# How to be formal in an email

## In this lesson you will learn how to be clear and precise in a formal email.

### Starter

1 Look at the London souvenirs. Which ones do you think would be more popular with tourists? Can you see problems with any of the products?



2 What guidelines do you know for writing a formal email? Are there any common fixed expressions? What should you avoid doing?

## Expressions

- Régine Arkady is the director of a souvenir distribution firm in London. Read the two emails and answer the questions.
  - 1 What is Régine pleased and not pleased about?
  - 2 What would Régine like to happen as a result of her emails?



Subject: Prototype for London Eye Souvening

#### Dear Mr Da Silva.

Thank you for sending the prototype model for our new London Eye souvenir.

We have now studied it carefully and we would like to send our gratitude for the high quality of your studio's work. We also felt pleased about the speed with which the design was completed. Would you mind if we used this as the free sample that we give away to our potential retailers? Would you also be able to prepare some more items for us? We are thinking about creating a new range of Stratford-upon-Avon souvenirs and have some preliminary design briefs for these. I wonder if your firm would be interested in co-operating on this new project? Please get back to me if this would be possible.

Régine Arkady

Takeaway Memories London Ltd

#### Practice

1 One month later, some of Régine's own customers are unhappy. Here are some notes made by a retailer who has been waiting two weeks for a promised delivery from Takeaway Memories. Write his email.

Ordered 150 Big Ben – fully paid in advance Delivery promised two weeks ago – is there a problem? Any new souvenirs? (d like to expand lines stocked

> 2 Print off three formal emails you sent recently for work. Make changes to improve them based on what you have learnt in this unit.

## Language box

It is important to be able to state clear, firm requests, demands, and questions in a formal email without sounding rude.

Sentences with I would can make a demand sound less direct. The structure I would be grateful if you could / would ... is used to request an action:

I would be grateful if you could confirm that you will rectify this problem.

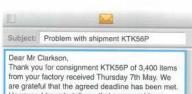
Would you mind ... is a polite way of introducing a request. It is often used with please and always needs a question mark:

Would you mind sending the email again, please?

#### Hint

We normally avoid imperatives on their own. The word please can soften some requests and demands. Please assure me that a corrected consignment will be dispatched.

Not Assure me that ...



Inank you for consignment KI KSSP of 3,400 flems from your factory received Thursday 7th May. We are grateful that the agreed deadline has been met. However, I have to tell you that some problems have been discovered with the shipment. Unfortunately, one of the product lines is faulty: The 10 cm Big Ben models (reference 237) have not had hands or numbers painted on their clock faces as specified in design brief KG623. In addition, the models do not stand perpendicular but lean at an angle.

As these items are urgently required for the summer tourist season, I would be grateful if you could organize an immediate replacement shipment of the faulty items. Please let me know as soon as they are ready.

I stress that we have been very satisfied with previous orders received from your factory and I want to make you feel certain that we hope to maintain a long-term relationship.

Yours sincerely, Régine Arkady

Takeaway Memories London Ltd

- 2 Look at the two emails again and find:
  - 1 three different ways that Régine thanks the email recipient
  - 2 one way that Régine offers thanks that is conditional on something being done
  - 3 one way that Régine enquires if some work is possible
  - 4 two ways that Régine asks for a response.
- 3 When Régine asked a colleague to check her formal English in the emails, he suggested using some of the following verbs: appreciate, assure, consider, inform, convey, notify. Replace the words in bold in these sentences (1-6) with one of the verbs in the correct form.
  - I have to tell you that some problems have been discovered with the shipment.
  - 2 We are thinking about creating a new range
  - 3 We also felt pleased about the speed with which the design was completed.
  - 4 Please let me know as soon as they are ready.
  - 5 I want to make you feel certain that we hope to maintain a long-term relationship.
  - 6 We would like to send our gratitude for the high quality of your studio's work.

Make indirect questions with phrases such as I wonder, Do you know, Could you tell me, followed by if I whether or a question word (who, what, etc.):

Could you tell me how much it costs? I wonder if you could tell me how much it costs.

#### Look

Look again at Régine's emails in Expressions. Find more ways of stating requests, demands, and questions in a formal email.

Lesson record	
3 new words from this lesson	3 useful phrases from this lesson
1	1
2	2
3 ,	3
Things to rememb	per
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