

IT01.- Business correspondence.

Situation



Nerea, Mikel and Aitor are Vocational Education students in the IT (Information Technology) sector. Nerea is studying Software and Services, Mikel is studying Computer and Peripherals and Aitor is doing Design and Installation of Applications. They will finally get their degrees when they have completed a three-month training period in a company.

Although they have taken different courses and their professional careers will probably go different ways, they have something in common; they are aware of the importance of languages in a world that is becoming more and more global.

Nerea is a lively, extrovert girl and she has always wanted to travel. When her English teacher told her about the possibility of doing her training period abroad she jumped at the chance. She was awarded an Erasmus grant and is now working in an Italian software company.

Mikel is a little shy but very hard working. He decided that he wanted to do his three-month training period near his home. He is also interested in improving his English level because the company he works for has offices in different countries in Europe and as an IT Technician, he may need to travel in the future.

As for Aitor, he was not sure about where to do his training period but after talking to Nerea he made up his mind. Aitor and Nerea are very good friends and when Nerea told him that she was going abroad Aitor thought he could also have a try. Why not? It could be a good challenge. He spoke to his English teacher and applied for a grant. Now he is in a company in Poland and does not regret having made that decision.

They are all very enthusiastic and willing to learn but they are a bit nervous in their new jobs. We will accompany them in their daily tasks and try to help them solve the difficulties they may encounter. So, for example, let's start with business correspondence...



1.- Types of business correspondence (the email).

Situation



Nerea works in the Software Service Department of an Italian company that receives most of its mail in English; not only letters that arrive by ordinary mail but more and more often, emails.

She usually has quite a lot of emails to reply to. Whenever she gets an email in English she wants to make sure that she understands the message correctly. She also wants to make herself understood when she is answering.

What kind of vocabulary does she need? She knows, for example, that the type of language she needs to use is more formal than when she is sending an email to one of her friends.

In this unit you will find some basic vocabulary related to the mechanics of sending emails and some advice on how to write them.

When we hear the term "business correspondence" the first thing that comes to our mind is probably business letters. However, we live in the computer era and business letter writing is not the only type of business correspondence nowadays. Some other new ways of communication have appeared namely the memo, the fax and most common of all, the email.

Whereas business letters have very well established rules and regulations all these new types of communication have not; everybody writes them the way they consider appropriate.

So what is an email? Electronic mail, or email (also spelt "e-mail") is a quick way of sending messages to people using the Internet.

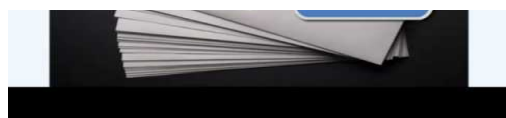
Some important points to remember when writing professional emails:

- Emails are less formal than a written letter but remember that you are not writing to a friend.
- They are usually short and go to the point.
- The subject line should be brief and should give a clue to the contents of the message.
- You can use "Dear" before the name of the person at the beginning of your email. If you are addressing a group of people, you can say "Dear" plus the unifying attribute.
- Use abbreviated verb forms (He's, We're, He'd, etc.).
- Expressions like "I look forward to hearing from you", "Best Regards" can be used to close the email.
- Include a telephone number to the signature of the email. This will give the recipient the chance to telephone if necessary.

You should know

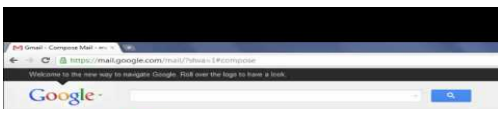
The following videos will help you to get familiar with some common terms used when receiving or sending emails in English.

What is email?



(link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FLXNWOP7Tts>)

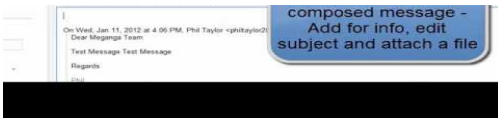
Alternative textual summary (link: IT01_CONT_R20_TheBasicsEmails.html)



(link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m6P0HXvS91M>)

Alternative textual summary (link: IT01_CONT_R20_TheBasicsEmails.html)

Using my email part 2



(link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y4KQK48nuRU>)

Alternative textual summary (link: IT01_CONT_R20_TheBasicsEmails.html)

Solved exercise

Now answer the following questions. They correspond to each of the sections in the video that you have watched.

Sending:

1. How do you read this symbol: @, in English?
2. What do you write in the box TO?
3. What do you click after writing the message?
4. What will people think if you write your message in capital letters?

