

# EMAIL PHRASES

FORMAL VS INFORMAL



efb

## EMAIL PHRASES: FORMAL VS INFORMAL

### BASICS

	MORE FORMAL	MORE INFORMAL
<b>Name</b>	Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms Dupuis Dear Mary	Hi Mary Mary, ... (or no name at all)
<b>Previous contact</b>	Thank you for your email of . ... With reference to your email sent [date], ... I apologize for not getting in contact with you before now.	Thanks for your email. Re your last email, ... Sorry I haven't written for ages, but I've been really busy.
<b>Common acquaintance</b>	Your name was given to me by ...	I got your name from ...
<b>Reason for writing</b>	We are writing to inform you that... I am writing in connection with ... In reply to your email, here are ...	Just a short note to let you know that ... I'm writing about ... Here's the ... you wanted.
<b>Giving information</b>	I'm writing to let you know that ... We are able to confirm that ... We would like to point out that ... You will be pleased to hear that ... We regret to inform you that ...	Just a note to say ... I can confirm that ... Please note that ... Good news! Unfortunately, ...
<b>Attachments</b>	Please find attached my report. I'm sending you ... as a pdf file.	I've attached ... Here is the ... you wanted.
<b>Asking for information</b>	Could you give me some information about ... I would like to know ... I'm interested in receiving/finding out ...	Can you tell me a little more about ... I'd like to know ... Please send me ...
<b>Requests</b>	I would be grateful if you could ... I wonder if you could ... Do you think I could have ... ? Thank you in advance for your help.	Please ... /Can you ... ? Could you ... ? Can I have ... ? I'd appreciate your help on this.
<b>Promising action</b>	I will ... I'll investigate the matter. I will contact you again shortly.	I'll ... I'll look into it. I'll get back to you soon.
<b>Offering help</b>	If you wish, I would be happy to ... Would you like me to ... ?	If you like, I can ... Do you want me to ... ?
<b>Final comments</b>	Thank you for your assistance. Do not hesitate to contact us again if you need any further information. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. My direct line is ...	Thanks for your help. If there's anything else, just let me know. Just give me a call if you have any questions. My number is ...
<b>Close</b>	Give my regards to ... Looking forward to our meeting. Yours/Sincerely	Best wishes to ... Speak to you soon/See you soon. Best wishes/All the best

## EMAIL PHRASES: FORMAL VS INFORMAL

### CHECKING UNDERSTANDING

EXAMPLES	
<b>Technical Problems</b>	<p>Did you get my last email sent on ... ?</p> <p>Sorry, you forgot to attach the file. Can you send it again?</p> <p>I got your email, but I can't open the attachment.</p> <p>Did you mean to send this? I don't want to open the attachment in case it's got a virus.</p>
<b>Asking for clarification</b>	<p>I'm not sure what you mean by this. Could you clarify?</p> <p>Which ... do you mean?</p> <p>Sorry, I don't understand this point. Can you explain in more detail?</p> <p>Are you sure about that?</p>
<b>Giving clarification</b>	<p>Sorry, what I meant was ... , not ...</p> <p>I thought ... , but I may be wrong.</p> <p>I'll check and get back to you.</p> <p>The correct information is given below. Please amend your records accordingly.</p> <p>Sorry, forget my last email. You're right.</p>
<b>Close</b>	<p>I hope this clarifies the situation.</p> <p>Get back to me if there's anything else.</p>

### NEGOTIATING WITH EXTERNAL PARTNERS

EXAMPLES	
<b>Asking for information</b>	<p>What are your usual charges (fees/rates) for a job like this?</p> <p>Can you give me some more information about ... ?</p>
<b>Requests</b>	<p>Do you think you could ... ?</p> <p>Would you be able to ... ?</p>
<b>Emphasizing a point</b>	<p>My main concern at this stage is ...</p> <p>The main thing for me is ...</p>
<b>Asking for a suggestion</b>	<p>How do you think we should deal with this?</p> <p>What do you think is the best way forward?</p>
<b>Making a suggestion</b>	<p>Why don't we ... ?</p> <p>What about if we ... ?</p>
<b>Negotiating: being firm</b>	<p>I understand what you're saying about ... , (but ... )</p> <p>I can see what you're saying about ... , (but ... )</p>
<b>Negotiating: being flexible</b>	<p>I would be prepared to ... (if you ... )</p> <p>I am willing to ... (if you ... )</p>
<b>Negotiating: agreeing</b>	<p>Okay, I'm happy with that for now.</p> <p>That's fine. Let's go ahead on that basis.</p>
<b>Next steps</b>	<p>I'll be in touch soon.</p> <p>Let's talk next week.</p>
<b>Closing</b>	<p>I look forward to working with you.</p> <p>I'm sorry that we couldn't use your services this time, but I hope there will be another opportunity.</p>

