



WRITING FORMAL MAILS



GOALS

1. Understand the basics of e-mail writing.
2. Comprehend the format of e-mail writing.
3. Use appropriate language and style for writing e-mails.
4. Compose a clear and effective e-mail.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ◆ Identify difference between informal, semi-formal and formal e-mails.
- ◆ Understand format of an e-mail.
- ◆ State your purpose of writing the e-mail clearly.
- ◆ Follow etiquettes of e-mail writing.
- ◆ Use appropriate language and style.
- ◆ Organise content logically and systematically.
- ◆ Practice writing different types of reports.



INTRODUCTION

There has been a revolution in the manner and method of communication in the last few decades. The internet has made instantaneous communication a part of everyday life. Writing and posting letters is no longer a viable option.

The most common and preferred method of informal and formal communication in the modern world, is the e-mail (electronic mail). It is the method of composing, sending, storing and receiving messages over electronic communication system.

An e-mail can be used as an inter-office or internal written communication tool or it can be sent to someone outside the company or institution. It is fast, immediate and allows you to interact and seek/share information with all kinds of people viz. suppliers, customers, colleagues, peers, relatives, friends and even family. It connects you within and beyond the national boundaries. However, there are differences in language and style used in an formal, semi- formal and informal e-mail.

Formal E-mails: They are addressed to **people within and outside the organisation to business suppliers and customers**. Therefore, the style and language should be formal; the purpose should be clear and content should be lucid and precise. It is advised to follow all etiquettes of formal communication. Using contractions, abbreviations, emoticons and slang language are not recommended.

Semi- Formal e-mails: These are **addressed to colleagues functioning within a team and at the same seniority level**. The E-mail can be brief, and the language can be casual and friendly. However, maintaining decorum is essential and the purpose of the mail and message should be clear to the recipient/ recipients.

Informal e-mails: They are **sent to friends and relatives**. There are no rules to be followed. You can use a casual/ informal language (slangs/ abbreviations can be used). No particular style of writing is required to be followed. However, the purpose of the mail and message should be clear to the recipient.

Format of e-mail writing:

From:	Sender's e-mail id/address
To:	Receiver's e-mail id
Cc:	(Cc means Carbon copy) The same mail being sent to other individuals with their e-mail ids visible to all in the group.
Bcc:	(Bcc means Blank carbon copy) The names and e-mail IDs of the Bcc receivers is not visible to the recipient of the mail, but his/her ID is visible to the Bcc receivers.
Subject:	Title or the reason of writing the e-mail
Salutation:	The mail should start with a salutation such as Dear Mr. Price. <i>It is always good to address the recipient by name.</i>
Main Body:	It contains main content of the mail. a) Opening paragraph should outline the main idea/ reason for the mail b) Following paragraphs give relevant details.
Closing:	Make a concluding statement/ suggestion - a) Recommendations to address the issue or problem b) Suggestions on the timeline for resolving the issue and delegating responsibility to selected individuals.
Attachments:	Attach the required documents and give the list in the e-mail. You can use 'Please find attached.' before the list of documents or alone, to imply and tell the receiver about the attachments.
Signature Line:	Includes signature, name and designation of sender. It may include e-mail address and telephone number for convenience of recipient.

Anatomy of a good e-mail

■ Subject line:

The most important part of the e-mail because -

- A good subject line can entice people to open your e-mail to read.
- A bad subject line can land your e-mail in trash.
- Hence, carefully craft the subject line. Please note that every time you are discussing a new topic, change the subject line.

■ Salutation/ Greetings:

- Directly address the person you are sending the e-mail to.
Example : 'Dear Students,','Dear Ms. Jones,','Hi Mr. Smith'
- If you do not know the name of the person whom you are sending the e-mail, try to find the designation/position or simply address as "Dear Human Resource Department,','Dear Sir/Madam,','To whom it may concern'
- Use 'Dear All' if you are addressing to a group of people.

Tip: Suppose you are addressing the person whose name is S. Oberoi, write either – 'Dear Ms./Mr. Oberoi,' or 'Dear S', use last name with title or just the first name.

■ Body of the e-mail:

- Introduce yourself if you are connecting with someone for the first time.
- Briefly explain the subject in the beginning.
- Be clear and concise.
- Organise the contents point-wise in paragraphs.
- Each paragraph should have only one point of discussion.
- Check the grammar, spelling and punctuation.

