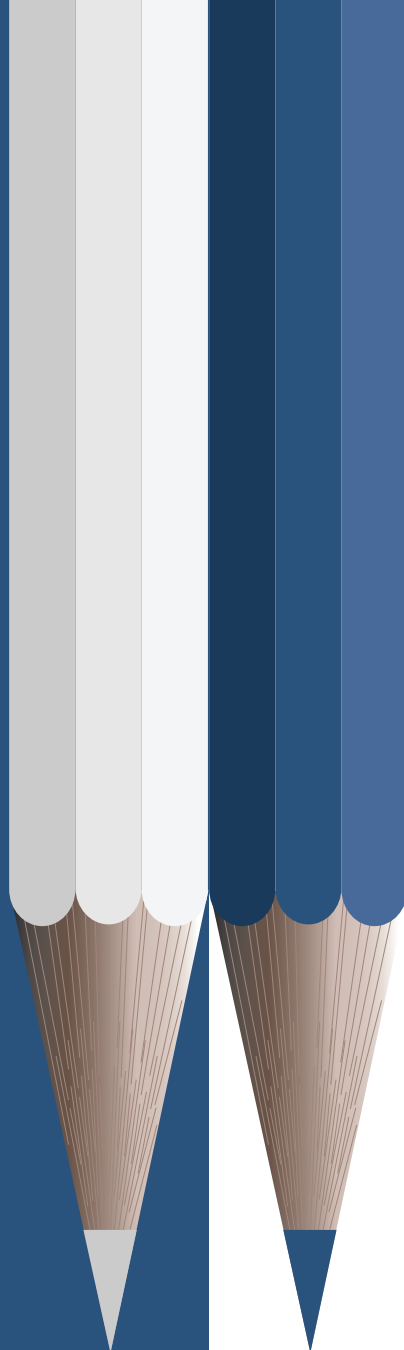


Jenny Dooley

# The Art *of* Writing



B2



**Express Publishing**

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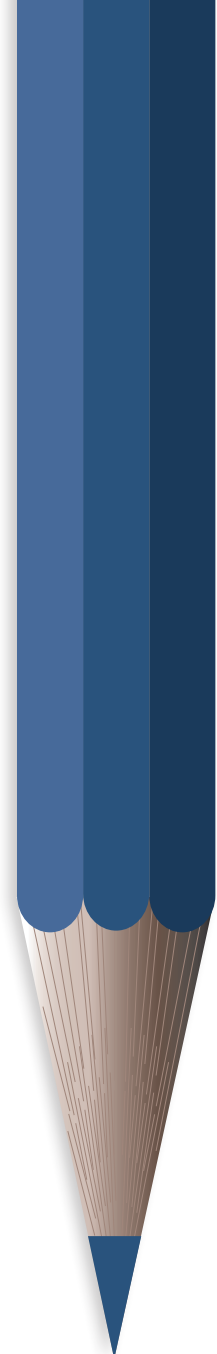
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# Emails/letters

## Warm-up

- When do we write informal emails/letters?
- Who can they be for?
- What can we write about?



# Introduction

Emails/Letters can be formal, semi-formal or informal depending on who we are writing to. Reasons for writing them include: giving news, inviting, accepting or refusing invitations, complaining, asking for or giving information, applying for a post/course, expressing apology, asking for/giving advice, explaining, thanking, suggesting, expressing preference etc.

