

Correspondence

Emails

1. Write a meaningful & informative subject line.
2. Keep the message focussed and short.
 - a. Greet your reader (salutation)
 - b. Identify yourself*
 - c. Acknowledge previous correspondence*
 - d. State the purpose (why you are writing)
 - e. Elaborate (details about purpose)
 - f. Indicate follow up action steps/polite ending and/or close
 - g. Include signature line, [company*] & contact details
3. Respect social relations in language (informal «» formal).
4. Keep the layout clear.
 - a. Short paragraphs
 - b. Blank line between paragraphs
 - c. Avoid fancy typefaces
5. Proof-read for spelling, grammar & punctuation.

Stages marked * are optional and depend on the particular socio-cultural context of the email.

Exercise 1

Identify the different stages of the email below.

Subject: confirmation order ABCD/34/09-10

Dear Sir or Madam

With reference to your letter dated 26th March, I want to confirm the Order No. ABCD/34/09-10 placed by our purchasing department. The order was given on 3rd March, 2010.

As far as the payment is concerned, I would appreciate if you could send me the account details where the payment has to be made. As per the invoice, we are entitled to a cash discount of 2% if the payment is done within 30 days from the date of invoice.

For your reference I am also sending the purchase order details as an attachment. This will help you in determining the amount which needs to be deposited in the account. Can you please let us know whether it suits you if we make a wire transfer instead of a DD or a cheque?

Please contact me, if you have any query.

Yours faithfully,

Thanks.

G.B.Shaw

Account Manager, Oxford Book Store Ltd.

(222) 123 – 4567

E-mail: bgshaw@obsi.ne

Source: <http://www.sampleemails.org/sample-business-email-2.html#iiHtzkBI738wcGw.99>

Exercise 2

Match each email opening with a good subject line from the box.

Unhappy customer	Focus group	How to make beer	Anniversary dinner invitation
Job application	Complaint	10 th anniversary dinner	
Focus group 6 April	Job application ref. 24/GP	Instructions for beer kit	

1. I am writing to apply for the job (ref. 24/GP) advertised in *The Guardian* on 6 October 2016.
2. Pleased find attached the instructions for the beer-making kit.
3. I am writing to complain about the poor service provided by your hotel during my recent stay.
4. On June 5 our company will be celebrating our tenth anniversary and we are pleased to invite you to the dinner.
5. You have been selected to join a focus group that will be meeting on 6 April.

Exercise 3

Rewrite the following email received by the English teacher from a student. Choose language selections that reflect the socio-cultural context. Add any essential information that is missing.

Subject: Notes
<p>Hello Ann</p> <p>I wanna now why my note of the ER exam was not released? there is nothing in front of my name! What was my note?</p> <p>Best regards</p>

Exercise 4

You are doing your masters dissertation and in your readings have come across several references to an article published in an obscure journal that you cannot find on-line. Write an email to the author of the article, requesting her to send you a copy of the article in question. The bibliographic reference of the article is:

Henshall, A.C. 2012. 'English as an International Language and language policies in Economics journals'. *Anglo-Saxónica*. Series III. Nr. 4: 131-162.

The author's email is: ahenshall@iseg.ulisboa.pt

Letters

The material for letters (pp 3-6) was originally published in *Language reference for business English: Grammar, functions and communication skills*, by Nick Brieger & Jeremy Comfort, New York: Prentice Hall International, 1992. Pp 202-209.

Exercise 5.

How does the layout of a letter on paper differ from that of an email? Why might this be so?

SKILL 4

Letter-writing

Background

Why write a letter when you can use the phone or meet face-to-face? There are a number of reasons for using the letter as the medium of communication. Most important are:

1. Letters can formalise ideas. A well written letter needs a clear structure; and a clear structure needs systematic and logical development. So, writing helps to clarify thoughts.
2. Letters can simplify ideas. The process of drafting a letter can reduce ideas to short, simple and essential information.
3. Letters project an organisation's image – through the logo, the writer's style and the appearance of the document.
4. Letters are tangible. They are a written record of a message transmitted by the writer. They are also a more permanent record than a phone call.
5. Letters are cheaper, especially when compared to long-distance phone calls.

