

« EMAIL ETIQUETTE: COMMON GREETING CLICHÉS AND SOME ALTERNATIVES »

In collaboration with Dr. Chantal Carleton (Languages and Cultures Department)

1. “HOW ARE YOU?” OR “HOW ARE YOU DOING?”

We use this one a lot. In fact, it’s so pervasive that most of us skim right past it as we’re reading our incoming emails.

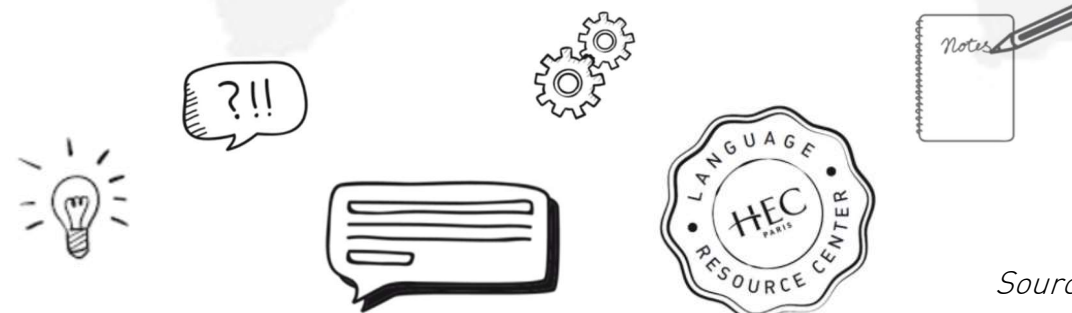
ALTERNATIVES:

Jump right in. There is nothing wrong with getting straight down to business. Just read your email before sending it to make sure you haven’t come across as abrupt or unfriendly.

Use a bit of small talk. If you know the recipient, it never hurts to remind them that you have an existing relationship.

2. THE WORST AND BEST EMAIL GREETINGS:

Annoying	Acceptable
No greeting (53%)	Hi (49%)
To whom it may concern (37%)	Good morning/afternoon (48%)
Hey (28%)	Hello (21%)
Happy [insert day]! (23%)	Dear (20%)
Greetings (22%)	Happy [insert day]! (7%)



Source: Business Insider, Grammarly

3. “I’M *NAME* AND I WORK FOR *COMPANY*.”

Although they’re usually necessary in some form or another when you email someone you don’t know well (or at all), introductions can be dull.

ALTERNATIVES:

Drop a name. If you have a mutual acquaintance or someone referred you, try “Ella Quint at ABC Widgets suggested I get in touch.”

Tell them why you’re emailing. Busy people appreciate when we get to the point. “I’m reaching out because...” or “I’m writing to learn more about...”

4. “PER OUR CONVERSATION...”

This one sounds too officious and formal. Worse, it can come across as demanding, or even aggressive.

ALTERNATIVE:

Restate the conversation politely. “When we chatted last week, we agreed that we would draft the quarterly report by July 15.”

5. “SORRY FOR THE LATE RESPONSE.”

ALTERNATIVE:

Don’t say sorry, say thanks. “Thanks for your patience while I waded through my inbox deluge.”

6. “I’M SORRY YOU FEEL...” / “I’M SORRY, BUT...”

ALTERNATIVE:

Just say you’re sorry. Own it, and be specific. “I’m sorry my tardiness inconvenienced you yesterday.”

7. "THANKS IN ADVANCE."

Although a study by the email app Boomerang rated "Thanks in advance" as the sign-off with the highest response rate, it's not the best sign-off for creating goodwill. Like "Looking forward to hearing from you", it has a tone of "I expect you to do this."

ALTERNATIVE:

Offer appreciation. Instead of sounding demanding, sound appreciative. "I'm grateful for your help on..."

8. THE FINAL EMAIL COMPOSITION LESSON:

If you're left with a loss for words, don't hit "send" until you come up with something. More than 40% of the email etiquette survey respondents say that the worst sign-off of all is the absence of one.

ALTERNATIVE:

A simple and genuine "Be well" or "Take care" are always appropriate for these times.

thank you

9. PS: A LITTLE HUMOUR IN TIMES OF PANDEMIC

"I hope this email finds you—" STOP
FINDING MEEEEEE



"I hope this email finds you well"
How the email found me:



Hannah Long
@HannahGraceLong

How I used to begin work emails:
Hi!

How I begin work emails now:

