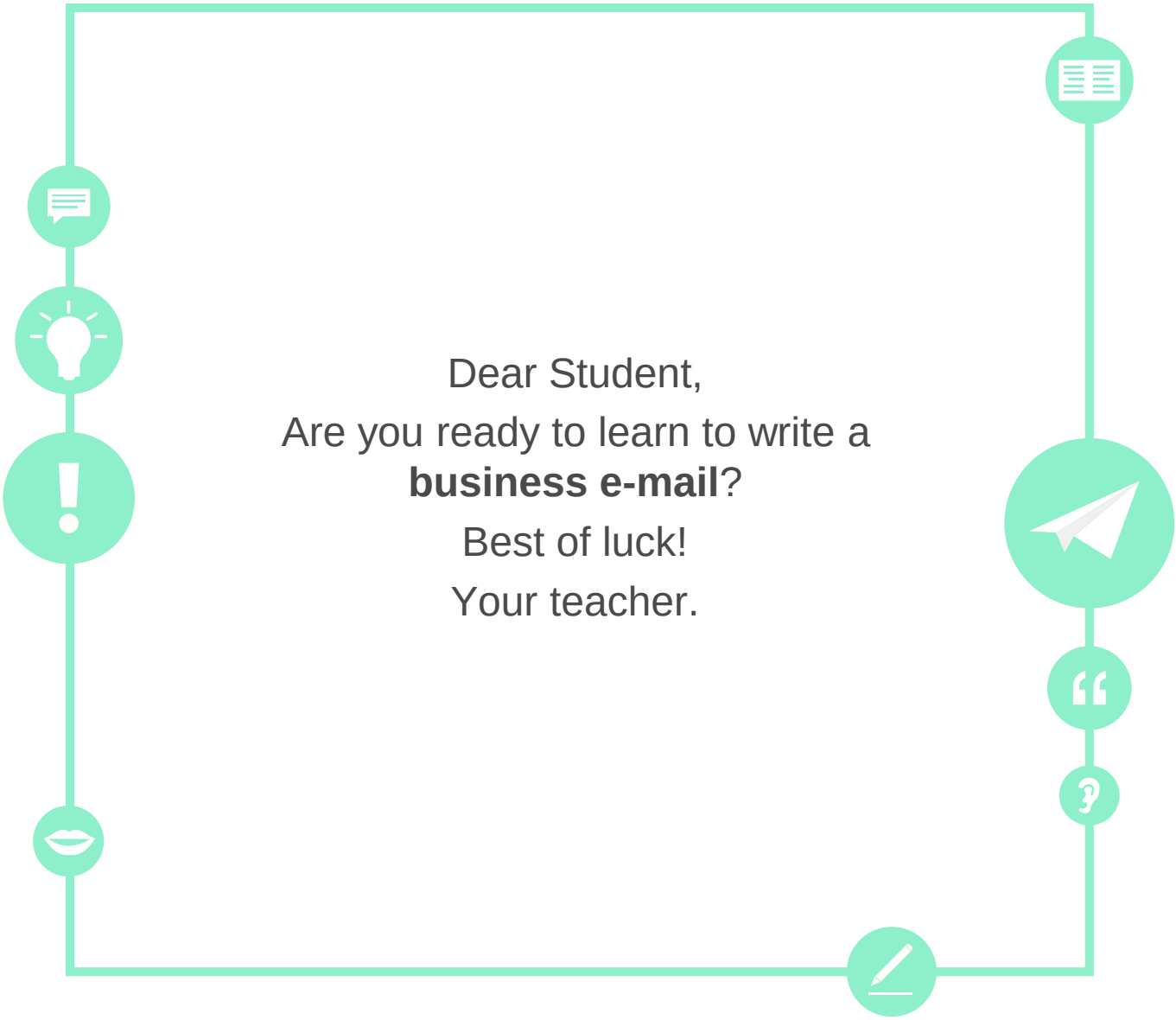
Parts of a business e-mail

COMMUNICATION

LEVEL	NUMBER	LANGUAGE
Upper-intermediate	EN_BE_3202X	English

Goals

- Can recognise and understand the basic structure of a standard e-mail
- Can read a short e-mail and write a cohesive response



Dear Student,

Are you ready to learn to write a **business e-mail**?