In summary, we can say that a letter is the appropriate medium:

1. When immediate feedback isn't needed or isn't possible, e.g. when inviting comments on a proposal.
 2. When personal contact isn't needed or isn't possible, e.g. when confirming an appointment made by phone.
 3. When a written record is needed, either as a permanent record or as a symbol of the company's image, e.g. a proposal.
 4. When you are not sure you can contact the right person by phone or the right person is difficult to get hold of.
 5. When a large number of standard messages need to be transmitted, e.g. a mailshot.
- So, what are the elements of effective letter-writing?
1. **Good practice:** the need for good physical presentation and layout.
 2. **Clear objectives:** Why are you writing the letter? What has caused the letter to be written? What results do you want from the letter?
 3. **The message:** the need for the right information in clear language and appropriate style.
 4. **Anticipation of the likely result:** how do you expect the reader to react?
 5. **An action plan:** do you have a procedure for follow-up?

Structuring a letter

Presentation and layout

Letters are important in creating a good impression. Therefore, what is written is as vital as how it is presented. There are various styles appropriate to business letters. These must take into account:

- the company's letterhead
- the company's inhouse writing style.

In addition, the style of letters is constantly changing in line with different international business practices and new language developments. However, a good business letter should aim to be:

- precise
- concise
- accurate

The following are examples of five types of business letter.

A letter of application

Inventor Plus
20 Chiswick Avenue
Southtown
SO3 6QZ

10 January 19—

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing in response to your advertisement for a Personal Assistant/Secretary to the Managing Director.

I am enclosing a copy of my curriculum vitae, which gives details of my qualifications and experience. As you will see I have had 7 years' experience of working in a business environment and have an RSA 2 in Typing and Shorthand. Although I did not have to travel in my previous job, I would be very willing to do so.

I will be available for interview at any time, and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,

Hilary Beacham

Hilary Beacham

63 Wenwell Gardens
Southtown
SO9 7PX

The sender's address

← The date

← The addressee

← The greeting (where the addressee's name is not known)

← The first paragraph says why you are writing

← The second paragraph gives further details

← The final paragraph includes a polite ending

← Dear sir/(Madam)

← The farewell (after Dear sir/(Madam))

← The signature

← The person writing the letter

A letter of request



The letterhead includes the name and address of the sender

(Head Office), Foss House, Brigham Street, Liverpool L13 4AT
Tel: 051-387 6397 Fax: 051-387 9284

Compact Systems
96 Rosewall Drive
Southtown
SO3 4BT

Your ref: B7693
Our ref: Inq. B7693

The sender's reference

5 April 19--

The date
The greeting (where the addressee's name is not known)

Dear Sirs

The first paragraph says why you are writing

We recently attended the Software Trade Exhibition in Bath, and were impressed by the range of software available through your company.

The second paragraph gives the real reason for writing

We are a large chain of business software retailers and are looking for a software house which could supply us with a range of business applications programs.

As we usually place large orders, we would expect a quantity discount in addition to a 20 p.c. trade discount off net list prices. Our terms of payment are normally 30 days after receipt of invoice.

If these conditions are of interest to you, we would be much obliged if you could send us your current catalogue and price list.

We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours faithfully

The farewell (after Dear Sirs)
The final paragraph is a polite ending

P. Pat Miles

The signature
The person writing the letter
P. Barker
Purchasing Manager

PP. means that Pat Miles signed the letter for P. Barker

A letter of reply

Compact Systems

96 ROSEWALL DRIVE, SOUTHTOWN, SO3 4BT TEL: 0927 423845 FAX: 0927 423617

Mr P. Barker
Purchasing Manager
Softchain Ltd

Your ref: Inq. B7693
Our ref: AE/677

Foss House
Brigham Street
Liverpool
L13 4AT

The addressee's reference

10 April--

Alternative position for the date
The greeting (where the addressee's name is known)

Dear Mr Barker

Thank you for your letter of 5 April 19-- in which you asked for details of our range of business applications programs.

