UNIT 1

BASIC CONVENTIONS FOR LETTER AND EMAIL WRITING
1.1. LETTERS: LAYOUT AND STYLE

LAYOUT OF A BUSINESS LETTER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRINTED LETTERHEAD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Sender’s address)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receiver’s address</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Private and Confidential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attention Line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salutation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject heading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body of the letter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The opening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The main message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The complimentary close</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Signature

Per pro (p. p.)

Company position

Copies (c. c.) Enclosures (enc. or encl.)
**SENDER’S ADDRESS**
Not sender’s name.
Name of building or house, number of building and name of street, road or avenue.
Name of town or city and postcode.
Name of country.

Eg. Warwick House
54-59 Riverside St.
Cardiff CF1 1JW
UK

**REFERENCES**
They are quoted to indicate what the letter refers to (*your ref.*) and the correspondence to refer to when replying (*our ref.*). They may appear in figures or in letters.

Eg.
- 661/17 (661 may be the chronological number of the letter and 17 the number of the department)
- DS/MR (DS stands for Donald Sampson and MR for Mary Roig)

**DATE**
The month should not be written in figures as they can be confusing. In British English, they write the day first, but in American English they write the month first. Remember to use a capital letter for the month. You do not have to write *th, rd, nd or st* after the day.

Eg. 11. 1. 99

**RECEIVER’S ADDRESS**

-If you know the surname of the person:
  - Mr J. Smith (Mr… is used for a man)
  - Mrs M. Brown (Mrs… is used for a married woman)
  - Miss K. Jansen (Miss… is used for an unmarried woman)
  - Ms H. Bird (Ms… is used for both married or unmarried woman)
  - Messrs Carlton (Messrs… abbreviation for messieurs, is used for two or more men).
  - Esq is placed after the name. It’s the abbreviation for Esquire. E.g. Bruce Hill Esq (It’s old-fashioned)
  - Dr Johnson (Dr for Doctor)
  - Prof Smith (Prof for Professor)

-If you do not know the name of the person you are writing to, you may assume his/her title or position in the company.
  Eg. The Sales manager

You can address the letter to a department: Ex. The Sales Department or if you know nothing about the company or do not want to make any assumptions about the person or department your letter should go to the company itself: Eg. Soundsonic Ltd.

**Private and Confidential**
When the letter is intended only for the named recipient. It may appear on the envelope.
**Attention line**

*For the attention of the Production Manager*

It is an alternative to including the recipient’s name or position in the address.

**Salutations**

- Dear Sir (to a man whose name you do not know)
- Dear Sirs (to address a company)
- Dear Madam (to a woman single or married whose name you do not know)
- Dear Sir or Madam (to address a person you know neither the name nor the sex or to address a company).
- Dear Mr Smith (NOT Dear Mr John Smith) to a man when you know his surname.
- Dear Mrs Carlmann (to a married woman)
- Dear Miss Jansen (to an unmarried woman)
- Dear Ms Hollingsworth (to a married or unmarried woman)
- Gentlemen (in the US).
- Dear John or Dear Mary, to address to a friend or someone you know well.

**Notes:**

- Letters do not usually open with “Dear Mr John” or “Dear Mr John Smith”.
- Unless you know that a woman prefers to be known as “Miss” or “Mrs”, it is best to use “Ms”.

**Subject line (Re)**

This line provides a further reference. It saves introducing the subject in the first paragraph. It immediately draws attention to the topic of the letter and allows the writer to refer to it throughout the letter.

Eg. Application for post of typist
Re: Application for post of typist

**Body of the letter**

There are two ways of laying out business letters, block style or indented. The first one is the most useful because it is accepted everywhere.

**Complimentary closes**

If the letter begins *Dear Sir* It will close *Yours faithfully*

Dear Sirs
Dear Madam
Dear Sir or Madam

If the letter begins *Dear Mr Jordan* It will close *Yours sincerely*

Dear Mrs Robinson
Dear Miss Kenton
Dear Ms Peterson

If the letter begins *Dear John* It will close *Best wishes*

The Americans tend to close with *Yours truly or Truly Yours*
**Signature**
Always type your name after your handwritten signature.