Best of luck!

Your teacher.

Sending e-mails

How often do you send e-mails? Who do you normally send them to?

Annoying e-mails

Is there anything that annoys you about e-mails you receive?

Recipients

When writing e-mails you will have noticed that there are three different places you can put a **recipient's address**. See below for when it is appropriate to use each one.

To:	Use this if you **expect a reply** from the recipients. You can write to multiple recipients.
Cc:	Use this if you **do not expect a reply** from the recipients. This is when an e-mail is more for information. You can write to multiple recipients.
Bcc:	Use this when you **do not expect a reply** from the recipients, and when you do not want the recipients to see who else received the e-mail. (The *B* stands for blind!).

The subject line

The **subject line** is extremely important in an e-mail and should **never be left blank**. Recipients decide whether to open an e-mail sooner or later based on the subject line.

Tips for a subject line
Make sure it is concise
But, do not use one word descriptors e.g. help!
Summarise the content of the e-mail
Do not use all capital letters
Do not overuse punctuation, e.g. ??!!

The structure of an e-mail

An e-mail should follow a **basic structure** so that your writing is clear and concise. The **components** of an e-mail are listed below.

Introduction	The first sentence should tell the recipient what the e-mail is going to be about.
Main Body	The details of the e-mail.
Ask/Action	Make a request of the recipient, or say what action should be taken moving forward
Closing	A polite thank you in advance to the recipient

An e-mail signature

At the end of your e-mails, after you have written a closing statement and your name, there should also be an **e-mail signature**. Here are some tips for a good one.

- 3 – 4 lines of text.
- Use an image, either a company logo or a picture of yourself.
- Do not include your e-mail address.
- Do not use inspirational quotations.

- Your name
- Title and company
- Phone number

Bob Hope

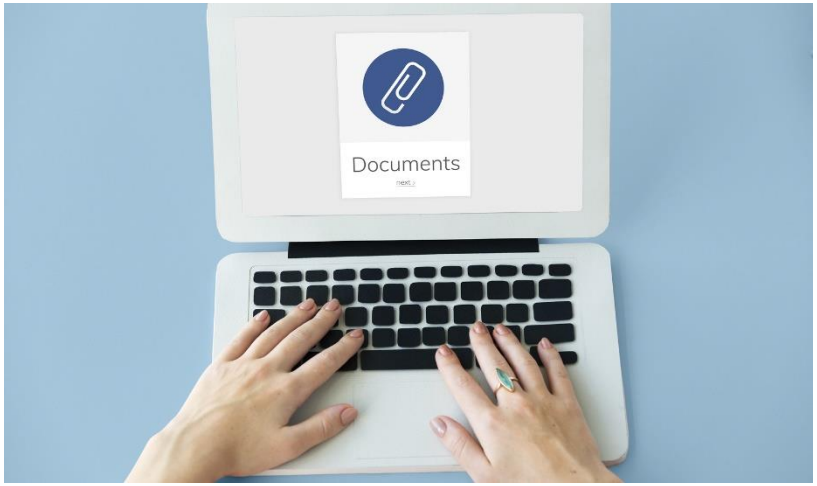
HR Manager, Area Solutions

+44 123 4567 890

Attachments

Use **attachments** when you want to give lots of information in an e-mail.

- Always **mention the attachment** in the body of the e-mail.
- Use a document type which is easy for most people to open, e.g. **Word** or **PDF**.



Please find attached...

Cc and Bcc

Have you used the Cc or Bcc options in e-mails? When might you use them?

Write a subject line for each of these e-mail scenarios

You are organising a team meeting next Wednesday at 4pm in the conference room. Each person will be giving their monthly report.

You are working on a collaborative project with two colleagues. You want to update them on your progress, and get an update on theirs.