## ARRANGEMENTS

MEETINGS		
	NEUTRAL	INFORMAL
<b>Reason for writing</b>	I'm writing to arrange a time for our meeting. What time would be convenient for you? Could we meet on [day] at [time]?	Just a quick note to arrange a time to meet. When would suit you?
<b>Suggesting time/place</b>	Could we meet on [day] at [time]?	How about [day] at [time]? Are you free sometime next week?
<b>Saying when you are (are not) free</b>	I would be able to attend the meeting on Thursday morning. I'm out of the office until 2pm. Any time after that would be fine. Unfortunately I can't manage next Monday.	I'm free Thursday am. I won't be around until after lunch. Any time after that is okay. Sorry, can't make it next Monday.
<b>Confirming</b>	I'd like to confirm ... That's fine. I will call/email you tomorrow to confirm the details.	Thursday is good for me. That should be okay. I'll get back to you if there's a problem.
<b>Changing arrangements</b>	This is to let you know that I will not be able to attend the meeting next Thursday. I wonder if we could move it to ...? I apologize for any inconvenience caused.	Re our meeting next week, sorry but I can't make Thursday. How about ... instead? Sorry for the inconvenience.
<b>Close</b>	I look forward to meeting you in Brussels. Let me know if you need to change the arrangements.	See you in Brussels. Give me a call if anything changes.

INVITATIONS		
	NEUTRAL	INFORMAL
<b>Inviting</b>	I would like to invite you to attend ... Your presence at ... will be very useful. Please let me know if you are able to attend.	I'm writing to invite you to ... It would be great to see you there. Please let me know if you can make it.
<b>Preparations</b>	Before the meeting it would be useful if ... It would be helpful if you could bring ...	Please ... before the meeting. Please bring to the meeting ...
<b>Accepting</b>	Thank you for your kind invitation. The date you suggested is fine. I would be delighted to attend the meeting.	Thanks a lot for the invitation. The date's fine for me. I'd love to come to the meeting.
<b>Refusing</b>	Thank you for your kind invitation. Unfortunately, I have another appointment in my schedule on that day. I hope we will have the opportunity to meet on another occasion in the near future. I am sure the meeting will be a great success.	Thanks a lot for your kind invitation. Unfortunately, I have something else to do on that day. Please accept my apologies. I hope we can meet up soon.  Good luck with the meeting.

WRITING STYLES

FORMAL/INFORMAL		
	NEUTRAL/FORMAL	INFORMAL
<b>Example phrases</b>	Thank you for your email of 12 Feb. With reference to ... I would be grateful if you could ... We regret to advise you that ... Please accept our apologies for ... I was wondering if you could ... We note from our records that you have not ... We would like to remind you that ... It is necessary for me to ... It is possible that I will ... Would you like me to ... ? However, ... /In addition, ... /Therefore, ... If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to meeting you next week.	Thanks for the email Re ... Please ... I'm sorry to tell you that ... I'm sorry about ... Could you ... ? You haven't ... Don't forget ... I need to ... I might ... Shall I ... ? But, ... /Also, ... /So, ... If you'd like more details, just let me know. See you next week.
<b>Example words (formal/informal pairs with the same meaning)</b>	assistance/due to/inquire/inform/information occupation/possess/provide/receive/repair request/requirements/verify	help/because of/ask/tell/facts job/have/give/get/fix ask for/needs/check

