



## TOPIC 5: FORMAL AND INFORMAL EMAILS

Teacher-in-charge: Mr Nguyen Quoc Thinh

At the end of the lesson, you will be able to:

- + **apply** formal and informal phrases to write an email effectively

# 1 Look at the emails a – f. Which messages are formal and which are informal?

**From:** Evan Davis <evan.davis@meyer-consulting.com>  
**To:** Sidney Braithwaite <sb@texnet.de>

**a Subject:** Monitors offer

Dear Mr Braithwaite

I'm writing to enquire about the monitors you informed us of last month (April). Please could you send us a brochure and price list?

We would also appreciate a visit from your rep in order to get more information about the products. Could you ask one of them to contact us, please?

Looking forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely

Evan Davis  
Purchasing Assistant

6. formal

**b**

Delete Reply Reply All Forward Print

**From:** "Darren Thornten" <darren.thornten@odt.com>  
**cc:** "Tanya Becker" <tanya.becker@odt.com>  
**To:** "Hallwell, Gary" <gary.hallwell@odt.com>  
**Subject:** Hols

Hey Gary!

How was the holiday? I'll be away on mine when you get this! I'm off to Florida. :-)

Just a note to tell you that all the info to update you on the last couple of weeks is with Tanya. She's collected memos & post for you & also a list of important points from me. Hope you had a great time. I'm really looking forward to mine.

Speak to you when I get back. I WON'T be checking emails at all while I'm away!

See ya

D

informal

2

**From:** Daniel Prewitt <dtprewitt@triangle.com>  
**To:** Lorna Braun <lornabraun@redcol.at>

**c Subject:** Order CD239 A

Dear Ms Braun

Thank you for your order of 24 April for 200 corporate umbrellas. I would appreciate it if you could check the logo size & colour on the attachment.

Please confirm by email if this is correct before we make up your order.

Thank you for your custom.

Regards

Daniel Prewitt

formal 4

**d**

**From:** <r.frischherz@hellers.ch> **To:** <reservations@grandpalace.com>

**Subject:** Reservation

I would like to reserve a room for 3 nights 1-3 December inclusive. Could you also confirm the corporate price I was quoted of EUR 145.50 including breakfast buffet?

Kind regards

Ronald Frischherz

informal 5

e

**To:** Gabriella <gabriella.m@bradfords.co.uk>  
**From:** Yanis <yta@infotech2.co.uk>  
**Subject:** Change of plan

Hello Gabi

I hope this email reaches you before you leave the office.  
 I'm afraid the rep who's coming to visit you tomorrow has  
 been taken ill.

Would it be OK if we put off her visit until she's well?

Hope this isn't going to cause you too much trouble.

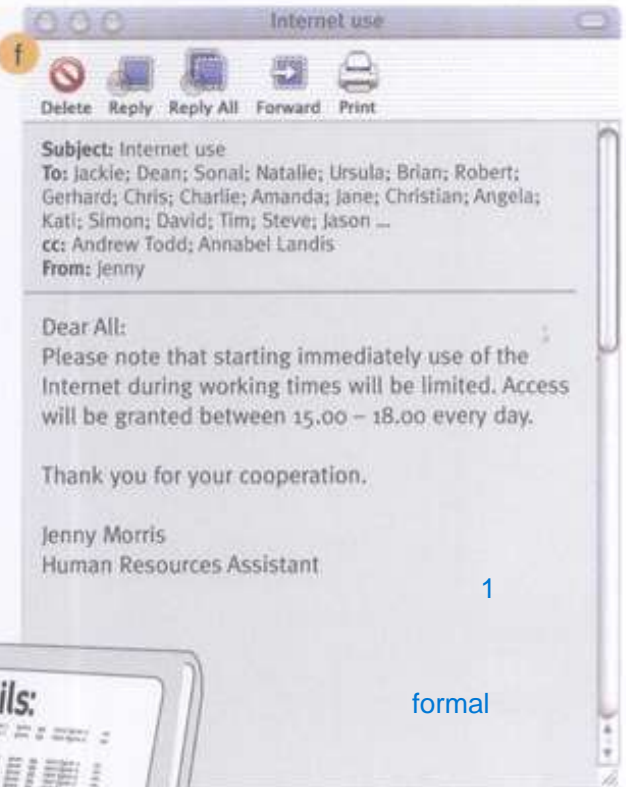
Let me know if I can be of assistance.