## General outline for emails/letters



Informal Style	Semi-Formal Style	Formal Style
<b>Greeting:</b> Dear John/Uncle Jim/Mum, etc <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>friendly, relaxed, personal style</b> (e.g. <i>Thanks so much for your last letter.</i>)</li> <li><b>frequent use of colloquial expressions, idioms, phrasal verbs, short verb forms</b> (e.g. <i>It's been ages since we last saw each other.</i>)</li> <li><b>pronouns are often omitted</b> (e.g. <i>Thought I'd drop you a line.</i>)</li> <li><b>chatty language</b> (e.g. <i>I hope you're doing well.</i>)</li> <li><b>simple linking words</b> (e.g. <i>and, but, so</i>)</li> </ul> <b>Sign off:</b> Best wishes,/Yours,/Regards, (our first name)	<b>Greeting:</b> Dear Mr Harris, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>polite respectful tone</b> (e.g. <i>I would like to thank you for your help.</i>)</li> <li><b>use of less colloquial language</b> (e.g. <i>Thank you so much for your letter, instead of Thanks a million for your letter.</i>)</li> <li><b>less frequent use of short verb forms, linking words, phrasal verbs</b> (e.g. <i>Also, I was wondering if you had a computer I could use while I am staying with you.</i>)</li> </ul> <b>Sign off:</b> Regards,/Kind regards, (our full name)	<b>Greeting:</b> Dear Sir/Madam, – Dear Mr Smith, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>serious, impersonal style</b> (e.g. <i>I am writing to apply for the position of salesperson at your company.</i>)</li> <li><b>complex sentence structure, frequent use of passive voice, formal linking words, no colloquial English, advanced vocabulary, no short verb forms</b> (e.g. <i>The item in question, which I received last week, was damaged in transit. I would be grateful if a replacement could be dispatched as soon as possible.</i>)</li> </ul> <b>Sign off:</b> Yours faithfully,/Yours sincerely, (our full name)

## Style

### 1 Match the informal phrases (1-10) to their formal equivalents (a-j).

1. Sorry I haven't written for ages, but I've been really busy.		a. Please find my CV enclosed.
2. Can you tell me a little more about the course?		b. I look forward to our meeting.
3. Just give us a call if you have any questions.		c. I regret to inform you I will not be able to attend.
4. I've put my CV in with the letter.		d. Do not hesitate to contact us if you require further information.
5. See you soon!		e. Could you give me some more information about the course?
6. Thanks a lot for everything.		f. We apologise for any inconvenience caused.
7. Sorry for any trouble caused.		g. I really appreciate everything you have done.
8. I'm sorry but I won't be able to make it.		h. I apologise for not getting in contact with you earlier.
9. Great to hear from you!		i. We were delighted to receive your invitation.
10. Thanks for the invitation.		j. I was pleased to receive your letter.



## Rubric Analysis

Read the rubric carefully and underline the key words/phrases. These indicate:

- the imaginary situation you are going to write about, who you are and the reason you are writing.
- the imaginary reader who is going to read your piece of writing.

This will help you decide on the writing style you should use (formal, semi-formal or informal); the type of writing task; the specific topics you should include in your piece of writing and how many words you should write.

Study the example below.

<sup>1)</sup> This is part of an email you received from <sup>2)</sup> your English-speaking friend, <sup>3)</sup> Emily.

Write your <sup>5)</sup> email <sup>6)</sup> (140-190 words).

My parents are visiting your area next month for a weekend. They want to visit some places of cultural interest. <sup>4)</sup> **Can you tell me which places they could visit? What's the best way to travel around?**

Emily



<sup>1)</sup> This is part of an email you received from <sup>2)</sup> your English-speaking friend, <sup>3)</sup> Emily.

Write your <sup>5)</sup> email <sup>6)</sup> (140-190 words).

1) imaginary situation, 2) writing style, 3) imaginary reader, 4) specific topics, 5) type of writing task, 6) word count

## 2 Read the rubrics. Underline the key words. What information do they give?

1. This is part of an email you received from your English friend, Luke.

I'm planning to visit your country this summer. Which places should I visit? Also, what's the best way to travel from place to place and where should I stay? Any advice?

Luke

Write your email (140-190 words).

2. You have seen this advertisement for a job in the local newspaper.

**Wanted:** social media manager for successful bicycle shop  
We have many customers and also organise cycling events and tours, so we need to keep our social media accounts up to date. The person we're looking for must be creative, have experience with modern technology, and be enthusiastic about pedal power!  
The job is part-time, so it would suit a student.

**RENT to OWN**  
If you cannot qualify for a traditional mortgage through banks, NO PROBLEM!

**TWO BEDROOM for 850\$**  
Beautiful 2 bed/2 bath open concept condo comes with lovely kitchen, charming room w/ fireplace and balcony.

**HOUSE FOR SALE**  
2 bed/2 bath open floor plan condo comes with a lovely backyard.

Write your letter (140-190 words) applying for the post.

