

Business English- Too formal or informal for most business emails

Decide if each line below is probably too formal/ polite (F) or probably too casual/ informal/ impolite (I) for most business emails.

Opening greeting

Hiya!/ Hey! Dearest Bob!

Hey dudes

Opening line

'bout the meeting next week,...

I just got your mail./ I was so thrilled to get your email yesterday.

Thank you so much for your very rapid response.

Sorry it took me absolutely ages to get back to you.

Whassup?

It was a honour to have the opportunity to be able to meet with you yesterday.

Just a word or two about...

Body

Attachments

Please find attached the XL document for your attention./ Attached please find the XL document for your attention./ Kindly look at the attached document if you require any further details.

Making arrangements / Invitations

I would be absolutely delighted if you could spare a few minutes to see me on Monday 25th January.

... should that match your availability./... if that is at all possible.

It is my very great pleasure to accept your invitation.

Sorry, I'm busy then./ Can't make it. Sorry!

Complaints/ Dealing with complaints

You might be disappointed to hear that the standards of your hotel were not quite up to the very high ones that I had come to expect from your chain.

You sent the wrong amount.

Requests/ Replying to requests

Would you mind at all if I asked you to send that to me, if it's not too much trouble?

Forward this to Mr Jones.

Please do it by Friday/ I need this asap/ Wanna get it finished by Friday.

I would respectfully request that you confirm this at your earliest possible convenience.

There's no way I can do that./ That's impossible.

Closing line

I await a response at your earliest convenience.

Need more info? Just drop me a line.

I would very much appreciate any assistance you can offer me in this matter.

CU then.

Okay?/ Alright?

Once again, please accept my most sincerest thanks.

Give a kiss to John from me./ Send my love to John.

I hope that is of some assistance to you.

Sorry 'bout that!/ Sorry!

Closing greeting

Lots of love/ Kisses/ XXXX/ Hugs and kisses/ XOXO

Work together to convert some of the above into the right level of formality.

Generally, what changes are necessary to make something more formal or less formal?

Compare your ideas with the answer key on the next page.

Too formal or informal for most business emails Suggested answers

Listed with the most formal/ polite first if there is more than one. The ones which are (probably) too formal are in bold.

Opening greeting

- Hiya!/ Hey! Dearest Bob! – Dear Mr.../ Dear Ms.../ Dear Bob/ Hi Bob/ Hi (+ maybe just “Bob”, but that isn’t very friendly)
- Hey dudes – To: All staff:/ Dear all/ Hi everyone/ Hi guys

Opening line

- ‘bout the meeting next week,... - I’m writing to you in connection with the meeting next week./ I’m writing to you about the meeting next week./ Regarding the meeting next week,.../ Re: the meeting next week,.../ About the meeting next week,...
- I just got your mail./ I was so thrilled to get your email yesterday.- Thank you very much for your email of 7 March./ Thank you for your email, which I have just received./ Thank you for your email yesterday.
- **Thank you so much for your very rapid response. – Thank you for your rapid reply./ Thanks for your quick reply.**
- Sorry it took me absolutely ages to get back to you. – Sorry for my late reply.
- Whassup? – I hope you are well./ How are you?/ How’s it going?/ How are things?
- **It was a honour to have the opportunity to be able to meet with you yesterday. – It was a pleasure to meet you yesterday./ It was great to meet you yesterday.**
- Just a word or two about... - I don’t have time to reply in detail at the moment, but I thought I should let you know.../ This is just a quick note to say...

Body

Attachments

- **Please find attached the XL document for your attention./ Attached please find the XL document for your attention./ Kindly look at the attached document if you require any further details. – Please find the XL document attached./ Can you have a look at this XL document and...?/ Please see the attached XL document./ I’ve attached the XL document./ Here’s the XL document..**

Making arrangements / Invitations

- **I would be absolutely delighted if you could spare a few minutes to see me on Monday 25th January. – Do you have time to meet on Monday 25th?/ Can you meet on Monday 25th?/ Are you free (to meet) on Monday 25th?**
- ... should that match your availability./... if that is at all possible. - ... if that is convenient with you./ ... if you are available./ ...if that suits you./ ... if you are free.
- **It is my very great pleasure to accept your invitation. – That is perfect for me. I look forward to seeing you then./ Great! See you there!**
- Sorry, I’m busy then./ Can’t make it. Sorry! – Unfortunately, I will be... ing at just that time./ I’m afraid I am... ing... at that time.

Complaints/ Dealing with complaints

- **You might be disappointed to hear that the standards of your hotel were not quite up to the very high ones that I had come to expect from your chain. – Unfortunately, the standards of your hotel were not what I expected.**
- You sent the wrong amount. – The amount we received was not what we expected/ The amount sent does not seem to be correct

Requests/ Replying to requests

- **Would you mind at all if I asked you to send that to me, if it's not too much trouble? – Could you possibly send that to me?/ Can you send that to me?**
- Forward this to Mr Jones. – Could you forward this to Mr Jones?/ Can you forward this to Mr Jones?/ Can you send this on to Mr Jones?
- Please do it by Friday/ I need this asap/ Wanna get it finished by Friday. – Your quick response would be much appreciated./ I would be very grateful if you could take action in the near future./ If you could get this finished by Friday, that would be a great help./ I'm afraid this really needs to be finished by the end of the week
- **I would respectfully request that you confirm this at your earliest possible convenience. – Could you get back to me by...?**
- There's no way I can do that./ That's impossible. – I'm afraid that is not really possible at this time/ I'm afraid that is rather difficult.

Closing line

- **I await a response at your earliest convenience. – I look forward to hearing from you (soon)./ I'm looking forward to hearing from you (soon)./ Looking forward to hearing from you (soon).**
- Need more info? Just drop me a line. – If you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me./ If you need any more information, please contact me./ If you need any more info, please let me know.
- **I would very much appreciate any assistance you can offer me in this matter. – Thank you in advance./ Thanks in advance./ Cheers.**
- CU then. – I look forward to seeing you then./ See you then.
- Okay?/ Alright? – I hope that is acceptable with you./ I hope that is okay with you./ I hope that's okay./ Hope that's okay.
- Once again, please accept my most sincerest thanks. – Thanks again.
- Give a kiss to John from me./ Send my love to John. – Please give my regards to John./ Give my regards to John/ Pass my best wishes onto John/ Say "Hi" to John from me.
- **I hope that is of some assistance to you. – I hope that helps./ Hope that helps.**
- Sorry 'bout that!/ Sorry! - Once again, please accept our sincerest apologies for any inconvenience that might have been caused by this problem./ Please accept my apologies for any inconvenience caused./ I'm sorry about that./ Sorry about that.

Closing greeting

- Lots of love/ Kisses/ XXXX/ Hugs and kisses/ XOXO – Yours/ Best regards/ Regards/ All the best/ Best wishes

Circle phrases above which are probably suitable for your own emailing at work and then compare with someone else.