

Business Class

WEEK 3 - WRITING SKILLS



Welcome to Class!

TODAY'S AGENDA

- Surprising statistics
- The power of email
- Outlook structure
- Email rules and templates
- 1st Q&A session

- Email management
- Unprofessional habits
- IM at work
- Corporate jargon
- Acronyms
- 2nd Q&A session



Class Objectives

EXPECTATIONS AND OUTCOMES

★ Objectives:

- In today's lesson, you're going to learn how to become more confident in the area of business writing skills.
- By the end of this lesson today, you'll be ready to create professional correspondence with your clients and coworkers.



Lesson for Today

BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Everyone, already working or just starting their career, knows that writing is an essential skill for business communication. Not only traditional email, but also social media or instant messaging communication.



Surprising statistics



AVERAGE BUSINESS EMAILS

sent/received per day per person: 131 in 2020.

NUMBER OF BUSINESS EMAILS

sent/received daily: 212 billion

THE AVERAGE PROFESSIONAL

spends 28% of the work day reading and answering email. For the average full-time worker in America, that amounts to a staggering 2.6 hours spent per day.

The power of email

EMAIL IS STILL DOING GREAT

according to latest research it's importance is going to grow. Of course it's form has evolved over the years, mainly because of new types of tools on which this is used – mobiles and tablets. Emails become shorter and more concise, so this is easier to read them at smaller screens. Usually there are no long, sophisticated sentences or very complex language – email's job is to carry the message that the recipient will understand easily.

EVERYONE WRITES EMAILS

from regular employee to big businessmen and directors of corporations. Every single person working in business environment needs to learn how to write to achieve the expected results. Remembering commonly used sentences and few ground rules is going to help you with your email communication.



The power of email

BAD EMAIL CAN CREATE BIG PROBLEMS

Improve your email communication skills so you can avoid creating these four big problems at work.

YOUR MESSAGE CREATED CONFUSION AND DOUBT

If you included too many details, big paragraphs, and run-on sentences, chances are you confused your recipient and made them doubt your true meaning. And that's bad. The point of sending a message is to compose information that eliminates confusion and doubt, not cause it.

Solution: Keep your emails short and to the point. Put the most important information at the top so your recipient sees it right away. If you really have a lot of information to share, skip email altogether and pick up the phone.

YOUR MESSAGE CAUSED BAD FEELINGS BETWEEN PEOPLE AND DEPARTMENTS

One of major disadvantages of email is the lack of non-verbal cues. Your recipient can't hear your tone of voice or see your facial expression. This makes it harder to interpret the true meaning. Your recipient(s) might get upset by something that you never meant to cause offense.

Solution: Unless you know your recipient really, really well, it's best to refrain from making sarcastic comments that could be misconstrued. When in doubt, keep it professional. Save the humor for a phone conversation or face-to-face meeting where you recipient can hear and/or see you.



The power of email

YOUR MESSAGE DAMAGED COMPANY MORALE

This problem is similar to the previous one, but might be harder to fix because it's affected the entire company, not just one person or department.

Maybe you accidentally hit the "reply all" button or unwisely "BCC'd" some people to include them in the conversation. Just keep in mind that when you send a thoughtless message or comment to a big group of people instead of just one person, you'll have a bigger mess to clean up later.

Solution: Never, ever hit "reply all" or copy extra people on a message unless you are absolutely sure they need to be included in the conversation. And only include them in professional topics/issues. Never argue with other people through email. Never try to prove you're right and someone else is wrong. If it's that important for you to get everyone involved, then it's important enough to have a face-to-face group meeting or conference call.

YOUR MESSAGE DELAYED THE COMPLETION OF A PROJECT

This one is extra terrible because if project-completion delays were caused by your email, then the company probably lost money, too. Email is supposed to make communication faster and more efficient. If you write poorly or ignore basic email etiquette, you're only going to hinder your coworkers and managers from getting projects done in a timely manner.

Solution: Make sure your message is easy to understand, and proofread it before you send it. Ask yourself if you had no knowledge at all of a particular project, would your message help your recipient understand what to do or just confuse them.



Outlook structure



BUSINESS EMAIL COMMUNICATION IN MOST CASES IS DONE VIA OUTLOOK

Outlook (as most of other communicators) has below options:

- TO – this is simple as this is your main e-mail recipient. This can be one person or group of people
- CC – which is translated as “courtesy copy” or “carbon copy” emails added in this field are visible to everyone else receiving the email, and recipients in CC see exactly the same message as people in the TO field. We use CC usually when we want to inform someone what was sent to mail recipients from TO field. CC recipient may need to take action on email, but this is not mandatory.
- BCC – which is “blind carbon copy” and this is hidden recipient of the email. Recipient in BCC sees the message as everyone else, but no one can see who the recipient from BCC is.