Eg. Yours faithfully

(Miss) M. Brown

**Per pro (p. p.)**
It means *on behalf of*

**Company position**
When signing on behalf of your company it is useful to indicate your position in the firm in the signature.

**Copies (c.c.)**
c.c. is written usually at the end of the letter when copies are sent to people other than the named recipient.

**Enclosures (Enc. or Encl.)**
If there are any enclosures, eg. leaflets, prospectuses etc. with the letter, these may be mentioned in the body of the letter. But many firms write *Enc. or Encl.* at the bottom of the letter. If there are a number of documents, these are listed.
LETTER LAYOUT: BLOCK STYLE

The writer's and addressee's references
The addressee's name and address is on the left. There is no punctuation.
The date is usually on the right and is shown in full.
Dear Sir or Madam to a company or when you do not know the addressee's name.
Subject heading helps to focus the reader's attention.
Paragraphs start at the margin.

LETTERS OFTEN HAVE THREE PARTS:
An opening which says why you are writing.
The main message which gives the details.
The close which usually talks about the future.

Line space between each paragraph.
Dear Sir or Madam ends Yours faithfully.
Dear Name ends Yours sincerely or Best wishes.
The writer's name, title and/or department are under the signature.

12 January 2001

Dear Sir or Madam

Visit to Singapore

I am now planning my forthcoming trip to South East Asia and I would be very pleased if we could meet to discuss the new range of Nagakura products.

I hope to be in Singapore on 9 and 10 March. Would it be convenient to visit you on 10 March at 11.30 a.m.? I would also be grateful if, in your reply, you could tell me exactly where your offices are located.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully

Jun Mizuno
Technical Sales

Yoshimori Heights Kawasaki-shi
Kawagawa Ken 231 Japan
Tel +81 44-932-2526
Fax +81 44-932-2884

www.nagakura.com.jp
sales@nagakura.com.jp
technical@nagakura.com.jp
SOUNDSONIC Ltd.

Ms B. Kaaesen
Bredgade 51
Copenhagen K
DENMARK

Dear Ms Kaaesen,

Non-payment of invoice 299/77

I am sorry to advise that, despite several reminders, you have not yet paid the above-mentioned invoice. Unless, therefore, the account is cleared within 14 days of the above date, I shall have no alternative but to place the matter in the hands of our solicitors.

Yours sincerely,
D. Simpson
Sales manager

cc: Messrs. Poole & Jackson Ltd., Solicitors

SOUNDSONIC Ltd.

Ms B. Kaaesen
Bredgade 51
Copenhagen K
DENMARK

Dear Ms Kaaesen,

Thank you very much for your enquiry which we received today.

I am enclosing our catalogue and price-list for the equipment you said you were interested in. I would like to draw your attention to pages 31-35 in the catalogue where you will find full details of the Omega range.

We would welcome any further enquiries you have, and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,
D. Simpson
Sales manager

Enc.
PUT IN THE MISSING OPENINGS AND CLOSINGS

a. The Manager  
   Fuchi Bank  
   Tokyo 101  
   Dear………..  
   Yours………..

b. John Hall  
   Ave Paul Hymans 26  
   1200 Brussels  
   Dear……………...  
   Yours……………...

c. Ms B Carrillo  
   Restaurante Flor  
   Guadalajara  
   Dear……………….  
   Yours……………….

d. The Manageress  
   Bells Supermarket  
   76 Oxford Road  
   Bath BA2 5HD  
   …………………….  
   ………………….

e. Trufit Shoe Co.  
   841 Pacific St  
   Los Angeles 901  
   …………………..  
   ………………….

f. Mrs H Cheng  
   5 Hatton Road  
   Hong Kong  
   …………………..  
   ………………….

There are ten mistakes in this letter. Can you find them? Write out the letter correctly, in 'block style'.

Ms Margareta Lindell,  
Slottsberget 26,  
Göteborg 41803,  
Sweden.

Your ref  
Our ref FH/ts

Dear Sir  
Thank you for your letter of the nineteenth of May two thousand and one  
I have pleasure in sending you our brochure with details of all our  
holidays.  
I look forward to hearing from you.

