

Standard Phrases for Letters and E-mails

The basics of good business letter writing are easy to learn.

By using standard phrases usually found in business letters and e-mails, you can give your English business correspondence a professional tone. These phrases can be used to frame and introduce the content of business letters. Here are some phrases typically used in business letters and e-mails.

Greeting	Making reference
<p>Dear Sir or Madam, <i>(use if you don't know who you are writing to)</i></p> <p>Dear Dr / Mr / Mrs / Miss / Ms Smith, <i>(use if you know who you are writing to and if you have a formal relationship – IMPORTANT use Ms for women unless asked to use Mrs or Miss)</i></p> <p>Dear Jane, <i>(use if the person is a close business contact or friend)</i></p>	<p>With reference to your letter of 21 March / your phone call today, ...</p> <p>Thank you for your letter of 21 March.</p> <p>Further to our telephone conversation, ...</p>
Giving the reason for writing	Making requests
<p>I am writing to enquire about / apologise for / confirm / request ...</p>	<p>Could you (possibly) ...?</p> <p>I would be grateful if you could ...</p> <p>I would appreciate it if you could ...</p> <p>Would you mind ...?</p>
Agreeing to requests	Giving bad news
<p>I would be delighted to ...</p> <p>I would be pleased to ...</p>	<p>Unfortunately, ...</p> <p>I am afraid that ...</p>
Enclosing/Attaching documents	Reference to future contact
<p>I am enclosing/attaching ...</p> <p>Please find enclosed/attached ...</p> <p>Enclosed/Attached you will find ...</p>	<p>I look forward to hearing from you soon.</p> <p>I look forward to meeting you next week.</p> <p>I'm looking forward to seeing you next Thursday.</p>
Closing remarks	Finishing salutation
<p>Please contact us again if we can help in any way / there are any problems / you have any questions.</p> <p>Should you have any further questions/queries, please do not hesitate to contact us.</p> <p>If you need any further information, please contact us again.</p>	<p>Yours faithfully, <i>(if you don't know the name of the person you're writing to)</i></p> <p>Yours sincerely, <i>(if you know the name of the person you're writing to)</i></p> <p>Best wishes, <i>(if the person is a close business contact or friend)</i></p> <p>Best regards, <i>(if the person is a close business contact or friend)</i></p>

Sample Letter

Here is a sample letter using a typical layout and some of the phrases given above:

Nuts and Bolts
24 High Street
Whitby

23 August 2007

Fred Benn
The Bolt Shop
456 Back Street
Rockville

RE: Bolt Order No. 154/24"/0X

Dear Mr Benn*

With reference to our telephone conversation today, **I am writing to confirm** that we have not yet received payment for the above order.

Please find enclosed a copy of the proforma invoice for this order.

We would be grateful if you could make payment as soon as possible.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Kenneth Bran
Director of Nuts and Bolts

Enc. **

* We never write 'Dear Mr Fred Benn'

** Indicates that something else has been enclosed with the letter.