3. Write an email (140-190 words) to your best friend's dad, who took you on a two-day mountain hiking trip. Thank him for driving you to the mountain, arranging the accommodation at the hostel and lending you some equipment. Describe the experience of climbing the mountain and express a wish to do it again.



# Giving news

## 1 a) Underline the key words in the rubric. Answer the questions.

You have received an email from your English-speaking pen friend Sally.



How are things? Are you enjoying your holiday? What are your plans for tomorrow? Write back and tell me about it.

Sally

Write your email (140-190 words).

1. What are you going to write?
2. Who is going to read it?
3. What should you write about?
4. What style should you write in?
5. How many words should you use?

## b) Read the model and choose the correct tenses.



Hi Sally,

- 1 Great to hear from you! Sorry it's taken so long to reply, but **1) I'm being/I've been** really busy at work recently. Anyway, now that I'm on holiday, I thought **2) I've dropped/I'd drop** you a line to let you know how I'm getting on.
- 2 I'm spending two weeks in Rome, Italy. I arrived two days ago, and I **3) am having/had** a really great time! So far, **4) I'm seeing/I've seen** the Colosseum, the Trevi Fountain and the Pantheon. They're all really spectacular sights.
- 3 Tomorrow, I have quite a busy day planned! I **5) haven't been/didn't go** to the Vatican City yet, so I'm going to spend a whole day there. Afterwards, **6) I'd meet/I'm meeting** a friend for dinner before heading to the Roman Opera House. The performance **7) is starting/starts** at 7 pm. I can't wait!
- 4 Well, I'd better get going. Write back soon and let me know what **8) you've been/you were** up to since the last time I heard from you.

Yours,  
Emma

**Note!** Informal style is characterised by the use of a friendly tone, everyday expressions, short verb forms and simple linking words. Find examples in Emma's email.



## 2 Find and replace the opening/closing remarks in Emma's letter in Ex. 1b with sentences from the Useful Language box.



### Useful Language

#### Opening remarks

- Hi, how's everything? Hope you are well.
- Thanks for your email.
- I wanted to drop you a line to tell you my news.
- Sorry for not writing sooner, but I was busy.
- Just a quick email to tell you what I've been up to.
- I'm sorry for not getting back to you earlier.

#### Closing remarks

- Looking forward to hearing your news.
- Got to go now or I'll be late.
- Give my regards to your parents.
- It was good to hear from you.
- I hope to hear from you soon.

### 3 a) Underline the key words in the rubric. Answer the questions.

You have received an email from your English-speaking pen friend Mary.



How is it going on your English course in New York? Where are you staying? How long will you be there? What is the course like? Do you like it? Write soon.

Mary



Write your email (140-190 words).

1. What are you going to write?
2. Who is going to read it?
3. What should you write about?
4. What style should you write in?
5. How many words should you use?



b) Make notes under the headings:

PLACE	LENGTH OF STAY	COURSE DESCRIPTION	FEELINGS/IMPRESSIONS

### 4 Use your notes in Ex. 3b to write your email. Follow the plan.

#### Plan

Hi Mary,

(Para 1) *opening remarks, reason for writing*

(Para 2) *where you are staying, how long you are going to stay there*

(Para 3) *description of course, impressions*

(Para 4) *closing remarks*

Yours,

(your first name)





# Thanking (semi-formal)

- 1 Match the sentences. Which is: *accepting an invitation? refusing an invitation? thanking? apologising? asking for information? giving advice? asking for advice?*

Informal		Semi-formal
1. See you next Sunday, then.		A. I really appreciate everything you have done.
2. It's a shame that I can't come.		B. Please accept my apology.
3. Thanks a lot for everything.		C. I look forward to seeing you.
4. I'm really sorry.		D. I was wondering if you knew ...
5. Do you know ...?		E. Have you considered ...?
6. How about ...?		F. Unfortunately, I will be unable to attend.
7. I thought I'd drop you a line to ask you about ...		G. I am writing to request information about...

- 2 Read the rubric, then the email. Replace the phrases in bold with more polite ones from the list.