2001, may 22nd

Best wishes  
Sales Manager  
Fred Henderson  

Fred Henderson
Join these openings to the right ending.

a. Dear Mrs Wilson  
Yours sincerely
b. Dear Madam  
Yours sincerely
c. Dear Ms Hemsuchi  
Best wishes
d. Dear Susan  
Yours faithfully
e. Dear Mr Soler  
Yours faithfully
f. Dear David  
Yours faithfully
g. Dear Sir or Madam

Read the following statements and decide which are true (T) and which are false (F).

1. If a letter begins with the receiver’s name, e.g. Dear Mr Ross, it will close with Yours faithfully.
2. The abbreviation c.c. stands for “correct carbons”.
3. If you were writing a letter to Mr Peter Smith, you would open with Dear Mr Peter Smith.
4. The head of a company in the UK is known as “The President”.
5. In the USA, it is correct to open a letter with the salutation Gentlemen.
6. The abbreviation enc or encl means there are enclosures with the letter.
7. In the UK, the abbreviated date 2. 6. 05 on a letter means 6 February 2005.
8. If a secretary signs her name on a letter and her signature is followed by p.p. (per pro) Daniel Harris, it means she is signing on behalf of Daniel Harris.
9. If you did not know whether a female correspondent was married or not, it would be correct to use the term Ms, e.g. Ms Tessa Groves, instead of Miss or Mrs.
10. Rather than use the UK close of Yours sincerely/faithfully, Americans often choose Yours truly.
Complete these sentences by explaining what the abbreviations printed in bold type mean. Use a dictionary if necessary.

1. Rd., St. and Sq. are short for
2. #24 in the USA and No. 24 in Britain both mean
3. On an envelope the abbreviations c/o, Attn. and P.O.B. mean
4. You may see these in a report or textbook: e.g. or eg, i.e. or ie, etc. or etc and P.T.O. They stand for
   And you may also find these: cf. (compare), do. (ditto) and viz. (namely).
5. A British firm’s name may be followed by plc or PLC, Ltd, Bros or & Co.
   These are short for
6. An American firm’s name may be followed by Corp. or Inc., meaning
7. In a printed text you may see these abbreviations: @ ¥3000 each,
   © 1989, Apple and Macintosh. They mean
8. At the end of an informal letter, you might add a P.S., in other words a
9. At the end of a formal business letter it’s common to use the abbreviations c.c. and enc. or encl., which stand for
10. But you’d only see these in very old-fashioned correspondence:
    ult. (last month), inst. (.......... month) and prox. (.......... month)!

“GOLDEN RULES” for writing letters and memos

1 Give your letter a heading if it will help the reader to see at glance what you’re writing about.
2 Decide what you are going to say before you start to write or dictate: if you don’t do this, the sentences are likely to go on and on until you can think of a good way to finish. In other words, always try to plan ahead.
3 Use short sentences.
4 Put each separate idea in a separate paragraph. Numbering each paragraph may help the reader to understand better.
5 Use short words that everyone can understand.
6 Think about your reader. Your reader ...
   ... must be able to see exactly what you mean:
   your letters should be CLEAR
   ... must be given all the necessary information:
   your letters should be COMPLETE
   ... is likely to be a busy person with no time to waste:
   your letters should be CONCISE
   ... must be addressed in a sincere, polite tone:
   your letters should be COURTEOUS
   ... may get a bad impression if there are mistakes in grammar, punctuation and spelling:
   your letters should be CORRECT.
1.2. E-MAIL: LAYOUT AND STYLE

GENERAL OUTLINE

- General characteristics of e-mail communication
- Elements of an e-mail message
  - Sender’s address
  - Receiver’s address
  - Copies
  - Subject line
  - Attachments
  - The message
    - Salutation
    - Body of the message
      - Length
      - Content
      - Form
      - Courtesy
    - Complimentary close
    - Signature
  - Getting rid of messages
GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF E-MAIL COMMUNICATION

Although e-mail is a relatively new medium, in most organisations and businesses it is now the de-facto communication method, both internally and with external bodies. However, many people make the mistake of treating e-mail as a lesser form of communication, when it deserves the same amount of care and attention as putting pen to paper.