Outlook structure



THERE ARE SEVERAL RULES YOU NEED TO REMEMBER WHEN WRITING BUSINESS EMAILS, BELOW YOU CAN FIND THE SHORT SUMMARY:

- Subject Line – before you even start to write the email body, you need to ensure that your recipients understand clearly through the subject line, what’s the email about. Email without subject line or with some confusing one, may be disregarded by recipients, or confuse them. Also, let’s be honest – most of business people have no time to read all emails they receive. If the subject line is clear and interesting, you get more chances your email will be read. Don’t make it too long, one line to grab recipient’s attention and same time summarizing email content is best way to go.
- Include the greeting – do not start the email body without writing first “Hello” in appropriate form
- Email Body - This is ‘business’ so be concise – less is more in this case. Get straight to the point. However avoid sentences which sound artificial. Use natural language.
- Think about the purpose of your communication and what you want to achieve (do you just inform about something or your email requires an action from the email recipient). Be specific so your email does not lead to confusion. It can’t be vague or ambiguous. Give precise information.
- Use proper language and be polite – your reader can’t hear your voice or see your body language so make sure what you write is clearly stated. Use kind phrases like “please” and “thank you”. Know when you must be formal and when you can be informal. You can decide on the level of the email formality, by simply using the same writing style as the sender. However, be careful with emails from higher management – they tend to send quite informal emails, however your reply should be a bit more formal than theirs email.

Outlook structure



THERE ARE SEVERAL RULES YOU NEED TO REMEMBER WHEN WRITING BUSINESS EMAILS, BELOW YOU CAN FIND THE SHORT SUMMARY:

- Email recipients – use correct fields for the To, CC and BCC recipients. Remember that in digital world nothing is really confidential so never assume your email will stay totally private is sent to one recipient.
- Add personal touch if possible – if your recipient planned some holidays for example or was recently promoted, wish them great time off or congratulate.
- Write in ‘active voice’ – try to avoid ‘passive voice’. Active voice allows shorter sentences and clearer message.
- Add good closing - once you set your email purpose at the beginning, you can summarize everything once more at the end.
- Before you click send: check the spelling and grammar, read your email through once more to make sure all is clear and nothing is missing.
- Avoid writing and sending emails when you got emotional – when we are angry we tend to use too many punctuation marks, like exclamations. Our sentences may ‘sound’ offensive to recipient. Better to save your email to Drafts and go back to it later, read it once more before sending.
- At the end - always sign your email with your name and position (in many corporations there are set rules on the email signatures) and make sure you add friendly sign-off like “Best regards”, “Kind regards” or just “Regards”, but also “Yours sincerely” (formal), “Thank you” or “Have a nice day” (less formal)

Email Body – main rules

BE CONCISE

As mentioned email body must be concise. If you see your email is going to take more than one page, think of adding details to the document and attach it to email, instead of adding everything in email body. If the email has attachment, make sure you mention it in the email.

USE PARAGRAPHS

to split the sections and topics. This makes the email to look clear and easy to read. Use numbering or bullet points for additional clarity, this allows quick email scanning and comprehension.

BOLDED/UNDERLINED SENTENCES

you can mark very important information by underlying or bolding them. This will make them more visible. However avoid having too many of sentences marked this way.

Email template



The diagram shows a business email template with various parts labeled. On the left, 'Friendly opening' points to 'Hi Eve,' and 'I hope you are well.' 'Reason of your email' points to the main body text. 'Closing line' points to 'Looking forward to seeing your presentation!'. On the right, 'Attachments' points to 'I've attached a document...', 'Offering help' points to 'If you have any questions, please let me know.', and 'Friendly good-bye' points to 'All the best, Tony'. A URL 'http://talaera.com/' is at the bottom.

Business Email Template

Friendly opening → Hi Eve,
I hope you are well.

Reason of your email → I am writing to you with regards to your presentation next week. As you requested, I've checked your slides and have made some suggestions. I've attached a document with all my comments.

Attachments ←

Offering help ← If you have any questions, please let me know.

Closing line → Looking forward to seeing your presentation!

Friendly good-bye ← All the best,
Tony

<http://talaera.com/>

Email template

Most common sentences to use in emails

GREETINGS

When it comes to greetings, it depends on how formal you need to be or if you know the name of the recipient or your write to company shared mailbox for example.