Receiving and replying:

1. What does the number next to the INBOX mean?
2. What do you do to read an email?

Attachments:

1. Give some examples of attachments

Forwarding:

1. What does FW mean?

Junk, deleting and contents:

1. Give a synonym expression for JUNK MAIL
2. What do you do to delete messages?

Self assessment

Read the paragraph below and fill in the missing words.

Emails are less than a written letter but remember that you are not writing to a friend. They are usually short and go to the . The subject line should be brief and should give a to the contents of the message.

1.1.- Understanding written messages.

Solved exercise



Read this email carefully and answer the following questions:

Who is sending the email?

What is it about?

To: SoftServ & Co.

From: Teach Online

Subject: Service delay

Good morning,

We were expecting to receive the goods by 28th April **as agreed** but nobody has turned up yet.

You didn't mention any problems when we talked on the telephone last week.

We need someone to come **as soon as possible**. Please, give us further details.

Looking forward to hearing from you,

Best Regards,

Peter Weir

Now underline the expressions that have to do with time.

Look at the expressions in bold type. What do they mean?

Underline the verb tenses. What are they called?

A piece of advice

If you have difficulty with verb tenses it is a good idea to do some revision exercises now. You can use [New English File Intermediate](https://elt.oup.com/student/englishfile/intermediate/a_grammar/?cc=global&selLanguage=en) on-line exercises in the first two units (called File 1 and 2).

On-line exercises (link: https://elt.oup.com/student/englishfile/intermediate/a_grammar/?cc=global&selLanguage=en)

1.2.- Useful vocabulary and expressions.



When we see a new word for the first time, our brain may not remember it after some time, especially if we don't need to use the word again. Learning the key words and expressions for business correspondence takes time and above all, practice. Let's do some exercises on email vocabulary.

Solved exercise

Have a look at some words and expressions that we use when writing an email. What do they mean? Try to translate them into your language. Then check your answers.

1. as agreed:
2. as follows:
3. as requested:
4. as soon as possible:
5. due to:
6. on behalf of:
7. on condition that / provided that:
8. on receipt of the order:
9. on time:
10. please let us know:
11. we're sorry for the inconvenience:
12. looking forward to hearing from you:

You should know

You can practise with extra exercises on different types of email writing on the following document. The answers to the exercises are on the last page.

Business Email exercises ([link: http://www.autoenglish.org/writing/BusinessEmail.pdf](http://www.autoenglish.org/writing/BusinessEmail.pdf))

Self assessment

Read the sentences below and fill in the missing words. If you are not sure, watch the videos at the beginning of the unit once again.

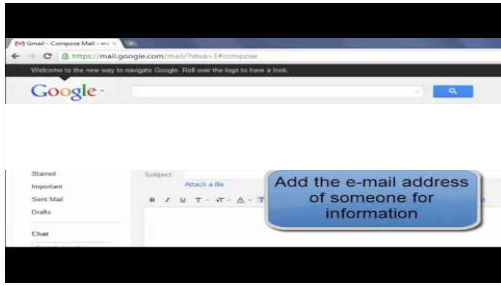
What is email?



([link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FLXNWp7Tts](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FLXNWp7Tts))

Alternative textual summary ([link: IT01_CONT_R20_TheBasicsEmails.html](http://IT01_CONT_R20_TheBasicsEmails.html))

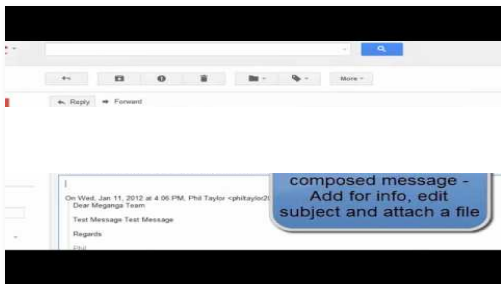
Using my email part 1



(link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m6P0HXvS91M>)

Alternative textual summary (link: IT01_CONT_R20_TheBasicsEmails.html)

Using my email part 2



(link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y4KQK48nuRU>)

Alternative textual summary (link: IT01_CONT_R20_TheBasicsEmails.html)

1. The box called is for the name of the person we are sending the message.
2. refers to what the text is about.
3. is where we write the message.
4. is for new incoming messages.
5. is to send an answer to the person who wrote the email.
6. an email is to send the email to somebody else.
7. Files, photos or other documents that are sent together with an email are called .
8. The box called receives spam email.
9. is where all your deleted emails are stored.
10. The electronic address book where you can save all your email addresses is called .
11. The (carbon copy) function in many email programs lets you send a copy of your message to one or more people.
12. The (blind copy) function sends a copy of the email to a person with their email hidden.