You are leaving your job and you need a reference letter from your boss. She knows that you are leaving already.

You are writing to complain about a product that you bought which is faulty.

Your e-mail signature

Design your e-mail signature with your teacher. What image would you use?

Attachments

What was the last attachment you sent? What about one you received?

The main body

The content of the **main body** of an e-mail will vary depending on its purpose, but there are **certain elements** which should always be there.

- Provide any relevant **background information**.
- Briefly explain the problem or situation, answering the questions: **Who**? **What**? **When**? **Where**? **How**?
- Keep it **short**. If you need to give lots of information, **attach a document** to the e-mail.

Ask/action

This is one of the **most important** parts of the e-mail, as you cannot expect the recipient to do what you want unless you **state explicitly** what that is.

- State the **action** you want carried out, or the **response** you wish to receive.
- Be clear about **who** needs to do **what**.
- Give a **deadline** for the action to be completed.

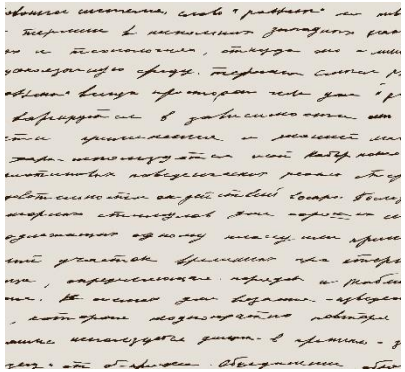
Font

e-mail servers usually have **set fonts** and it is suggested you use them. This ensures **consistency** within an organisation.

If you wish to choose a font, choose a **basic** one such as Arial, Calibri, or Verdana. The font should be **black**.

The font should be a readable size: **12 point** is reasonable.

Avoid italics and highlighting unless specifically warranted.



This is not a legible font.

Layout

The **layout** of your e-mail is important. It creates an initial **impression** on the recipient, so the layout should make the e-mail look **simple** and **readable**.

Layout tips
Use a single column layout.
Always use paragraphs.
Leave a line between each paragraph.

Put the text of this e-mail in order

1	2	3	4

A

I have conducted the initial market research we agreed on and have compiled the results. The answers have given me a lot of interesting ideas for the placement of the advertisements, as well as the layout and colours which would appeal to our audience.

B

I would like to request a meeting with you to update you in more detail. I suggest Monday at 2pm. Please let me know if that works for you by this afternoon.

C

I am writing to give you an update on the new advertisement on which we have been working.

D

Kind regards,

John

e-mail example

To: bobhope@bobhope.com

Subject: Update on new advertisement

Dear Bob,

I am writing to give you an update on the new advertisement on which we have been working.

I have conducted the initial market research we agreed on and have compiled the results. The answers have given me a lot of interesting ideas for the placement of the advertisements, as well as the layout and colours which would appeal to our audience. Please find attached below a summary of the results.

I would like to request a meeting with you to update you in more detail. I suggest Monday at 2pm. Please let me know if that works for you by this afternoon.

Kind regards,
John

Read through the e-mail example.

Situations when you need to send an e-mail

Below are some work situations when you need to communicate with other professionals. Have you ever been in any of these situations before?

You have finished writing a document for your boss. You would like her to read through your work and give you some feedback.

You are collaborating on a project with the finance department. Laura from finance has a spreadsheet of relevant numbers and you need to look at it to finish your work.

You are looking at a list of expectations from a client and some of them are contradictory. You want to arrange a meeting with them to explain this properly and help them figure out what they want.

Plan your e-mail

Make notes on the following in preparation for writing your own e-mail to arrange a meeting with a business colleague. If you're stuck for ideas, look at the situations on the previous slide for inspiration.

Where do you want to meet?

When do you want to meet?

Why do you need the meeting?

