

Activity Type

Reading, Vocabulary and Writing Exercises: categorising, identifying, gap-fill, sentence writing (pair work)

Focus

First lines with a clear purpose in business emails

Aim

To practice recognising and writing clear first-line openings in business emails that show the main purpose and are appropriate for the relationship.

Preparation

Make one copy of the two-page worksheet for each student.

Level

Intermediate (B1)

Time

40 minutes

Introduction

In this email openings worksheet, students practice recognising and writing first-line openings that clearly show the purpose of the email and suit different recipients (managers, clients, and colleagues).

Procedure

Give each student a copy of the two-page worksheet.

Students begin by reading opening lines and sorting them into the five purposes given.

Exercise A – Answer key

1. Request: c, h
2. Follow-up: b, g
3. Confirmation: a, f
4. Reminder: e, j
5. Apology: d, i

Students then read opening lines and decide who each one is most suitable for.

Exercise B – Answer key

1. a 2. c 3. b 4. b 5. c 6. a

Next, students underline the best phrase in each sentence to create a correct and natural opening line.

Exercise C – Answer key

1. confirm
2. check
3. follow up on
4. remind you that

After that, students read opening lines and write the best answer that indicates what the email is about.

Exercise D – Answer key

1. b
2. c

(continued on the next page)

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Procedure continued

Students then complete six opening lines with words and phrases from a box.

Exercise E – Answer key

- | | |
|--------------|---------------|
| 1. confirm | 4. remind you |
| 2. clarify | 5. confirm |
| 3. follow up | 6. follow up |

Finally, students read four situations and write an appropriate opening line for each one. Encourage students to use patterns from previous exercises.

Examples:

I'm writing to...
I'm emailing to confirm...
I'm just writing to remind you that...
Just a quick reminder that...
I'm just following up on...
I wanted to follow up on...
I'm writing to check...
Just a quick note to see if...

Exercise F – Possible answers

1. I'm just following up on the quote I sent you last week.
2. Just a quick reminder that your slides for tomorrow's meeting are due.
3. I'm writing to clarify where tomorrow's meeting will take place.
4. I'm writing to confirm our meeting on Tuesday at 3 p.m. in Room 4 B.

A. Read the opening lines and then sort them into the purposes. Write the letters of the matching opening lines under each purpose.

Opening lines	Purpose
a. I'm writing to confirm the time of tomorrow's call.	1. Request
b. Just a quick note to see if you had a chance to review the draft.	
c. Could you please send the final slides by Thursday?	2. Follow-up
d. I'm very sorry about the confusion with the meeting link yesterday.	
e. This is just a friendly reminder about our call at 3 p.m. today.	3. Confirmation
f. I'm emailing to confirm your visit to our office on 14 March.	
g. I wanted to follow up on my email from last week about the contract.	4. Reminder
h. Please could you let me know if the new schedule works for you?	
i. My apologies for not replying sooner.	5. Apology
j. Just a quick reminder that the deadline is next Monday.	

B. Read the opening lines and decide who each one is most suitable for. Write the letter of the recipient in the space provided.



a. manager or senior executive (inside your company)

b. external client or new contact

c. colleague or teammate

1. Could you please let me know if you approve the new department budget by Friday?
2. Just a quick reminder that your sales slides for our team meeting are due tomorrow.
3. I'm writing to confirm our meeting on 18 March at 10 a.m. at your company.
4. I'm sorry for replying late to your email about the contract with your company.
5. Just checking if you had a chance to look at our team presentation draft.
6. I'm writing to clarify the next steps for your department's project review.

C. Underline the correct phrase to complete each opening line.

1. I'm just emailing to *confirm about the time of* / *confirm the time of* our meeting on Thursday.
2. I'm getting in touch to *check if* / *check about* you received my last email.
3. I'm writing to *follow up* / *follow up on* the invoice I sent last week.
4. This is just a quick note to *remind you about* / *remind you that* the sales report is due tomorrow.

D. What is each email about? Read the opening lines and write the best answer a, b or c.

1. I'm just following up on the quote I sent you on Monday.
 - a. asking for a new quote.
 - b. checking if you saw and read the quote.
 - c. saying sorry for a late payment.
2. I'm just writing to remind you that the sales report is due tomorrow.
 - a. saying thank you for the sales report.
 - b. moving the deadline to next week.
 - c. telling you again that you must send the report.

E. Complete the opening lines with the words and phrases from the box. You can use some words or phrases more than once.

confirm	clarify	follow up	remind you
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1. I'm just emailing to the time of our meeting next Tuesday at 10 a.m.
2. I'm getting in touch to the details of the new payment terms.
3. I'm writing to on the invoice I sent on Monday.
4. This is just a quick note to that the sales report is due tomorrow.
5. I'm writing to your visit to our office on 12 June.
6. I'm just contacting you to on the training session we discussed last week.

F. For each of the situations, write an appropriate opening line. Use examples from the previous exercises to help you.

1. You sent a client a quote last week. They have not replied. You want to write a polite email now.
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2. You already agreed a deadline with a colleague. Today you want to remind them that the slides are due tomorrow.
.....
3. You have a meeting tomorrow with a new client. You are not sure where the meeting will be. You want to check.
.....
4. You and your manager have arranged a meeting. You want to confirm the time and place in a short email.
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