Formal and Informal Email Phrases Starting with Greetings, Finishing with Closing Phrases!

Whether you’re writing to friends, colleagues or to a potential business partner, your main goal is to get your message across. If you use language that isn’t considered Standard English, or there are too many mistakes in your e-mail, not only might you fail your aim, you might also fail to make a good impression on the reader.

To avoid this, you can run your e-mail through a grammar and spell checker, however, this, in itself, won’t guarantee that you’re using the right words and expressions.

In this article, you’ll find examples of language that are commonly used in different e-mailing situations, so that you won’t have to worry about whether your wording is correct or not.

The examples are labelled ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ - please note that most informal expressions are perfectly suitable to use in ‘semi-formal’ situations, such as between business associates who have worked together for some time and have established a good relationship.

GREETINGS

Formal
- Dear Sir/ Madam,
- Dear Sir or Madam,
- To whom it may concern: (especially AmE)
- Dear Mr/ Ms Jones,
- Dear Dr Smith,

(note: First names are NOT used. Using Miss or Mrs to address a woman is not good form anymore: you cannot know whether she’s married or not)

Informal
- Hi Dennis,
- Hello Claire,
- Dear Mum,

(note: salutations are followed by a (,) comma, exception: ’To whom it may concern:’)

http://www.myenglishteacher.eu/blog/7-simple-steps-to-improve-business-email-writing-skills-in-english/
**REASON FOR WRITING / REPLYING**

**Formal**
- *I am writing to* make a reservation/* to apply for the position of...*/ to confirm my booking/* to ask for further information about ...*
- *I am writing with regard to* the sale of */ to the complaint you made on* 29 February
- *Thank you for your e-mail of* 29 February regarding the sale of */ concerning the conference in Brussels.*
- *With reference to our telephone conversation on Friday, I would like to let you know that...*

**Informal**
- *Just a quick note to* invite you to */ to tell you that...*
- *This is to* invite you to join us for a picnic on 20 May.
- *Thanks for your e-mail, it was wonderful/great to hear from you.*

**MAKING A REQUEST / ASKING FOR INFORMATION**

**Formal**
- *Could you please let me know if you can attend the fair/* if you are available for a meeting on 12 December?*
- *I would appreciate it if you could send me a brochure/* if you could reply within two days.*
- *Could you possibly arrange a meeting with my secretary?*
- *I would also like to know if there are any swimming pools in your area.*
- *Please, let me know how much the tickets cost.*

**Informal**
- *I was wondering if you could come and see me sometime next week.*
- *Would you mind coming early to help me clear up the place?*
- *Do you think you could call Jerry for me?*
- *Can you call me/* get back to me asap? (as soon as possible)*
OFFERING HELP / GIVING INFORMATION

Formal
- We are happy to let you know that your article has been selected for publication.
- I am glad to inform you that we will be holding our annual conference in Brussels on 20 September 2014.
- We regret to inform you that the show has been cancelled due to bad weather conditions.
- We are willing to arrange another meeting with the CEO.
- We would be glad to send you another statement if necessary.
- Please, let me know if I can be of further assistance.
- Should you need any further information/assistance, do not hesitate to contact us.

Informal
- I’m sorry, but I can’t make it tomorrow. (= I can’t come tomorrow.)
- I’m happy to tell you that John and I are getting married next month.
- Would you like me to come early and help you clear up the place?
- How about I come and help you out?
- Do you need a hand with moving the furniture?

COMPLAINING

Formal
- I am writing to express my dissatisfaction with... / to complain about...
- I regret to say that I was not completely satisfied with the room you provided us.
- We regret to inform you that your payment is considerably overdue.
- I would like to receive a full refund and compensation for the damages.
- I am interested to hear how your company can compensate us for the distress we suffered.

Informal
- I’m sorry to say that you’re late with the payments.
- I hope you won’t mind me saying that the place you’d recommended to us wasn’t as nice as we’d expected.
APOLOGIZING

Formal
- We would like to apologize for any inconvenience caused.
- Please accept our apologies for the delay.
- Please let us know what we can do to compensate you for the damages caused.
- We will make sure that this will not happen again in the future.
- I am afraid I will not be able to attend the conference.

Informal
- I’m sorry for the trouble I caused.
- I apologize for the delay.
- I promise it won’t happen again.
- I’m sorry, but I can’t make it to the meeting.

ATTACHING FILES

Formal
- I am attaching my CV for your consideration.
- I am sending you the brochure as an attachment.
- Please see the statement attached.
- Please find attached the file you requested.
- I am afraid I cannot open the file you have sent me.
- Could you send it again in … format?

Informal
- I’m attaching/sending you the holiday photos.
- Sorry, but I can’t open it. Can you send it again in … format?

ENDING

Formal
- I look forward to hearing from you.
- I look forward to hearing when you are planning to visit our town.

Informal
- Hope to hear from you soon.
- I’m looking forward to seeing you.
CLOSING FORMULA

Formal
- Yours sincerely, (when you start with the name e.g. Dear Ms Collins)
- Sincerely Yours, (AmE)
- Sincerely, (AmE)
- Yours Truly, (AmE)

Informal
- Love,
- Thanks,
- Take care,
- Yours,
- Best regards, (semi-formal, also BR)

One more thing to keep in mind is that in formal correspondence contractions are rarely used, so remember to write ‘I do not’ instead of ‘I don’t’ or ‘they cannot’ instead of ‘they can’t’ and so on.