You attended a course in the USA and you want to thank your host family, Mr and Mrs Peterson. Write an email to Mr and Mrs Peterson (140-190 words) thanking them for letting you stay with them and explaining how much you enjoyed your stay.



Dear Mr and Mrs Peterson,

- A 1) **I thought I'd drop you a line** to let you know that I have arrived home safely and 2) **to say thanks a lot** for your hospitality during my stay with you.
- B It was 3) **really great** of you to let me stay in your home. I really appreciate 4) **all the stuff you did** to make my stay in your home a happy one. 5) **You made me feel** like part of your family. My room was very comfortable and every meal was delicious.
- C 6) **Now about my English**, I think it improved considerably during my stay with you. 7) **The best thing** was the opportunity to practise English with you every day. I 8) **won't forget** our great conversations after dinner.
- D 9) **Again thanks a million** for all your kindness. I hope we will keep in touch. 10) **Why don't you** come and visit me one day?

11) **Lots of love,**

Carla Hills

- Thank you once again
- What helped me most
- to thank you very much
- very kind
- I really felt
- shall always remember
- As far as my English is concerned
- I am writing
- Perhaps you could
- Best regards,
- all your efforts



### 3 Read the emails below. Replace the informal phrases with phrases from the lists.

- reply
- Thank you very much
- I apologise for
- I am looking forward to seeing
- It will be an honour to attend



Dear Mr Harris,

**1) Thanks a million** for your letter. **2) I'm really sorry about** taking so long to **3) write back**. **4) I'd love to come to** your party. **5) I can't wait to see** you.

- I appreciate
- I'm very grateful
- your hospitality



Dear Mr and Mrs Smith,

I'd like to thank you for **1) making me feel at home**. **2) I can't get over** everything you did for me. **3) I owe you a lot** for all your help.

### 4 Underline the key words in the rubric. What information do they give you? Write your email. Use language from the Useful Language box. Follow the plan.

You have just completed an English language course. Write an email (140-190 words) to your English teacher, Mr Higgins, thanking him for all his help and explaining how the course has helped you.



#### Useful Language

##### Opening remarks

- I am writing to ...
- I'd like to ...

##### Thanking

- Thank you so/very much for ...
- I just wanted to tell you how much I enjoyed/appreciated etc ...
- I can't tell you how much I appreciate ...

##### Closing remarks

- Thank you once again (for) ...
- It was very kind of you to ...
- I shall always remember ...

## Plan

Dear Mr Higgins,

**(Para 1)** *opening remarks & reason for writing*

**(Para 2)** *thank for help*

**(Para 3)** *explain how course was of benefit*

**(Para 4)** *restate thanks & closing remarks*

Best wishes,

(your first name)

# Making a complaint (formal)

## 1 Read the rubric. Underline the key words. Answer the questions.

You recently paid for a holiday, but the travel agency booked the wrong dates. You contacted the travel agency to correct the mistake and you were promised that someone would contact you. You are still waiting for a reply. Send an email (140-190 words) to the travel agency explaining the reasons for your dissatisfaction and saying what action you expect them to take.

1. What are you going to write?
2. Who is going to read it?
3. What should you write about?
4. What style should you write in?
5. How many words should you use?



## 2 Read the email and fill in the missing words/phrases with ones from the list.

- take further action
- make matters worse
- express my extreme dissatisfaction
- incredibly unhelpful
- extremely annoyed
- to my frustration
- an error had been made
- refused to amend my flight



**Note!** Letters/Emails of complaint are normally written in formal language with an impersonal tone. However, we should never be rude or insulting. The language used depends on whether we want to complain in a mild or strong way.

Dear Sir/Madam,

- 1 I wish to **1)** \_\_\_\_\_ with the appalling inefficiency of the staff at your travel agency.
- 2 On 21<sup>st</sup> May, I booked a holiday to Tenerife departing on 5<sup>th</sup> June. Checking my ticket, I realised that **2)** \_\_\_\_\_; my outbound flight had been booked for 5<sup>th</sup> July.
- 3 When I returned to amend the details of my trip, I was told, **3)** \_\_\_\_\_ that the dates could not be changed without charging an extra fee.
- 4 To **4)** \_\_\_\_\_, when I asked to speak to the manager, he was **5)** \_\_\_\_\_. He insisted that I had made an error when booking and **6)** \_\_\_\_\_ until he had investigated the matter. However, I have heard nothing for two days.
- 5 As you can imagine, I am **7)** \_\_\_\_\_ with the service I have received at your agency. I demand my flights be changed within the next 24 hours or I shall be forced to **8)** \_\_\_\_\_.