Another common error is to assume that all e-mails are necessarily informal. One must distinguish personal messages between business colleagues, which may be very casual, from company to company e-mail, which is not radically different from traditional correspondence and requires a certain degree of formality. It is safer, especially in international communication, to initiate the contact formally and then switch to a more relaxed register if your correspondent replies informally. It is easy and natural to progress from formal to friendly, but it is awkward to have to step backwards from friendly to formal if the receiver replies in a formal way.

When writing e-mail, it is important to follow the rules of “Netiquette” (short for “network etiquette”), i.e. the code of conduct regarding acceptable online behavior. In the pages that follow, we will deal with different netiquette issues concerning form, content or politeness.

ELEMENTS OF AN E-MAIL MESSAGE
In e-mails there is no need for the layout of ordinary letters, especially with regard to the sender’s address, the receiver’s address or the date, since these elements appear under a different form.

- **Sender’s address**: when you send a message, your e-mail address (e.g. vpellegrini@italialink.it) will be automatically specified, so that the receiver knows who wrote the e-mail.
  - Normally, when setting up an e-mail account, you attach a “personal name” (e.g. “Vincenzo Pellegrini”) to your address, because that name identifies you better than your address can on its own. Use a sensible personal name: “Guess who” or other such phrases are annoying as personal names and hinder the recipient’s quick identification of you and your message. In business, that would be suicidal.
  - After opening up an account, it is a good idea to send yourself an e-mail first. That way, you can check that your name and your return address are correct, and that the message is displayed correctly.

- The **receiver’s address** goes on the “To:” line (1). Instead of an e-mail address you can simply write a nickname (2), if you have previously set up an **address book** (3) matching addresses and nicknames (e.g. “Tim” could be a nickname for timothy.dawson@microsoft.com). Even though they are very convenient, the problem with address books is that many viruses spread automatically to all the recipients listed in them.

- The **date** (and time) is also marked automatically when you send a message

**Note: structure of an e-mail address**

E-mail addresses follow the pattern **user@domain.ext**.

- “@” is pronounced “at”, and “.” is pronounced “dot”.

- The domain name generally designates the institution/company the person belongs to (e.g. profesor@ull.es, john.doe@cocacola.com), or to the email provider used by the person (e.g. jackfry@hotmail.com).

- The domain name extension (abbreviated as “ext” above) is a two or three-letter code that identifies the type of organisation or the country the e-mail address belongs to. Examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain extension</th>
<th>Type of organisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.com</td>
<td>Commercial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.net</td>
<td>Network services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.org</td>
<td>Non-profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.edu</td>
<td>Education (within the U.S.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain extension</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.es</td>
<td>Spain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.fr</td>
<td>France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.pt</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.it</td>
<td>Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.uk</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.jp</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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• Copies

“Cc:” (4) stands for “carbon copies”. On this line you can write the address of the person(s) you want to send a copy of the message to. If you write several addresses, separate them by means of a comma (e.g. bclaire@beatty.com, jpatrick@ecoplan.net).

“Bcc:” (5) stands for “blind carbon copies”. This line is used for the same purpose as the “Cc:” one, but in this case the recipients do not know that copies are being sent to other people.

• The subject line (6)

-Always include a subject line in your message, since it is often the only clue the recipient has about its contents when checking his daily e-mail or filing and searching for messages. Messages that arrive with no subject are very likely to be treated as junk mail.

-Make the subject line meaningful. For example, sending a message to Apple Technical Support with the subject “Apple” is practically as unhelpful as having no subject at all.

-If you are replying to a message but are changing the subject matter, change the subject line, too. Even in back-and forth messages with the same subject matter, it is easier to keep track of things if you alter the subject line to match the current phase of conversation, as shown in example (b), as opposed to (a):

a)  
(Original message) Subject: Complaint  
(1st reply) Subject: Re: Complaint  
(2nd reply) Subject: Re: Complaint  
(3rd reply) Subject: Re: Complaint

b)  
(Original message) Subject: Complaint  
(1st reply) Subject: Apologies, transport strike  
(2nd reply) Subject: Refund?  
(3rd reply) Subject: Delivery in 3 days

• Attachments (7)

-You use this feature to send files (texts, pictures, databases, etc.) together with your message. Make sure that you give a meaningful name to the attached file, rather than a generic name like “file.doc”.