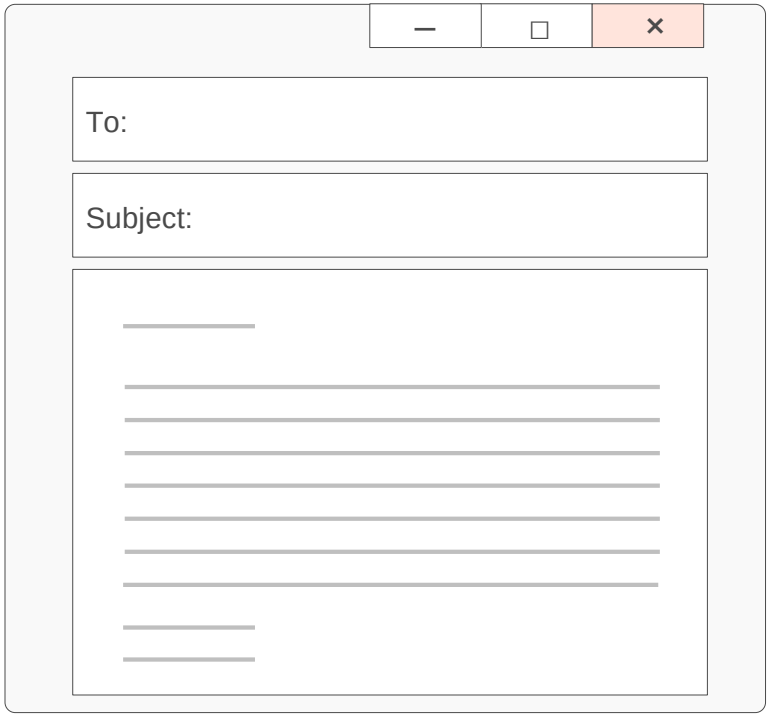
What is the meeting about?

Do you need directions to the meeting place?

Should you invite someone else?

e-mail writing activity

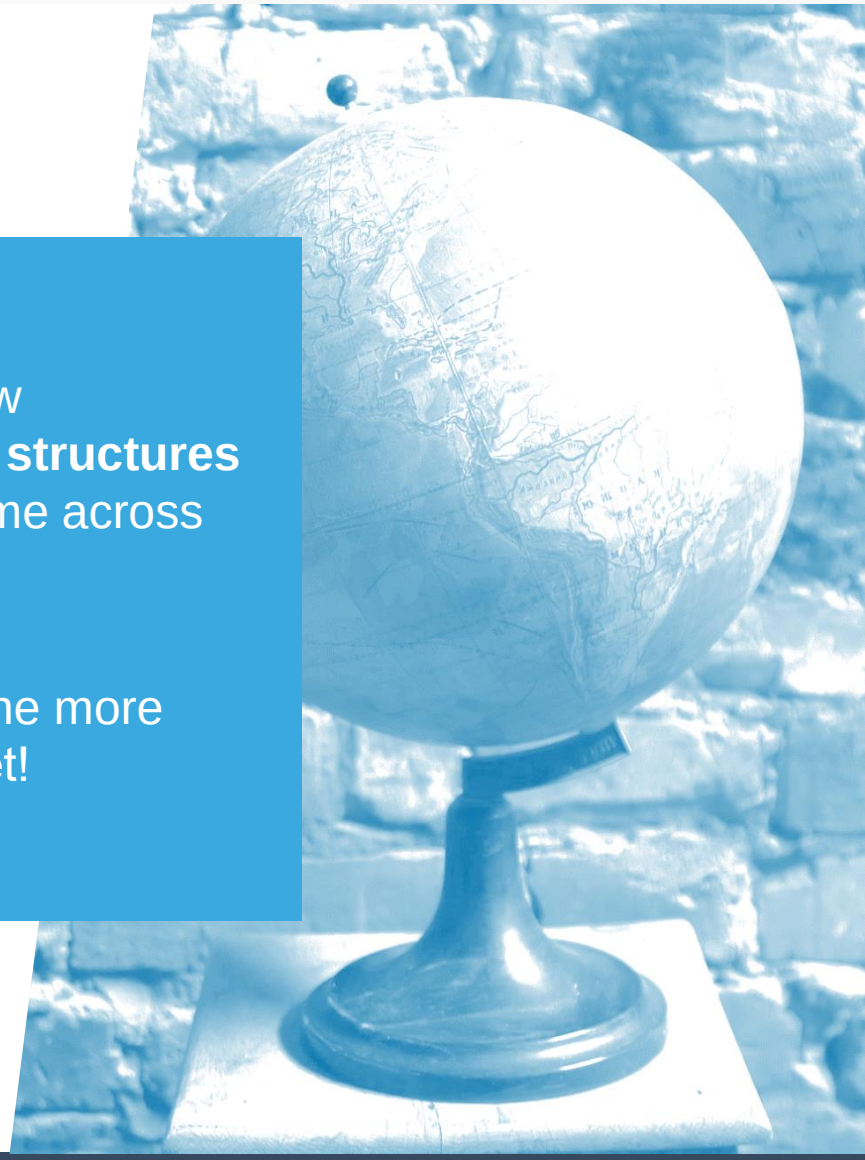
Using your notes, write an e-mail.