Have a nice day :-)

Yanis

informal

3



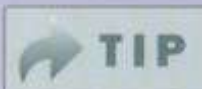
formal

1



## 2 Now look at the emails again and find the following.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1 An announcement to the staff of a new regulation | 4 A request for confirmation of an order |
| 2 A message to a colleague                         | 5 A hotel reservation                    |
| 3 A message to a customer about a change in plans  | 6 An enquiry to a supplier               |



## Register

The register of an email (how formal or informal it is) depends on the type of message you are writing and who you are writing to. So an email about rescheduling a meeting might be less formal than an enquiry or an apology. Similarly, an email to a new customer or the CEO of your company would probably be more formal than an email to an old customer or a colleague.

You can tell how formal an email is by its ...

**Salutation & close:** See **TIP** on page 7.

**Colloquial phrases:** These are phrases normally used in conversation which make an email less formal. Examples are *How's it going?* for *How are you?* or *See ya* for *See you later*. See page 34 for more examples.

**Vocabulary:** The words and expressions used in an email can make it formal or informal. Some examples are:

<b>formal</b>	to receive	to inform	to assist	to contact
<b>less formal</b>	to get	to tell	to help	to get in touch

**Abbreviations:** The use of abbreviations and symbols (eg *for* for *for example*, *info* for *information* and *&* for *and*) are more common in informal emails, although some standard abbreviations used in letter-writing – like *asap* – are also found in formal emails.

**Emoticons:** These written forms of body language or gesture are often used in less formal emails to help the recipient understand exactly what you mean.

### 3 Find examples in the emails on pages 12 and 13 to complete the table.

	More formal	Less formal (or informal)
salutations & closes	<i>Dear Mr Braithwaite</i>	<i>Hey Gary!</i>
phrases & vocabulary	<i>inform</i>	<i>Just a note to tell you ...</i>
abbreviations, etc.		<i>:~)</i>




#### 4 Match the vocabulary used in formal emails (1–10) with the less formal vocabulary below.

to answer • to ask • to get in touch with • help • to need • OK  
• to put off • to be sorry • to set up • to tell

1 convenient = OK  
2 assistance = \_\_\_\_\_  
3 to inform = \_\_\_\_\_  
4 to reply = \_\_\_\_\_  
5 to regret = \_\_\_\_\_

6 to contact = \_\_\_\_\_  
7 to postpone = \_\_\_\_\_  
8 to arrange = \_\_\_\_\_  
9 to enquire = \_\_\_\_\_  
10 to require = \_\_\_\_\_

#### 5 Now complete the emails below with words from above. Be careful of the register!



1 Dear Mr Bass


I am writing to \_\_\_\_\_<sup>1</sup> about your range of less exclusive products.

Our company has diversified recently and, in addition to the professional equipment we have previously purchased, we now \_\_\_\_\_<sup>2</sup> products for the hobby golfer.

Could we \_\_\_\_\_<sup>3</sup> a meeting to see one of your sales reps who can \_\_\_\_\_<sup>4</sup> us about your products? The week of 19 August would be \_\_\_\_\_<sup>5</sup> for us.

As I will be out of the office from 2 to 6 August, please \_\_\_\_\_<sup>6</sup> my assistant, Sylvie Jouet, directly.

Best regards  
Simon Pilgrim



2 Hi Sylvie

Just a quick note to say we are very \_\_\_\_\_<sup>7</sup> for the delivery delay.

I'm afraid we'll have to \_\_\_\_\_<sup>8</sup> the delivery date for 10 days because of the truck drivers' strike.

When exactly do you \_\_\_\_\_<sup>9</sup> the goods? If it's very urgent I'll \_\_\_\_\_<sup>10</sup> the manager of the forwarders whether we can \_\_\_\_\_<sup>11</sup> a special delivery somehow.

I'll \_\_\_\_\_<sup>12</sup> asap, but please let me know the latest date for the goods.

Despite this, have a nice day!  
Rgds  
Jean



## 8 Find ten spelling mistakes in the first email. Then correct the second email. How many mistakes can you find? (Look out for punctuation too!)

Hi Charlotta  
Jsut a quik note to telll you that the info fort  
he new product has finally arrived.  
Ill get in tuch with you next week to update  
you on tormorow#s meeting in Romania.  
Can you put of the product mailing until I'm  
back?  
Seeyou soon.