-It is a good idea to compress any file that is over 100K in size, using programs like WinZip, which can be downloaded for free from the web. If you have to send multiple files, compress all of them into a single attached file.

-Try to send files only in widespread formats, to make sure the recipient is able to open them. Sometimes, however, the receiver will be still unable to convert the file, so it is always useful to say what you are attaching, as in the example below.
- If you need to send a really large file, you may want to e-mail your recipient ahead of time, asking for permission and letting him know what time you will be sending it over.

- Make sure that the attachment is virus-free, too!

- The message (8)
  
  - **Salutation**

    Use appropriate salutations depending on the level of formality. As mentioned above, it is better to initiate the contact in a formal way, using the title (Mr, Ms) and the surname of the receiver (e.g., “Dear Mr Saffron”). If you do not know the name of the receiver, use “Dear Sir/Madam”. If you are not sure what to use in terms of formality, you can also send your first message without a salutation, but in general it seems better to include one.

    When replying, be guided by your correspondent’s signature. If he has signed his first name, you may address him accordingly. If both first and last names are used, it is safest to reply formally. If your correspondent uses your first name, then use his.

  
  - **Body of the message**

    - **Length**

      - Try to match your message length to the purpose of the message: if you are only making a quick query, then keep it short and to the point. But it is important to say all you have to say, so do not kill understanding with brevity.

      - When replying to a message, you can quote from it to help your reader know what you are talking about, even though most people keep a copy of their outgoing messages in a “Sent items” folder (9). However, include only the minimum you need from the original message. It is extremely annoying to have your original 5-page message quoted back at you in its entirety, with the words “Me too” added at the bottom. Quote from the original message only where relevant and make sure that there is some kind of visual indication to
distinguish between text quoted from the original message and your new text. Such visual markers (">" is a traditional one) tend to be automatically included in most e-mail programmes.

**Content**

- When initiating the contact, say where you obtained the e-mail address of the person you are writing to, or mention the web page name (URL), if you emailed off a web page.

- Keep to the subject as much as possible. If you need to branch off onto a totally new and different topic, then it is often better to send a new message, which allows the recipient the option of filing it separately.

- Include enough information. For example, sending the message “What has happened to my order?” to a company is rather unhelpful. You should include the order number and any other details that might assist in tracing your order.

- Make sure that the content is relevant to the recipients:
  
  - Be careful when replying to messages sent to many recipients. Are you sure you want to reply to the whole list?
  
  - Do not send excessive multiple postings to people who have no interest (e.g. chain letters, “make money fast” messages or virus hoaxes). Nobody likes to receive spam.
  
  - However, business acknowledges that direct mail works. How can you satisfy the need to get new customers, which by definition must be strangers to your business, and at the same time be considerate? If you decide to send unsolicited e-mail in search for new customers, only send one-line solicitations, followed by “E-mail for details”. People who want details will reply, those that do not, will not. Put the list of e-mail addresses in “Bcc” to protect the privacy of the receivers. Apart from the privacy angle, it is frustrating to receive a one-line message preceded by 5 pages of e-mail addresses.

  - Do not send unsuitable e-mail or attachments, especially anything of a sexual nature, as they may be found by a third party.

  - Don’t spread gossip or rumours— you have no control over them.
-Be very careful about including sensitive information (e.g. credit card numbers) in e-mail messages, as they can be intercepted in transit.

- **Form**

-Insert “breaths” of empty space. Break your message into logical paragraphs and keep sentences to a sensible length.

-Do not type in CAPITALS, as this is considered to be SHOUTING.

-Business communication requires proper use of capital letters. Some offices permit all lower-case for internal memos. But this is rude and slovenly when used for inter-company communications. Would you write a business letter on company letterhead using all lower-case?

-If your e-mail programme supports “fancy” formatting (bold, italic and so on –see the formatting tool bar in (10)) in the messages it generates, make sure that the recipient has a mail programme that can display such messages. Also, be careful with graphic accents and characters such as “¡, ¿, ñ”, since foreign e-mail programmes may not support them.