■ Closing:

- Just as you started on a pleasant note with greetings, you also should part well.
- Sign off on a friendly note, for example : 'Thanks, Best Regards, Best Wishes'
- Choose a closing that genuinely reflects your sentiment and strengthens your relationship to ensure professionalism.

■ Signature:

- Always use your full name.

- Your contact information should be mentioned in the signature – such as designation, company's name, phone number, e-mail id, website address, etc. Providing this information establishes a connect apart from creating a good impression.

Example:

Incorrect version:

Dear Sanjana Shroff,

I read online that you're selling business cards. I was wondering how much if I only wanted 500? Is colour and a logo extra? Can I see an example before all are shipped or will that cost extra? You seem to have a great business so I hope you can help.

Thanks,

Jess Higgins

Correct version:

Dear Ms. Shroff,

I was searching online for a company that makes business cards. I came across your website and am extremely impressed. However, I do have a few questions.

If I were to order only 500 instead of the advertised 1000 business cards, how much would that cost?

Furthermore, I would like my business card to be coloured, and include the logo of my company. Are those requests possible, and if so, how much extra will they be?

Due to my request for colour and logo I would like to preview the card before receiving all 500. Is that feasible?

I appreciate your assistance and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Jessica Higgins

Managing Partner

First Financial Assistance

(555) 555-5555

Analyse the following points in the correct version and compare with incorrect version:

1. **Salutation:** Either Ms. Sanjana or Ms. Shroff. (Please note: while addressing to a female you always use 'Ms.' as title.
2. **Body of the e-mail**
 - a. Language used: In the first e-mail, the language is informal. The sentence structures are not well thought so the e-mail does not convey the appropriate message. It also does not create impression on the reader/receiver as it should. Whereas in correct version of e-mail, the language is formal – no abbreviation and slang is used.

- b. Main Body: The major difference between the two versions is in the body of the e-mails. In the second/correct version, every point of discussion is written in a separate paragraph.
- c. Opening and closing of the e-mail – In the second/correct version, the e-mail starts briefly stating the purpose (how the sender got to know about receiver and clearly states the interest of the sender) and closes on a formal note, clearly specifying the expected action (sender to hear back from receiver as soon as possible).

The e-mail should be concise but it should tell the receiver about the sender's interest and expectation clearly so as to entice the interest of the reader (especially when it is the first e-mail that is being exchanged).

- 3. **Signature** – The signature should always be complete. If the sender just writes their first name casually, it does not create a good impression. Writing your full name along with designation, your firm's name and contact details makes you sound serious and more convincing.

Starter Kit to writing good e-mails

Following are the sample phrases/sentences that can be used in formal e-mail writing.

- Greetings:
 - *Dear Jones,*
 - *Hi Amit,*
 - *Dear Professor Jain,*
 - *Dear Ms. Sharma,*
- Introducing a topic/informing
 - *This is to inform you...*
 - *Just to let you know...*
 - *Good news!, Bad news!, I have got a news for you...*
- Follow up on previous discussion/e-mail:
 - *As discussed,...*
 - *To follow up on our meeting/discussion,...*
 - *As required,...*
 - *Regarding/in regards to...*
- Asking and requesting:
 - *I would like to know if....*
 - *Could you please let me know if...?*
 - *Could you confirm if/when/how...?*
 - *Could you give me an update/quote/estimate?*

- Thanking:
 - *Getting back to me.*
 - *The information.*
 - *The update.*
 - *The e-mail.*
 - *Following up on/with...*
- Ending:
 - *I'll get back to you as soon as I can.*
 - *I'll let you know.*
 - *Let me know.*
 - *Looking forward to hearing from you soon.*
 - *Trust you will find in order.*
 - *Keep me posted.*
 - *Thanks/regards/all the best.*

Writing an effective and an appropriate e-mail:

1. Be **clear about the purpose** of writing the e-mail.
2. **Make points about information** that needs to be included in it.
3. Your **tone and language should be suitable** for the intended recipients.
4. **Use your official id** for all work-related e-mails.
5. Use an **appropriate salutation**.
6. **Keep the mail short and simple**. Nobody has the time to read lengthy, confusing and complicated e-mails.
7. **Use short sentences** to convey your message clearly and concisely.
8. **State the subject/ main purpose** of writing the e-mail clearly **in the opening paragraph**.
9. **Use separate paragraphs for stating different points**.
10. **The content of the mail should be logically and systematically organised**.
11. **Do not write the entire e-mail in capital letters**. (Using capital letters might give an impression of being rude or shouting at recipient.) Capital letters can be utilised to highlight certain points but should be used judiciously.
12. **Highlight/underline the key points** so that the reader can skim through the e-mail and get an idea of the content.
13. **Take special care of the tone**. Since all you write goes on record, make sure that your tone is pleasant and reflects truly what you wish to state.