A close-up photograph of a computer keyboard, focusing on the central keys including 'S', 'D', 'F', 'G', 'H', 'J', 'K', 'L', and 'Enter'. The keys are white with black lettering, and the image is slightly blurred to create a sense of depth.

Further knowledge

The author of this guide gives lots of advice on the *dos* and *don'ts* of email writing. Choose the tips that seem to be closer to your needs.

A Beginner's Guide to Effective Email (*link: <http://www.webfoot.com/advice/email.top.php>*)

In , keep everything short. Keep your lines short, keep your paragraphs short, and keep the message short.

2.- Types of telephone messages.

Situation



Nerea also has to answer telephone calls sometimes. She doesn't feel very confident speaking English over the telephone but she is optimistic and hopes to learn soon.

Making or answering phone calls requires the ability to respond quickly to the other person's requirements. If you are answering a call, for example, who does the caller want to speak to? Does he want to leave a message? Did you get the caller's name right? Do you need the caller to spell it for you?

Asking for and giving information, making an appointment, checking dates and dealing service conditions ... these are only some of the most common topics of telephone conversations.

Let's have a look at some examples...

Solved exercise

Imagine that you are answering a phone call and the person the caller wants to speak to is not available...

Read the following text carefully and answer the following questions:

A: Good morning. SoftServ & Co.

B: I'd like to speak to the accounts department manager.

A: One moment (pause) I'm afraid the line's busy. Can you hold? Or do you want to call back?

B: No, I'm taking a plane in ten minutes. Can you take a message?

A: Yes, of course. One moment.

B: Please tell Mr. Visconti that Peter Weir phoned and that I'll call again on Thursday. It's about the invoice for the restoring and updating of the software.

A: Peter Weir phoned - invoice for the restoring and updating of the software. Do you have a contact number?

B: No, don't worry - I'll call again on Thursday. Thanks.

A: Thank you. Goodbye

1. Who does B want to talk to?
2. Why can't A put him through?
3. What is B doing in ten minutes?
4. What is the message about?
5. Does he leave a contact number?
6. When will he call back?

Further knowledge

Having a telephone conversation in a foreign language is a difficult task. Many speakers that feel confident speaking English when they can see the other person, can find it a more demanding thing to do when speaking over the telephone. Why is this so?

On the one hand, when you can not see the person you are talking to you lack information that visual contact could give you, and on the other hand, business conversations may be faster than casual ones.

Here are some tips to help you make the person you are speaking to slow down.

Business speaking skills (*link: http://esl.about.com/od/businessspeakingskills/a/t_tips.htm*)

2.1.- Answering telephone calls.

Solved exercise



You are going to watch 2 short videos of about 5 minutes each on how to answer the phone. These videos will also enable you to compare the pronunciation of American English and British English (in the previous video about emails).

Watch the first video and answer the following question:
Why was it intimidating for Rachel to speak on the phone?



(link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bj8qnnNo36M>)

Alternative textual summary (link: IT01_CONT_R21_AnsweringCalls01.html)

Watch the first video again and look for expressions we use when,

- a) answering the phone
- b) if the caller wants to speak to you
- c) to ask the caller to wait

Now watch video number two:



(link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tAQeGJS06IM>)

Alternative textual summary (link: IT01_CONT_R22_AnsweringCalls02.html)

What expressions can you use

- 1. if the person the caller wants is not available?
- 2. to take a message?
- 3. if the caller has misdialled the number?
- 4. if you don't understand?

Watch the second video again. Listen to the pronunciation of the expressions we can use when we don't understand something and we want the caller to repeat it. Does the voice go up or down at the end of the sentence? Why?

2.2.- Grammar.



Being able to use verb tenses, indirect speech (the type of speech you use when you are repeating what somebody else said), and also adverbs and prepositions correctly will enable you to communicate successfully.

Solved exercise

Both oral and written messages need coherence so that the message is clearly understood. We recognize a coherent text when the message follows a logical order.

Read the following conversation and try to put it in the correct order:

B: All right. Please tell her that the flight time has been changed to 20.30. The flight number is the same, BY 29 but the flight is leaving half an hour earlier.

B: Yes, I'd like to speak to Mary Shepherd.

B: Oh dear. It's very urgent.

B: Toñi Bravo from BY. My telephone number is 27474059.

B: Thank you. Goodbye.

A: Well, I can take a message. She should be back tomorrow.