Because of the low price of our software we do not normally offer a quantity discount; however, if you can give me an indication of the quantity involved, I would be happy to discuss terms further with you. Normally, we would be happy to offer you a 20 p.c. trade discount off net list prices, as requested in your letter, and to accept your terms of payment.

I am enclosing a copy of our most recent catalogue, which gives details of your product range, together with list prices. I hope that the information will be of interest to you, and look forward to discussing orders in the near future.

Yours sincerely

The farewell (after a named addressee)
PP. Hilary Beacham

Alice Everett
Marketing Manager

The enclosed documents

Encl. Compact catalogue, trade price list

'Encl.' means enclosure(s)

A letter of order



Softchain Ltd

(Head Office), Foss House, Brigham Street, Liverpool L13 4AT
Tel: 051-387 6397 Fax: 051-387 9284

Mrs A. Everett
Compact Systems
96 Rosewall Drive
Southtown
SO3 4BT

Your ref: AE/677
Our ref: Ord. B7693

15 July 19--

Dear Mrs Everett

Please find enclosed our order, Ord. B7693, for 100 IBM-compatible Compact Accounts packages, as discussed in our phone conversation of 12 July.

We have decided to place an order for 100 packages and accept the 20 p.c. trade discount off net list prices as discussed. Payment will be made, as agreed, 30 days after receipt of your invoice.

We would be much obliged if you could despatch the goods so that they reach us no later than 30 July, and look forward to receiving your acknowledgement.

Yours sincerely

P. Barker
Purchasing Manager

Encl. Ord. B7693

A letter of complaint



Softchain Ltd

(Head Office), Foss House, Brigham Street, Liverpool L13 4AT
Tel: 051-387 6397 Fax: 051-387 9284

Mrs A. Everett
Compact Systems
96 Rosewall Drive
Southtown
SO3 4BT

Your ref: AE/677
Our ref: Ord. B7693

2 August 19--

Dear Mrs Everett

On 15 July we placed an order for 100 IBM-compatible Compact Accounts packages. A consignment was delivered on 30 July, but upon inspection we found that the packages were not IBM-compatible.

As this is our first transaction with your company we are naturally disappointed that we have got off to such a bad start. Therefore I would be much obliged if you could send us the correct goods as soon as possible, and arrange for the collection of the incorrect ones.

Yours sincerely

P. Barker
Purchasing Manager

Beginning and ending a letter

Opening a letter

To a:	British English	American English
company	Dear Sirs	Gentlemen
man (name unknown)	Dear Sir	Dear Sir
woman (name unknown)	Dear Madam	Dear Madam
person (name and sex unknown)	Dear Sir/Madam	Dear Sir/Madam
man	Dear Mr Bennett	Dear Mr. Bennett
woman (married or widowed)	Dear Mrs Bennett	Dear Mrs. Bennett
woman (unmarried)	Dear Miss Bennett	Dear Miss Bennett
woman (marital status unknown)	Dear Ms Bennett	Dear Ms. Bennett
married couple	Dear Mr and Mrs Bennett	Dear Mr. and Mrs. ...
unmarried couple	Dear Mr Bennett and Mrs Black	Dear Mr. ... and Mrs. ...
friend or acquaintance	Dear Peter	Dear Peter

Closing a letter

The closing depends on the opening

If you start:	then close: British English	American English
Dear Sirs/Sir/Madam Gentlemen	Yours faithfully	Sincerely yours (Very) Truly yours
Dear Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms Bennett (Br.E.) Dear Mr./Mrs./Miss/Ms. Bennett (Am.E.)	Yours sincerely	Yours sincerely Sincerely yours (Very) Truly yours Yours (very) truly
Dear Peter	(With) Best wishes (Best) Regards	

In British letters the closing is fixed by the opening; in American English the closing depends on the degree of formality.

1. Formal tone: Yours truly, Yours very truly, Very truly yours
2. More formal tone: Respectfully yours, Yours respectfully, Very respectfully yours, Yours very respectfully
3. More personal tone: Sincerely, Cordially, Sincerely yours, Cordially yours, Yours sincerely

Starting the letter

- Thank you for your letter of ... (date)
- I have received your letter of ... (date)

asking if/about ...
concerning ...
enclosing ...
in which you asked ...

Explaining purpose of letter

- We are writing to enquire about/whether ...
- We are writing to ask about/if ...
- I am writing in connection with ...
- I am writing in response to ...
- With reference to ...
- Further to ...
- With regard to ...

Finishing the letter

- I look forward to meeting/hearing from you.
- Looking forward to meeting/hearing from you.
- We look forward to receiving the proposal/your order/your reply.

The main part

Requesting

- We would be very grateful if you could ...
- I would be much obliged if you could ...
- We would appreciate if you could ...
- Please could you ... (informal)

Giving information or replying to a request for information

- *Positive*
- Please find enclosed ...
- We are happy to enclose ...
- We wish to inform you ...
- We are pleased to inform/advise you ...
- *Negative*
- We regret to inform you ...
- We are sorry to tell you ...

Thanking

- I am much obliged to you for sending me ...
- I am grateful to you for ...
- We are much obliged to you for ...
- Thank you for ... (informal)

Apologising

- We were (very/extremely/most) sorry to hear about the problem.
- We regret that this problem has happened.
- We apologise for ...

Reports

Reports are nearly always written to solve a business problem. Reports maybe commissioned because there is a crisis or they may be routine.

Title Page	This should include the title of the report (which should give a precise indication of the subject matter), the author's name, the date, and the file, serial or reference number.
Table of contents	As in a book, this lists all the headings in the report and the pages or, in short reports, the paragraphs. It should show the relationship of headings and subheadings by indentation or by different types or size of print. It can be left out in very short reports.
Executive Summary	<p>This should be a short paragraph summarizing the main contents of the report. It should include a short statement of the main task, the methods used, conclusions reached, and recommendations.</p> <p>The abstract or summary should be concise, informative and independent of the report. It can enable others, who may be interested, to decide whether they wish to read the report.</p> <p>Email Tip: If you are sending the report via email, include the executive summary in the main part of your Email, so that a busy executive doesn't have to read an attachment to read the main points.</p>
Introduction (or terms of reference, methods and procedures)	The introduction tells the reader why the report was written (including a clear statement of the problem or problems to be considered), who asked for it, who did the investigation, who wrote the report, what the scope and limitations of the investigation and report are, where the information was obtained, any special methods used and acknowledgements of help given. It sets the scene before the reader gets down to the body of the report. Generally, the more widely a report is to be circulated, the lengthier the introduction.
Body/Discussion	<p>Your findings will be in the body of the report. You need to give the facts, discuss them and make certain deductions about them. The way you organize the sequence of ideas will depend on the subject and your purpose.</p> <p>There are a number of ways in which results can be presented: tables, graphs, pie charts, bar charts, and diagrams. After the facts and deductions comes an examination of possible courses of action with an accurate assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of each. The continuity of the report should not be interrupted by material which could go into an appendix.</p>
Conclusions	The conclusions are based on the evidence and alternatives given in the previous part of the report. Do not include diagrams or graphs. Everything must flow logically from the facts and discussion and alternatives shown in the previous part of the report. <i>You should never include new information.</i> Conclusions should be clear and concise. Remember that some people will read only the introduction, conclusions and recommendations so they must be intelligible and in a logical order.

Recommendations	These state the action which the writer of the report advises on the strength of the evidence, discussion and conclusions. You may wish to list your recommendations in a separate section or include them with the conclusions. Each recommendation must be given a letter or number.
Appendices	Information which is reference rather than part of the argument should be put in an appendix. Appendices should be grouped together at the end of the report and set out so that they can be read the same way up as the rest of the report.
References	It is important that you give precise details of all the work by other authors that has been referenced in the report.

Exercise 6.

Write the phrases from the box into the most appropriate section below.

The purpose of this report is to ...	Customer feedback is currently assessed by ...
Overproduction is an ongoing problem.	Table 3 shows the results of a survey about ...
This report sets out to establish ...	The best course of action would be to ...
A solution to the problem would be ...	The marketing department should implement ...
Graph 1 shows ...	This report will consider the following ...
This report responds to the board's request for ...	Transport costs have increased more than 15%.
It is important to ... as soon as possible.	The results show that the company is losing market share.
The work for this report was carried out in the context of ...	

