

WRITING E-MAILS



Notes

E-mail, also written as email, is an abbreviation for electronic mail. It is described as data kept on a computer and shared between two people over the internet. E-mail, in its most basic form, is a communication that may contain text, files, photos, or other attachments and is transmitted across a network to a specific individual or group of individuals. Email is something you type on a computer, but a letter is something you write by hand. Email is more efficient and speedier since typing and sending email takes significantly less time than writing and posting. Moreover, while using e-mail, differences in location and time zone do not remain an obstacle. For example, if you send an e-mail from India to a firm in America, they will get it immediately.



LEARNING OUTCOMES

After completing this lesson, the learner:

- Recognises different styles of communications through e-mail;
- Composes e-mail based on real-life situations;
- Classifies different Dos and Don'ts of effective communication through e-mail;
- Assesses the use of technology in communicating ideas effectively.

24.1 WHAT MAKES E-MAIL DIFFERENT

Electronic communication is fundamentally different from paper based communication because of its speed and broadcasting ability.

On paper, it is essential to make everything clear because your audience may not have a chance to ask for clarification. With e-mail, the receiver can ask questions immediately.

Writing E-Mails



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- **Correspondent:**
writer/ a person employed to report for a newspaper or broadcasting organisation

E-mail thus tends to be loosely structured, like conversation. This has its advantages—you save time and effort. Why should you spend hours on correct spellings, perfect grammar and appropriate words when the message is only to tell your colleague that you are ready to go to lunch. Of course, you must know when you can be careless and when you have to be meticulous.

Another difference between e-mail and older media is that what the sender sees when composing a message might not look like what the reader sees. With e-mail, the software and hardware that you use for composing, sending, storing, downloading, and reading may be completely different from what your **correspondent** uses. The visual quality of your message may be quite different by the time it gets to someone else's screen. Since these differences exist, it is necessary for you to tailor your message to this new medium.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 24.1**

1. How is an email different from a written letter?
2. How is electronic communication different from paper-based communication?
3. Mention some important features of communicating through e-mail.

24.2 HOW TO WRITE AN E-MAIL

In this section you will learn some of the major features of communicating through e-mail.

Ways Of Establishing Context

With e-mail, you cannot assume anything about a sender's location, time, state of mind, and profession, interest or future value to you. This means that you need to be very careful about giving your receiver some context. Furthermore, your receiver may get a few hundred messages all at once. This section will give specific ways for establishing context so that your message becomes meaningful and receives attention.

24.2.1 MESSAGE HEADER

The message header contains information concerning the sender and recipients. The exact content of email headers can vary depending upon the email system that generated the message.

Generally, headers contain the following information:

- **Subject:** Subject is a description of the topic of the message and is displayed in most email systems that list email messages individually. A subject line that relates clearly to the body of the e-mails will help people mentally shift to the proper context before they read your message. The subject line should be brief, and needs to be a complete sentence. It should give a clue to the contents of the message. For example:

SUBJECT: BOOK ORDER – TEACHER TRAINING

Dear Mr. Mishra,

Please send one copy of the following CUP titles by 26th March latest.

Here, the subject line summarises the most important details of the message.

When you know the person gets a lot of mail and you want him/her to act on your message without delay:

Subject: URGENT: Book Order- Teacher Training

If you are offering non-urgent information that requires no response from the other person, prefacing the subject line with FYI: (For your information) is not a bad idea, as in

Subject: FYI: Passes for The Wild Duck

21 passes for the 18th 3 p. m. show are at the Reception Desk, First come, First served!

Do not use 'information' for your subject line. Instead ask clearly for the specific piece of information you need.

- **Sender (From).** This is the sender's Internet email address.
- **Date and Time Received (On).** The date and time the message was received.
- **Recipient (To:).** First/last name of email recipient.
- **Reply-to:** If your message is in response to another piece of e-mail, **preface** the subject line with Re: or RE: (for Regarding). For example:

Subject: RE: Book order-Teacher Training



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- **Preface:**
introduction/
foreword

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This is the Internet email address that will become the recipient of your reply if you click the Reply button.