POLITE		
	NEUTRAL	POLITE AND DIPLOMATIC
<b>Requests</b>	Can you ... ? Please ...	Could you possibly ... ? I was wondering if you could ... ?
<b>Asking for permission</b>	Is it okay if I ... ? Could I ... ?	Would it be a problem for you if I ... ? I wonder if I could ... ?
<b>Offering help</b>	Can I ... ? Shall I ... ?	Would you like me to ... ? Do you need any help with ... ?
<b>Making a suggestion</b>	What about ... (+ -ing)? Shall we ... ?	Why don't we ... / Perhaps we should ... ?
<b>Softening a strong comment</b>	There is a problem.  There will be a delay. It will be very expensive.  We can't do that. That gives us very little time. I think it's better to ask Liyu. I disagree.	There seems to be an issue with this. It's nothing serious. I'm sorry, but it looks like there will be a small delay. It might be quite expensive. Won't it be a bit expensive? It won't be cheap. I'm not sure we can do that. Actually, that doesn't give us much time. Wouldn't it be better to ask Liyu! I can see what you're saying, but ... Don't you think that ... ? To be honest, I think it might be better to ...

WRITING STYLES

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (customer)**

EXAMPLES	
<b>How you got the contact</b>	We met last Thursday on your stand at the Munich Trade Fair. I am emailing you via your website, which I found through Google.
<b>Reason for writing</b>	We are a manufacturer/supplier/provider of .... We are interested in ... We are a Polish company exporting to the rest of the EU, and we need ...
<b>General requests</b>	We would be grateful for some information about ... Please send us information about your product range and prices.
<b>Specific requests</b>	In particular, we would like to know ... Please send details of your prices, discounts, terms of payment and delivery times. Could you also say whether there is any minimum order?
<b>Close</b>	An early reply would be greatly appreciated. I look forward to an early reply, and am sure that there is a market for your products here in Brazil.

**GIVING INFORMATION (supplier)**

EXAMPLES	
<b>Thanks</b>	Thank you for your email of 4 June inquiring about ...
<b>Factual information</b>	We can quote you a price of ... We can ship by ... [date] The goods will be shipped within three days of a firm order. We can offer a discount of 5% on orders over €5000. We require payment by bank transfer/letter of credit. Our normal procedure is to ... Our normal terms for first-time customers are ... We can supply the items you require directly from stock.
<b>Attachments</b>	I am attaching a document that gives full details of ... I am attaching our current catalogue and price list as a pdf file.
<b>Highlighting key points</b>	You will see that our line of ... is on special offer right now. This month we are offering a special deal on ...
<b>Answering questions</b>	We can meet all your needs. Our experience in this field includes ... We ship the goods within 24 hours of a firm order, and for first-time customers our minimum order is \$2,000. I am sorry but that model is no longer available. However, ...
<b>Close</b>	May I suggest that I call you at your convenience to discuss the matter further? If you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me. My direct line is ...

## WRITING STYLES

### FOLLOWING UP A CALL (supplier)

#### EXAMPLES

<b>Open</b>	Thank you for your call this morning, and for explaining your needs so clearly. I understand you are looking for ... and I am confident we can find a good solution.
<b>Information</b>	I have attached some information about our company, including ... I have attached a list of some of our clients, which include [names of companies].
<b>Next steps</b>	As agreed, I'll give you a call in a day, or two after you've had a chance to read ... Perhaps it would be a good idea to meet in person to discuss ... ?
<b>Close</b>	In the meantime, if you would like to discuss any other points, please don't hesitate to call me on my direct line, given below.

### CLARIFYING ISSUES (customer)

#### EXAMPLES

<b>Open</b>	Thank you for sending .... We are interested in However, there are one or two things we would like to clarify before going ahead.
<b>Discussing terms</b>	Do you give my discount for large orders? If we pay 50% in advance, can we pay the rest after 60 days? We need these items by ... at the latest.
<b>Close</b>	If we can reach an agreement on these matters we are sure that we can do more business with you in the future. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

### ASKING FOR PAYMENT (supplier)

#### EXAMPLES

<b>Open</b>	Thank you for your email of ... inquiring about a possible order for ...
<b>Saying yes</b>	In relation to ... , we would be happy to let you have ... I have spoken to my line manager, and we are able to on this occasion.
<b>Saying yes, if you ...</b>	With regard to ... , unfortunately we are not able to However, I am sure we can find an acceptable compromise. We are happy to give you ... if you ...
<b>Final details</b>	We would be grateful if you could supply bank references. Please complete and return the attached form so that your order can be processed without any delay. Please note that we have recently improved the functionality of our website, and it is now possible to place an order online.
<b>Close</b>	I will give you another call later in the week to check that everything is satisfactory. We look forward to receiving your order, and assure you it will have our prompt attention. If you need any further information, do not hesitate to contact me.