14. **Ensure you are always polite**, irrespective of the provocation.
15. **Proofread** your mail before you send it. **Check for grammatical, spelling and punctuation errors.** An e-mail full of errors would communicate that you are careless or that you do not pay attention to detail. Besides, errors may change the meaning of the e-mail.
16. When framing a reply to a received mail, **ensure you answer the queries or requests** in it.
17. **Do not use slang, incomprehensible abbreviations and SMS language in your e-mails.** They make it difficult to follow and give the impression to the reader that you are too casual in your approach.

e-mails are effective means of communication when:

1. You need to **send information to a large group of people.**
2. You wish to **send someone an electronic file, bulky documents or detailed information** about any project/ course/ product.
3. It also makes it **easier to contact people** who are otherwise not approachable due to distances, busy schedules, differing time zones etc.
4. You require **daily communication** on varied matters in an organisation.
5. You **need a written record of the communication.** It is imperative that important e-mails are saved for reference to what someone said in an earlier message, to register the time and substantive proof/evidence for example: proof that you have sent some consignment and have received confirmation for the same or review excerpts of an important meeting such as deadline, memo etc.

e-mails are inappropriate means of communication when:

1. If the issue is **complicated and involves repeated lengthy discussions**, it is better to arrange a meeting with the concerned person/ party.
2. The **information is confidential and of sensitive nature.** Your e-mail can be forwarded to others without your knowledge. All your electronic communication is stored in the server even after you have deleted it. This can be accessed and misused by anyone.
3. **Do not write an e-mail when you are emotional** (distressed, upset, overjoyed or excited) about something. You may use words which can alter the tone of the message and this can be misunderstood by the recipient. Besides, do not write anything in an e-mail which you cannot say to a person in a face to face conversation.

Sample e-mails:

The following are some examples of informal, semi formal and formal e-mails.

1. Amit Suri, has recently been promoted to the post of Senior Manager in Hindalco Industries. He receives a congratulatory mail from his sister, his colleague, and his General Manager.
 - a) To: Amit Suri
 - CC/BCC:
 - Subject: CONGRATULATIONS!!

Hi Amit,

We just got the SUPER news of your promotion. I am so excited and thrilled. A big party is due from you and, of course, gifts for your loving sis.

Mom and Dad too are overjoyed. They are proud of their hardworking son. They send you their love and blessings.

We are all looking forward to your visit home so that we can have a grand celebratory party.

Yours affectionately

Jyoti,

b) To: Amit Suri

CC/BCC:

Subject: Congratulations on Your Promotion

Hi Amit,

I just got to hear of your promotion to the post of Senior Manager. Please accept my heartiest congratulations.

Your hard work and dedication have been rewarded. You surely deserve the recognition and responsibility of the position. All team members are elated that you have been selected from our team (out of the members of ten teams.)

We are surely looking forward to a party from you at your earliest convenience.

Regards,

Sumit Choudhary

(Team member)

c) To: Amit Suri

CC/BCC:

Subject: Promotion to the Post of Senior Manager

Dear Amit Suri,

I am pleased to apprise you of your promotion to the post of a Senior Manager in the Production Department.

You have been with Hindalco Industries for the past seven years and have proved your worth time and again. Your dedication, hard work and willingness to take on new initiatives has been recognised and appreciated by your seniors

You have implemented procedures which have improved efficiency in your department and been recognised for outstanding achievement.

Please accept my congratulations on your promotion.

Regards,
Prateek Chopra
General Manager
Hindalco Industries

Sample 2:

Following is the resignation e-mail of Mr. Sushil Kumar, Project Manager. The e-mail is written to his immediate boss, Mr. Anil Malhotra and other team members informing them about the handover of the ongoing project.