- **Recipient email address:** The Internet mail address of the recipient, or where the message was actually sent.
- **Attachments:** Files that are attached to the message.

24.2.2 Body Of The E-Mail

The body of a message contains text that you want to share with the other party. The message body may also include signatures or automatically generated text that is inserted by the sender's email system.

- **Quoting References:**

If you are referring to a previous e-mail, you should explicitly quote the document used for reference. For example, imagine, you are referring to the following mail:

Subject: FYI: Passes for The Wild Duck

21 passes for the 18th 3 p. m. show are at the Reception Desk, First come, First served!

Here, you can make your e-mail specific by beginning with the subject line followed by your query as in:

Re: Show on 18th

Hello!

Are passes for 18th, 3 p.m. show gone?

Referring to the previous document becomes necessary because you may have sent the message on Friday and might not remember it on Monday morning when you see the response.

However, you must also avoid giving too much context. Look at the two examples given below and decide which is better and why?

Example A:

>I've talked to Rakesh about
 > price quoted by BPL. He thinks
 >its too high. Neha promised
 > to contact HL and LG> Any news?
 > What do I do now?

Example B:

> Rakesh has Bp: quotation. Compare
 > it with those of HL and LG available
 > with Neha.
 > Respond with the line of action.

The second (B) is better because it is shorter and is action oriented. It tells the receiver precisely what he should do-

- (i) compare prices from different sources
- (ii) decide and convey subsequent action.

You must remember that the greater than sign (>) appears only when you are forwarding a mail or replying to a mail without going through the process of composing a reply afresh. This sign (>) appears only at the recipient's end.

- **Page Layout**

Words on a computer screen look different from the words on paper and usually people find it more difficult to read things on a screen than on paper. For instance, you may have put some of your information in boxes but your recipient's computer may not receive it in that form. This means that a good e-mail page layout is different from a good paper document page layout.

- **Shorter Paragraphs**

Frequently e-mail messages will be read in a document window with scroll bars. It is difficult to read a very long paragraph because half of it will be outside the screen. Therefore, it will be difficult to remember the information.



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Writing E-Mails



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- **Line Length**

Most softwares that reads mail does not automatically wrap i.e. adjust what words go on what line. This means that if there is a mismatch between your software's and your correspondent's in how they wrap lines, your correspondent may end up with a message that does not look good; especially in formal business communications.

If a line is longer than 76 characters (Anything typed including a space is a character), it is split after the 75th character and the line ends with an equal sign. Some e-mail reading software can automatically reconstruct your message but others may completely change the alignment. You should try to keep your lines under seventy characters long. Why seventy and not, say seventy six? Because you should leave a little room for the indentation or quote marks your correspondents may want if they need to quote pieces of your message in their replies.

- **Clear and Precise Prose**

Keep everything short. Keep your lines short, keep your paragraphs short and keep the message short. If your correspondents want more information, they can ask for it. Also note that some of your correspondents may have limits on how much disc space their e-mail can use.

If you are sending a report to many people then you may need to put more details into the e-mail so that you aren't flooded with questions from everyone on the recipients list. You should ask yourself carefully, if all the people really need to be on the list.

The fewer the people there are on the recipient list, the shorter the message should be. Keep everything on one "page". In most cases this means twenty five lines of text.

- **Greetings and Signature**

Every new medium develops its own rules for opening and closing. Because email is so new, there aren't firm customs on how to open and close.

Most often start with 'Dear-(First name) and close with 'Regards' or 'Thanks' and your signature. In the USA, they often begin with 'Hi' Many people do not give either a salutation or a signature because the addressing information is a part of an e-mail message. The e-mail message itself says who it is to and from.

