

2. Emailing – Key Phrases

Level: A2–B1

Aims: To practise and produce key phrases for standard business emails.
To identify different reasons for writing business emails

Timing: 45 minutes with ideas for extension

Stage	Objective	Interaction	Timing
Introduction	Discuss reasons for writing emails	Whole class	10 mins
Task 1	Introduce key phrases for emailing	Individual or pairs	15
Task 2	Deciding which phrases are used in specific situations	Individual or pairs	15
Task 3	Practicing key phrases that are often confused	Individual	5
Extra task	Focus on language use. I'm afraid and I'd like	Whole class	15

Introduction

Write the following words on the board. Students work in pairs to unscramble them.

E S W N *E P L H* *S P A N L*
(NEWS) (HELP) (PLANS)

Emails are written in order to give news, ask for help and make plans.

Ask students to suggest other reasons for writing emails.

Examples: to make a complaint, apologise, thank someone, ask for information, invite someone to an event.

Discuss vocabulary with the students. As for example situations. 'When would you write an email to complain?' 'Give an example of a situation when we would write a thank you email!'

Task 1 Key phrases

Students complete the table with the phrases.

Suggested Answers: (Some statements may fit more than once category)

Saying thanks	Thanks very much (for your help). / I really appreciate your help.
Giving information	You'll be happy to hear that ... / I'm writing to let you know that ... / Unfortunately, ...
Asking for information	I would like some information. / Could you please let me know...? / Please send me ...
Planning	Could we meet next week? / I'm afraid I'm busy on Tuesday. / I'm free on Friday between 10 and 2.
Apologising	Please accept my apologies. / I'm sorry about ...
Complaining	I am writing to complain about ...
Goodbye	Kind regards. / Best wishes.

Task 2 What could you say in the following situations?

In this task students think about specific emails they might have to write if working in an office.

Answers: 1 – A, 2 – F, 3 – B, 4 – G, 5 – C, 6 – D, 7 – H, 8 – E

Task 3 Emailing phrases people often get wrong

Fill in the missing words.

The phrases in this task can be used in different types of emails and contain words students commonly get wrong, ie Best greetings, instead of Best wishes, at Friday instead of on, etc.

Best (wishes).
I'm (afraid) I'm busy on Tuesday.
I'm free (on) Friday between 10 and 2.
I really (appreciate) your help.
I (would) like some information.
Kind (regards).
Please (accept) my apologies

Task 4 Email practice

Tell the students they are going to write a short email to a classmate or colleague to arrange a meeting. They would like to meet next week to talk about a project they are working on. This can be done in pairs or individually. Students can share their finished emails with the class.

Extra task

I'm afraid ... Used to introduce bad or slightly disappointing news.

You'd like to speak to Jane? She's not in the office today, I'm afraid.

I'm afraid I don't have the information you're looking for.

I'm afraid of ... Used to talk about fear.

I'm afraid of spiders.

I would like/ I'd like ... versus I like ...

I would like to go to Japan one day. I like Paris, I've been there many times.

Now you've introduced the key vocabulary, go to Test Prep Writing Task 2.

2. Emailing – Key Phrases

Task 1 Key phrases for emailing

Complete the table with the phrases below.

Best wishes. / Could we meet next week? / Could you please let me know ...? / I am writing to complain about ... / I'm afraid I'm busy on Tuesday. / I'm free on Friday between 10 and 2. / I really appreciate your help. / I'm sorry about ... / I'm writing to let you know that ... / I would like some information. / Kind regards. / Please accept my apologies. / Please send me ... / Thanks very much (for your help). / Unfortunately, ... / You'll be happy to hear that ...

Saying thanks	
Giving information	
Asking for information	
Planning a meeting	
Apologising	
Complaining	
Goodbye	

Task 2 What could you say in the following situations?

Match the situations to the correct expressions.

1	Ask a supplier for specific information about an order.	A Could you please let me know when the goods we ordered will be delivered?
2	Thank a colleague for showing you how to use new software.	B Could we meet on Tuesday to talk about the project? I'm free all day.
3	Organise a meeting with a colleague.	C I am writing to complain about the business cards we ordered from your website.
4	Ask a colleague for a document.	D I'm afraid Ms. McQueen is busy on Friday.
5	Write to a company to say you are unhappy with their product.	E I'm writing to let you know that this year's office party will take place on Friday 22nd at 5pm in the canteen.
6	A customer wants to meet your boss on Friday but she already has a meeting then.	F I really appreciate your help.
7	Tell the customer about some problems that the company has had.	G Please send me the report by Wednesday at the latest.
8	Tell your colleagues about an event that has been planned.	H Unfortunately, due to some IT difficulties we had this week, some orders were not delivered on time.

Task 3 Emailing phrases people often get wrong.

Fill in the missing words.

Best _____.

I'm _____ I'm busy on Tuesday.

I'm free _____ Friday between 10 and 2.

I really _____ your help.

I _____ like some information.

Kind _____.

Please _____ my apologies.

Extra task

You want to arrange a meeting with a classmate / colleague to work on a project together.

Write an email using some of the phrases from Task 1.

Explain why you are writing. Say what days you are free, when you are not free, and what times suit you best.