NELA

BUSINESS ENGLISH

Module Correspondence | Lesson 1

Get Started

MODULE CORRESPONDENCE - LESSON 1

After this lesson, you will be able to:

- Talk about the different parts of an email:
  subject line, salutation, etc.
- Write an email to someone you know and someone you don't know: Dear Mr Shaw,
- Know how to say why you are writing an email:
  I am writing to...
- Add some colour to your writing with words such as:
  concise - concisely, courteous - courteously
- Say what you wish for:
  If only...
- Avoid some typical mistakes:
  I have some informations for you.
- Use some new words:
  hesitate, inconvenience, etc.

Text

Emily: Today is really not my day!

Megan: Hey, what's wrong?

You look down in the dumps.
verzweifelt

Emily: Luke's secretary is on vacation, so he's asked me to write an email to Mr Shaw at Crane Enterprises. But what do I know about writing business emails? If only I could WhatsApp him and include some emojis!

Megan: If you like, I could help you with that.

Emily: That would be great! You're a real lifesaver.
Lebensretter

Megan: Ok, let's start at the top,

with the subject line.
Betreffzeile

Emily: Oh, is that important? Can't you just

leave it blank or just say something like
leer lassen

'Apology' or 'Request'?
Entschuldigung Anfrage

Megan: Well, if you leave the subject line blank, it might end up in the person's spam folder.
Spam-Ordner

And you must remember that

people get tons of emails every day.
Leute bekommen jeden Tag eine Menge E-Mails

So, they usually look at the subject line first to see how important the email is.

Emily: Ok, so, a good subject line!

Megan: Megan: In your subject line you should be clear and specific about your topic.
klar spezifisch Thema

And keep it as short and sweet as possible.
kurz bündig

Then we get to your salutation.
Anrede

Emily: Man, that already sounds extremely formal.
extrem förmlich

Megan: Sure, if you write me an email you can say 'Hi Megan', but not in a business email.

We usually start off with 'Dear Mr Shaw' or, if you could write 'Dear Sir or Madam'. I know it's not your style, but that's business!
Stil

Now the main body of your email is the most important part, because this is where you say what the purpose of your email is.
Hauptteil
Zweck

Emily: Yeah, sure, that makes sense.

Megan: For myself, I use what I call the 3C rule.
Regel

Emily: What on earth is that?
was in aller Welt

Megan: It's just something I made up myself.
ausgedacht

You have to write clearly, concisely and courteously. That's my three C's.
präzise/prägnant
höflich

Emily: I'm impressed! Let me give this a try.
beeindruckt

I have to explain to Mr Shaw that his recent order will be delayed. Ok, subject line first; let me think.
aktuelle Bestellung
verzögert

Order delayed
verzögert

Dear Mr Shaw,

Thank you very much for ordering our premium espresso machines. Unfortunately, we have had some problems with our suppliers.
leider
Lieferanten

For this reason, there will be a delay of one week

before we can deliver the machines.
liefern
We apologise for any inconvenience
Unannehmlichkeit
this might cause.

Megan: Hey Emily, that sounds great. Your email is clear, concise and courteous.
klar prägnant höflich
Now I'm the one who's impressed. Something else that you might want to add is a call to action.
Handlungsaufforderung

Emily: Call to action? Is that your fourth C?

Megan: Something like that. Do you expect the person to do anything, to respond in any way to your email? This is how you end your email. something like, 'Please do not hesitate to contact
zögern
me if we can be of any further assistance.'
Unterstützung

Emily: That sounds really good.

Megan: Then for the closing you could just add 'Best regards' or 'Best wishes', followed
Beste Grüße Herzliche/Liebe Grüße
by your name

Emily: Thanks a million, Megan. I wouldn't have
Tausend Dank
been able to do this without you. I'll send it off to Mr Shaw and put Luke in cc.

Megan: You know what, I'll forward you some mails that I recently wrote so you can have
kürzlich
some more examples of business emails.

Checkpoint

Test yourself!

Complete the sentences using these words:

slow clear helpful careful correct

You will need to add -ly to some words

1. Make sure that you spell all words _____.
2. Your subject line should always be written _____.
3. My computer at work is very _____.
4. Always read your email _____ before sending it off.
5. Megan is a very _____ person.

You Can't Do Without This

Using adjectives and adverbs

You have to write **clearly**, **concisely** and **courteously**.

Your email is **clear**, **concise** and **courteous**.

I'll forward you some mails that I **recently** wrote.

