

**Exercise 1: Planning your letter or email**

Complete the tip list below with the words from the box.

reader	polite	direct	points	brief	complicated
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- Think about what background information the ..... will need to understand your message.
- Decide on the important ..... to include in your message.
- Keep letters and emails .....
- Don't write long, ..... sentences.
- Be clear and ....., but use suitably ..... expressions and constructions.

**Exercise 2: The structure of a letter or email**

Look at the parts of an email below. Arrange them in a logical order.

\_\_\_\_\_ reason for writing

\_\_\_\_\_ your signature/name and job title

\_\_\_\_\_ offering/requesting action

\_\_\_\_\_ concluding

\_\_\_\_\_ opening greeting

\_\_\_\_\_ connecting with the reader ('small talk' / referring to previous contact)

\_\_\_\_\_ closing expression

\_\_\_\_\_ giving good news / bad news; agreeing to requests

### Exercise 3: The body of a letter or email

Read the letter and the email below.

#### Letter

Dear Mr Smith

With regards to your phone call, I would like to inform you that the Networking for Business event will now take place on Wednesday 15 September. I would appreciate it if you could confirm your availability.

I would be pleased to assist you with the organisation of transport, should you need it.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Andy Robson  
Events Co-ordinator  
PQC Ltd.

#### Email

Hi James

Thanks for your phone call this morning. Just to let you know that the Networking for Business event will now be on Weds 15 Sept. Could you let me know if you're still free?

If you need me to organise transport, I'd be glad to help out.

Let me know if you need anything else.

Best wishes

Andy

Now label the parts of the letter/email with the correct headings from exercise 2.

	Letter	Email
	Dear Mr Smith	Hi James
	With regards to your phone call	Thanks for your phone call this morning
	I would like to inform you	Just to let you know
	I would appreciate it if you could	Could you
	I would be pleased to assist you	I'd be glad to help out
	If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me	Let me know if you need anything else
	Yours sincerely	Best wishes
	Andy Robson Events Co-ordinator PQC Ltd.	Andy

#### Exercise 4: Formal or informal?

There are two main styles of writing in business: **formal** and **informal**.

**Which phrases above are informal?**

**What are the main differences between the formal and informal styles of writing?**

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**Exercise 5: Structuring an email**

Put the paragraphs of the email in the correct order.

	Anne Kennedy Bookings Officer Ramada Hotel
	I can now confirm that the Company Strategy meeting will take place on 22 September at 9.00 am in the Ramada Hotel.
	Kind regards
	If you have any further questions or special requirements, please do not hesitate to contact me.
	With regards to your phone call this afternoon,
	Dear Mr Reagan
	I would appreciate it if you would confirm whether you need overnight accommodation.

**Exercise 6: Opening and closing expressions**

As well as 'formal' and 'informal', there is an intermediate, or 'semi-formal', level of opening and closing expressions. This is often used in more formal business emails, but not in letters.

Match the opening and closing expressions. Write your answers in the table below.

Opening	Closing
1. Dear Sirs Dear Sir or Madam To whom it may concern	A. Take care Best wishes All the best
2. Hi Susan Dear Robert Hello / Hi	B. Yours faithfully
3. Dear Mrs Jones Dear Mr Smith Dear Ms Pearson	C. Best/Kind regards Regards Best wishes
4. Good morning/afternoon	D. Yours sincerely

	You don't know the name	You know the name
Formal		
Semi-formal		
Informal	n/a	

### Exercise 7: Choosing opening and closing expressions

Complete the gaps with expressions from exercise 6.

- When you don't know the person's name, use ..... or ..... or ..... to open a letter.
- When you don't know the person's name, use ..... to close a letter.
- When you don't know the person's name, use ..... to open an email.
- When you know the person's name and have a close business relationship, use ..... or ..... to open an email.
- When you know the person's name but have a formal business relationship, use ..... to open an email or letter.
- When you know the person's name, use ..... to close a letter.
- When you know the person well and have an informal relationship, use ..... or ..... or ..... to close an email.