To: Mr. Anil Malhotra

CC/BCC: Mr, Satish Kumar, Mr. Ranjeet Prasad

Subject: Handover of ABC Project

Dear Mr. Malhotra,

This is for your information that I would be discontinuing my services in this organisation dated 5th June 2017. I am e-mailing to let you know that the project ABC is 70% complete and requires some more effort on our behalf in the next one month to wrap it up. As I am on my last week of notice period, I would like to hand over the project details to you so that you can take it forward from this juncture.

I have sent the required E-mails to the client informing them of the change in point of contact. Starting 2nd June 2017, they would be communicating directly with you. Hence, I am sending the required files attached with the mail.

Please get back to me in case you require any clarification regarding the project.

Thanks and Regards!

Sushil Kumar

Project Manager

2. Difference between a well-drafted and poorly structured e-mail.**Sample 1:****Version 1 of Sudha Kumari's e-mail**

Subject: tomorrow

As you know, tomorrow afternoon we all are meeting to discuss the status of all the new assignments we are preparing for the students for the coming session. Tea will be provided. Be sure to arrive on time and bring along the assignments you have been working on —bring plenty copies for everyone. Bring everything you have been working on- your calendars, reports, and any important e-mails you have sent. Also, I wanted to remind you that your material has to be given to Ms. Ridhima at the reception. If she is not at her desk when you stop by, you can e-mail them to her later.

Thanks and Regards!

Sudha Kumari
Academic Convener

Version 2

Subject: Materials required for Wed. staff meeting

Hi, everyone—

For tomorrow's 3 p.m. staff meeting in the conference room, please bring copies of the following materials:

- The assignments prepared by you till now
- A one-page report describing your progress so far
- A list of goals for the next month
- Copies of any messages you have sent to team members this past month

You are also requested to submit the finalised assignments for printing to Ms. Ridhima at the reception. If you do not find her at her desk, please e-mail them to her later.

See you tomorrow—

Thanks and Regards,

Sudha Kumari

Academic Convener

Comments

Version 1

1. The **first mail** is confusing, poorly structured, and worded.
2. It is not addressed to anyone.
3. Subject is vague. It does not give a clue to the contents of the mail.
4. Time and place of meeting is not mentioned.
5. It is a single paragraph with too much information that is randomly put in- tea, assignments, reports, E-mails etc.
6. The reader has to read the mail very carefully to understand the message.

Version 2

1. Politely addressed to all recipients
2. States the subject clearly- you know it is about material required for Wednesday's staff meeting.
3. Time and place of meeting clearly mentioned.
4. Lists material required in bullet points.
5. Makes a separate paragraph for submitting assignments to Ms. Ridhima.

Sample 2**Version 1**

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a graduate from ABC college. I got a degree in business and would now like to use it. Your company looks interesting. Can I come in for an interview? I have a lot of experience from my schooling and extra-curricular activities. I think I can help the company a lot. Please respond to my e-mail to let me know.

Thanks,

Manvi Singh

Version 2

Dear Hiring Manager,

My name is Manvi Singh. I graduated in May, 2020 from ABC College with a **Bachelor of Business Management with Specialisation in Marketing**. I was recommended to contact you concerning job opportunities from my mentor, Dr. Abhinav Srivastav. I believe that I would be an excellent candidate for a job.

I have recently interned at Google as an **Internet Marketing Researcher**. I have also taken many courses in **Marketing** to enrich my knowledge including **Principles of Marketing, Marketing Research, Strategic Marketing Management, Consumer Behaviour, and Internet Marketing**.

I believe that I can be a valued asset to your company.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Manvi Singh

singh.manvi@gmail.com

555-555-5555

**PRACTICE EXERCISES**

1. You are Mr. Pradeep Kumar, General Manager, Surbhi Furnishings. You provide furniture and other furnishings to large businesses. Write an e-mail to Mr. Naveen Bansal, proprietor, 'Chelsea' chain of restaurants offering your latest range of products at a discounted price in about 100-150 words.
2. Write an e-mail to Mr. Santosh Desai responding to his query about the availability of cosmetics and toiletries in your manufacturing unit 'Shimmer and Shine'. You are Mr. Manohar Singh, marketing head of the company. (word limit: 100-150 words)
3. Write a mail to Ms. Shikha Sharma, reminding her of a business contract you have sent to her regarding providing infrastructure maintenance services to her company 'Global Solutions'. You are Mr. Sanjay Johri, Business Head of Bloomsbury Infrastructures. (word limit: 100-150 words)

