

Writing skills
for
young learners

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An email is a short piece of writing used in everyday communication on the Internet. What we call an "informal email" is a type of short letter written on a computer and sent to friends. When you write an informal email, use a familiar, personal tone.

People write emails to inform, apologise, invite, congratulate, ask for information and for many other purposes.

Task:

Imagine the teacher asks you to write an email to your best friend to invite him to your birthday party.

Let's read a MODEL:

From: gabriel_jones@yahoo.com
To: michael.sanders@hotmail.com
Subject: Invitation to my birthday party

Hi Michael,

How are you? I hope you're enjoying the summer holiday!

I'm writing to invite you to my birthday party. You're my best friend and I would be very happy if you could be there!

My parents are abroad right now, so my party's going to be at my grandparents' house in the countryside. It's better there because they have a large garden where we can play lots of games. I know how much you like to play hide-and-seek, so there will be plenty of room for that. We'll also listen to music, dance and really have fun!

Don't worry about how you'll get to my grandparents' place: they don't live far from town.

I think the best idea is to all meet on Saturday, at 9 o'clock, in front of the cinema.

Then, my uncle will give us a lift, so we'll arrive before 10 o'clock to prepare the party.

Please give me a call or drop me a line by email to let me know if you can come.

Cheers,

Gabriel

1 Read the MODEL and answer the following questions:

a) Who wrote the invitation email?

b) Who was the email addressed to?

c) Why did the author write to Michael?

d) Where was the party going to be held?

2 Find the false sentences about the MODEL and turn them into true ones:

- a) Gabriel is invited to Michael's birthday party.
- b) Gabriel and Michael know each other very well.
- c) Gabriel's parents will be at their son's party.
- d) Gabriel's uncle will help to take his friends to the party.
- e) Gabriel's grandparents live in town.
- f) Gabriel wants an answer from Michael.
- g) The birthday party will be held near the supermarket.

3 Fill in the blanks with phrases/sentences from the email MODEL to illustrate the following steps:

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Salutation formula | 5. Gabriel gives directions to the party |
| 2. Gabriel greets his friend, Michael | 6. Gabriel asks Michael to write an answer to him |
| 3. Gabriel explains the reason for his email | 7. Gabriel signs his email |
| 4. Gabriel gives details of the party | |

1. -----

2. -----

3. -----

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

4 Decide which of the following details Gabriel could include in his email to make it clearer:

- a) My grandparents are very nice people, they love children a lot.
- b) The weather was rainy yesterday.
- c) I'm going to invite all my classmates to this party.
- d) My parents are having a great time in Greece.
- e) If I don't receive your answer by Friday evening, I will call you.
- f) I don't know what film is on at the cinema.

5 The following text is about Michael. Imagine you are Michael and write his answer to Gabriel. The first sentence has been written for you.

Michael answered Gabriel's email immediately, saying that he was very happy to accept his invitation. He told Gabriel that he was sure that they would have a very good time. He added that he couldn't wait to meet Gabriel's friends, play games and listen to their favourite music. He also wondered if Gabriel had thought of doing karaoke and maybe even dancing in the evening. He ended his email by telling Gabriel that he would give him a hand with the preparations if he needed, so the party would be the most exciting they had ever had.

Hi Gabriel,

I'm very happy to accept your invitation.

Structure

Informal greeting

Hi Michael,

Orientation

Who: Gabriel writes to Michael

What: an invitation to his party

Why: because they are best friends

Details

- place to meet
- time to meet
- location
- transport
- music, games

Subject:
Invitation to my birthday party

How are you? I hope you're enjoying the summer holiday! I'm writing to invite you to my birthday party. You're my best friend and I would be very happy if you could be there!

My parents are abroad right now, so my party's going to be at my grandparents' house in the countryside. It's better there because they have a large garden where we can play lots of games. I know how much you like to play hide-and-seek, so there will be plenty of room for that. We'll also listen to music, dance and really have fun.