**Exercise 8: Choosing opening and closing expressions for emails**

Choose a suitable opening and closing for each email.

	Opening	Closing
<b>Your best friend</b>		
<b>The Chief Executive of your company</b>		
<b>A new client</b>		
<b>A colleague who sits near you</b>		

## Teaching notes

**Level:** lower-intermediate (B1).

**Aims:**

- to understand how to structure a business letter or email
- to understand the differences between formal and informal business letters and emails
- to learn standard formal, semi-formal and informal opening and closing expressions.

**Timing:** approximately 45 minutes.

## Answers

### Exercise 1

- reader
- points
- brief/polite
- complicated
- direct; polite

### Exercise 2

1. opening greeting
2. connecting with the reader ('small talk' / referring to previous contact)
3. giving good news / bad news; agreeing to requests
4. reason for writing
5. offering/requesting action
6. concluding
7. closing expression
8. your signature/name and job title

### Exercise 3

- opening greeting
- connecting with the reader
- reason for writing
- requesting action
- offering action
- offering action / concluding
- closing expression
- your signature/name and job title

**Exercise 4**

The phrases from the letter are formal.

Formal writing	Informal writing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses more complex sentences (e.g. more conditionals)</li> <li>uses complete forms of words (e.g. <i>I would</i>)</li> <li>uses more words of Latin/French origin (e.g. <i>regards, inform, appreciate, questions, hesitate, contact, sincerely</i>).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses more simple sentences</li> <li>misses out some 'grammar words' (e.g. <i><b>I am just writing</b> to let you know</i>)</li> <li>uses abbreviations and short forms (e.g. <i>Thanks</i> and <i>I'd</i>)</li> <li>uses more multi-word verbs (e.g. <i>let you know</i> and <i>help out</i>).</li> </ul>

**Exercise 5**

An interactive version of this activity is available on [www.teachitworld.com](http://www.teachitworld.com) (Quick search: 21130).

7.	Anne Kennedy Bookings Officer Ramada Hotel
3.	I can now confirm that the Company Strategy meeting will take place on 22 September at 9.00 am in the Ramada Hotel.
6.	Kind regards
5.	If you have any further questions or special requirements, please do not hesitate to contact me.
2.	With regards to your phone call this afternoon,
1.	Dear Mr Reagan
4.	I would appreciate it if you would confirm whether you need overnight accommodation.

Dear Mr Reagan

With regards to your phone call this afternoon, I can now confirm that the Company Strategy meeting will take place on 22 September at 9.00 am in the Ramada Hotel.

I would appreciate it if you would confirm whether you need overnight accommodation.

If you have any further questions or special requirements, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards

Anne Kennedy  
Bookings Officer  
Ramada Hotel



**Exercise 6**

	<b>You don't know the name</b>	<b>You know the name</b>
<b>Formal</b>	1b	3d
<b>Semi-formal</b>	4c	3c
<b>Informal</b>	n/a	2a

**Exercise 7**

1. When you don't know the person's name, use Dear Sirs or Dear Sir or Madam or To whom it may concern to open a letter.
2. When you don't know the person's name, use Yours faithfully to close a letter.
3. When you don't know the person's name, use Good morning/afternoon to open an email.
4. When you know the person's name and have a close business relationship, use Hi Susan or Dear Robert to open an email.
5. When you know the person's name but have a formal business relationship, use Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms ... to open an email or letter.
6. When you know the person's name, use Yours sincerely to close a letter.
7. When you know the person well and have an informal relationship, use Take care or Best wishes or All the best to close an email.

**Exercise 8**

Note that British, American and Australian business culture tends to be more informal than in many other cultures. The answers suggested below would be suitable in a typical British/American/Australian company.

	<b>Opening</b>	<b>Closing</b>
<b>Your best friend</b>	Hi Susan	Take care / All the best
<b>The Chief Executive of your company</b>	(depends on the size and conventions of the company)	(depends on the size and conventions of the company)
<b>A new client</b>	Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms ... / Dear Robert	Regards / Best/Kind regards
<b>A colleague who sits near you</b>	Hi Susan	Best wishes / All the best