

2.5 Writing Formal and informal correspondence

Discussion

1 With a partner, discuss what differences you would find in your own language between formal correspondence, e.g. a letter to your bank manager, and informal messages, e.g. an email to a friend.

Skim reading

2 Read the four emails below and answer the questions.

1 Which email is from:

- a customer service department?
 a senior colleague?

- a junior colleague?
 a customer?

1

Dear Ms Reckett,

I am writing with regard to a computer problem. You may remember we met at the office Christmas party, and I believe you mentioned having a similar problem with your laptop. Unfortunately I have dropped mine and the screen is *cracked*. I was wondering if you could give me any advice on getting it repaired? I would very much appreciate any help you might be able to give me.

Yours sincerely,
 James Blair

2

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to enquire about having a television repaired. The set is a Goodson TV750 which we bought 18 months ago and therefore is unfortunately no longer under guarantee. Currently we have a picture but no sound.

I would be very grateful if you could give me the address of an authorized repair centre in the Greater Manchester area. Thank you for your help.

Yours faithfully,
 J. Roebotham (Miss)

3

Hi James,

Thanks for your mail. Bad luck about the laptop. Mine was a write-off – had to get a new one! Why don't you try Harrowson's in Oldham? They're usually good. Hope this helps.

Cheers,
 Margaret

P.S. Of course I remember you. Give me a ring next time you're in town and we'll go for a drink!

4

Dear Miss Roebotham,

Re your email of 10 September: your TV is in fact covered by a two-year manufacturer's *guarantee*. Can you just send the set back in its original packaging and we will repair or exchange it *asap*. Don't hesitate to get back to me if you need any more information.

Regards,
 Max Hurst

P.S. Are you by any chance the Jenny Roebotham I knew at Manchester Business School in 98 / 99?

2 Which two emails are formal? Which two are neutral / informal?

Internet research

The advantages of email are obvious – but what risks must companies consider? Search for the keywords “email risk policy” to find out.

Reading for detail

3 Find expressions in the four emails in 2 to complete the table.

	Formal	Neutral / Informal
Greeting		
Opening		
Requests		
Closing		
Salutation		

Skim reading

4 Read the next four emails the people in 2 sent.

- Which two writers have changed style? Why?
- Find and correct the two inconsistencies of style in each email.

5 Dear Mr Hurst,
 Thanks for your email of 12 September. I am afraid you have mistaken me for my cousin, who attended Manchester Business School in 1998. I am very pleased to learn that the TV set is still under guarantee. Unfortunately, I no longer have the original packaging, so I think it would be preferable if I deliver the TV directly to your repair centre after work. Could you possibly let me know the opening hours?
 Cheers,
 Jane Roebotham

7 Dear Miss Roebotham,
 I am writing with reference to the repair of your Goodson TV750. Our Manchester repair centre is open from 9am to 6pm from Monday to Saturday. I've attached a leaflet with the details and a map. Hope this helps.
 Yours sincerely,
 Max Hurst.
 P.S. Please accept my apologies for confusing you with your cousin.

6 Hi Margaret,
 Thanks for your email. I wasn't sure if you'd remember me – it was quite a party, wasn't it? Funnily enough, I will be in town next Thursday so perhaps we could have that drink? I would be very grateful if you could let me know if you are free around 6.30? Looking forward to seeing you.
 James
 P.S. I would like to express my gratitude for your help with the computer, I'm getting it fixed tomorrow.

8 James,
 Re next Thursday. It will be lovely to see you. Actually, my husband will be in Indonesia that week, so I need to be at home to look after the cats. I was wondering if you would mind coming over to our place? I've attached a map – get back to me if it's not clear.
 Yours sincerely,
 Margaret

Writing

5 Work in groups of three to write and reply to business emails using appropriate styles.

Student A: look at page 111.

Student B: look at page 112.

Student C: look at page 115.