

## E-mail writing (and writing to your teachers)

Many people don't write letters now. They write e-mail, which are in many ways similar to letters.

### **Reason to write**

Just like letters: to introduce yourself, to ask a question or for an opinion, to give information or advice, to change other people's opinions, to complain about something or ask for action.

### **Situation**

Again, just like letters, e-mail are used in a wide range of situations:

- formal (a letter to an organization, a professor or someone you do not know)
- informal (letter to a friend or family member)
- for business (a letter to a company)
- for the public (a letter to be published in a newspaper) or
- for private reasons

Here is one informal/casual e-mail to a friend and one formal one to a professor.

### **Text:**

#### **1. Organization**

- Write a clear and easy to understand short subject line
- Use an appropriate greeting (Dear Mr. Tanaka, Hello Maki..., Hi Maki...)
- Organize into clear paragraphs with a space between
- First paragraph: Informal - ask questions like "How are you?" Formal - say why you are writing
- There are many set phrases for the last line/paragraph: "Looking forward to..." Think about how formal your letter is and what you want when you choose one.
- Finish Yours sincerely, / Regards, / All the best, / Warm regards, / Take care,
- Write your name at the end

#### **2. Grammar**

- In formal e-mails check your grammar and write things like "don't" as "do not"
- Casual e-mails may have grammar mistakes or incomplete sentences. Punctuation like ! and ??? or !?! could be included to show emotion, like emoticons in texting.

#### **3. Vocabulary**

- There are many set phrases for writing e-mails and many are the same as letters, for example "I am writing to..." and "Looking forward to hearing from you." Learn them and use them. (PS "passed away" in the formal letter means "died")

**Casual (informal) e-mail to a friend**

To	Hiromisato23@gmail.com
CC	
Subject	American History this semester?

Hi Maki,

How've you been? I haven't heard from you for a long time. Is everything OK? Did you have a good summer? I just worked so it was boring, but I did save some money.

I just wanted to ask about classes this semester. Are you planning to take American History again? It was great last semester, but a lot of work. I think we made a good team and helped each other to pass the course. If you're going to take it again this semester, I want to take it too. What are you thinking? Please let me know.

Looking forward to hearing from you and to catching up soon!

Warm regards,

Hiromi

**More formal e-mail to language school or university abroad**

To	internationaloffice@famous_university.ac.au
CC	
Subject	Enquiry about enrollment

Dear Ms. Smith,

I am a student at Kyoto Sangyo University in Japan.

I am writing to you as I am planning to study abroad from April next year for ten months. I am thinking about coming to your university. Could you please send me some information on how much the fees for classes are, how much it costs to live and how to apply?

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Maki Kinoshita



## Writing e-mail to your teachers

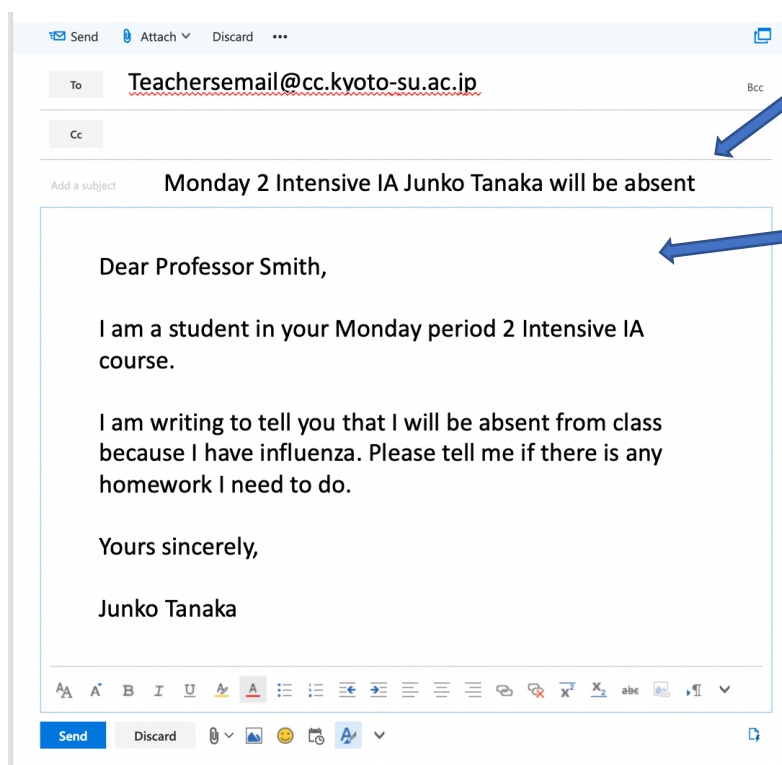
There are many reasons for a student to write to a professor. Maybe you need to tell him or her you will be late or absent or maybe you want to ask about class or homework. *Not sure what to do or how to say it?* On these pages are some common types of e-mails to professors

that you can use as models for when you write. (**Important note** Before writing, check: Do you have the information already? Look at what your teacher has given you and read instructions and the course guide carefully before sending an e-mail.)

*When you write your e-mail, there are three basic rules:*

1. If you are not sure, be formal.
2. Say who you are and what course you are talking about.
3. Keep it *concise*. (*Concise* means short and focused on what you want to say or ask.)

*Here is a basic model with an example:*



**Subject line:** Always put in a subject that includes your class and the subject of your mail.

**In the e-mail:**

1. Greet the professor (“Dear Professor Smith,” or *if* your teacher has told you to use their first name, “Dear Matthew,”)
2. Say what course you are writing about. (“I am a student..”)
4. Say clearly why you are writing. (“I am writing...”)
5. Say clearly what you want the professor to do. (“Please...”)
6. Sign off politely. (“Yours sincerely, Junko Tanaka.”)

*There are other formal ways to say “Yours sincerely,” including:*

“Sincerely,” or “Best regards,”

Here are some models for part 4 in the basic model on the last page: (Say clearly why you are writing:)

### Telling the teacher information

- I am very sorry but I am going to be late for class today. I take the Hankyu and the train has been delayed. I think I will be about 30 minutes late.
- I am very sorry but I am going to be absent from class today. I woke up feeling very sick and am going to the hospital. Please give any homework to my friend, Atsushi Tanaka.
- I am writing to tell you I will be absent from next class. I am in the university basketball team and we have a game in Tokyo. I will bring a notice from the Gakuseibu next class.
- I am writing to tell you that last night my grandmother passed away. My family has asked me to go home, so I will be absent from next class. (Note: “passed away” is a gentle and polite way to say “died”.)



### Asking the teacher for information or to do something

- I am very sorry I was absent from class today. I was not feeling well and went to the hospital. Could you please let me know if there is any homework for next class?
- I have a question about the class homework for next week. You told us to prepare a three-minute presentation. Should I make a PowerPoint for the presentation?
- I have a request about the essay due this Thursday. Last week I had influenza and I am having difficulty catching up on my homework. Could I have an extension until next Monday (Note: “Could I have an extension until next Monday?” means “Can I give it to you next Monday?” Getting an extension means asking for more time.)
- I am applying to study abroad and I need a teacher to write a recommendation for me. Can I ask you to write it for me?



*If you asked the teacher for information or to do something,*

*you can say at the end before “Yours sincerely,”:*

“I look forward to your reply.” or

“I look forward to hearing from you.”