-Here you are some expressions that are typical of e-mails:

Now complete the following e-mail using the correct forms of the above-mentioned expressions that mean the same as the underlined expressions:
- Some acronyms are typical of e-mail:

  - AFAIK: as far as I know
  - HTH: hope this helps
  - IMHO: in my humble opinion
  - FYI: for your information
  - TIA: thanks in advance

However, these abbreviations should be used sparingly, and only in casual communication (e.g. between business colleagues).

- Emoticons:

  Sometimes, e-mail has very nearly the immediacy of conversation, but is totally devoid of “body language”. Irony or humour can be difficult to express in e-mails, which are usually short and not very elaborate. Many people get round this by using emoticons like the following:

  :-)   Amusement. Funny or ironic comment
  :-(  Disappointment or sorrow
  ;-)  Something should be taken “with a grain of salt”
However, these emoticons are only appropriate in very casual personal e-mails and, even in that context, they should not be overused. Always make sure that the recipient understands what they mean.

Emoticons are quite inappropriate for business use. The meaning of your words should be contained within the words themselves, and not need additional explanation with funny faces. In any case, humour and irony should be avoided, as a rule, in business correspondence.

-Accuracy:

  Have a dictionary at hand, and check your grammar, vocabulary and spelling. Most e-mail programmes have a spell checker (11).

  Do not rush. Re-read your message carefully before clicking on the “Send” button (12). If you do not have time to finish the job properly, save the message as a draft (13) and go back to work on it later.

- Courtesy

  - Be polite, since e-mail messages are easily misinterpreted. Say “please” and “thank you”. While this might sound trivial, it is astonishing how many people who are perfectly polite in everyday life seem to forget their manners in their e-mail.

  - Avoid “flames” (i.e. messages sent in anger).

  o Complimentary close

    - You can end with “Yours faithfully” (when you do not know the name of the receiver) or “Yours sincerely” (when you know the name of the recipient), as in conventional correspondence.

    - However, in e-mails it is more common to use one of the following:
      - Best wishes
      - All best wishes
      - Regards
      - Best regards

    To people you know well, you can end with:
      - All the best
      - Best

  o Signature

    - Apart from writing your name below the complimentary close, it is a good idea to include a signature (14) that will be added automatically at the end of a message when you send it.
In business communication, a signature should identify who you are and include alternative means of contacting you. However, keep the signature short (four to seven lines is a handy guideline for maximum signature length). An example of signature is the following:

Signature

Enter text that you can attach to the bottom of all outgoing messages.

Vincenzo Pellegrini
Chief Buyer, ItaliaLink SPA (www.italialink.it)
Via del Rocco 18
21052 Verona, ITALY
Tel. +39-0331-632137
Fax +39-0331-620110
Email: v.pellegrini@italialink.it

In more personal e-mail correspondence you can use a quote or any other element as a signature. You should consider the following basic rules though:

- Keep it short. A 5,000 word excerpt from Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* used as a signature will not win you many friends.

- Definitions of “offensive” vary widely: avoid quotes which might offend people on the grounds of religion, race, politics or sexuality.

- Try to avoid local quotes, since they may be meaningless to recipients in other towns, countries or cultures.

- Do not use an over-elaborate signature. Never include images, as these tend to be very large.

**Getting rid of messages**

- Remember that if anything goes wrong during the composition of an e-mail message you can always cancel the process (15).

- You can also eliminate an incoming e-mail you do not want by selecting “Delete”. That way, you move the message to the “Trash” folder, which you should empty from time to time.

