

Email: Semi-formal and Informal Messages

When you write email messages, you can use two distinct styles: semi-formal and informal. A semi-formal style is used for communicating with people you do not know well or who are outside your regular working relations. Messages written in this style are similar to business letters: they are concise and informative. An informal personal style is used for emails with people you know well or within your company. This style is more conversational and reflects spoken language.

Elements that can make your message more informal are:

- Salutations and closings
e.g., *Hello Juan* instead of *Dear Mr. Rodriguez*; no closing at all instead of *Sincerely*
- Omitting pronouns
e.g., *No problem* instead of *It is not a problem*; *Looking forward ...* instead of *I am looking forward*
- Informal vocabulary and expressions
e.g., *Thanks* instead of *I really appreciate*; *Phone me* instead of *Please contact me*; *Is it okay?* instead of *Is it convenient?*

1 Read the email messages below and discuss how they are different.

1. What is the relationship between the recipient and the sender of each message?
2. How is the style of each message different?

✉ **Message 1**

Dear Martina,

I will be attending the conference in Toronto next week and I would like to take this opportunity to meet with you to discuss your latest project. Please let me know when you will be available.

Best regards,
Felippa

✉ **Message 2**

Hi Joanna,

I'm going to be in Toronto for a conference next week. Do you think we could meet some time? I'd love to know how you are doing and talk to you about your latest project. Let me know if we can get together.

Cheers,
Mel

2 Write a response to each message using the same style as the above messages. Include the following:

- express happiness about hearing from the other person
- agree to meet
- suggest a time and place
- end the message appropriately

3 Write email messages for the situations below. Decide whether the style is semi-formal or informal.



Situation 1

You were going to have a meeting with your manager. Unfortunately, your plans have changed and you will not be able to meet at the arranged time. Write an email and include the following:

- inform the reader that you can't meet on the date that was previously arranged; give reasons
 - suggest a new time
 - apologize for any inconvenience
 - end the message appropriately
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Situation 2

You have received an email from a team member requesting a report on the progress of a project. You were away on holidays for two weeks and still need more time to collect and process the information. Write an email in response and include the following:

- confirm receiving the request
 - explain the reason for the delay in submitting the report
 - suggest a new deadline
 - end the message appropriately
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Situation 3

You have received an email from a long-time co-worker inviting you and your spouse to an end-of-summer barbeque at her place. The date of the barbeque coincides with the date of your in-laws' 40th anniversary, so you will not be able to attend. Write an email in response and include the following:

- thank your co-worker for the invitation
 - express regret and explain why you will not be able to attend
 - end the message appropriately
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Situation 4

You have received a formal invitation for you and your partner to the company's annual New Year's Eve gala. Write an email in response and include the following:

- thank the sender for the invitation
- confirm who will be attending
- end the message appropriately

4 Proofread and edit your work. Exchange your messages with a classmate for peer editing.