For very formal emails you can start for example as:

- Dear First name Last name
- Dear Mr. Last name
- Dear Mrs. Last name

When you don't know the recipient name:

- To whom it may concern
- Greetings

When you can be less formal:

- Hi
- Hello

When email is sent to larger group of recipients:

- Dear All

Email template

Most common sentences to use in emails

HOW TO START?

"I hope you..." - starting with this sentences you can add to it many different endings, depending on the context or email recipients. For example:

- I hope you are well
- I hope you had a great weekend
- I hope you enjoyed your holidays/time off
- Hope this email finds you well (quite formal)

Reason of the email - simply explaining shortly why you are sending the email.

This usually is the sentence starting with "I'm writing to ...", "I am contacting you...", "I wanted to let you know..." and a few other examples below:

- I'm writing to let you know... (to ask/to confirm/to update you/to follow up on...)
- I'm contacting you regarding the meeting...
- I wanted to let you know that...
- This is just friendly reminder ...
- This is just to let you know that....
- As agreed...
- As discussed...
- This email is to confirm that...
- We wish to inform you....
- Further to our call last week....

Email template

Most common sentences to use in emails

HOW TO START?

Replying to email:

- Thank you for your email...
- Thank you for getting back to me...
- As requested in your email, I would like to...
- In reply to your email/request..
- I just received your email about/your request/...
- In regards to your email/your question/...
- Following up on your email...

Apologizing (for late reply for example or something that happened):

- I apologize for my late reply..
- Sorry for my late reply... (less formal)
- I apologize for any inconvenience caused by...
- Please accept our apologies...
- I'm sorry it took me so long to reply/to get back to you on....

Email template

Most common sentences to use in emails

EMAIL BODY

Information:

- Please see below for more information about
- Please see information below
- You can find more information at the attached document
- You can find more information under below link
- Please note...
- I would like to inform you that...
- Please keep me informed
- Please note...
- Please keep me in the loop (Thanks for keeping me in the loop)
- Here below details on
- Here are the details on...

Attachments:

- Please find attached
- Attached is the document you asked for
- I've attached the file for your review
- The attached document contains explanation on...
- Attached is the file we discussed
- Please have a look at the attached file

Email template

Most common sentences to use in emails

EMAIL BODY

Requests:

- Could you please...
- I would appreciate if you could...
- I would be grateful if you could....
- I was wondering if you could
- I would be very helpful if you could
- If possible, please...
- Would it be possible to...
- I would appreciate your attention/help...
- I was hoping you could...
- Would you mind....
- Could you give me an update on...
- Could you give me an estimate...

Clarification:

- Could you provide/give more details about...
- Could you please clarify/explain....
- If I understood correctly, what you need is...
- In other words, would you like me to....

Email template

Most common sentences to use in emails

EMAIL BODY

Asking for approval/asking questions:

- Please let me know if this is fine with you...
- What are your thoughts on....
- Waiting for your approval...
- Could you please confirm
- Questions - usually started with "Would" or containing "Would" (Would you?, How would you ...?, How could we...? Would it be...?)

Giving negative answer:

- Unfortunately, we can't ... (we are unable to..)
- I'm afraid this won't be possible..
- I regret to inform you that...
- Due to XYZ, unfortunately we won't be able to...

Giving positive answer:

- I'm pleased to let you know
- It's my pleasure to let you know

Email template

Most common sentences to use in emails

EMAIL BODY

Follow up:

- As discussed
- As we discussed
- To follow up on
- Regarding XYZ
- In regards to
- On the topic of...

CLOSING / ENDING

When expecting reply or action:

- Looking forward to hearing from you (I look forward to hearing from you)
- Please let me know if...
- Thank you in advance for....
- I would appreciate any feedback you can give me on this
- I would appreciate your help on...

Email template

Most common sentences to use in emails

CLOSING / ENDING

Offering help or additional information:

- Please let me know if you need any help on...
- If you have any additional questions, do not hesitate to contact me
- If you need more information
- Feel free to contact me
- Do not hesitate to contact me
- For more details please contact XYZ

Apologizing:

- Please accept our apologies for (any inconvenience, for misunderstanding)
- Thank you for your understanding
- I'm sorry I couldn't be of more help

Saying goodbye:

- Best regards
- Kinds regards
- Cheers
- All the best!
- Sincerely
- Yours sincerely
- Many thanks

Email management

OTHER ASPECT OF THE BUSINESS EMAILS IS ALSO, HOW YOU MANAGE THEM

Writing and sending is one thing. Making sure you organize yourself in proper way, is another. First, think if the information you want to pass really requires an email. Maybe it is better to use internal communicator for short message to your colleague or quick question to your boss? Or maybe this is better to step at someone 's desk and ask the question personally?

