

8 International trade

8.5 Writing Requests and reminders

Discussion

1 Answer the questions below, then compare your answers with a partner.

- 1 What is your philosophy on credit?
 - a) never borrow money
 - b) use credit in moderation
 - c) get as much credit as you can
- 2 If you have to ask someone to repay money they owe you, how do you feel?
 - a) embarrassed
 - b) angry
 - c) nothing, it's only money
- 3 What would you write to remind someone they owe you money? Why?
 - a) a text message
 - b) an email
 - c) a letter

Reading and analysis

2 Read the emails below. Which email is:

a request? a reminder? a refusal? a final demand?

Highlight the phrases which helped you to decide.

1 According to our records, our invoice number 061704 for €15,789 is now overdue. If, however, this invoice has already been settled, please disregard this email.

3 Further to our email of 23 May, we have still not received payment for the outstanding sum of €15,789. We regret to inform you that we are suspending all shipments until this outstanding balance has been settled.

2 In answer to your enquiry of 2 September about trading on open account, we regret to inform you that we are unable to agree to your request due to your insufficient credit rating. We hope you will understand the reasons for this decision, and we trust that we can continue to do business together as in the past.

4 As we now intend to place regular orders with your company, we would appreciate being able to trade on open account. We are confident this arrangement will be to our mutual benefit, and we look forward to an early reply.

3 Make complete sentences by using one phrase from each column. The first one has been done for you.

| | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 I am writing to enquire | agree to | which is still outstanding. |
| 2 I am afraid group policy | the sum of €21,552 | to extend credit terms of 60 days. |
| 3 We are pleased to | whether you would be able | of this outstanding balance. |
| 4 May I remind you that | your early settlement | the terms you propose. |
| 5 We wrote to you on 4 November | does not allow us | to our legal department. |
| 6 Would you let us | regarding the balance of €12,650 | is still outstanding? |
| 7 We would appreciate | but to pass the matter on | as soon as possible? |
| 8 We shall have no alternative | know your decision | to give more than 30 days' credit. |

Which sentences are used in:

a request? a reminder? a refusal?
 an agreement? a final demand?

Internet research

If your customers are slow payers, one way to improve cash-flow is factoring. Search for the keywords *factoring receivables* to find out how factoring works, and its advantages and disadvantages.

4 Which is the most polite form, a) or b)?

- 1a) In view of the increase in our volume of business, ...
 b) Considering how much more business we're giving you, ...
- 2a) About the longer credit you asked for, ...
 b) With regard to your request for improved credit terms, ...
- 3a) Re: your letter dated 31/1, ...
 b) Further to your letter of 31 January, ...
- 4a) We look forward to receiving your order.
 b) We expect you to order quickly.
- 5a) We're giving you a week to pay, ...
 b) Unless we receive payment within seven days, ...
- 6a) We would like to apologize for the delay in sending the enclosed cheque.
 b) We are sorry we took so long to send the enclosed cheque.
- 7a) This was an unfortunate oversight due to circumstances beyond our control.
 b) We forgot, but it wasn't our fault.
- 8a) We can assure you that it will not recur.
 b) Don't worry, it will never happen again.

5 Complete the emails using vocabulary from 2, 3 and 4.

1 In _____ of the increase in our volume of _____, I am writing to _____ whether you would be prepared to _____ credit terms of 60 days.
 Would you let us _____ your decision as soon as _____?

4 May I _____ you that the sum of €101,000 is still _____ on your account?
 We would appreciate your early _____ of this outstanding _____.

2 With _____ to your request for improved credit _____, I am afraid that group _____ does not _____ us to extend more than 30 days' credit.

5 We would like to _____ for the delay in sending the _____ cheque. This was an unfortunate _____ due to circumstances beyond our _____, and we can assure you that it will not _____.

3 _____ to your email of 17 July, we are pleased to agree to the _____ you propose, and we look _____ to receiving your order.

6 We wrote to you on 11 April _____ the balance of €15,550 which is still _____. Unless we receive payment _____ seven days, we shall have no _____ but to pass the matter on to our _____ department.

Which email is:

- a request? a reminder? a refusal?
 a final demand? an apology? an agreement?

Writing

6 Work in groups of three to write and reply to requests and reminders.

Student A: turn to page 113.

Student B: turn to page 115.

Student C: turn to page 116.