

How to be formal in an email

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

Starter

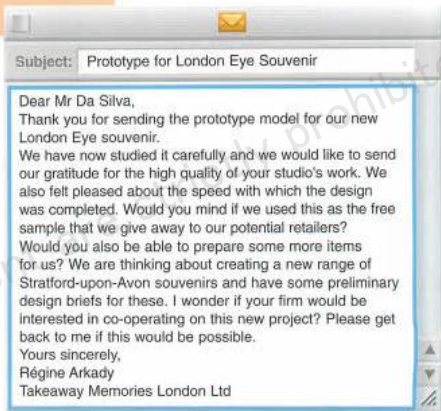
- 1 Look at the London souvenirs. Which ones do you think would be more popular with tourists? Can you see problems with any of the products?



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

Expressions

- 1 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?



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? I'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 ...



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.
- 1 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 / 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

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| 1 | 1 |
| 2 | 2 |
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Things to remember

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