

5 More key phrases for emails and letters

Here are some more sentences and expressions which are typically used in business emails and letters.

Reason for writing

I am writing to confirm / request / inform you that ...
I am writing to you to enquire about ...
I'm sorry to tell you that ...
I'm just writing to find out ...
Just a short message to clarify ...
Just to let you know

Giving good news

We are pleased to inform you that ...
You will be happy to hear that ...
I'm sure you'll be delighted to know ...
I'm pleased to tell you ...

Does your writing have correct facts and figures ?



Giving bad news

I / We regret to inform you that ...
Unfortunately, ...
I am afraid that we are unable to ...
I'm sorry to tell you that ...

Closing remarks

Do not hesitate to contact me / us if you need ...
Let me know if you need ...
If you have any further questions, please contact me.
Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you ...
Thank you (again) for your input / assistance.
Thanks for your help (once again).

Apologising

We (must) apologise for (not) ...-ing
I (do) apologise for any inconvenience.
I'm (really) sorry for/about ...
Sorry for (not) ...-ing.



Sending documents / files

Would you mind ...-ing ...?
Please find attached / enclosed ...
Please will you ... ?
We have enclosed a hard copy of the document. Would you please ... ?
I've sent you a copy of ...

Positive future reference

If you wish, we would be happy to ...
I / We look forward to meeting / seeing you ...
Would you like me to ... ?
I (very much) look forward to hearing from you.
Do you want me / us to ... ?
It would be good to get together ...
Shall I ... (for you)?
Hope to see you soon.

Checklist for good writing

Does your writing have:

- ✓ a clear objective?
- ✓ good organisation and structure?
- ✓ a professional layout?
- ✓ clear, concise language?
- ✓ correct facts and figures?
- ✓ a positive ending?
- ✓ correct grammar, spelling and punctuation?

6 Getting the style right

Pay careful attention to the level of formality or familiarity you use when writing. While planning, decide which is the most appropriate style to use.

Formal writing

Longer words, impersonal and indirect, formula-based language structure, perfect grammar and punctuation.

Standard professional writing

Direct and shorter phrases, less formal vocabulary, personal and direct in style, structured, proficient language use expected.

Informal writing

Conversational expression, everyday words, personalised style, less structure, less than perfect language use acceptable.

Which style is best?

Write to your reader.
Don't be too informal (or too formal).
Use language which establishes a professional tone.

Short forms

I'm ... They haven't ...
You're ... I'd ...
I can't ... She won't ...

Push or pull styles*

Rephrasing our language more positively has a significantly more positive effect on the reader.

It may also increase the chances of getting people to do what you want them to do.

Push

Send it – I need it now.
If you don't send it, we'll be in trouble.
The report you sent is totally inadequate.
We cannot send it in its present form, so you will need to rewrite sections 3 and 5.
We strongly recommend that you ...

NOT

busy, crisis, difficult, failure, cannot, won't, impossible, incompetent, never, stupid, unreasonable, waste, pointless

Pull

Do me a favour and get it to me asap.
If you send it, we can save this situation.
Can we meet this afternoon to go through your report? I think it could benefit from some changes to sections 3 and 5 before we send it.

One option you could consider is to ...

BUT

activity, agreed, evolving, fast, good question, helpful, manageable, mutual, productive, solve, solution, together, tools, team

...and, rather than words which sound negative, use positive alternatives

***Pull** styles can be effective in gaining longer-term commitment and high quality but they may be slower in achieving immediate results.

Push styles can be effective in achieving compliance but may not achieve commitment. They may bring about quick results, but could cause problems in the longer term.

