

Email writing

Formal emails are usually sent to people the writer doesn't know or to people outside the company. Less formal emails are usually sent to people the writer knows and / or colleagues. If you are not sure how formal your email should be, copy the email style of the person who wrote to you, or use a semi-formal style.

The following are some guidelines on how to start and end emails with different levels of formality.

Formal emails

Writing to someone when you do not know the name:

Opening

Dear Sir or Madam

Dear Sir / Madam

Closing

Yours faithfully (UK)

Sincerely (US)

Writing to someone when you know the name:

Opening

Dear Mr Thomas

Dear Dr Thomas

Dear Ms Smith (use for a married / unmarried woman)

Dear John Thomas

Closing

Regards

Yours sincerely (UK)

Sincerely (US)

Semi-formal emails

Opening

Dear John

Dear Olivia

Closing

Thanks

Best regards

Yours

Informal emails

In many companies, informal emails are sent between colleagues.

Opening

Hi John

Hello Olivia

Hi (Use *Hi* or *Hello* without the person's name.)

Hello

John (Start the email with the person's first name.)

J (In very informal situations, you can write the first letter of the person's name. This is for someone called *John*.)

You can also start an informal email with no opening at all.

Closing

Best wishes

All the best

Thanks

John (You can close an email with just your first name.)

J (In very informal situations, you can write the first letter of your name. This is a closing from someone called *John*.)