Introduction Findings Conclusions Recommendations

Exercise 7.

For each of the following report briefs, identify:

- who the audience is;
- why the report is needed;
- what the audience wants to find out.

1. Report for the charity "Greenpeace" on the use of Facebook amongst 18-25 year olds as a means of social action and protest.
2. Investigate the use of Facebook as a means of social action and protest by 18-25 year olds. This report has been commissioned by the Metropolitan police.
3. Report commissioned by the Municipal Council of Lisbon on parking in the *Baixa* area of Lisbon.
4. Report for the *Associação de Comerciantes de Lisboa* on parking in the *Baixa* area of Lisbon.
5. Report on the recycling practices of households in Lisbon. The report has been commissioned by the Municipal Council of Lisbon.
6. Investigate the recycling practices of households in Lisbon. The report has been commissioned by a paper and plastic recycling firm.

Exercise 8.

Scan the relevant sections of the report *Industry as a partner for sustainable development: Tourism* and answer the questions that follow.

<http://www.gdrc.org/uem/eco-tour/WSSD-tourism.pdf>

1. Who prepared the report?
2. What names does it give for the introduction and conclusions?
3. What is the rationale behind the names for the sections in the body of the report?
4. Does it include recommendations?
5. What is the purpose of the report? Why was it commissioned?
6. What style of language is used? personal «» impersonal; everyday «» technical; concrete «» abstract.

Reports often include lists, which may be numbered or use bullets. When writing lists, each item should be presented in the same grammatical form. For example:

- Information should be concise; (impersonal advice)
- Spelling and punctuation must be checked. (impersonal advice)

not

- Information should be concise; (impersonal advice)
- Check spelling and punctuation. (direct instruction for advice)

Exercise 9.

Rewrite the following lists so that the grammatical form is consistent.

1.

The choice of the project's name - "Maritime Traffic Technology: The Integrity of E-Navigation" – already illustrates the three main research and development activities:

- (1) The integrity of Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS) and their supplementary services
- (2) Multi-sensor based unit for on-board determination of position, navigation and timing (PNT Unit)
- (3) How to monitor and assess the traffic situation

Source: [http://www.dlr.de/kn/en/Portaldata/27/Resources/dokumente/04_abteilungen_nas/MVT-Final-Report\(Final\).pdf](http://www.dlr.de/kn/en/Portaldata/27/Resources/dokumente/04_abteilungen_nas/MVT-Final-Report(Final).pdf) (adapted)

2.

Several activities might come under local responsibility:

- Organising waste collection and disposal services or water supply and sewage (Bulgaria, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Portugal, Russian Federation).
- To maintain and operate waste or water treatment facilities (Bulgaria, Italy, Latvia, Malta, Portugal, Russian Federation, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey).
- Setting the tariffs for payment of these local services (Bulgaria, Latvia, Portugal, Spain, Ukraine).
- Approving the rules and plans to organise the service in compliance with applicable legislation (Bulgaria, Denmark, Italy, Latvia,).
- The issue of permits (Czech Republic).
- All of these activities (Denmark, Finland, Netherlands).

Source : <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?p=&id=1364497&direct=true> (adapted)

3.

The main areas of local responsibility examined reveal certain trends concerning the nature and frequency of the relationships between central and local authorities:

- Legislation and setting of criteria is a central (State/regional) responsibility.
- Funding is, in many cases, a central responsibility, although municipalities can raise taxes and there is joint-funding for some issues.
- Supervision of legality is also a central (State/regional) responsibility and there are frequent budgetary compliance controls.
- Central performance controls in shared responsibilities.
- Mandatory consultation with municipality associations in relation to local statutes, budgets and other significant issues concerning local responsibilities exist in most States.
- Formal consultation structures (general or sectoral) in many member states to facilitate interlocution in those areas.
- De-concentrated central bodies usually in charge of information and supervision interactions.

Source : <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?p=&id=1364497&direct=true> (adapted)

Useful website for exercises on reports

<https://inglescomercial.wordpress.com/2009/02/02/writing-reports-interactive-exercise/>