I have to explain to Mr Shaw that his **recent** order will be delayed.

An adjective describes nouns. Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives or other adverbs. We often change an adjective into an adverb by adding **'ly'**.

Let's look at the words **clear** and **clearly** again:

Your email is **clear**.

It is a **clear** email.

You have to write **clearly**.

Can you see how the words clear/clearly are used as an adjective and as an adverb?

First Things First

In this lesson and the next, you'll learn all about writing emails. So, let's start with the basics. First, you'll need a salutation, which is the greeting at the beginning of your email.

For formal emails, it's best to stick with: Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms...

If you are emailing a co-worker or have a friendly relationship with a client, you could start your email with: Hi... or Hello...

When writing to several people in your company: Hi team... / Hi all... / Hi everyone...

For formal emails, if you know it, use the person's last name. Don't forget to add a title.

For a man, it's simple! Use **Mr**, which is short for mister.

Mrs is usually used for a married woman and **Miss** for an unmarried woman. If you don't know how to address a woman, it's best to use **Ms**. You can't go wrong with **Ms** because it can be used regardless of marital status.

A final note:

In America, Mr, Mrs and Ms are written with a full stop,* but in Britain, they aren't!

Miss is never written with a full stop because it is not an abbreviation.

* In American English, a full stop is a period.

Writing the Main Body of Your Email

Very often we use the same phrases over and over when we write emails. Let's take a look at a few phrases that you will find useful.

Here are some sentences to say why you are writing:

I am writing to provide you with some information about our latest product.

I am writing to enquire/ask/confirm...

I am writing in reference to...

When you want to tell someone that something went well, you can say:

You will be pleased to know that your order has been received.

You will be pleased to hear that we are able to deliver your order tomorrow.

When you want to tell someone that something didn't go well, you can say:

Unfortunately, we have had some problems with our suppliers.

We regret to inform you that we will not be able to deliver your supplies on time.

Tips & Tricks

That's English!

Today is really not my day!

You burnt your breakfast, you got a parking ticket and you stepped into some chewing gum. If everything is going wrong or something is causing you stress, it isn't your day!

You look down in the dumps.

A dump is an unpleasant or dirty place. When you're down in the dumps, it means things are not going well and you are sad or discouraged.

You're a real lifesaver!

When someone helps you when you're in a difficult or stressful situation, they're a lifesaver! Of course, your life wasn't literally in danger, but it sure felt that way. 😉

You know what?

You can use this clever little question if you want to emphasize what you're going to say next!

Email Phrases You Can't Live Without

» **Part 1**

Emily starts her email with: Thank you very much for...
Another way to start your email in a respectful and friendly manner:
I hope you are well / all is well.
I hope this email finds you well.

Sometimes we need to apologise in an email:
We apologise for any inconvenience this might cause.
Or: Please accept our apologies for any inconvenience caused.

A polite phrase to end your email:
Please do not hesitate to contact me if we can be of any further assistance. Or: Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Megan suggests closing the email with best regards or best wishes. You could also use kind regards, or just regards.

Avoid These Mistakes

After the salutation (For example: Dear Mr Shaw,) start the main body of your email with a capital letter, not with a small letter. Starting the main body of your text with a small letter is the German way.

Information in English is never written in plural: informations. For example, we say: I would like to provide you with the following **information** regarding your order.

Choose Your Style

Should you use a comma after your salutation?
Well, let's just say, it depends!

In general, in American English, a comma is used after the salutation. However, if you are writing a very formal email, you may want to use a colon:

Dear Mr Shaw:
Dear Mr Shaw,

In British English, open punctuation is often preferred, which means you simply use neither a comma nor a colon. However, many still use a comma.

What about using a comma at the end of your email when you sign-off? Again, American English often favours using a comma and British English often favours without.

So, at the end of the day, with all these options, you need to choose your own style!

When You Wish Something Was Different

If only I could WhatsApp him and include some emojis!
We use **if only** when we wish that something could be different. It is the same as I wish but is stronger. In our example we use the past tense of the verb (could) to talk about the present.

Here are some more examples:

If only I was rich!

If only we brought the umbrella along.

If only I had more time.

What is your wish for today?

Build Your Vocabulary

Match the word to the definition:

request concise delay inconvenience courteous hesitate

1. If you do not act immediately, because you are uncertain
2. To ask for something
3. When something does not happen on time or as planned
4. Short, without unnecessary words
5. Another word for polite or respectful
6. When something causes problems or difficulties