Don't worry about how you'll get to my grandparents' place: they don't live far from town. I think the best idea is to all meet on Saturday, at 9 o'clock, in front of the cinema. Then, my uncle will give us a lift, so we'll arrive before 10 o'clock to prepare the party.

Conclusion

Please give me a call or drop me a line by email to let me know if you can come.

Friendly closing

Cheers,
Gabriel

Language features

First person pronouns and determiners:

I, my, me

Second person pronouns and determiners:

you, your, to you

Adjectives:

great, lots of, best

Words to indicate time or the order of the events:

then, so, at 9 o'clock, before 10 o'clock

1 Put these sentences under the correct heading:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| a) "I'm very sorry for what I said to you." | f) "Would you like to join us?" |
| b) "I'd be so happy if you were there with us." | g) "I really hope all my friends come along." |
| c) "I'm so pleased that you won." | h) "I hope you have even more success
in the future." |
| d) "I really regret hurting you." | i) "Please forgive me." |
| e) "Congratulations on becoming
the new chess champion!" | |

invitation:

apology

congratulation

a)

2 Use the expressions in the previous exercise to complete the emails below:

Dear Johanna,

I'm writing to invite you on a trip to Reading next month, with my classmates. I can't tell you how excited I am. 1) _____!

We'll set out on Monday and come back on Friday, and we'll travel by minibus. We'll visit monasteries, climb mountains and stay at a local guesthouse.

So, what do you say? 2) _____?

I know you don't usually travel with people you haven't met before, but 3) _____.

Please let me know your answer by next Friday.

Love,

Christine

Hi Robby,

I hope you're not too tired after the competition. I wanted to say that

4) _____ I know it wasn't easy at all.

5) _____ It's a great achievement, and you really deserve it. Email me when you can, and tell me how it feels to be so successful. I really want to know all about the competition.

6) _____

Cheers, mate!

Theo

Dear Sam,

7) _____

I don't know what I was thinking when I treated you like that.

8) _____ . Do you think we can be friends again?

Take it from me that 9) _____

I hope you'll write back to me some time, or give me a ring.

All the best,

Laura

3 Fill in the blanks with the right pronouns and determiners below:

I / my / myself / me / mine / you / yourself / your / yours / he / himself / his / him / she / herself / her / hers / it / itself / its / we / ourselves / our / ours / us / they / themselves / their / theirs / them

Hello, Jack

1) _____ am writing to ask you to help 2) _____ and Jenny to apply for a scholarship. 3) _____ would really like to study at your high school, but 4) _____ don't know how to do it. 5) _____ parents really want to help 6) _____ both to get ready for the exams, but 7) _____ need to know more about 8) _____ before they can help us. Jenny wants to do 9) _____ application. 10) _____, but I think 11) _____ needs help, too. So 12) _____ thought I'd write to you now, while 13) _____ still have time. 14) _____ all know 15) _____ is going to be difficult, so we would really be grateful for 16) _____ help. Please let 17) _____ know as soon as possible what we should do.

Thanks a lot,

Kurt

4 Transform the adjectives in the sentences below into adverbs, as in the example:**Adjective:** She has a beautiful smile.

She smiles in a beautiful way.

Her smile is beautiful.

Adverb: She smiles beautifully.

(the verb is "to smile")

- a) Our car's movement is slow. _____
- b) John thinks deep thoughts. _____
- c) He looked at me in a strange way. _____
- d) My dog has a loud bark. _____
- e) He walked with fear closer to the edge. _____

5 When writing a personal letter, the **TONE** is extremely important. Depending on the person you're writing to, you can choose between an **INFORMAL TONE** = used for close friends, relatives, people you know very well, and a **FORMAL TONE** = used for strangers, officials in institutions, company employees, and so on. So, you must pay attention to the tone you use.

informal

Abbreviations: I can't, you'd seen, it's, they're, she won't

Personal: I make a living from my paintings./I want to be a politician.