## WRITING STYLES

### MAKING AN ORDER (customer)

#### EXAMPLES

<b>Open</b>	Thank you for your recent email, and we accept your quotation. Our completed order form is attached, and we have instructed our bank to open a letter of credit.
<b>Close</b>	Please acknowledge receipt of this order.

### CONFIRMING AN ORDER (supplier)

#### EXAMPLES

<b>Open</b>	Your order has been received. We can confirm that your goods have been shipped. Due to exceptional demand these items are temporarily out of stock. We hope to be able to ship your order within ... days. We will keep you fully informed and apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.
<b>Close</b>	We are confident that you will be very satisfied with the goods. Should there be any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me, either by email or phone.

### AGREEING TERMS (supplier)

#### EXAMPLES

<b>First reminder (open)</b>	We are writing regarding a payment of €12,600 for invoice number KJ678. This is now overdue. A copy of the invoice is attached. According to our records, the sum of €4,500 is still outstanding on your account.
<b>(action)</b>	Please send the money by bank transfer to settle the account, or give an explanation of why the balance is still outstanding. If you have already dealt with this matter, please disregard this email. We would appreciate your cooperation in dealing with this matter as soon as possible.
<b>Second reminder (open)</b>	On [date] I wrote to you regarding your company's unpaid account, amounting to €4,500. May we please remind you that this amount is still outstanding. I wish to draw your attention to my previous email of [date] about the overdue payment on your account. We are very concerned that the matter has not received your attention.
<b>(action)</b>	We need a bank transfer in full settlement without further delay. Clearly, this situation cannot be allowed to continue, and we must ask you to take immediate action to settle your account. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your cooperation.
<b>Final demand (open)</b>	Following my emails of [dates] I must inform you that we have still not received payment for the outstanding sum of €4,500. I wrote to you on [dates] regarding the balance of €12,600 on your account. I attach copies of both emails. This sum is now two months overdue. We are very concerned that the matter has not received your attention.
<b>(action)</b>	Unless we receive payment within seven days, we shall have no alternative but to take legal action to recover the money. In the meantime, your existing credit facilities have been suspended.

## COMPLAINTS AND APOLOGIES

### COMPLAINING (customer)

EXAMPLES	
<b>Open</b>	<p>I am writing ...</p> <p>... in connection with my order FS690 which arrived this morning.</p> <p>... to complain about the quality of a product I bought from your website.</p> <p>... to complain about the poor service we received from your company.</p> <p>... to draw your attention to the negative attitude of some members of your team.</p>
<b>Complaint</b>	<p>Our order dated 16 September clearly stated that we wanted 600 items. However you sent ...</p> <p>The goods were faulty/damaged/in poor condition.</p> <p>There seems to be an error in the invoice.</p> <p>The equipment I ordered has still not been delivered, despite my phone call to you last week to say that it is needed urgently.</p> <p>The product I received was well below the standard I expected.</p> <p>To make matters worse, when I called your company your staff were rude and unhelpful.</p>
<b>Request for action</b>	<p>Please replace the faulty goods as soon as possible.</p> <p>We must insist on an immediate replacement/full refund.</p> <p>Unless we receive the goods by the end of this week, we will have no choice but to cancel the order.</p>
<b>Close</b>	<p>I hope you will deal with this matter promptly as it is causing considerable inconvenience.</p>

### APOLOGIZING (supplier)

EXAMPLES	
<b>Open</b>	<p>I am writing in relation to your recent complaint.</p>
<b>Apologizing</b>	<p>I was very concerned to learn about ... Please accept my sincere apologies .</p> <p>I would like to apologize for the inconvenience caused.</p>
<b>No responsibility</b>	<p>We appreciate that this has caused you considerable inconvenience, but we cannot accept any responsibility in this matter.</p>
<b>Promising action</b>	<p>We will send replacement items/send the missing goods/give you a refund immediately.</p> <p>I need to look into this. Please leave it with me and I'll get back to you tomorrow.</p> <p>I have looked into the matter and ...</p> <p>I have spoken to the staff involved, and ...</p> <p>We're having a temporary problem with We're doing everything we can to sort it out.</p>
<b>Compensation</b>	<p>To compensate for the inconvenience, we would like to offer you ...</p>
<b>Close</b>	<p>Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.</p> <p>Once again, I hope you will accept my apologies for the inconvenience caused.</p> <p>I can assure you that this will not happen again.</p> <p>I very much hope you will continue to use our services in the future.</p> <p>If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me on my direct line ...</p>

**EMAIL PHRASES: FORMAL VS INFORMAL**

**PERSONAL**

**OPENING AND CLOSING EXAMPLES**

Sorry I haven't been in touch. Really busy with all kinds of stuff.	Anyway, that's all for now. Are you on Skype? Let's fix a time to chat.
Thank you so much for the wonderful present. It's exactly what I wanted. How did you know?	Thanks again for the gift, and give my very best wishes to your family.
I've just read your email. I'm so sorry to hear about what happened.	You know you can count on me if you need any support. I'll call you at the weekend to see how things are.
Really sorry, but I can't make it at the weekend. Such a shame because I was looking forward to it.	Sorry again I can't come. But let's meet up soon anyway. What about going to see that new Ang Lee movie?

**BEING FRIENDLY: linking words at the start of a sentence**

<b>You heard something, but are not sure</b>	It seems that/Apparently
<b>Surprising, but true</b>	Actually/In fact
<b>Obvious or already known</b>	Obviously/Of course
<b>Bad/Good fortune</b>	Unfortunately/Luckily
<b>What you really think</b>	To be honest/If you ask me
<b>Most important thing about a situation</b>	Basically/At the end of the day
<b>Changing the subject, or returning to it</b>	Anyway/So
<b>Preparing to close</b>	Anyway

**ASKING FOR ADVICE**

	NEUTRAL/FORMAL	INFORMAL
<b>Open</b>	I'd like your advice about a problem I have.	There's something on my mind.
<b>Asking for advice</b>	I was wondering if you had any ideas.	What should I do? Any ideas?
<b>Close</b>	I would appreciate it if you could contact me to discuss this matter further.	Please let me know what you think. You can email, or give me a call.

**GIVING ADVICE**

	NEUTRAL/FORMAL	INFORMAL
<b>Open</b>	I was sorry to hear about your current difficulties.	I'm real sorry you're having such a hard time at the moment.
<b>Giving advice</b>	I think it might be a good idea to ... Have you thought of ... (+ -ing)?	I think you should ... What about ... (+ -ing)?
<b>Options</b>	I think this option would be preferable to ...	I think it's better than ...
<b>Close</b>	I hope I have been of some help.	Hope that helps.

## EMAIL PHRASES: FORMAL VS INFORMAL

### PERSONAL

#### SUGGESTIONS

<b>Making a suggestion</b>	I think we should/Let's ... Shall we/Perhaps we could/Why don't we ... ? I suggest/How about' ... (+ -ing)
<b>Accepting</b>	Great! What a wonderful idea! Yes, good idea. I think it would work really well. Yes, that might be worth trying . Let's give it a go.
<b>Rejecting</b>	Your idea sounds good, but I'm not sure it would work in practice. I'm not so sure about this. I can see some problems.

#### SPECIAL SITUATIONS

<b>Thanks</b>	Just a quick note to say many thanks for ... It was really helpful and I really appreciate it.
<b>Good luck wishes</b>	Good luck with ... I'm sure you'll do well. I wish you every success with your future projects.
<b>Congratulations</b>	Many congratulations on your promotion/new job. I was delighted to hear the news about ... Well done! You worked hard for this and really deserve it.
<b>Sending wishes to a third party</b>	Please give my best wishes/kind regards to ...
<b>Bad news</b>	I was so sorry to hear about ... I've just heard about your illness/unfortunate accident. I am so sorry. Hope you feel better soon. If there's anything I can do to help, just let me know.