When you decide on best method of communication, you can avoid unnecessary emails in your mailbox and organizing your work better.



Unprofessional Email Habits

RAMBLING

Respect your own time—and the time of the person(s) on the receiving end of your email. Be as straightforward and concise as possible. And don't send emails just for the sake of sending them. Make sure you have something concrete and important to convey!

FORGETTING THE ATTACHMENT

Even Gmail will alert you if you write “attached” anywhere in your email and forget to, you know, attach something. Always double check your messages before sending and try attaching the document first, before drafting the body message.

MISPELLING NAMES

How hard is it to spell your recipient's name correctly? It's literally right there in front of you. In your sidebar, in your address line, in their signature, in your contacts list.

FAKING URGENCY

Only use the urgent function when the message is actually urgent.

ALL CAPS

If you must emphasize in text, use bold or italics or underlining instead.

MISJUDGING TONE

You can miss the mark if you go too casual (“Hey ya’ll, So I was thinking...”) or too stiff (“Dear Sirs and Madams, Upon further consideration...”). Keep it professional, snappy, and do your best to reflect the relationship you have with the recipient(s).

REPLY ALL

If what you're about to type isn't absolutely crucial for everyone on the chain to receive, then please restrain yourself and reply only to the person who needs the information.



“I’ll Slack you.”

INSTANT MESSAGING AT WORK

In workplaces around the world, the name of the popular online messaging system has become a verb, just like Google. Slack has been enthusiastically integrated into the day-to-day functions of legacy corporations and burgeoning startups: The company claims that, in 2019, it hosted 10+ million daily users. It has competitors, too, including Microsoft Teams and Zoom.

BENEFITS

of these tools have quickly become obvious. Even in the early 2000s, researchers noted how instant messaging helped to decrease needless, back-and-forth phone calls and alleviate (minimalizujā) miscommunications. And instant messaging trounces (pobija) email by offering immediate and clearer resolution to business concerns that may have been unnoticed in inboxes.

Less intrusive than a phone call and faster than email, instant messaging (IM) offers ideal support for team collaboration. Plus, it sits perfectly with Gen Y employees’ desire for the immediacy they experience in other areas of their lives to be reflected in the workplace.



“I’ll Slack you.”

INSTANT MESSAGING AT WORK

With apps like Slack, you can get business communication with your colleagues at the touch of a button. Messaging, live video calls and photo sharing are fantastic ways to bring teams together, make decisions quickly and keep the ideas flowing.

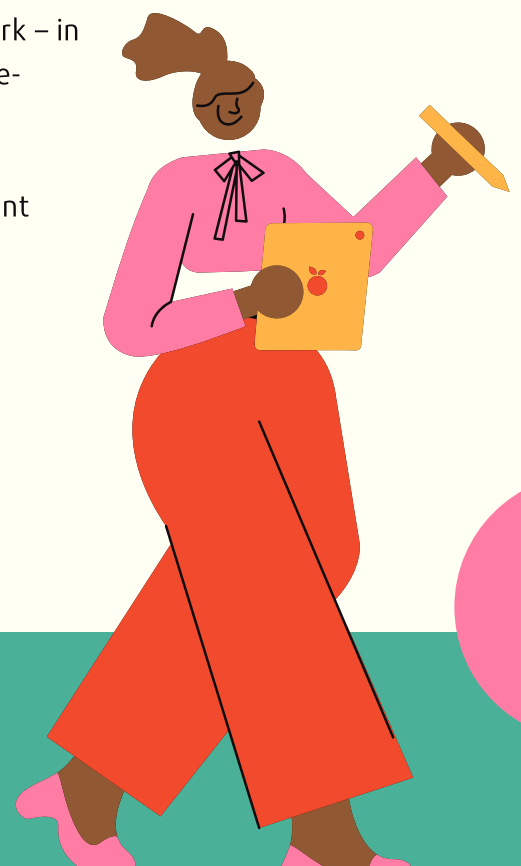
But to make instant messaging for business work for you, there are a few rules to follow:

KEEP IT BUSINESS-LIKE

Always remember you’re at work, so keep the subject matter professional and the tone polite and respectful. There’s nothing wrong with livening up your business messages with a few emojis – provided that’s appropriate for the people you’re messaging – but don’t overdo it.

