

Email Writing

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FAQs

- How much should I write in an email?
- Do spelling and grammar matter in email?
- What do cc: and bcc: mean?
- What are plain text and HTML format email?
- What is a signature file?

Do

- Use an informative subject line, which says what the email is about.
- Write the most important information first.
- Use numbers and bullet points to make the message clearer.
- Use simple grammar. Avoid passive sentences. (Emails are a fast means of communication and they should be less wordy and complex than formal letters.)
- Write short sentences.
- Use paragraphs to keep the email clear and easy to understand.

Don't

- Write 'Hello' or 'Hi' as your subject line. It may be seen as spam and deleted without being opened.
- Write about irrelevant issues. The reader will soon hit 'delete' if the email doesn't get to the point quickly.
- Give personal information that you don't want anyone else to know. (The email could end up in the wrong hands.)
- Use capital letters to write whole words. In emails, this is considered shouting.
- Use different fonts or italics in the email (the recipient's computer may not be compatible.)
- Use exclamation marks.
- Use sms abbreviations like coz and uni. The recipient may not understand them and therefore get irritated.
- Use acronyms like BTW for the same reason.
- Use smileys. They may seem unprofessional and could be misunderstood.

Parts of an email

- Headers
(information about the message, such as “To:”, “From:”, “Date:”, and “Message-ID:” etc. followed by a subject header such as “Meeting tomorrow at 10” which is a quick summary of the main point of the email.
- Body (the text) of the message.
(If the email is a formal one, it is customary, though not obligatory, to finish with your name, return address and other useful information as a signature).

Before you write an email ...

- Why am I writing this?
- What exactly do I want the result of this message to be?

If you can't concisely answer these questions, postpone sending your message until you can.

Types of email

- Self-fulfilling Email
- Inquiries
- Open-Ended Dialogue
- Action Emails

Structure of an email

- The Beginning
 - Use Appropriate Salutations
 - Write a Meaningful Subject Line
- The Body
 - Situation
 - Benefits
 - Call to Action
- The Closing
 - Signature Line