

How to be clear in an email

In this lesson you will learn how to make your emails clear.

Starter

- Which of the following features do you use in order to be clear in your emails?
 - useful subject line
 - direct requests
 - bullet points and numbering
 - paragraphs
 - different colours or fonts
 - keeping the subject as close to the verb as possible
 - specific references
 - short sentences



Expressions

- Kazuo Saitou is the regional manager for a supermarket chain. In response to a local supermarket manager, he has written the email on page 69. What do you think Daniel, the supermarket manager, wrote in the original email?
- Complete the email with the phrases below.
as such arising in question referred to
the former in this way in the meantime
rather than regarding the latter
- Rewrite the sentences using the phrases from 2.
 - The member of staff who is being discussed acted inappropriately.
 - I will provide more details in our meeting. Before then, you may like to review the procedures outlined in the handbook.
 - We recommend both scheduled visits and spot checks. Scheduled visits allow stores to show their best side and spot checks keep staff on their toes.
 - We will discuss the matters which came out of the visit in our next meeting.
 - We advise you to provide written instead of oral feedback.

Practice

- Rewrite this email to make it clearer, using the language from Expressions and the Language box.

Subject: Security

Dear department managers,
We've been having some security problems, so we're thinking of introducing a security system which is operated by swipe cards which bear a photo of the owner. This is instead of a less effective code-operated system. We're concerned about security in the departments which receive a lot of visitors. This means that we are making a list of the average numbers of visitors to each department. Please help us by supplying this information.
Best regards,
Natasha

Language box

Reduced relative clauses make writing more concise. The relative pronoun is omitted and the verb takes the form of the present or past participle:

The man sitting over there is our new boss.
(= The man who is sitting over there ...)

If the verb is active, use a present participle (-ing):

The man working with me in Los Angeles is Malaysian. (= the man who works with me in Los Angeles ...)

If the verb is passive, use a past participle:

You haven't yet paid for the goods delivered on 12th November. (= you haven't yet paid for the goods which were delivered ...)

Hint

To make your email clear, use a subject line which tells the receiver exactly what the email is about. For example: **Corrections to minutes of meeting of 5th May**, rather than simply **Corrections or Minutes**.

Subject: Urgent action re mystery shopper report

Dear Daniel,

Thank you for your response to my email ¹ _____ the mystery shopper report. We will discuss the issues ² _____ in more detail at our meeting. ³ _____ I recommend immediate action in three areas:

1 Tidiness and cleanliness

As you are aware, the report described empty boxes discarded in the aisles and staff wearing dirty uniforms. Neither of these is acceptable as they are health and safety issues. ⁴ _____ also impedes the flow of customer traffic around the store, whilst ⁵ _____ damages customer confidence.

You mentioned that the uniforms were dirty because staff had been cleaning the stockroom. Nevertheless, if you see a staff member inappropriately dressed ⁶ _____, you should instruct them to go and change immediately.

2 Customer service

Staff should assist customers looking for particular items by guiding them to the item ⁷ _____ and checking it is the product being sought.

You wrote that this is not always possible but the incident ⁸ _____ in the report actually involved an item located in the next aisle.

3 Items out-of-stock

According to your email, this problem was caused by the supplier going bankrupt and ⁹ _____, was difficult to prevent. You should:

- fill the space left by the missing items with similar products, ¹⁰ _____ leaving empty shelf-space
- instruct staff to advise customers on similar products available

Best wishes,
Kazuo

A present continuous passive can be expressed with **being + past participle**:

We need to cut back on the money **being spent** on advertising. (= we need to cut back on the money which is being spent ...)

Some adjectives can be used after nouns in a similar way:

I'll do everything **necessary** to speed up the process. (= I'll do everything which is necessary to ...)

Look

Look again at the email in Expressions. Find more examples of reduced relative clauses.

Lesson record

3 new words from this lesson 3 useful phrases from this lesson

- | | |
|---------|---------|
| 1 | 1 |
| 2 | 2 |
| 3 | 3 |

Things to remember

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....