

Informal e-mails and letters are sent to people you know well (e.g. friends, relatives, etc.) about your recent news, personal problems, information you need, etc. They are written in an informal style.

Structure of informal e-mails and letters:

An informal e-mail or letter should consist of:

1. An informal greeting:

We begin letters with **Dear + name** and we use a comma at the end, not a colon (:).

We can begin e-mails not only with **Dear + name**, but also with **Hi/Hello + name**.

2. 1st paragraph: an introduction in which you ask about your friend's health, express pleasure at receiving her/his last letter, apologize for not writing before, etc. and mention your reason/s for writing. (Read below for useful language).

3. 2nd / 3rd (etc) paragraphs: a main body in which you write the main subject(s) of the e-mail/letter in detail, starting a new paragraph for each topic. Example topics could be: giving news, talking about plans, describing your new boy/girl-friend, describing the place where you are living now, making suggestions about what to do in your city to a friend who's coming to see you, etc. (Read below for useful language).

4. Last paragraph: a conclusion in which you write your closing remarks. (Read below for useful language).

5. An informal ending:

For close friends and relatives: All my love/ Lots of love/ Love/Lots of kisses,
Your name

More neutral: Best wishes/ Regards/ Kind regards/Bye for now/Take care,
Your name

FIRST PARAGRAPH - typical first sentences:

- **Questions/ Wishes about the person's health:**

How are you? I'm fine. I hope you're well / I hope you're feeling better.

- **A thank you to the person for their last e-mail/ letter:**

It was great/nice/lovely to hear from you again.

Thank you so much for your (lovely) letter/e-mail of ... *November 30th*.

- **Comments about their news:**

I was really sorry to hear that you... *are ill*.

It was really great to ... *get all your news*.

It was a nice surprise to ... *hear from you after all this time*.

I'm glad that ... *you're enjoying your new job*.

- **An apology for a delay in writing:**

Sorry for/about not writing earlier but ... *I've been very busy preparing for my exams*.

I must apologise for not keeping in touch. I'm afraid I'm such a terrible letter writer!

- **The reason why you are writing:**

I've got some good news! *I've got a new house*.

The reason why I'm writing is to ... *ask you if you would like to come to Tenerife next Christmas*.

I'm writing (to you) to see how you're getting on ... *in your new flat/ with your new boy/girlfriend*.

BODY PARAGRAPHS - typical body paragraphs sentences:

- **Congratulating:** Congratulations!/ Well done! / Congratulations on sth / congratulate sb on sth / congratulate sb for doing sth:

I've just heard that you passed all your exams. Congratulations!

Congratulations on your new job.

- **Inviting:**

I'm writing to invite you to ... *my birthday party on 26th July*.

Would you (verb)...: *Would you come and spend next Easter with us at our apartment in the south of Tenerife? Adolfo and I would be delighted if you accepted.*

Would you like (sth)...: *Would you like a new watch?*

Would you like to (verb)...: *Would you like to come to a dinner party on Friday 3rd November at 9 p.m.?*

Imperative (e.g. Feel free to + inf.): *Please help yourself to any food and feel free to use my computer.*

• After the invitation you can add the following sentences:

Think about it ... *and tell me soon*.

Let me know... *if you can come. I hope you can. / I really hope you can come.*

- **Apologizing:**

I'm (really) sorry for (sth/sb/ + verb-ing): *Sorry for arriving late at your party.*

I'm sorry about (sth/sb/ + verb-ing): *I was sorry about your father.*

I'm sorry + (that) ...: *I'm sorry (that) I got so angry.*

I'm sorry + to infinitive: *I was sorry to miss your concert.*

I must apologize for (+ verb-ing)...: *I must apologize for not being able to come to your party.*

- Thanking:

Thank you for + sth/-ing : *Thank you for your invitation to stay with you for a week in August.*

A big thank you for + sth/-ing: *A big thank-you for helping to make it an exciting birthday.*

(Many) thanks for + sth/-ing: *Many thanks for your kind hospitality during my stay with you in England. I enjoyed it very much.*

Thanks a million for + sth/-ing: *Thanks a million for an experience I will never forget.*

After thanking, to describe how you felt you can say: I had a fantastic/great/wonderful time. I enjoyed it a lot more than I expected. I would love to do it again.

