

Mastering the Professional Inquiry: Requesting Information via Email

Writing an email for communicative purposes in professional/academic settings

PART 01 Authentic Model Text Analysis

Read the following email from a student to a department coordinator.

Subject: Inquiry regarding the Advanced Marketing Seminar - [Your Name]

Dear Ms. Thompson,

I hope this email finds you well.

I am writing to express my interest in the Advanced Marketing Seminar scheduled for next month. I have reviewed the syllabus online, but I would like to request further clarification regarding the prerequisites. Specifically, could you please let me know if professional work experience can be used instead of the "Marketing 101" course requirement?

I would appreciate it if you could provide this information at your earliest convenience. Thank you for your time and assistance.

Best regards,

Elena Rossi

ID: 882930

Analysis Questions:

1. **Structure:** Identify the three main parts of the email: The Opening, The Purpose/Request, and The Closing.
2. **Tone:** Underline the phrases used to make the request polite. Why does the writer use "I would like to" instead of "I want"?
3. **Cultural Context:** In some cultures, it is common to ask about a person's family or health before making a request. In a North American or European professional context, this email is direct but polite. How does this compare to professional emails in your home country or culture?

PART 02 Vocabulary Bank

Scenario: You need to email a supervisor or professor to ask for a meeting to discuss a project. Use the vocabulary and frames below to draft your email.

Vocabulary Bank:

- *Greetings:* Dear [Name], / Hi [Name] (less formal),
- *Opening:* I am writing to... / I am contacting you regarding...
- *Requests:* Would it be possible to... / I was wondering if... / Could we please...
- *Closings:* Thank you for your help. / I look forward to hearing from you. / Sincerely,

PART 03 Independent Writing

Prompt: Choose ONE of the following scenarios and write a professional email (80-120 words).

- **Scenario A (Academic):** You are a student. You missed a class due to an emergency. Write to your professor to explain the situation and ask for the materials or assignments you missed.
- **Scenario B (Professional):** You are an employee. You are interested in attending a professional development workshop next Friday. Write to your manager to explain why the workshop is useful and ask for permission to attend.

PART 04 Editorial Revision & Peer Review

Checklist:

- ☐ Does the subject line clearly state the topic?
- ☐ Did I use a formal greeting and closing?
- ☐ Did I use polite modals (could/would/might)?
- ☐ Is the main request easy to find in the text?
- ☐ **Peer Feedback:** Ask a partner: "Is the tone of my email too direct, too indirect, or just right for this situation?"

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Writing practice worksheet.



TIME

20-30 MINS

OBJECTIVE

To enable B1 learners to compose clear, culturally appropriate professional emails using formal registers and polite modal verbs.



GRAMMAR FOCUS

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- Polite Modals (could, would, may) and Formal Register

KEY VOCABULARY

DEAR [NAME]

/ HI [NAME] LESS FORMAL

I AM WRITING TO... / I AM CONTACTING YOU REGARDING..

WOULD IT BE POSSIBLE TO... / I WAS WONDERING IF... / COULD WE PLEASE..

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP. / I LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU. / SINCERELY

Procedure

1. Deconstruction (15 mins):

- Distribute the worksheet. Have students read the model text individually.
- Discuss the analysis questions as a class. Focus on the "Cultural Context" question to allow students to share their own experiences with professional hierarchy and "small talk" in emails.
- Highlight the grammar: "I would like to" vs. "I want." Explain that modals create "social distance" which translates to politeness in English.

2. Joint Construction / Imitation (20 mins):

- Walk through the Vocabulary Bank.
- Have students complete the Sentence Frames in Part 2.
- Differentiation:* For students struggling with the register, provide a "Too Informal" version of the email (e.g., "Hey, I need a meeting. Tell me when.") and ask them to "translate" it into the professional frames provided.

3. Independent Construction (20 mins):

- Students choose Scenario A or B.
- Circulate the room to provide feedback on word choice (e.g., suggesting "assistance" instead of "help").
- Encourage students to use the Editorial Revision checklist before submitting or sharing.
- Peer Review:** If time permits, have students swap emails and act as the "recipient." They should report how the email made them feel (e.g., "I felt respected," or "I felt confused about the request").