

Worksheet 1: Formal and informal correspondence

- 1** How often do you write emails or letters at work? How formal or informal are they? Mark the level of formality on the scale and compare it with a partner.

Very formal



Neutral



Very informal

- 2** Read three pieces of correspondence. What level of formality are they? Write 1, 2 and 3 on the scale and compare with your partner. Explain your reasons.

Dear Ryan

1

I am writing in response to your message on my voicemail. I'd be delighted to give a talk to your business students on the subject of Modern Management Practices. I'd be grateful if you could send me any days and times you have in mind so we can finalise the exact date.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards

Corinne

2

Hi

I'm afraid my plane is delayed by two hours. Can you pick me up at around 2 instead?

See you soon. (I hope!)

Dear Mr Baker

3

With regard to your interest in the position of IT assistant, please find attached the full job description and application form. Please note that the closing date for applications is the 30th of this month. Unfortunately, due to the expected high number of applications for this post, we are only able to reply to those applicants who have been shortlisted.

We thank you for your interest.

Yours sincerely

Alan Johnson

- 3a** The verbs 1–10 tend to be used in more formal correspondence. Match the formal verbs 1–10 to the less formal verbs in the box.

need tell change say sorry get ask about ask for help stop give

- | | | | |
|---|-----------|----|-----------|
| 1 | inform | 6 | enquire |
| 2 | request | 7 | alter |
| 3 | apologise | 8 | terminate |
| 4 | receive | 9 | require |
| 5 | assist | 10 | provide |

- b** How many of the verbs 1–10 have a noun form? e.g. *inform* - *information*

4 Find expressions in the texts in Exercise 2 to complete the table.

	FORMAL OR NEUTRAL	INFORMAL
Opening	1 _____ _____	Hello 2 _____
Reason for writing / Reference	Further to your letter ... 3 _____ 4 _____	It's about ...
Enclosure or attachment	I'm enclosing 5 _____	Here is ...
Give good news	We're happy to inform you that ... 6 _____	Good news!
Apologise / Give bad news	Sadly ... 7 _____ We regret to inform you that ...	Sorry but ... 8 _____
Request	Would it be possible for you to ...? 9 _____	Could you ...? 10 _____
Thanks / Refer to future contact	11 _____ 12 _____	13 _____ 14 _____
Closing	Kind regards Yours 15 _____	Bye Love

6 Rewrite this email using an informal style. Use expressions from Exercises 3 and 5.

Dear Dr Bruce Baines

With regard to your visit to Italy next week, I'm attaching details of your flights and hotel reservations. I regret to inform you that the business college in Perugia has cancelled the appointment on Wednesday. Would it be possible for you to give the same presentation in Bologna?

I'd be grateful if you could confirm the flight times as soon as possible. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need me to assist you any further.

7 Read this informal reply. Rewrite it using a neutral or more formal style.

Hi Maddie

It's about the flight times to Italy. Sorry but I can't fly out on Monday morning. Can you change it to Monday evening?

I'm happy to talk in Bologna instead.

B.

I CAN

write using a formal and neutral style

an informal style