

1st Year

How to write a perfect professional email in English in 6 steps

For most of us, email is the most common form of business communication so it's important to get it right. Although emails usually aren't as formal as letters, they still need to be professional to present a good image of you and your company.

Subject Line Says a Lot

No doubt, a subject line is the first thing a recipient reads. The decision of whether or not to open an email depends highly on how the subject line looks. Make sure the subject line is simple, specific, but catchy. Use key words that briefly summarize the content of your message.

“FYI” in the subject line is a commonly used abbreviation of “for your information”.

Follow these six simple steps to make sure your English emails are perfectly professional.

1. Begin with a greeting
2. Thank the recipient
3. State your purpose
4. Add your closing remarks
5. End with a closing
6. Proof read your email

1. Begin with a greeting

Always open your email with a greeting, such as “**Dear Lillian**”. If your relationship with the reader is formal, use their family name (eg. “**Dear Mrs. Price**”). If the relationship is more casual, you can simply say, “**Hi Kelly**”. If you don't know the name of the person you are writing to, use: “**To whom it may concern**” or “**Dear Sir/Madam**”.

2. Thank the recipient / Break the ice

If you are replying to a client's inquiry, you should begin with a line of thanks. For example, if someone has a question about your company, you can say, “**Thank you for contacting ABC Company**”. If someone has replied to one of your emails, be sure to say, “**Thank you for your prompt reply**” or “**Thanks for getting back to me**”. Thanking the reader puts him or her at ease, and it will make you appear more polite.

3. State your purpose

If you are starting the email communication, it may be impossible to include a line of thanks. Instead, begin by stating your purpose. For example, “**I am writing to enquire about ...**” or “**I am writing in reference to ...**”. Being clear and precise about the purpose of your email is important, as it will save time and will be much appreciated.

Remember, people want to read emails quickly, so keep your sentences **short and clear**. It is also a good idea to split the body of the email into **several paragraphs**, based on the topics you raise. You can also use **bullet-points**, which makes it easy to read. You'll also need to pay careful attention to **grammar, spelling and punctuation** so that you present a professional image of yourself (and your company).

4. Add your closing remarks

Before you end your email, it's polite to thank your reader one more time and add some polite closing remarks. You might start with **“Thank you for your patience and cooperation”** or **“Thank you for your consideration”** and then follow up with, **“If you have any questions or concerns, don't hesitate to let me know”** and **“I look forward to hearing from you”**.

5. End with a closing

The last step is to include an appropriate closing with your name. **“Best regards”**, **“Sincerely”**, and **“Thank you”** are all professional. Avoid closings such as **“Best wishes”** or **“Cheers”** unless you are good friends with the reader.

6. Proofread your Email

Finally, before you hit the send button, review and spell check your email one more time to make sure it's truly perfect! Check if there are any typos, grammatical or punctuation errors, or inappropriate word usage.

Informal vs Formal style

Your manner of speaking depends on who you are talking to. It usually comes naturally and is based on your relationship with an interlocutor. It applies to emails as well.

Here are some examples demonstrating different ways to write the same thing:

Informal: Can you ...?

Formal: I was wondering if you could...

Informal: Sorry, I can't meet you. I'm busy that day.

Formal: I am afraid I will not be available to make it that day

It's always good to ask someone else to proofread it for you. Remember that you cannot get the email back once you send it!