A: Good morning. Can I help you?

A: I'm afraid she's on sick leave today.

A: Flight time changed - 20.30 - flight number BY 29 - unchanged. I see, yes I've got that. Who shall I say called?

A: Thank you.

Self assessment

Fill in the gaps with the following words:

name, Can, works, on, through, at, back, at, on, spell, on, full

A: Hello. I help you?

B: Hello. Yes, can I speak to Len, please?

A: Len? Can you give me his name?

B: Leonard Smith. He in the sales department - I think.

A: Let me see - Leonard Smith - yes. I'll put you (pause). I'm sorry. There's no answer. Can I take a message?

B: Mmm - yes - OK - tell him that I'm not going to the exhibition after all. I'll see him at the meeting Thursday 10.30.

A: Could I have your , please?

B: Oh - yes - Nerea Raeli.

A: How do you that?

B: N-E-R-E-A, R-A-E-L-I.

A: Thank you. I'll read the message to you. Nerea Raeli will see you 10.30 at the meeting Thursday. She is not going to the exhibition.

B: Fine, thanks. Oh and could you ask him to call me 28531795?

A: 285331795. Yes, certainly.

B: Thank you.

A: Thank you.

A piece of advice

Do the grammar exercises in File 6 to get more practice on Reported Speech.

On-line exercises (*link: https://elt.oup.com/student/englishfile/intermediate/a_grammar/?cc=global&selLanguage=en*)

2.3.- Useful vocabulary and expressions.

Self assessment

Have a good look at the following list of vocabulary. When you think you are ready, do the exercises.

Vocabulary (*link: IT01_CONT_R100_vocabulario.pdf*)

1. What do you call a person who answers telephone calls? An

2. What do you call an electronic system to receive and transfer telephone calls? A

3. What do you call it when the receiver pays for the call ? A

4. What do you call another telephone in the same office or house? An

5. What do you call a list of telephone numbers? A



Self assessment

Read the sentences below and fill in the missing words.

1. Could you speak a bit, please? (speak louder)

2. to up (finish the phone call)

3. to someone's call (to call someone who earlier called you)

4. to put someone (to transfer the call to another person)

5. to cut someone (to accidentally stop the call)

6. Sorry, I didn't your name (I didn't understand your name)

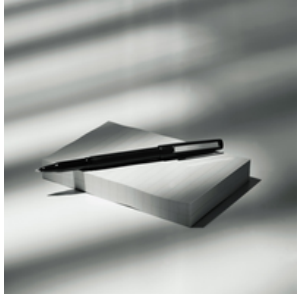
7. Hold , please (Wait a moment, please)

8. I'm calling (The reason of my call is.....)

9. Go , caller (You can speak now, sir/madam)

10. to (to dial again)

2.4.- Writing a dialogue.



In this unit we have looked at written messages (different types business correspondence) and oral messages (telephone conversations), and we have talked about their main features as well as the type of vocabulary that is used in them. Now we are going to put some of that theory into practice.

Solved exercise

Imagine you are Peter Weir. You telephoned Mr. Visconti last week but unfortunately he was not in and you weren't able to speak to him. There is some kind of mistake with prices in the invoice of the restoring and updating of the software and you would like to clear it up.

Today, you call him again.

Write the telephone conversation between Peter Weir and Mr. Visconti at SoftServ & Co. You should come to an agreement about prices by the end of the conversation.

A piece of advice

Here is a couple of links to on-line dictionaries. In one of them you can look up English general words.














General English (*link: <http://www.wordreference.com/es/translation.asp?tranword=agenda>*)

The other is a European database that offers more specific information on different fields.

Technical English (*link: <http://iate.europa.eu/switchLang.do?success=mainPage&lang=es>*)

Anexo.- Licencia de recursos.

Licencias de recursos utilizados en la Unidad de Trabajo.

Recurso (1)	Datos del recurso (1)	Recurso (2)	Datos del recurso (2)
	Autoría: Jaime Serrano Licencia: CC BY-NC-SA 2.0 Procedencia: http://www.flickr.com/photos/jaimeserrano/4388612807/		Autoría: Mandaloo Licencia: CC BY-NC-SA 2.0 Procedencia: http://www.flickr.com/photos/mandaloo/2
	Autoría: Latinstock Licencia: Uso educativo para plataformas públicas de FPaD Procedencia: \04\A51E4X_ok.jpg		Autoría: Latinstock Licencia: Uso educativo para plataformas públicas de FPaD Procedencia: \19\42-17286777_ok.jpg
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