

# 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*

We also use *Dear Sir or Madam* when writing to a company or organization.

#### 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*

Note that in modern business usage the distinction between *Mrs* (a married woman) and *Miss* (an unmarried woman) is being replaced with *Ms*.

Titles such as *Mr*, *Ms*, and *Dr* can also be written with a full stop: *Mr.*, *Ms.*, *Dr.* This is especially common in American English.

#### The sign-off

Before ending an email with *Yours sincerely*, etc. it is very common to include a sign-off. The sign-off is a final sentence making reference to future contact. These are used in all forms of emails and are especially useful as a way of sounding friendly as well as formal at the end of an email.

*If you are interested in discussing this further, please contact me using the details below.*

*Please call me at any time if there is anything else you would like to know.*

*I look forward to seeing you next month.* (used when a meeting has already been arranged)

#### 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)

*With very best wishes*

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## 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*

### The sign-off

*Please email or call me if you would like to discuss this further.*

*Do you think that we could arrange a phone call to discuss it further? What would be a good time for you?*

*By the way, I will be in Osaka again in June. Maybe we could meet up again then?*

*Please give me a ring if there is anything else you would like to know.*

### 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).

In greetings, workers will often use their first name alone at the top and bottom of the email (without *Dear*). Another common occurrence with very short internal emails is to include all the email content in the subject line, leaving the rest of the message empty.

### 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, especially as part of a longer email exchange.

### 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)

*J* (you can write the first initial of your name in very informal situations)