Yours faithfully,  
Jonathan Young

## 3 Read the Useful Language box. What tone is the letter in Ex. 2 written in: *strong* or *mild*?



### Useful Language

#### Opening remarks

#### Mild

- I am writing in connection with/on the subject of ...
- I wish to draw your attention to a problem which arose due to ...

#### Strong

- I am writing to express my strong dissatisfaction with the disgraceful treatment I received/the attitude of your staff.
- I am writing to complain about the appalling behaviour of .../the shocking quality of ...





**Closing remarks****Mild**

- I feel that I am entitled to a refund/replacement/compensation in the form of (vouchers).
- I hope/I would appreciate it if this matter could be dealt with promptly.

**Strong**

- I insist on/I demand a full refund/an immediate replacement.
- If the matter is not dealt with promptly, I shall be forced to take legal action/take the matter further.

**4 Rewrite the sentences using a mild tone accordingly.**

1. I would like to express my strong dissatisfaction with the shocking quality of your rooms.
2. I was completely appalled by the rudeness of the assistants in your store.
3. I must insist on an immediate refund for the goods I ordered from your site.
4. I am writing to express my strong dissatisfaction about the items I ordered, which arrived in an appalling condition.

**5 Read the complaints. What product does each refer to? Circle the correct answer.**

1. It is not working well because the bag compartment keeps falling off. **vacuum cleaner/camera**
2. There is a number of nails sticking out of it and the cushion is flattened. **bed/chair**
3. It leaks water. **washing machine/book**
4. There are sparks flying out of it whenever I use it. **toaster/cup**
5. Two buttons are missing and there is a stain on the sleeve. **shirt/skirt**
6. The lens gets stuck while extended. **sunglasses/camera**
7. The zipper was stuck and the strap was broken. **heels/handbag**
8. The buttons were missing and the sleeves were of uneven lengths. **trousers/coat**
9. It was chipped in multiple places. **dress/vase**
10. The heels had scratches and one came off when I put them on. **shoes/gloves**

**6 a) Underline the key words in the rubric. Answer the questions.**

You recently bought a book online but you received the wrong book by mistake. You asked for a replacement and there has been a delay with delivery. Send an email (140-190 words) to the online bookshop explaining the reasons for your dissatisfaction and saying what action you expect the bookshop to take.

1. What are you going to write?
2. Who is going to read it?
3. What should you write about?
4. What style should you write in?
5. How many words should you use?

**b) Write your email of complaint. Use phrases from the Useful Language box. Follow the plan.**

**Plan**

*Dear Sir/ Madam,*

**(Para 1)** *reason for writing*

**(Para 2, 3)** *complaint(s) with justification(s)/example(s)*

**(Para 4)** *action to be taken, closing remarks*

*Yours faithfully,*

*(your full name)*

# Inviting – Accepting/Refusing (formal)

- 1** Underline the key words in the rubric. What are you going to write? Who for? What should you write about?

You have received an invitation from your piano teacher, Mrs Taylor, to attend a concert she is giving on 8<sup>th</sup> May, but you cannot attend. Write a letter to Mrs Taylor (140-190 words) refusing the invitation, giving reasons.

- 2** Read the model. Match the paragraphs to the headings.

**Note!** Letters/Emails inviting/accepting/refusing an invitation are written to a person in authority (e.g. a teacher; the Mayor; etc) relating to a formal event. We need to sound polite and respectful.

Dear Mrs Taylor,

- 1 I was very pleased and grateful to receive** your kind invitation to attend your concert on 8<sup>th</sup> May. I am honoured that you thought to invite me.
- 2 Unfortunately, I will not be able to attend** due to a prior arrangement. I am afraid that I will be away from home visiting my aunt on that date and I am unable to change my travel plans. I am very sorry to miss what I am sure will be a very enjoyable evening.
- 3 Once again, thank you for the kind invitation.** I hope the evening is successful and I wish you all the best for your performance.