All the same, it is good to have greetings and signatures. Many e-mail programmes allow you to set up a default signature to be included at the end of every message. Many people use these signatures as an easy way to give their name and alternate ways of reaching them. For example:

R. Swaminarayan
 Training Officer
 Translation Project
 Malgudi Publishing House, malgudi
 Contact: (+91) *****
 malgudipublishinghouse@gmail.com

Of course, you have to decide whether all this information is necessary with a particular message. Such a heavy signature may be inappropriate for a one-line casual e-mail.

● **Identification:**

It is important to identify yourself especially when you are e-mailing a stranger. Your e-mail must answer the questions that will come to the receiver's mind. They are:

- ❖ How did she/he find out about me?
- ❖ What does she/he want from me?
- ❖ Who is he/she?
- ❖ Why should I pay any attention to him/her?

It is best to put all identification information at the top instead of the bottom because:

- ❖ Your identity is an important clue to the context of the message.
- ❖ If there is a problem with the transmission of the mail, the end is much likely to get lost than the beginning
- ❖ If you don't establish quickly who you are, your correspondent may delete your message before he gets to the bottom.



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Writing E-Mails

*Notes*

- **Spam:** Digital junk mail sent in bulk over the internet
- **Confidential:** Intended to keep secret
- **Jargon:** Key terms related to a particular occupation or subject

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 24.2**

1. What are the basic components of an email?
2. How do you write a good e-mail? Explain its constituents.
3. Why is identification of a person vital in writing an e-mail.

24.3 THINGS TO REMEMBER

- The subject line should be very clear. It should simply state the subject of the email so that the reader knows what to expect. Also, the subject line should never be in all caps or all small letters. The reader might misunderstand it for a **spam** message.
- Only public matters should be discussed over emails. Matters of **confidential** nature can be misused if the email gets hacked.
- Emailing with any kind of bad news or expressing anger over the email is also not advisable. Face to face communication (if possible) is always preferable in such cases.
- The use of emoticons, slangs and **jargon** not known to the receiver should be discouraged while writing a professional email.
- While hitting reply, beware of the 'Reply all' option. This will send your email to all the people who were in the mailer list of the original email and this may not be what you intended.
- Using BCC is always advisable when you do not want people to know who others have sent the e-mail. BCC stands for blind carbon copy. When you put the email addresses under BCC, those addresses will not be visible to the recipients of the email.
- Sometimes, when we are too lazy to compose a new email, we just open an old email and hit reply. This should never be done because by doing this, you are sending a message that has nothing to do with the previous one.
- A little time saving trick for someone who has to send a lot of emails is to include a signature in their emails. The signature contains your first name and last name followed by your title/designation, email address and telephone number etc.

- People usually use short forms when sending e-mails. Here are a few of them:

BBL - be back later

IMO - in my opinion

BFN - bye for now

IOW - in other words

BRB - be right back

LOL - laughing out loud

BTW - by the way

NBD - no big deal

FYI - for your information

RPFL - rolling on floor laughing

<g>- grin

TIA - thanks in advance

<G>- big grin

TIC - tongue in cheek

HSIK - how should I know?

TTFN - ta ta for now

IAE - in any event

TTYL - talk to you later

IMHO: In My Humble Opinion

ASAP: As Soon As Possible

WYSIWYG- what you see is what you get

RSVP: Répondez s'il vous plaît, French for "Respond, if it pleases you"



INTEXT QUESTIONS 24.3

Identify the following statements are true (T) or false (F) Correct the false statements.

1. With e-mail, the receiver can ask for and get clarifications.
2. Since many messages come all at once we must use ways to make our message stand out and be read.
3. Reference to previous letter/mail is carried below the subject line.



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Writing E-Mails

24.4 SAMPLE E-MAIL

Sample 1

anamika@gmail.com

Request for work from home due to Covid

Dear Ma'am,

This is to let you know that I have not been keeping well for the past few days and as far as the symptoms are concerned, I suspect it could be covid. I will be getting tested for the same and it will take a few days till I get the reports. Until then, please allow me to work in the online mode as it is best for me and others that I isolate myself. Will update you as soon as I have the results.

