

Writing an Email

Matthew Williams • English Language • April 21, 2026

Purpose

A formal email is used for professional written communication sent electronically. Emails may:

- **Request** — ask for information, assistance, or a meeting
- **Apply** — submit applications or supporting documents
- **Follow up** — respond to a previous communication or confirm an arrangement
- **Inform** — communicate a decision, update, or announcement to a recipient

Structure

- **To** — recipient's name and email address
- **From** — your name and email address
- **Cc / Bcc** — additional recipients, if needed
- **Subject** — clear, specific summary of the email's purpose
- **Salutation** — Dear [Title] [Surname]: — colon for formal emails
- **Opening Paragraph** — state the purpose immediately; one or two sentences
- **Middle Paragraph(s)** — supporting details; one idea per paragraph
- **Closing Paragraph** — what you need the recipient to do next
- **Sign-off** — Best Regards / Yours sincerely, followed by your full name and contact number

Key Conventions

- Go **immediately to the business at hand** — no "I hope this finds you well"
- Write **short paragraphs** with a blank line between each
- Be professional and direct, but not blunt to the point of rudeness
- Use a **colon** after the salutation in formal emails, not a comma
- Keep the subject line specific — it should tell the reader exactly why you are writing

DOCUMENT EXAMPLE

To: "Professor Binns" <abinns@cartercollege.edu>
From: "Kerry-Kay Bogue" <boguekkk@xmail.com>
Cc:
Subject: Request for a Letter of Recommendation

Dear Professor Binns:

I am applying to the Cangulu University in Kinshasa to pursue a degree in Gender Studies. If it is convenient, would you be able to write me a letter of recommendation?

The application requires that the recommendation be addressed to the Dean of Studies, Professor Archibald Okoye. It should give a general overview of my record of academic performance, my character, and the extent of my involvement in the community. I have attached my curriculum vitae with an outline of my academic accomplishments and co-curricular involvement to give you some ideas for formulating the letter. The application is due on December 28, approximately five weeks from now.

Please respond at your earliest convenience to let me know whether you agree to write the letter. If you agree, please let me know when you would be likely to complete it and whether you need any additional information.

Best Regards, Kerry-Kay Bogue 876-555-0194