



## Email structure

One of the advantages of emails over normal 'snail-mail' letters is that they are quick and direct. We send an email for a particular purpose and we expect a fast response or immediate action. For emails – whether formal or informal – to be most effective, it is a good idea to give them a clear, logical structure.

**Subject line:** This should be short and give some specific information about the contents of your message.

**Salutation:** As in letter-writing, the salutation can be formal or informal, depending on how well you know the person you are writing to.

Dear Mr, Mrs, Ms ...	<i>A formal form of address, also used when first contacting a person.</i>
Dear John	<i>Less formal. Either you have had contact with this person before, or they have already addressed you by your first name.</i>
Hi/Hello Mary (or just the name)	<i>Informal, usually used with colleagues you often work with. In the U.S.A. and the U.K. also sometimes used at first contact.</i>
(no salutation)	<i>Very informal, usually used in messages which are part of a longer email exchange.</i>

**Opening sentence:** This is used to explain why you are writing. (Remember: the opening sentence should always start with a capital letter.)

I'm writing to ...	<i>More formal introduction to say why you are writing.</i>
Just a quick note to ...	<i>Friendly, informal way to say why you are writing.</i>

**Conclusion:** This is where you tell the reader what kind of response, if any, you expect.

Looking forward to your reply.	<i>Friendly ending, can be used in formal or informal correspondence.</i>
Hope to hear from you soon.	<i>Informal ending to indicate a reply is necessary.</i>

**Close:** Like the salutation, this can vary from formal to very informal.

Yours sincerely	<i>Very formal, rarely used in email correspondence.</i>
Regards/Best wishes	<i>Most commonly used close, can be used in formal and informal emails.</i>
Bye/All the Best/Best James/Mary	<i>Friendly, informal close. Name only (or initials) is also common when writing to close colleagues.</i>