Thank you

Regards,
Paul



Sample 2

Bcc: radhika@hotmail.com

Notification: International Conference on Language and Culture

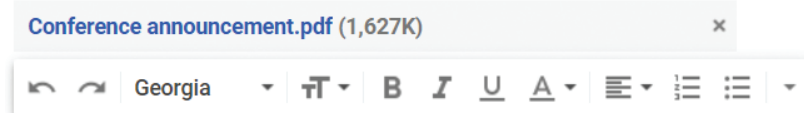
Dear Colleague,

We are pleased to announce the 4th International Conference on **Language and Culture** to be organised on **14th and 15th May, 2022**. The conference will be hosted by Star Glory University, Madhya Pradesh, India.

Please find the details of the conference attached with this email. We look forward to your active participation.

Thank you.

Best
Usha Lal, PhD
Assistant Professor
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Star Glory University



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INTEXT QUESTIONS 24.4

1. You receive the following message on 21/04/2024

Dear Harish,
 Last night the new central cooling system installed by Aqua Cool exploded.
 Our complete spring stock has been destroyed. Damage-minimum Rs. 4 lakhs.
 Advise line of action.
 Manish.

You are Harish. Now, write a reply to Manish.

2. Write to Raj Travels, asking them to cancel your air tickets to Bangalore and hotel accomodation they had booked for you. You will inform about the changed date in the near future.
3. Mention some Dos and Don'ts of writing an email.



WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNT

- An e-mail is different from older media
- To write a good e-mail one has to provide adequate context
- Using meaningful subject lines, page layout, Greetings and signature, Identifying are very important in writing an effective e-mail



TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Write an e-mail to your friend giving him some tips and tricks on how to prepare for term end examinations.
2. Your friend wastes a lot of time on the internet visiting sites and playing online games. Write an e-mail advising him not to do so.
3. Imagine you are Vanshika/Vivek, write an email to your teacher asking permission to remain absent from school for 2 days on account of your sister's wedding ceremony.
4. Write an email to your younger brother Ashish to give him the right guidance to choose the right career option after class 12th.
5. You are a former student of Mr. Mittal, your tutor. Write an email with a minimum of 80 words using phrases to thank Mr. Mittal for his guidance that contributed to your overall development.
6. You are a project manager for ABC company, write an email to your company members enquiring about delay in submitting their weekly planner and stressing the importance of meeting deadlines.



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ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

24.1

1. An email is instant and electronic, while a written letter is physical and typically slower to deliver.
2. Electronic communication is faster, editable, and allows for instant delivery compared to paper-based communication, which is physical and slower.
3. Important features of email communication include instant delivery, ease of editing, attachment capabilities, and the ability to communicate with people worldwide.

24.2

1. Basic components of an email include the subject line, recipient(s), sender's email address, message body, attachments, and signature.
2. To write a good email, include a clear subject line, provide context, use concise language, ensure proper formatting, and proofread carefully.
3. Identification of a person is vital in email to establish credibility, clarity, and professionalism, ensuring the recipient knows who the sender is.

24.3

1. T
2. F
3. F

24.4

1. Individual answer : Contact Aqua cool and ascertain cause of explosion- any casualties/contact insurance- use stand by system for time being.
2. Individual answer
3. Dos:
 - Do use a clear and concise subject line
 - Do address the recipient appropriately
 - Do provide context and background
 - Do use a professional tone
 - Do proofread before sending
 - Do use proper formatting
 - Do respond in a timely manner

Don'ts:

- Don't use vague or misleading subject lines
- Don't forget to proofread
- Don't use an unprofessional tone
- Don't use all caps
- Don't forget attachments
- Don't overuse CC and BCC
- Don't use email for sensitive or confidential information



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