

Formality and politeness in business requests

Circle the more formal examples on each line below.

- Any assistance you could give me in this matter would be gratefully accepted./ Any help at all would be much appreciated.
- Can you...?/ Could you...?
- Could you...?/ Could you possibly...?
- Could you...?/ Could you give me a hand with...?
- Hope that's okay./ Is that alright?
- I have a favour to ask you. .../ I have a request (for you). ...
- Can you...?/ I'd like to request...
- I need some help with.../ I need a hand with...
- I was wondering if you would be able to.../ Could you...?
- I would be very grateful if you could.../ Could you...?
- If you're not too busy,.../ Do you have time to...?
- Thanks in advance./ Thanks.
- There's something I think you can help me with. .../ I need your help with...
- Would it be possible for you to...?/ Could you...?
- Would you mind...ing (...)?/ You don't mind ..ing (...) (for me), do you?
- If..., that would be a great help./ Help!

Try to make general rules about which things are more polite/ formal, and use that to help and start checking your answers.

What are the general rules/ patterns of politeness and formality?

Which are the very most formal/ polite above? Are they too much for your typical business communications? Does that depend on whether you are writing or speaking?

Which of the above are most suitable for your average business emails?

Which of the above are good closing lines for those emails?

None of the phrases below are acceptable requests language in most situations. Why not?

Would you...?

Thank you for your cooperation.

Please + verb

We would appreciate your help in...

What paragraph structure and opening lines might you use for your emails making requests?