DON’T GET DISTRACTED

People want to communicate faster and more efficiently at work – in fact, they’re frustrated with the speed of email, with over three-quarters of companies believing it to be an ineffective communication tool. But being under pressure to answer immediately is seen by employees as the top drawback of instant messaging for business. To avoid distractions, channels can be created for posts that don’t need immediate attention.



“I’ll Slack you.”

KNOW THE COMPANY RULES

If you’re adding instant messaging to your business communication toolkit, make sure you have policies in place covering how it should be used and what information can be shared over IM. If you’re an employee, make sure you’re familiar with your organization’s IM rules and stick to them.

KEEP TO THE SUBJECT

It can be tempting to start having a good chat when you’re messaging, so make a conscious effort to stay on topic. That way, you’ll get your work out of the way faster and have more time to chat.

KNOW WHEN TO STOP

The aim of IM is to speed up communication. So, if you find yourself in a long chain of messages, constantly answering questions and trying to clarify what you’re saying, it may be quicker and easier to pick up the phone or talk to someone in person.

USE IM FOR THE RIGHT MESSAGES

IM is great, but it’s not always the right channel for the task. Instant messages should be brief, so if you’ve got something longer to say, an email might be more appropriate, or you might want to post in a Workplace by Facebook group. When it comes to discussing sensitive issues, a face-to-face meeting is probably the way to go.



Corporate jargon

The philosopher Étienne Bonnot de Condillac observed in 1782 that “every science requires a special language because every science has its own ideas.” Nowhere is that more apparent than the modern workplace. Jargon is everywhere.

Rather than improve understanding however, corporate double-speak can obfuscate and confuse. Worse, it can make you feel unempowered. Jargon is supposed to be shorthand for people “in the know” (like people of a certain profession or social group). When you don’t understand what’s being said, it can make you feel like an outsider, or like you’re uninformed.

And let’s face it, jargon is just plain annoying.

ACRONYMS AT WORK



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=igPIk79wAPg>

Acronyms at work

ASAP

As soon as possible - tak szybko jak to możliwe

FYI

For your information - do twojej wiadomości

EoB

End of business, lub też COB – close of business – czyli na koniec dnia biznesowego

BTW

By the way - przy okazji

FAQ

Frequently asked questions - najczęściej zadawane pytania

TBC

To be confirmed - do potwierdzenia

TBD

To be determined - do zdecydowania

TBA

To be announced - do ogłoszenia/poinformowania niebawem

Acronyms at work

AFAIK

As far as I know - o ile mi wiadomo

CRM

Customer Relationship Management – system do zarządzania relacjami z klientem

NP

No problem - nie ma problemu

IMO

In my opinion - moim zdaniem

B2B

Business to business - relacje biznesowe pomiędzy dwiema firmami

CDD

Contract delivery date - termin finalizacji kontraktu

QA

Quality assurance- kontrola jakości

KPI

Key performance indicator - kluczowy wskaźnik efektywności.

Używany głównie przy projektach lub jako wyznacznik wykonania zadań pracownika.

Acronyms at work

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QA

Quality assurance- kontrola jakości

RFP

Request for proposal - zapytanie o ofertę

Summary of Today's Class

RECAP 1

Email is still a powerful business tool

RECAP 2

Use templates and follow simple email rules

RECAP 3

Know when and how to use IM at work

RECAP 4

Make yourself familiar with jargon and acronyms



Tasks for you

I HAVE DONE MY JOB, SO IT IS TIME FOR YOU ;-)

★ Zadanie 1

Zachęcam do obejrzenia filmu Dereka Callana o błędach w emailach

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sc-ERSuBL50>



★ Zadanie 2

Z naszego podręcznika strony 130-133 :-)

Koniecznie skorzystaj z plików audio - odsłuchaj i powtarzaj na głos.

★ Zadanie 3

Ciąg dalszy naszego podręcznika. Na stronach 132 i 133 znajduje się 6 poleceń.

Wybierz co najmniej 2 i wykonaj.

- » E-mail the supplier and ask about the pending delivery.
 - » Write an e-mail to the whole department to inform them about the changes.
 - » Send out the minutes from the last meeting that you attended.
-
- » Write an e-mail to your workmates about all the details regarding the new project.
 - » Write an e-mail to your client offering them your new product. Attach a brochure.
 - » Write an e-mail to your client who wrote to you a long time ago.

Thank You

FOR JOINING TODAY'S CLASS

Please have a look at the tasks I have prepared for you.
See you next week!



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