- Making suggestions/ Giving advice:

Structures + infinitive:

I think we/you should ..., We/You should ..., We/You shouldn't ..., We/You could ..., We/You can...

I think you should do some exercises and eat lots of fruit and green vegetables.

You shouldn't drink tea or coffee, but you could try chamomile tea, because it helps you relax.

You can get a train to Brighton from the airport.

Why don't you/we ...?: *Why don't you come in July?*

It would be great if we/you could...: *It would be great if we could meet.*

Structures + to infinitive:

I think the best thing would be to ... *leave your job.*

It would be a good idea to... *go on holiday together.*

I advise (object pronoun) to...: *I advise you to go on a diet.*

□ With the verb "advise" there are other possibilities:

I advise + ing (when we don't say who we are giving advice): *I advise giving up smoking.*

I advise (object pronoun) on/about/of sth: *She advised me on the use of computers in the classroom.*

Structures + ing:

I recommend + ing: *I recommend writing your feelings down on paper.*

I advise + ing (when we don't say who we are giving advice): *I advise giving up smoking.*

Imperative: *Go to a specialist so s/he can tell you what to eat.*

Second conditional: If I were you, I would (+ inf)...: *If I were you, I would travel by bus.*

After the advice you can say: I hope that this advice helps.

- Asking for advice/opinion:

I've got a problem and I'd like your advice. / I'm writing to ask for your advice.

I'm writing to ask you if you could advise me on/about/of ... *how to lose weight.*

Do you think I should (+ inf)...?: *Do you think I should hire a car or travel around by bus or train?*

Can you recommend (+ sth)...?: *Can you recommend a good hotel, not too expensive?*

Could you tell me (+ sth)...?: *Could you tell me a bit about her so I can see if she fits in with us?*

What ... should I (+ inf)...?: *What sort of clothes should I pack? Casual or formal?*

Which ... should I (+ inf)...?: *Which places should I visit?*

Would you like me to (+ inf)...?: *Would you like me to bring anything for you?*

What do you think is ... *the right thing to do?/ the best month for me to go?*

LAST PARAGRAPH - typical last sentences:

- The reason why you must end the e-mail/letter: I have to finish now. / (Well) that's all for now. / (Well) that's all my news.

- Greetings to the person's family / friends: Give my regards/ love to your family/ to Sarah. / My mother sends her love.

- A request to the person to reply soon: (I'm) Looking forward to hearing from you. / (I) Look forward to hearing from you soon./ (I'm) Hoping to hear from you soon. / (I) Hope to hear from you soon. / (I'm) Looking forward to seeing you soon./ (Please) Write soon and tell me all your news.

- A promise to write again soon: I'll write as soon as I can.

- Promises, wishes, thanks, invitations/suggestions...:

I promise *I'll come back and visit all of you as soon as I can.*

Hope to *see you soon/ at Christmas.* / I hope that *my advice helps.*

Thanks again for ... *everything / ... remembering my birthday / ... the invitation.*

Don't forget my invitation *to Tenerife.*

- Postscript: PS I'm sending you ... *a photo of the family so you'll recognize us at the station.*

In letters we write: PS I enclose ... *a photo of my baby.*

In e-mails we write: PS I attach ... *a photo of the three of us.*

• Differences between informal e-mails and informal letters:

In an informal letter you write your address (street; city or village; postcode) in the top right-hand corner, and you write the date under the address. The greeting always begins with **Dear** followed by the person's name and a comma. In an informal e-mail you write your name and/or e-mail address in the first box, then the name of the person you are writing to in the second box and you can tell the reader what your text is about in the "subject" box. You obviously don't need to write the date. The greeting can begin with **Dear / Hi / Hello** followed by the person's name and a comma.