

# Unit 3 Writing emails in preparation for meetings

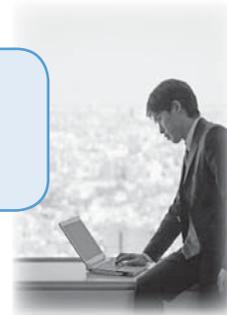
## Background

Once a meeting is arranged, most follow-up correspondence is usually done by email – which involves a whole new set of language and conventions. Let's take a look at how they deal with this at Delta International.



### Culture point – 'Chatty emails'

In some cultures it is normal to write very friendly emails even in a business context. People often write as if they were chatting to somebody and they don't always check their spelling or grammar. What is it like in your country? Do people treat emails formally or informally?



## Skills work

1 Read the following four emails (A–D) and write the correct letter(s) next to the explanatory sentences (1–7).

Which email(s)...

- 1 is a request for a list of completed aims? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 is about a meeting for company shareholders? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 is about a meeting for sharing ideas? \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 are about staff development? \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 is sent to more than one person? \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 have an attachment? \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 mentions booking accommodation? \_\_\_\_\_

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**A** ← Reply ▼

To All Delta International Centre Owners  
From Uwe Timm Managing Director  
Subject AGM

Dear colleagues,

I trust you are all well. Please find herewith a brief note for your diaries. I detail below the latest information about this year's Delta International Annual General Meeting.

Date and Time: 12th November 10.00 to 16.00  
Venue: Four Seasons Hotel Prague

We have negotiated special rates for Delta International delegates, including family members. Please make all bookings through my PA Barbara Koenig, who can provide further information. As in previous years, I would advise making an early reservation to ensure accommodation.

I will send an agenda and details of the social programme nearer the time. I look forward to seeing you and your families again in the near future.

With best regards,  
Yours sincerely,  
Uwe Timm

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**B** Reply ▾

To jtidman@deltainternational.co.uk  
From Tombuddell-25@yahoo.com  
Subject Software Training

Dear Jenny,

It was good to speak the other day. I think we covered a lot of ground in a short time. As discussed, I and one of our engineers will lead the training day for your designers using our new publishing software. I'll send copies of the software next week with some initial tasks for the designers to try out before the day. I look forward to seeing you on the 15th July.

Best wishes,

Tom Buddell, Softecco

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**C** Reply ▾

To jtidman@deltainternational.co.uk  
From Uwe Timm <uwe\_timm@deltainternational.de>  
Subject Appraisal meeting  
Attachment Appraisal document

Hello Jenny,

I finally got round to writing to you. Sorry for the long delay. I have really been snowed under over the last few days. Anyway, better late than never! OK, down to business.

Can you send me a summary of objectives you have achieved over the last year for our meeting next week, plus any areas you've identified for your own training needs? I've attached a copy of the appraisal document for your perusal.

See you on Thursday.

Cheers for now,

Uwe

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**D** Reply ▾

To Uwe Timm  
From jtidman@deltainternational.co.uk  
Subject Brainstorming meeting  
Attachment Competitors' websites

Hi Uwe,

I'm looking forward to our meeting next week. I'm pleased that we've set aside time to discuss the website.

Please find attached a list of the features of some of our competitors. I thought it would be a good starting point for our brainstorming meeting.

All the best,

Jenny

- 2 Read the emails again and decide which is the most formal and the most informal.

3 Now complete the table with the underlined words and phrases from the emails in 1.

Formal	Informal

4 Read these people’s ideas about writing emails. Then complete sentences 1–6 below with the first name of the correct person.

I think it’s really important to write a short but very clear message in the subject line. That way the reader gets the key point of your message the moment he opens the mail. It also means that the reader can quickly find the mail again if necessary. Some people leave the subject line blank. That’s not very professional in my opinion. **Tony Davey**

In my opinion the most important thing is to be as brief as possible. It’s good as well if the reader can reply with just yes or no answers. So I never write questions like: ‘Can you give me an idea of what you think about possible dates?’ I always write short questions like: ‘How about Friday at 9am for the meeting?’ **Jeremy Rooster**

For me the most important thing is to make the text easy to read. I use headings and a very clear font. I also underline key words or phrases. It’s important as well to use paragraphs to separate key points. I also think that it’s better and clearer if an email only deals with one main point. **Olga Birch**

I like to make my emails fun – even the business ones. I write in a chatty way as if I were speaking to the person. I also use lots of symbols to liven things up a bit. For example: ‘That was a great idea! 😊😊’ I sometimes write key words in capital letters, but I know that annoys some people. **Salina Crouch**

I think a lot of people send emails without checking them first. This can lead to problems and some very embarrassing situations. I always proofread what I’ve written and always have one last look before I press the ‘send’ button. I also think that it’s important not to send an email if the message is very private, because it’s easy for the person receiving it to forward it to somebody else by mistake. Also, if you forward an email I think it’s essential to give a reason why you’re forwarding. **Marmen Hofmeister**

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_ likes emails to be like informal conversations.
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_ likes to write very short emails.
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_ likes to use lots of emoticons in emails to liven them up.
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_ likes to have a very clear layout that is easy to read quickly.
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_ likes to make sure that the subject of the email jumps off the page.
- 6 \_\_\_\_\_ likes to read through emails very carefully to check for mistakes before sending them.

*For more on opinions, see Unit 12.*

5 Now write your views about emails, using the comments in 4 as a model.

*In my opinion,*

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## Further practice

6  **Pronunciation practice.** Listen to the email addresses and repeat them.

jtidman@deltainternational.co.uk

Tombuddell-25@yahoo.com

uwe\_timm@deltainternational.de



7 Now ask three other people you know for their email address and write them down.



**correspondence** (noun): the process of writing and receiving letters or emails  
**look forward to** (phrase): to feel happy about something that is going to happen  
**negotiate** (verb): to try to reach an agreement by discussing something in a formal way  
**request** (noun): the act of asking in a polite or formal way

8 **Present continuous.** Make full sentences in the present continuous. The first one is an example.

1 I / look forward / meet you next week *I am looking forward to meeting you next week.*

2 Our biggest client / visit / today

3 the printer / work?

4 He / not sit / his office

5 you / come / the meeting?

## Over to you

9 Prepare answers to these questions.

1 How often do you write emails to participants after you have arranged a meeting?

2 Who do you write to? (Customers, clients, suppliers, English-speaking colleagues?)

3 What type of emails do you write in English? (Long, short, formal, informal?)

10 Now interview other colleagues about the emails they write. Make a note of their answers and report back your findings.

11 Read email B from exercise 1 again. Imagine you are Tom Buddell from Softecco. Instead of sending an email, you have to telephone Jenny Tidman and leave a message on her answer phone about the training day. Write out your message, then practise saying it.

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12 Now turn to Case study 3 on page 87 for further practice on writing emails.

13 For a list of expressions from this unit, see Useful language Unit 3 on page 94.