#### JOB APPLICATIONS

<b>Greeting (formal)</b>	Dear Mr/Ms [real name]/Dear Hiring Manager for [position]/fo whom it may concern
<b>Reason for writing</b>	With reference to your advertisement on the ... website, I am interested in applying for ...
<b>Your background</b>	I am ... years old and am currently studying for a degree in ... at ... University. For the last two years I have been working as a (job) at [name of company].
<b>The job itself</b>	I am interested in this job because ... I think I would be very well suited for this job as I ...
<b>Refer to CV/resume</b>	I have attached my CV as a Word document. You will notice in the CV that I ...
<b>Final comments</b>	I would be grateful for the opportunity to discuss my application further with you. I am available for interview by telephone or Skype any weekday afternoon. Should you require any additional information, please don't hesitate to contact me. You will find my telephone number, email address and Skype name below.
<b>Close</b>	I look forward to hearing from you soon. Yours faithfully/Yours truly

## REPORTS

### REPORT STRUCTURE

<b>Introduction/Background</b>	Here is my report, as requested by the Board at their meeting of 18 April. The purpose of this report is to consider/analyze/review ... The report is based on research done/figures collected/interviews made ... I have divided the report into three sections.
<b>Findings</b>	As can be seen in table 1/section 2/figure 3, ... The graph/table shows that ... It appears that .... This has led to a situation where ... I will discuss this in more detail below/in section 3.2.
<b>Conclusion/ Recommendations</b>	The findings/figures/results/investigations show that ... It is clear that we are in a situation where ... My specific recommendations are as follows.
<b>Closing comments</b>	Please look at the full report, attached as a pdf, and let me have your comments. Feel free to contact me at any time if you have any questions.

### LINKING WORDS

<b>Sequence</b>	Firstly/Secondly/Finally
<b>Talking generally</b>	In general/On the whole/Typically
<b>Contrast</b>	However/Nevertheless/On the other hand
<b>Avoiding generalization</b>	In general ... , however ... /On the whole ... , but ...
<b>Avoiding certainty</b>	It is possible (likely) that/It appears that/The evidence suggests that
<b>Adding another point</b>	In addition/Furthermore/On another point
<b>Examples</b>	For example/For instance/eg
<b>Important example</b>	Especially/Above all/In particular
<b>Surprising but true</b>	In fact/Actually/As a matter of fact
<b>Something obvious</b>	Clearly/Obviously/Of course
<b>Result/Consequence</b>	As a result/Therefore/For this reason
<b>Rephrasing</b>	In other words/That is to say/ie
<b>Alternatives</b>	Either ... or ... /Alternatively/Instead of
<b>New topic</b>	In relation to/With reference to/As far as ... is concerned
<b>Summarizing</b>	In brief/In short/So, to sum up
<b>Concluding</b>	On balance/Taking everything into consideration/In the final analysis

REPORTS

TRENDS	
<b>Movement</b>	Sales went up/rose/improved/peaked/increased/grew/were up/were variable Sales went down/fell/got worse/hit a low/decreased/shrank/were down/were stable
<b>Size of movement</b>	Sales went up ... slightly/marginally/significantly/substantially
<b>Speed of movement</b>	Sales went up ... slowly/gradually/steadily/rapidly
<b>Prepositions</b>	Sales went up from 15,000 to 17,500. So they increased by 2,500. Last year we had a market share of 14%. After the recent increase in sales it now stands at 18%.
<b>Forecasts</b>	I'm sure that/I expect that/I doubt that ... sales will increase Sales will definitely/definitely won't increase. Sales will probably/probably won't increase Sales are likely to/are not likely to increase. Sales may/might increase.
<b>Cause and effect</b>	The marketing campaign should create/lead to/result in an increase in sales. The increase in sales was because of/resulted from/was a result of/was due to the marketing campaign. Next month will be the start of the marketing campaign. So/Therefore/Because of this we should see an increase in sales.
<b>Contrast</b>	Sales increased. However/Nevertheless, market share was unchanged. (like 'but') Sales increased, although/even though market share was unchanged. (surprise) Market share was unchanged in spite of/despite the increase in sales. (surprise) Sales increased, while/whereas market share was unchanged. (strong contrast, no surprise)

