



English Language Support

Writing Emails and Letters

Emails to friends and colleagues are written briefly and use informal language as in a conversation. When writing emails and letters to companies and organizations, a more formal style is needed.

• Informal Emails

Start with one of the following:

- *Hi*
- *Hi* + given name*
- given name only
- no name or no greeting at all

If you do not know the person well, it is safer to be neutral: - *Dear* + given name
 Never write both given name & family name

End with one of the following:

- *Talk to you soon / See you soon / Catch you later*
- *Regards / Cheers* (Informal British English)
- *All the best*
- *Take care*
- *Love* (personal)

OR - just the first letter of your given name, i.e., *M* (informal)

*** given name is often referred to as first name and is NOT a person's family name**

- **Formal Emails:** If you are writing a formal email, use the same beginnings and endings as for formal letters, see next page.

Do's and Don'ts of Formal & Semiformal Email writing

From: <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/try/lesson-plans/email-writing>

Do's	Don'ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the subject line to describe what the email is about • Write the most important information first • Emails are a fast way of communication - use simple grammar & keep things simple. • Write short, easy to understand sentences • Use paragraphs made up of a few sentences to keep the email clear and easy to understand • Always remember to be polite – use please and thank you. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write “Hello” as the subject line • Write about things that are not related to the issue. Make sure you get to the point • Give personal information that you would not want everyone else to know • Use capital letters to write words, this is considered “shouting” • Use different fonts in the email • Use exclamation marks • Use short forms of words such as “cuz”, “u”, “urs” • Use smiles :) , they may come across as unprofessional

- **Informal Letters** (<http://www.sampleletters.in/informal-letters-template.html/>)

- Start with:** - *Dear* + given name
 - *Hi* + given name (used in very informal letters)
- Body:** - *It was nice to hear from you*
 - *It was great to see you / It was good seeing you*
 - *I am having a good holiday in... / I'm having a great time in...*
 - *Thanks for the...*
 - *Sorry I haven't written for so long / Sorry I haven't been in touch*
- End with:** - *Look forward to seeing you soon / Look forward to hearing from you soon.*
 - *Hope all is well.*
- Neutral:** - *Best wishes (from)*
 - *With best wishes,*
- Formal:** - *Yours,*
- Informal:** - Take it easy, / Take care,
 - *Love (from) / - Lots of love (from) / - All my love*
 - *XOXO* (indicates kisses and hugs, used especially when writing to a loved one)
- + Your given name (on the line below the ending)**

- **Formal Letters:** (Templates can be found at: <http://businessletterformat.org/>)

Start with one of the following:

- ***Dear Mr. / Ms* / Mrs.*** (*married female*) / ***Miss*** (*unmarried female*) / **+ family name**

* ***Ms*** (*female*) = ***Mr.*** (*male*) **and does not indicate marital status – this indicated gender equality**

- ***Dear Dr. / Professor*** + family name

- ***Dear Sir*** (used when you do not know a man's name)

- ***Dear Madam*** (used when you do not know a woman's name)

- ***Dear Sir or Madam*** (used when you do not know if you are writing to a man or woman)

- ***To whom it may concern*** (used when you do not know the person's name)

Body: - I am writing to ask whether / to say that...

- I am writing in reply to your advertisement...

- Please could you send me / I would appreciate it if you could send me... / I would be grateful if you could send me...

- I enclose my resume / a cheque for...

- Please find attached

End with one of the following: - ***Yours truly,*** (used in North American English)

- ***Sincerely,***

- ***Yours faithfully,*** (used in British English)

+ your full name on the next line

This handout was compiled by Monica Rivera, ELS Student Staff (April 2009)

Source: *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (2003.). Longman Pearson Education