Simple words: I can't tell you how upset I am./I hope you'll tell me the truth.

Emotional: I feel awful about hurting her./I hate it when people are late.

Slang/idiom: Hi, Ciao, All right?/Bye, Cheers, L8er

formal

No abbreviations: I cannot, you had seen, it is, they are, she will not

Abstract: Painting is one way of earning a living./Politics is a worthwhile career.

Advanced words: I cannot describe my dissatisfaction about it./I would really appreciate your honesty.

Unemotional: I apologise for the misunderstanding./Please be kind enough to arrive in good time.

Correct usage: Dear Mr X, Good morning/Kind regards, I look forward to our next meeting.

Following the examples above, work out which tone is used in each of these sentences. Write (F) for formal or (I) for informal, as in the example:

- I would be grateful if you'd consider my request. **(F)**
- Email me when you get back, will you?
- Could you please reply by email at your earliest convenience?
- I swear I haven't said a word about your problem.
- You'll love my city the minute you see it!
- Please make sure that you keep these rooms tidy when you unpack the boxes.
- I wouldn't do it if I were you.
- I would be so grateful to have your help with this.
- Stop talking rubbish, or I'm off.
- The following information might be of some use to you.
- Have you heard any more about how she's doing?
- Thanks so much for helping.

6 Change the underlined words into their opposites and rewrite the email. Make the necessary changes. The first one has been done for you.

Dear Maddy,
 I'm really upset because I've lost my bicycle. It was raining when I went to the post office. I was there for less than ten minutes and when I came out I couldn't see it. Unfortunately there was nobody to help me. It's such bad luck. I really need it and now I can't use it to get to school.
 I'll tell you more when I can.
 Bye,
 Julian

Dear Maddy,
 I'm so happy

Bye,
 Julian

7 Is the meaning of the emphasised words/phrases the same or different? Write S or D.

eg. He has just got a bike/boat. D

1. I was very happy that you left me/let me go to Alan's Christmas party.
2. We should travel by/get the bus to the nearest post office.
3. Unfortunately/luckily, we arrived at the seaside resort by noon.
4. If you want to get/win first prize, you should work harder.
5. She was very unhappy, so/which is why she started to cry.

8 Write sentences with the words that you found different in the previous exercise, trying to make their difference in meaning clear, as in the model:

bike: I am happy to ride my bike over the hills to visit Granny every day.

boat: He went by boat with his dad to fish in the lake.



We know
how to

9 We use words like: quite, really, very, extremely to make adjectives stronger. Notice that the mentioned intensifiers increase in strength. Use them for the underlined adjectives in the email below and rewrite the email. The first one is a suggestion:

Dear Daniel,

I've just come back from a weird trip to Lake Windermere. It was strange, a bit of a nightmare. First we travelled on an old bus that could hardly move. Then we spent the night in a dirty house and we heard wild noises all night long. I woke up tired. When we got there, the water was rough and the wind cold, so we didn't have a swim. We climbed the mountain but we were scared by the noises we could hear everywhere.

I can't wait to see you and tell you more.

Yours,

Jane

Dear Daniel,

I've just come back from a really weird trip to Lake Windermere

All the best,

Jane

1 Use the words in brackets, in the given order, to write complex sentences:

My car is old. (**Unfortunately, blue, very, damaged**)
 Unfortunately, my blue car is very old and damaged.

a) I am studying for a test paper. (**this week, hard, difficult, in Maths**)

b) John's brother is happy to play football. (**every weekend, very, with his friends**)

c) The sun is shining. (**this summer, more brightly, than ever**)

d) I can see that you are tired. (**obviously, without any effort, extremely, today**).

e) Her dog was ready to bark. (**small, brown, at us, when we arrived**)

2 Use your imagination to continue the sentences below:

a) I don't know when _____

b) She can come with you if _____

c) He called me before _____

d) They first invited us to the mountains and then _____

e) The police officer is going to ask them _____

f) My friends, who went to the mountains, should _____