4. You are Amar Singh, a team lead in project implementations department of Cellular Telecommunications. Write a mail to all members of your team asking them to attend a meeting after two days, seeking their suggestions on ways and means to speed up the implementation of the project of improving connectivity in X, Y, Z areas. In the city.(word limit: 100-150 words)
5. You are Mr. Abhijeet Roy who has just graduated from a reputed college of mass communication. Write an e-mail to Ms. Ria Bansal, HR Head of Luxury Living Magazine to apply for the position of Associate Editor.
6. You are Rajan studying in second year of your graduation course. Write an e-mail to your professor, Dr. Jane Watson requesting her for leave for the upcoming lecture because of ill health.
7. You are Abhishek Sanon, an entrepreneur and have founded a start-up, 'Innovators'. Write an e-mail to your prospective clients telling them about the services/products offered by your company.
8. As the HR head of Axis Telecom Pvt Ltd, write an appointment mail to Mr. Anshul Malik, informing him about his selection for 'Team Lead', Sales and Marketing division.
9. You have opened a new branch of a catering company supplying food and snacks. As the owner, write a mail to an organisation, telling about your services.



ANSWERS (VALUE POINTS)

Q.1

- Subject: New Offer on Furnishings
- Opening paragraph states the offer.
- Offer special discount to an old valued customer.
- Detail your trendy, stylish and durable products and affirm that you are the first in the industry to introduce these state of art products.
- Be persuasive in convincing customer to be the first to use the products and thus attract clientele.
- Mention your website where the wide range of products can be viewed.
- Request to place order at the earliest.

Q.2

- Mention query letter and date (with reference to your request vide letter dated 5th May ...)
- Make a list of products available
- State that you make a business commitment only after 25% advance payment and remaining payment be made within 3 months.
- Mention time period of delivery of goods.
- Tell that you would be pleased to answer any further queries.

Q.3

- Remind that you had sent the contract on x date and no reply has been received till date.
- Mention date of meeting and discussion of details of contract

- Ask if any further details/ clarifications required from your side.
- Seek meeting to discuss any issues that have come up.
- In case, all is well you would appreciate it if the contract is signed and mailed to you.

Q.4

- Address a group-‘Hi all’/‘Dear All’
- Specify date and place of meeting
- Mention time frame of completion of project
- State problems being faced-procuring equipment, legal problems, local people protesting against radiation threat, getting required permission from local government bodies etc.
- Ask for viable suggestions such as better resources and software, longer working hours

Q.5

- Address the HR as Dear Ma’am/ Dear Ms. Bansal
- Start with the reference of the job post and your interest in the position
- Introduce yourself
- Briefly mention your background
- State how you would be a perfect fit for the position
- End e-mail with ‘Looking forward to hearing from you soon.’
- Mention about the attachment of your resume
- Give your contact details e-mail address and mobile number along with your full name and signature

Q.6

- Address your Professor
- Start your e-mail with – ‘I am sorry to inform you that...’
- Give reason for your ill health
- State that you are sorry and request for leave
- Assure that you will catch up with the class
- Ask for help on assignment

Q.7

- Subject: Introducing ‘Innovators’
- Address the person whom you are sending personally – like Dear Ms./Mr. ABC or Dear abc, (addressing the person entices the person to look at the e-mail)
- Introduce yourself and mention about the reference (if any)
- Tell about your agenda of writing the e-mail

- Introduce your start-up idea/product/service being offered
- Tell how the reader would be benefitted
- End the e-mail with appropriate closing

Q.8

- Congratulate the incumbent on his selection for the said position/profile
- Invite him to collect the appointment letter on day, time and place at the head office, if accepts the offer.
- Orientation Programme (spanning 2-3 days) organised at the head office, details to be mentioned.
- Date of joining to be mentioned.
- Closure (hoping for a prompt reply and acknowledgement)

Q.9

- Introduce your company.
- Apprise about the other branches operating at prominent places.
- Apprise them about the food items that you can supply broadly and mention that Rate List/Menu Card is appended.
- Specify items that can be offered for tasting for a quality check
- Apprise about bulk orders and discounts offered.
- Closure (hoping for a quick order)