

## Writing Effective Email

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1

## Email as a business document

- Emails today are used as professional business documents—like memos, letters, reports
- Emails must follow professional business writing standards:
  - Formal salutations
  - Standard format using paragraphing and cordial openings and closings
  - Professional style and tone (no jargon, no smiley faces!)
  - Complete sentences, proper grammar/spelling

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2

## Tips for writing professional emails

- **Preview main message in the subject line**
- **Summarize main message** in the opening paragraph
- **Format message** for quick reading using headings, listings, and double spaces between paragraphs
- **Organize ideas** logically
- **Use a professional tone** that is polite and positive
- **Edit email for clarity and conciseness**
- **Proofread** message (in hard copy) for grammar, punctuation, spelling

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3

## Use a descriptive subject line

- **Compare these two subject lines:**
  - Loan information
  - How to process your loan application
- **Subject lines emphasize actions:**
  - Review and Update Your Benefit Package
  - Submit Your Loan Papers by June 5
- **Subject lines tell the short story:**
  - Today's meeting rescheduled to Friday
  - Final draft needs proofing by Tuesday

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4

## State main message up front

- The main message tells readers—in the first paragraph—
  - What the message is about
  - How the information relates to the reader's concerns
  - What the reader should do with the information

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5

## Compare these openings. . .

- This is in reference to your suggestions for the new floor plans required to accommodate DSL connections.
- Based on your request, we have revised the floor plans to accommodate DSL connections for all offices. Please review the attached floor plans, construction schedule, and budget. We will begin renovation immediately when we receive your approval on these.

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6

## Format message for quick reading

- Use white space to separate the greeting, introductory paragraph, body paragraph, and closing.
- Double space between paragraphs
- Use headings to announce key information
- Use listings to itemize topics or show steps
- Use boldface to highlight information like dates, addresses, and deadlines.

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7

## Provide concrete details

- Acknowledge reader's question in the first paragraph.
- Give specific details about what the reader needs to do or what you will do.
- Give deadlines and other dates that are important to reader.
- Prioritize tasks or listing, if appropriate.
- Avoid abstractions like "keep to a minimum" or "slightly changed"; instead give specific facts, examples, and explanations.

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8

## Use a polite, positive, and professional (3 P's) tone

- Use buffer statements for bad news.
- Avoid negatives (unfortunately, no, sorry, etc.); instead tell the reader what you can do for them.
- When responding to complaints, acknowledge the reader's concern then tell the reader what you will do (or have done) to correct the situation.
- Use an appropriate point of view: I, you, we

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9

## How to plan and draft your message

- Decipher the inquiry: what is the issue?
- List reader's questions and write quick answers
- Organize your response
- Write a quick draft
- Format draft and make changes in style, tone, grammar, etc.
- Print out and proofread

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10

## Format messages for quick reading

- Use white space to separate the greeting, introductory paragraph, body paragraphs, and closing.
- Focus paragraphs on one topic
- Use headings to announce key information
- Use listings to itemize topics or show steps
- Use boldface to highlight information like dates, addresses, and deadlines..

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11

## Use listings for readability

- Lists
  - Use numbered lists for steps or sequence
  - Use bulleted list for random listings
  - Keep lists parallel

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12




## Bulleted list

To apply for a federal or university loan based on need, you must meet the following requirements: You are

- A US citizen or eligible national
- Registered as a full-time student
- Current on previous loan obligations

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13



Federal or university loans based on needs are given to

- A US citizen or eligible national
- Registered as a full-time student
- Current on previous loan obligations

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14



## Writing steps

To apply for a credit card

1. **Go** to <http://www> and print form X.
2. **Complete** form (include current accounts)
3. **Sign** form and date
4. **Send** form to:  
Credit Accounts  
P.O. Box 444  
Billings, MT

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15