Layout

Is the layout of an English e-mail similar to how you would structure an e-mail if you were writing in your language?

Reflect on the lesson



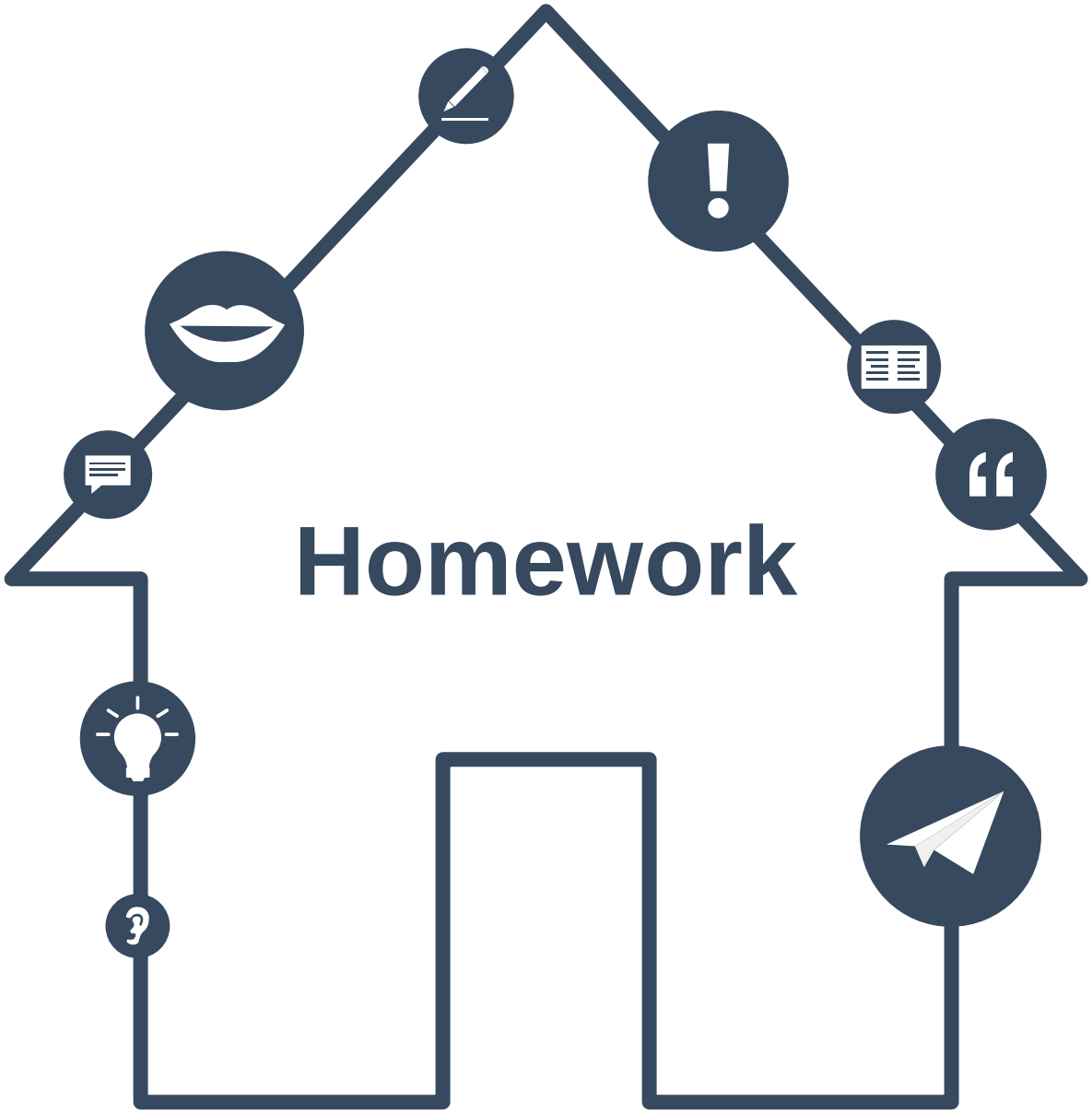
Take a moment to review any new **vocabulary**, **phrases**, **language structures** or **grammar points** you have come across for the first time in this lesson.