Ragrds  
Tibor

Deer Mahendra  
we are still wating for the above oerder but have  
recieved no email to explain the reason for the deley.  
This is particularly inconvenient for us at the moment  
as as our clients need the dylivery asap  
Please can you kontakt the forwarders find out what  
has happened and inform us immediately.  
we look forward to hearing from you very soon

kind regards  
Mia

### OUTPUT



### How important is accuracy in emails?

You will hear five people talking about emails. What is the main point each speaker makes? Note any important words they use.



Speaker 1

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Speaker 2

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Speaker 3

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Speaker 4

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Speaker 5

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### Which opinion do you agree with?

#### OVER TO YOU

How would you react if you received an email full of mistakes from someone you didn't know?  
Would it matter if the person wasn't writing in his or her native language?

## Practice

**From Exercise 7, use the notes to write responses based on given register.**

## 1. Email 1

[illegible]



## 2. Email 2

New Message

ToCc Bcc

Subject

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Send ▾

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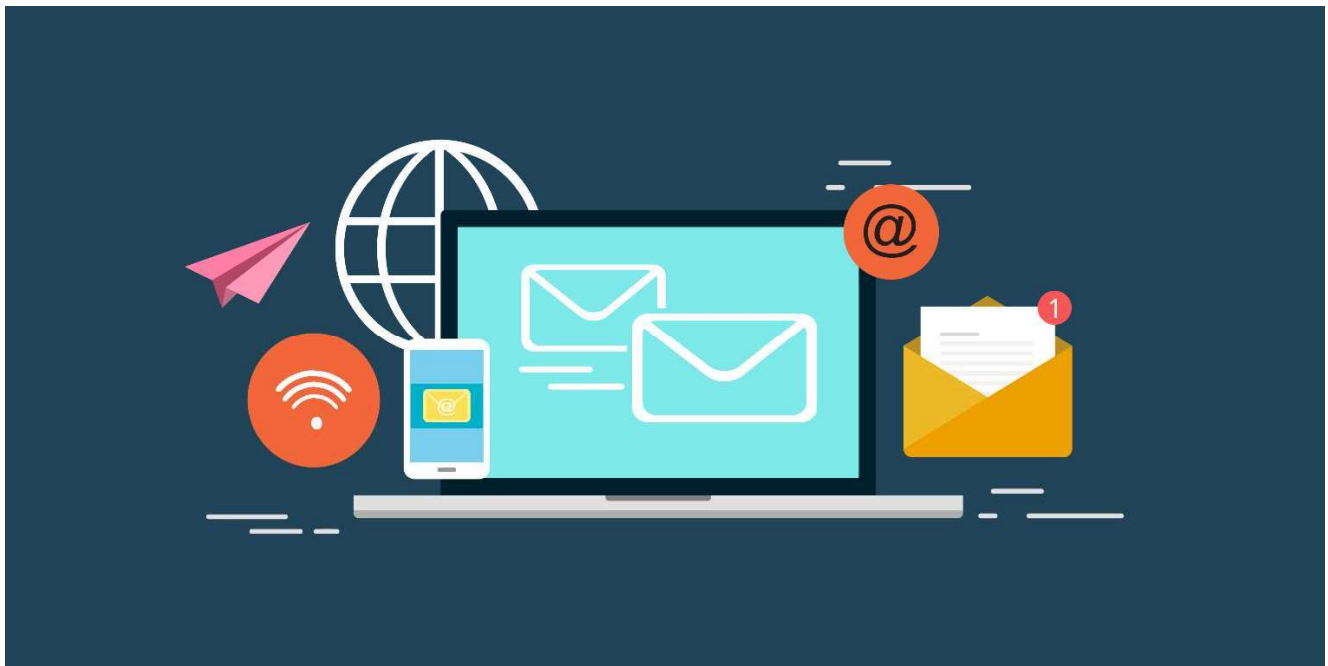
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## TOPIC 6:

# EXCHANGING INFORMATION IN EMAILS

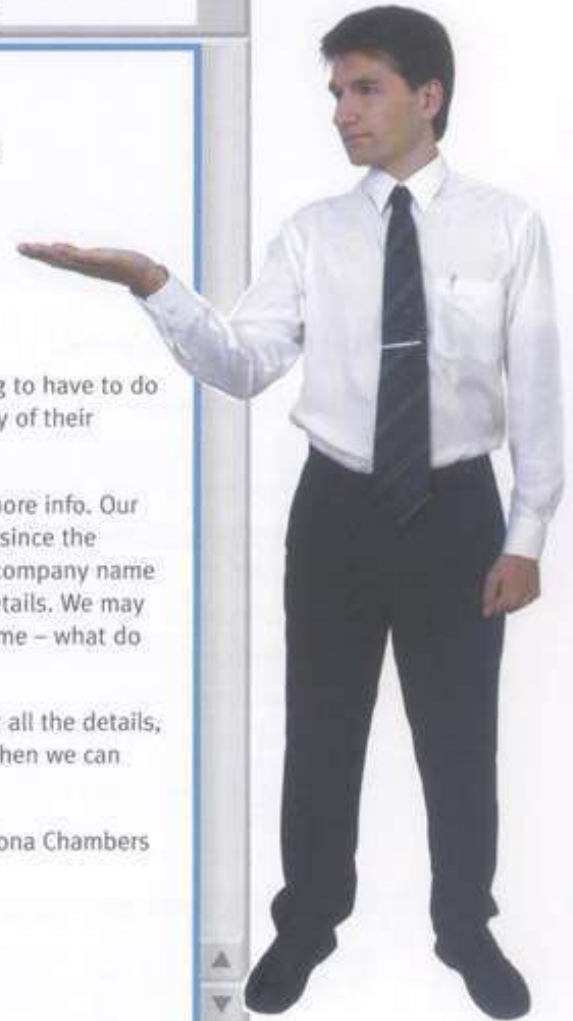
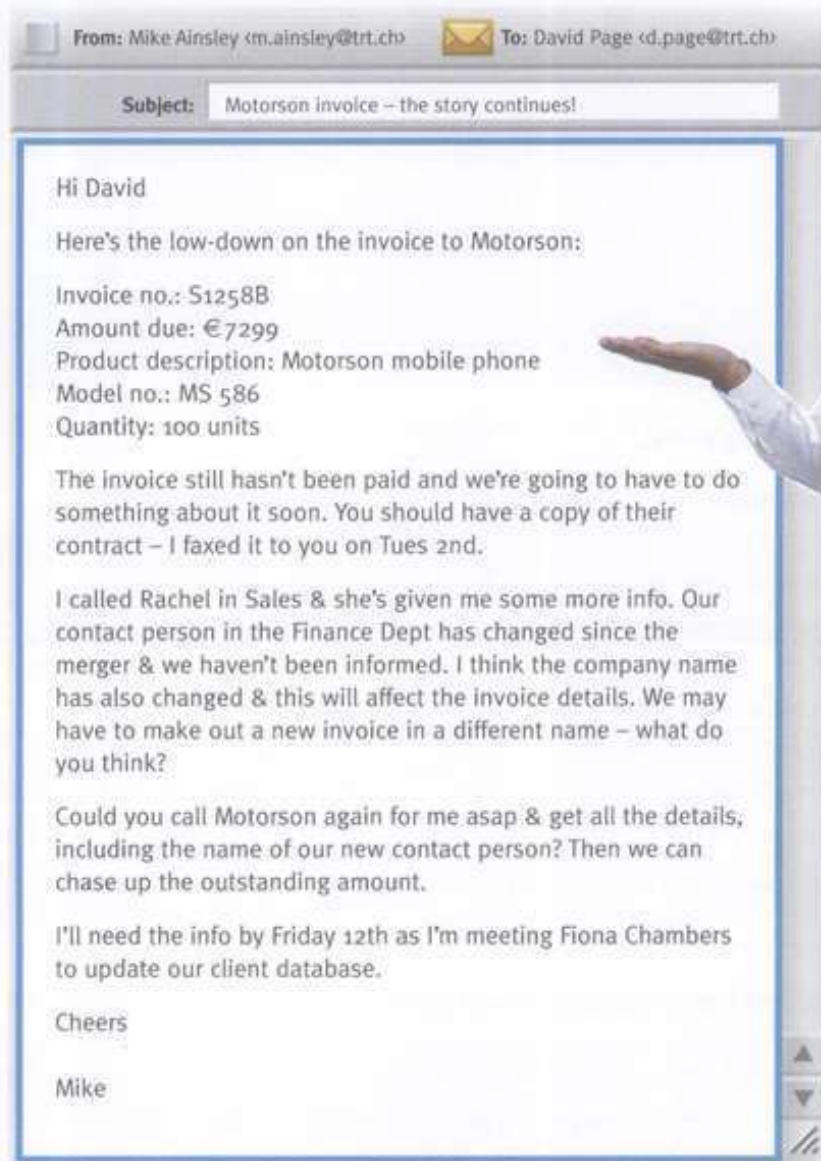
Teacher-in-charge: Mr Nguyen Quoc Thinh

At the end of the lesson, you will be able to:

- + **use** colloquial phrases, contractions, and diplomatic language to inform and reply emails correctly

**1 David and Mike both work for a distribution company dealing in mobile phones. Look at David's email and answer the questions.**

- 1 How does Mike introduce the subject of the email?
- 2 Label parts of the email with the following: salutation, informing, stating the action to be taken, giving a deadline, close.
- 3 Does David already know about the invoice? How do you know?
- 4 What is the new information Mike has found out?
- 5 What does Mike ask David to do?