Yours sincerely,  
Jenny Parsons

**A** thank again; closing remarks

**B** opening remarks; reason for writing

**C** refuse invitation giving reasons

CLASSICAL  
MUSIC  
CONCERT

on 8<sup>th</sup> May

INVITATION

- 3** Read the extracts. Which are from an email inviting (I), accepting an invitation (A), refusing an invitation (R)? Which are beginnings (B)? endings (E)?

1. It was a pleasure hearing from you. I would be honoured to attend.
2. I am really disappointed I have to decline the invitation.
3. It gives me great pleasure to accept your thoughtful invitation.
4. It is with great pleasure that I invite you to attend our School Open Day on 1<sup>st</sup> of June.
5. I am looking forward to the event immensely.
6. We are all hoping for your presence on that day.
7. I regret to say I would be unable to attend as I am already committed to another event.
8. I look forward to meeting you.

- 4** Rewrite the following in formal style.

1. Thanks for the invitation! I'd love to come.
2. I'm really disappointed I'll miss this.
3. Thanks for asking me, but I'm afraid I have to give it a miss.
4. Thanks again for the invitation. Can't wait!

Thank you

## 5 Choose one of the two rubrics and write your letter/email. Use phrases from the Useful Language box. Follow the plan.

- A.** Your teacher has asked you to write a letter of invitation to the Mayor, Mr Green, to ask him to present the prizes at the School Open Day on 1<sup>st</sup> June. Write your letter (140-190 words).
- B.** You have received an invitation from your neighbours, Mr & Mrs Nixon, to attend their daughter's wedding. Write an email to your neighbours (140-190 words) accepting the invitation and expressing your feelings about the event.



Useful Language	
<b>Opening remarks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I was delighted to receive your invitation ...</li> <li>Thank you for your kind invitation to ...</li> <li>I am very grateful for your invitation to ...</li> </ul>
<b>Inviting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I wish to invite you to attend...</li> <li>It would bring me great pleasure if you could attend ...</li> <li>It is with (great) pleasure that I invite you to attend ...</li> <li>I would like to invite you to attend ...</li> <li>It would be an honour to have you as a guest at ...</li> </ul>
<b>Accepting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I am pleased/happy to accept your invitation to ...</li> <li>It gives me great pleasure to accept your invitation ...</li> <li>It will be my pleasure to come to ...</li> </ul>
<b>Refusing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unfortunately, I will be unable to ...</li> <li>I regret to inform you that I will be unable to ...</li> <li>I am afraid that I will be unable to ...</li> <li>Please accept my apologies as I will not be able to ...</li> </ul>
<b>Closing remarks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Once again, thank you for the kind invitation.</li> <li>Please let us know if you are attending the event or not by (date).</li> <li>We are all hoping for your presence on that day.</li> <li>Please respond promptly.</li> <li>I appreciate your kind invitation.</li> </ul>

### Plan

*Dear Mr Green/Mr & Mrs Nixon,*

**(Para 1)** *reason for writing, (invite & mention where/when event takes place-accept invitation)*

**(Para 2)** *give further details*

**(Para 3)** *closing remarks*




*Yours sincerely,*

*(your full name)*

# Reflection & Evaluation



**Answer the questions.**

			
Did I understand what the rubric asked for?			
Did I include all the points in the rubric?			
Did I use appropriate content?			
Did I use an appropriate greeting?			
Did I sign off correctly depending on the recipient?			
Did I organise my ideas into appropriate paragraphs?			
Did I present the information in well-balanced paragraphs?			
Did I use appropriate opening/closing remarks?			
Did I stay within the word limit?			
Did I use the appropriate style?			
Did I start the sentences with capital letters?			
Did I use appropriate punctuation?			
Did I do my best at spelling?			
Did I use grammatically correct sentences?			
Did I use linking words to join ideas?			
Did I use a variety of simple/complex sentences?			
Did I use appropriate tenses?			
Did I include everything that the task required?			
Did I use the appropriate vocabulary?			



**Use the questions to evaluate your classmates' performance.**





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