

Beginning and ending emails

Formal emails

Many formal emails use standard letter-writing style. These are often used for a first email between individuals and organizations.

Writing to someone when you do not know the name

Opening

Dear Sir or Madam

Dear Sir / Madam

Closing

Yours faithfully (used in British English)

Sincerely (used only in American English)

Writing to someone when you know the name

Opening

Dear Mr / Dr / Mrs (used for a married woman) / *Ms* (used for a married / unmarried woman) *Thomas*

Dear John Thomas

Closing

Regards

Many thanks (this is usually followed by one of the other closings)

Yours sincerely (used in British English)

Sincerely (used only in American English)

Semi-formal emails

Semi-formal email correspondence is often used between the following groups.

- people who work together by email, but have never met
- people who work for different organizations, but have a long-term professional relationship
- people at different levels within the same organization

It can be difficult to know when to switch from a formal to a semi-formal style. This often happens after a first meeting between the correspondents. The best advice is to copy the style used by the person you are exchanging emails with.

Opening

Dear John

Dear Olivia

Closing

Thanks (this is common even if the person has not helped you to do something and is usually followed by one of the other closings.)

Best regards

Yours

Informal emails

In many companies, informal emails are sent between co-workers. Informal emails are also often used when workers write emails to higher-ranking managers (this will change from company to company and you will need to check this before being too informal in the workplace).

Opening

Hi John

Hello Olivia

Hi / Hello (can be used without adding the person's name)

John

J (the first initial of the person's name can be used in very informal situations)

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

Closing

Best wishes

All the best

Thanks (in informal emails this is often not used with another closing)

See you then (used in an email which arranges a time when the people will meet)