### Colloquial phrases and contractions

#### Colloquial phrases

When English native speakers write to each other as close business acquaintances they often use colloquial phrases like *the low-down*, *to chase something up* (AmE *down*), or *cheers* (BrE for *thanks*). Be careful when using colloquial phrases as they can make your English sound too familiar when used in the wrong context.

#### Contractions

Emails often reflect spoken English and tend to use contractions instead of the full form, e.g. *here's* (*here is*), *haven't* (*have not*), or *I'll* (*I will*).

Watch out: don't leave out the apostrophe when using contractions as the meaning could be changed.

it's = *it is*    its = *possessive*    I'll = *I will*    ill = *sick*

## 2 Find the matching pairs.

#### colloquial language

- 1 to check sth out
- 2 to touch base with sb
- 3 to send sth by snail mail
- 4 to mail\* sb
- 5 to give sb the low-down
- 6 to chase sth up (AmE: *down*)
- 7 to be out of the loop
- 8 to put sth on hold

#### standard language

- to send sb an email
- to give sb information
- to send sth by post
- to try to find or get sth (that is missing)
- to look at sth in detail
- to get in contact with sb
- to postpone sth (or put sth off)
- to be out of touch or not have heard sth

\* Watch out when *mail* is used as a verb; in AmE *to mail* also means sending something by the traditional postal service (i.e. *by snail mail*).

**Now rewrite this email using standard language to replace the colloquial phrases.**

Hello Sally

Thanks for getting in touch and giving me the low-down on the March sales meeting. By the way, I called Barbara's office and tried to chase up the January figures but she's been on holiday – so no success there! Perhaps you could touch base with Gary and ask him to mail me the info directly. I hope he can – I'd hate to have to put the meeting on hold.

Oh, one last thing: can you send me a few of the new brochures? No hurry – snail mail will do!

Ciao

Jon



### 3 A virus has knocked out all the apostrophes in these sentences. Put them back in.

- 1 The employees were asked to comment on a no-smoking policy. Well report the results in our next online bulletin.
- 2 Were happy the negotiations ended positively for both parties.
- 3 Lets introduce Internet access for all of our employees. Theyve been using it for years anyway.
- 4 The production plants just had its yearly safety examination and no problems have been reported.
- 5 If you havent received the report, let me know & Ill send it on.
- 6 Heres the survey. Remember, well have to scrap the product if its not popular.

### 4 David has replied to Mike's email in exercise 1 by 'quoting' from the original message. Complete David's email with items a–e.

- a No problem. According to their message, they're back on the 9th. I'll get back to you with the info asap.
- b Thanks for yr email. I've written my answers in below.
- c I agree. Let's discuss it with the new contact person though.
- d Yes, I got it. Thanks.
- e I've tried to call but the answerphone picks up. Apparently they're all on holiday! ;-) I'll keep trying though.

**To:** Mike Ainsley <m.ainsley@trt.ch> **From:** David Page <d.page@trt.ch>

**Subject:** re: Motorson invoice – the story continues!

Morning, Mike

1 [Redacted]

<You should have a copy of their contract – I faxed it to you on Tues 2nd.>

2 [Redacted]

<We may have to make out a new invoice in a different name – what do you think?>

3 [Redacted]

<Could you call Motorson again for me asap & get all the details, including the name of our new contact person? Then we can chase up the outstanding amount.>

4 [Redacted]

<I'll need the info by Friday 12th as I'm meeting Fiona Chambers to update our client database.>

5 [Redacted]

D

## 5 Put the following phrases in the correct category, informing or replying.

Just a note to say/tell you ... • In reply to your email ... • Here are the details on ... • I'm writing to clarify ... • I'll get back to you asap ... • Thank you for clarifying ... • I'll follow up the points mentioned in your email ... • I'd like to inform you of ... • Just a few comments about/on ... • Just to update you on ... • Let me fill you in on ... • Thanks for your email. • You'll find the info attached ...

