."

4.

Since email is easy to reply to, be proactive in asking the receiver for a response. Once you know the answer, you can make your business plans accordingly. Wondering whether someone really did get your email after all is worrying at best.

5.

Email may seem a more casual form of communication than an old-fashioned typed business letter. It has the features of immediacy, ready availability, ease of use. Remember that email has permanence too. However, travelling through dozens or perhaps hundreds of computers on its way to its destination, email is not quite so private. So choose your words and topics with the knowledge that more than just a friend could be reading it.



Do's and Don'ts

Do's

Don'ts

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Do's

- Use active verbs: I will, we will, we have, you can, you should.
- Make your email more conversational.
- Write in full sentences.
'Here's the information you asked for' rather than 'Information follows.'
- Use contractions.
- Keep it really short.
- Aim for a sentence length of not more than 15 words.
- Think creatively about your subject line.
- Sign off simply.

Don'ts

- Sign all emails with your first and last name.
- Respond spontaneously.
- Write as you would in a normal business letter - 'Dear Sir, I'm writing to let you know.'
- Use computer abbreviations, such as IOW and OTOH.
- Start your message in the subject field.
- Use unnecessary capitals.
- Get slangy.
- Forget to greet your correspondent.

Business Email Language

To inform	To request
Just to let you know... FYI Just to inform you that... Please be informed that...	Would you mind? Could you.... I wonder if you... I would really appreciate it if you
To apologise	To complain
Regrettably... I must apologise for.... Sorry. Please accept my apologies for...	I am unhappy with... I am very disappointed with... I am very dissatisfied with I must complain about....
To confirm	To suggest
Just to confirm I would like to make sure that... I would like to confirm that...	Might I suggest... Can I suggest that... How about.... Would you mind... Would it be okay if...
To give an alternative suggestion	Other
Could I make another suggestion? If not, then how about...	I have CCed it to.. Just to recap. BTW Best regards

‘Report Writing’

What kind of reports do/could you write?

e.g. debriefing, research, etc.

Who do/could you write your reports for?

e.g. internal, external, etc.

How do you write them?

e.g. preparation, etc.

Why do you write them?

e.g. to improve customer services

‘Sections’

Terms of Reference

Proceedings

Findings

Conclusions

Recommendations



‘Sections’

LAYOUT

all sections included and clearly labelled

signed and dated

easy to follow (numbered lists/spacing)

CONTENT

all information relevant

organised in logical order

clear reasons why sales are down

sensible conclusions and recommendations

LANGUAGE

no errors of grammar, spelling or punctuation

the language is clear and factual (appropriate for reports)



‘Language Focus’

Staff are reminded to keep doors closed at all times.

I recommend employing fewer staff.

It has been suggested we upgrade facilities.

I advise against expansion in the current market.

‘Styles’

“It was suggested that our maintenance contract could be changed.”

Is this an example of a formal or more informal sentence?

What language techniques are used to distinguish the two?



‘Styles’

- 1. Smoking is not allowed in public areas.**
- 2. It was suggested that the advertising campaign should be run for a six-month period.**
- 3. A different format might be considered for the annual sales account.**
- 4. It was agreed that the cleaning contract should be given to Smith Wax.**
- 5. The dam project has been delayed because of planning regulations.**

‘Making recommendations’

I recommend that the new scheme (should) be introduced.

I suggest that 10 workers (should) be made redundant and 10 others relocated.

It is my opinion that we (should) keep the current system.

I recommend that we (should) arrange for a staff training session on.....

It is suggested that we (should) open a new branch in Taegu.

‘Report Checklist’

Before writing:

- ***Objective?***
- ***Reader interest?***
- ***Background?***
- ***Structure?***
- ***Deadline?***
- ***Layout?***
- ***Organization?***



‘Report Checklist’

After writing:

- ***Concise and relevant?***
- ***Thoroughly checked?***
- ***Key recommendations?***
- ***Has someone given feedback?***



‘Reader-friendly writing - checklist’

Consistent and ample spacing

Clear headings and sub-headings

Single font with bold for focus

Short, focused sentences

Justified, indented text

Clear numbering system

