

Formal and informal email opening and closing phrases jigsaw

Instructions for teachers

Cut the worksheets into individual cards, with one set per group of two to four students. If you want to give out the names of the columns and rows (e.g. "Opening greeting To one person") later as clues, keep those as a separate set of cards for each group.

First get the groups of students to match the cards with no help, then give them more hints like those below (to keep the groups who have finished busy and to help the slower groups).

After they check their answers, there are practice ideas at the bottom below.

Instructions for students

Put all the cards that you are given together with other cards that have the same function/ meaning/ use.

Hint 1: There are three of each function/ meaning/ use (i.e. each card matches two others).

Hint 2: There should be one (very) formal card, one medium-formality card and one (very) informal card in each set of three cards with the same function/ meaning/ use.

Hint 3: There are two sets of opening greetings, six sets of opening lines, seven sets of closing lines, one set of closing greetings, and one set of names at the end of the email.

Hint 4: Ones with the same function are the same size as each other.

Hint 5: Use the headings to check the meanings of and sizes of the cards.

Check your answers with the answer key or as a class.

Before and/ or after the brainstorming, test each other in pairs or small groups:

- Read out two phrases with the same function and see if your partner can say which is more formal
- Read out formal and informal sentences and see if your partner can make the medium level ones between them
- Read out the name of a category (from the left column) and help your partner make three suitable phrases
- Choose one phrase and see if your partner can say a suitable email using it
- Say what you would be in an email including one of the phrases and see if your partner can reply with a suitable email response

Cards to cut up/ Suggested answers

	Very formal (e.g. job applications and legal-sounding complaints)	Standard/ Neutral/ Medium-level formality/ Everyday business level	(Very) informal/ friendly/ casual
Opening greeting To one person	Dear Sir or Madam Dear Professor Jones Dear Dr Jones Dear Mr Jones Dear Ms Jones	Dear Professor Jones Dear Dr Jones Dear Mr Jones Dear Ms Jones Dear John	Hi John John Hi Hi! (nothing)
To more than one person	To: All sales staff	Dear all	Hi guys Hi
Opening line Subject/ Topic	I am writing to you in connection with/ with regards to/ concerning/ regarding...	I'm writing to you about... I'm writing about...	Re:... Writing about... About...
Topic with verb	I am writing to you in order to...	I'm writing to...	Writing to...
Last contact	Thank you for your email, which I received yesterday.	Thanks for your email yesterday.	Just got your mail. Was so lovely to hear from you!
After a reply	Thank you very much for your prompt/ rapid reply.	Thanks for your quick reply.	Wow! That was quick!
General social question	I hope this email finds you well.	I hope you are well. How are you?	How's it going? How's life? How are things? How are you doing?
Specific social question	I hope you had a good weekend.	Hope you had a good weekend. How was your weekend?	Good weekend?
Starting a short mail	I don't have long to write, but I thought that you should know that...	Just a quick note to say...	A real quick one 'bout...

Closing line Reply!	I look forward to hearing from you soon.	I'm looking forward to hearing from you soon.	Write soon!
Offer more info	If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me (at any time).	If you need any more information, please let me know/ please (feel free to) contact me.	Just drop me a line if you need more info.
Offer more answers	If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me (at any time).	If you have any more questions, please contact me	Any more questions, just ask.
End a (big) request	Thank you in advance. Any assistance you could give me in this matter would be greatly appreciated.	Thanks in advance. Thanks. Thanks a lot.	Thx! Cheers. Cheers!
Mention next contact	I look forward to seeing you then.	See you then.	CU on Mon./ Can't wait to see you again!
Check if OK	I hope that is acceptable with you.	I hope that's okay. Hope that's okay.	Sound OK?
Apology (again)	Once again, please accept our sincerest apologies for any inconvenience that might have been caused (by this issue).	Again, please accept my apologies for any inconvenience caused. Sorry about (all) that.	Sorry 'bout that. Sorry!!
Closing greeting	Sincerely yours Sincerely Best regards	Best regards Yours All the best Best wishes	BW Lots of love Hugs and kisses XXX XOXO
Name at the end	A.M. Case (Mr)	Alex Alex Case Alex Case (Mr)	A (nothing)

Without looking above, fill the blanks below with the right formality.

	Very formal (e.g. job applications and legal-sounding complaints)	Standard/ Neutral/ Medium-level formality/ Everyday business	(Very) informal/ Friendly/ Casual
Opening greeting To one person	Dear Sir or Madam Dear Professor Jones Dear Dr Jones Dear Mr Jones Dear Ms Jones	Dear Professor Jones Dear Dr Jones Dear Mr Jones Dear Ms Jones Dear John	
To more than one person	To: All sales staff		Hi guys Hi
Opening line Subject/ Topic		I'm writing to you about... I'm writing about...	Re:... Writing about... About...
Topic with verb	I am writing to you in order to...		Writing to...
Last contact	Thank you for your email, which I received yesterday.	Thanks for your email yesterday.	
After a reply	Thank you very much for your prompt/ rapid reply.		Wow! That was quick!
General social question	I hope this email finds you well.	I hope you are well. How are you?	
Specific social question	I hope you had a good weekend.		Good weekend?
Starting a short mail	I don't have long to write, but I thought that you should know that...		A real quick one 'bout...

Closing line Reply!	I look forward to hearing from you soon.		Write soon!
Offer more info	If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me (at any time).		Just drop me a line if you need more info.
Offer more answers		If you have any more questions, please contact me	Any more questions, just ask.
End a request	Thank you in advance. Any assistance you could give me in this matter would be greatly appreciated.	Thanks in advance. Thanks. Thanks a lot.	
Mention next contact		See you then.	CU on Mon./ Can't wait to see you again!
Check if OK	I hope that is acceptable with you.		Sound OK?
Apology (again)		Again, please accept my apologies for any inconvenience caused. Sorry about (all) that.	Sorry 'bout that. Sorry!!
Closing greeting		Best regards Yours All the best Best wishes	BW Lots of love Hugs and kisses XXX XOXO
Name at the end	A.M. Case (Mr)		A (nothing)

Use the key words below to help with the task above.

- Alex
- all
- cheers
- concerning
- connection
- doing
- forward
- further
- FYI
- going
- got
- hesitate
- hi
- how
- I'm
- issue
- let
- life
- looking
- lovely
- might
- need
- note
- okay
- regarding
- regards
- regards
- sincerely
- sincerest
- things
- thx
- was

Check with the original cards. Other phrases might be suitable, so please check if you wrote something different.