### Informing

*Just a note to say/tell you ...*

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### Replying

*In reply to your email ...*

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## 6 Use (parts of) the phrases in exercise 5 to complete these short emails. More than one answer may be possible.

**a** **From:** Monica Jason **To:** Janice Forbes  
**Subject:** Market research

Hey Janice!

Just \_\_\_\_\_<sup>1</sup>  
the market research idea. We have 2000 participants  
& the start-up date is Oct 1. The rest of the details  
aren't clear so I'll \_\_\_\_\_<sup>2</sup>.

Best wishes

Monica :-)

**c** **From:** Phoebe Marlow **To:** Gerald Ainsley  
**Subject:** re: Updates

Dear Gerald

In \_\_\_\_\_<sup>3</sup>  
I've put together all the answers to your questions in a  
Word document which I can either fax you or send as  
an attachment. Which would you prefer?

Speak to you soon

Phoebe

**b** **From:** David Collins **To:** Alison Price  
**Subject:** Special Offer

Dear Ms Price

I'd \_\_\_\_\_<sup>4</sup> a special offer  
we're giving to all our most loyal customers. For any  
order of office supplies which exceeds EUR 200 we  
shall include a free stationery kit. For more details of  
this offer you'll find \_\_\_\_\_<sup>5</sup>.

Regards:  
David Collins  
Customer Services

**d** **From:** Steve East **To:** Timothy Barker  
**Subject:** re: conference info – again!!

Hi Tim

Thanks \_\_\_\_\_<sup>6</sup>. It sounds as  
if you still haven't got that info about the conference.  
Let \_\_\_\_\_<sup>7</sup> the important  
details. (I'll also post the packet to you.) It's taking place  
on Wed and Thurs 25–26.8. at the Adele Conference  
Centre in York and we're starting each day at 9 am. Your  
presentation is on Wed at 2 pm – you've only got 40  
minutes so talk fast!

Bye for now  
Steve





### Being diplomatic

When things aren't going according to plan, an email exchange can become heated. The use of diplomatic language lets you point out mistakes gently, without offending the person you're writing to.

*We have a slight / minor / little problem.*

*Unfortunately, the mistake is rather serious.*

*I'm afraid we're not happy with ...*

Furthermore, be careful when showing emotion in an email. Using exclamation marks and writing words or phrases in capital letters can make your message too strong – it can look like you're shouting.

*Joanne, I'm still waiting for a reply!!!*

*Didn't we agree to meet on TUESDAY?*

A more moderate way to emphasize a word is to enclose it in asterisks.

*Just writing to see what happened to your report. I needed it \*Monday\* and it's now Friday. Can we discuss?*

## 7 Rewrite the following email to make it more diplomatic.

ob  
We have a problem! I asked you to  
send me the conference details  
LAST WEEK but I still haven't  
received anything. What's going  
on?!! Now the hotel has asked me  
for the info today or we will lose the  
reservation. This is NOT a good  
situation!!! This is the ONLY hotel  
available in Madstown for our dates  
and I don't want to have to change  
the conference location.  
PLEASE TAKE CARE OF THIS  
IMMEDIATELY!  
Jack



## 8 Use these notes to write emails to some colleagues.

1 *Sira – Meeting changed to Wed (not Thurs). Don't forget: XS32 manual, laptop*

2 *Answer Pamela's email: Update OK but still need Manuel's travel plans. Urgent. Will send new price list tomorrow*

3 *Email John with update (check with Alice to make sure he's back from holiday) YES! Still no answer from Izumi about the Appleton account. Gantor-Brooks acct has been approved Meeting with me, Paul, and Izumi next week (Thursday 9 am) if he has time?*

### OUTPUT

AUDIO



7

Cecil Armstrong is a trainer for office communication. In this interview he talks about one of his 'pet hates' – something which annoys him when he is using email as a communication tool.

Listen to the interview and answer the questions below.

- 1 What does Cecil really dislike?
- 2 Why?
- 3 What does he recommend?
- 4 What's his number one rule for email etiquette?

The email printout? Should take ... ooh, only about, ahem, an hour ...



### OVER TO YOU

What do you think about quoting in emails? Do you ever do it?

Does it bother you as much as it does Cecil?

Is there anything which really annoys you when you receive emails? Write a list of 'five things NOT to do'.

YOU'VE GOT MAIL

UNIT 5

Partner A page 49  
Partner B page 51



## Practice

**From Exercise 8, use the notes to write emails Colleague no.3.**

[illegible]

✕  
✕  
|

Cc Bcc