- To help prevent junk e-mail from entering your inbox, you can install a spam filter.
SOURCES


The Art of Writing E-Mail: http://www.net-market.com/email.htm

Business Netiquette International: http://www.bspage.com/1netiq/Netiq.html

Dynamoo’s Email Etiquette: http://www.dynamoo.com/technical/etiquette.htm

1.3. BASIC GUIDELINES TO APPROACH THIS COURSE

A) ANALYSE LETTERS IN TERMS OF FUNCTIONS

In each of the units we are going to read some sample letters. Try to analyze them in terms of the “functions” that make up the outlines of each of the letter types. These outlines are given below:

A.1) COVERING LETTER FOR JOB APPLICATION

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Opening: Say where you got the vacancy/job information from (newspaper, magazine, web page) and when. In case the job ad refers to more than one post, specify clearly which one you are applying for.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Summarize your qualifications (degrees, masters, specialization courses) and, above all, your career. Be sure to include only relevant information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Explain clearly, but briefly, what your personal assets are.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Explain clearly, but briefly, what you think you can offer to the company and why you are interested in working with them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Show availability for a job interview.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Close your letter adding a formal ending.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A.2) ENQUIRIES

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Opening: Say where you got the information from.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Give some general information about your business.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Explain clearly what information you wish to receive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Say why you need it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Close your letter adding a formal ending.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A.3) REPLIES TO ENQUIRIES

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Acknowledge receipt of previous correspondence. Thank for the enquiry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Say you are enclosing information or state what action you are taking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Focus attention on specific information and answer specific questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Try to persuade customers to do business.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Add an appropriate ending to close the letter.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A.4) ORDERS

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Acknowledge previous correspondence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>State your reactions to the prices, discounts, samples…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Place the order.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Confirm or suggest terms of payment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Set deadline for delivery (if appropriate).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Close the letter and add a formal ending.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A.5) REPLIES TO ORDERS

1. Acknowledge receipt of the order.
2. Confirm that you are able to supply the goods.
3. Say what you have done about the order.
4. Say what you are going to do next about the order.
5. Assure the buyer that you can meet the conditions of the order.
6. Close the letter.

A.6) COMPLAINTS

1. Opening: refer to the order.
2. State the reason for the complaint.
3. Suggest a possible cause of the problem (if you can think of any).
4. Suggest a solution (if you have one) and/or state the action you require the other company to take.
5. State the action taken by your company.
6. Close the letter

A.7) REPLIES TO COMPLAINTS

1. Acknowledge the letter of complaint and thank the person for having made the complaint.
2. Apologize.
3. Explain the cause of the problem, but never discredit your firm or a member of staff.
4. Say the error was exceptional.
5. State the action taken to solve the immediate problem.
6. State the action taken to prevent the problem from happening again.
7. Reassure the customer and end optimistically.
8. Close the letter

B) GRIDS FOR USEFUL PHRASES AND VOCABULARY

Every time you come across a sentence that expresses one of the functions listed above, write the structure under the corresponding function. Some examples are given below to help you.

You will need to make your own grids due to lack of space in the one given here, which is simply a model.
ENQUIRIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FUNCTION</th>
<th>EXPRESSION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Say where you got the information. | - Your firm has been recommended to us by ….
| | - I met your representative at the Hanover Fair this year and… |
| Give some information about your business. | - We are a long standing company specialized in … and are interested in purchasing … |
| Explain information you wish to receive. | - Please would you send me an up-to-date price list for…
| | - Please let us know your prices for… |
| Say why you need it. | - My office is being renovated and I am looking for new office furniture. |
| Close with formal ending. | - We look forward to receiving your reply.
| | - We hope to receive an early reply. |

Bear in mind that you do not have to find every single function in all the letters you examine (some letters may deal with fewer points). Moreover, the order of the functions may be different. The outlines given above are only a suggestion.

The purpose of this activity is twofold:

1. To become familiar with the typical structure of letters of these kinds, in order to write coherent and well-organized texts.
2. To match each function with different phrases which can be used to express that meaning. This way, you will enrich your range of resources without depending on the mechanical (and often incorrect) memorization of a single model of letter.

Get used to adding useful expressions to the grid every time you see an interesting structure throughout the whole unit (not only when reading sample letters).

You should also use the vocabulary grid to record new words, especially technical terms. Make sure you write a definition in English and a full example in English, too, to learn how to use the term, as in the example shown below. A monolingual dictionary can be very helpful for this activity.

VOCABULARY GRID

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD</th>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
<th>EXAMPLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>inconvenience</td>
<td>noun</td>
<td>A state of difficulty when things do not suit one</td>
<td>“We are sorry for the inconvenience this accident may have caused”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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