Review them with your teacher one more time to make sure you don't forget!

Answer key

Exercise p. 19

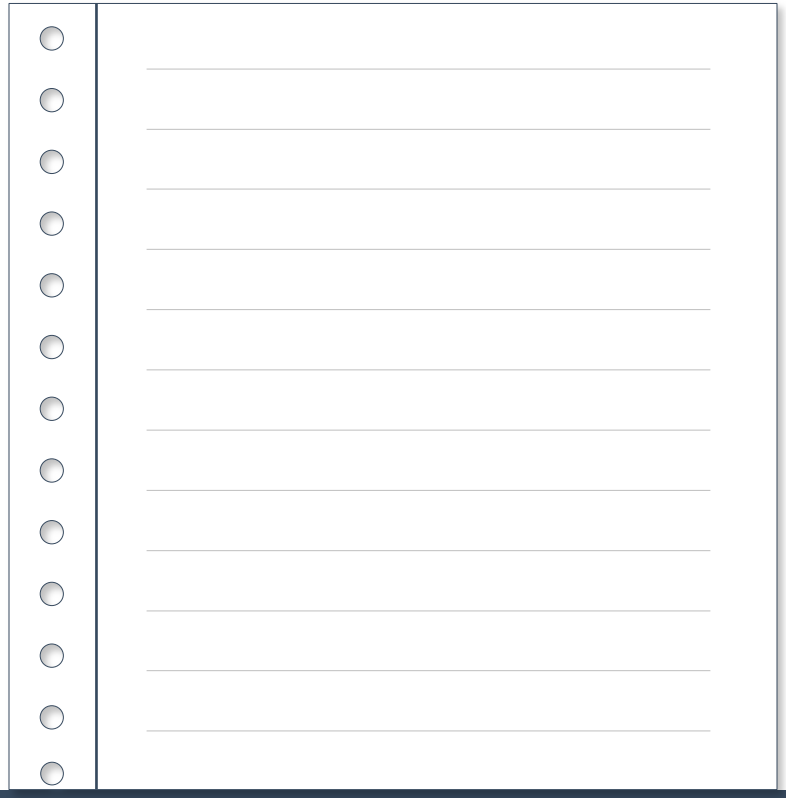
1. C, 2. A, 3. B, 4. D


Homework

What do you remember?

How much can you remember about how to layout a business e-mail? Make notes here.

font	paragraphs
introduction	asking
main body	e-mail signature



Write an e-mail

Write an e-mail to your teacher telling him or her about the layout tips for writing an e-mail.

To:

Subject:

Dear _____,

About this material

Find out more at www.lingoda.com

This material is provided by lingoda

lingoda Who are we?

Why learn English online?

What kinds of English classes do we offer?

Who are our English teachers?

How do our English certificates work?

We also have a language blog!