

Starting and ending business communications jigsaw texts Updated 20 Dec 2018

Instructions for teachers

Photocopy and cut out one set of cards for each group of two or three students. If the students are likely to find the activity challenging, you can leave the Body cards connected to the card above or the card below. Otherwise, it might be best to keep the body cards and only give them out to the students at the stage where the students put the conversations in order.

Give out the sets of cards and ask the students to divide them into starting and ending phrases, by type of communication (email, phone or face-to-face) and/or by formality. Then tell them to put the cards in order so that they make the starting and ending of two emails, two phone calls and two face-to-face conversations. If they need help, you can tell them that:

- the face-to-face conversations are between just two people;
- the two versions of each kind of communication have the same number of cards at the beginning and at the end as each other
- there are three cards at the end of each one
- there are three cards at the beginning of each email, four cards at the beginning of each phone call, and five cards at the beginning of each face-to-face conversation
- the two versions of each kind of communication have similar functions at each stage, so if the students put them next to each other they should match stage by stage
- the two versions of each kind of communication have different topics
- one email is formal and the other is informal
- the formal email is an answer to one person and the informal email is a request to more than one person
- one phone call is between people who know each other and the other is between people who don't know each other
- the phone call where the people know each other is informal and the other is formal
- both face-to-face conversations are at trade fairs/ trade shows/ conferences
- in one face-to-face chat the people know each other and in the other they don't
- "meet" means the first time, and "see" means meeting again

You could also tell them the function of each line.

Let them check their answers against a complete version of the worksheet or by listening to you reading it all out.

For further practice, they can:

- try to imagine/ write the body of the emails, phone calls and/ or conversations
- play a memory game by taking turns saying the whole of one of the texts as they turn the cards face down one by one each time (saying things that are not written on the cards also being okay as long as the phrases fit)
- take one card and try to include it in a whole email, phone call or face-to-face chat
- read out single cards for a partner to identify the kind of communication it is from
- read out a card for their partner to say something that should go before or after it (with other phrases not in these texts also okay as long as they fit)
- ask a partner to make suitable phrases for the beginning or ending of one kind of communication (giving them hints, such as key words, if they get stuck)

Cards to cut up/ Suggested answers

Dear Mr Case

Thank you for your email yesterday enquiring about the schedule for your visit to Japan in December.

Please find a copy of the schedule attached. It shows...

BODY OF THE (INDIVIDUAL, FORMAL, EXTERNAL) EMAIL

If you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to meeting you next month.

Best regards

Kim Parker (Ms)
Head of Training, ABC Limited

Hi guys

Hope you all had a good weekend.

I'm writing to ask if anyone can give me a hand with ...

BODY OF THE (INTERNAL) GROUP EMAIL

Let me know if you need more info before volunteering. Cheers.

Best wishes

Gus

Good afternoon. ABC Limited. John Smith speaking. How can I help you?
Good afternoon. Could I speak to Jane Brown, please?
I'm afraid she's in a meeting at the moment. Can I take a message?
Yes, please. Could you tell her ...?
BODY OF THE PHONE CALL (MESSAGE)
OK, I'll make sure that she gets your message. I'm sure she will get back to you soon. Can I help you with anything else?
No, that's all, thanks. Thank you for your help.
Thank you for calling. Goodbye.

Good afternoon. ABC Limited. John Smith speaking. How can I help you?
Hi, John, this is Steve.
Hi, Steve. How's it going? I heard that you broke your leg! Are you still in plaster?
'Fraid so, but just for one more week. Anyway, I'm ringing about ...
BODY OF THE (INFORMAL) PHONE CALL
Well, I'd love to chat more, but I've got someone on another line, so I'll give you a call again later to talk about it more.
Okay. No probs. Speak to you later, then. Bye.
Yup, speak to you then. Bye.

Is anyone sitting here?
No, it's free. Please help yourself.
Thanks. It's really busy here, isn't it?
Yes, it is, but it's usually like this. Is this your first time at this trade fair?
Yes, it is. I used to work in a different sector, but I've recently transferred to a related division. What do you do?
BODY OF THE FACE-TO-FACE CHAT WITH SOMEONE YOU DON'T KNOW
Well, I'd love to hear more about your company, but I'm afraid I have to go to another presentation, so maybe you can email me information. Here's my business card. My email is written on there.
Thanks. And here's mine. It was a pleasure to meet you.
It was great to meet you too. I look forward to hearing from you.

Lars? Sorry to disturb you. I don't know if you remember me, but we met at this conference last year.

Of course I remember you. It's Hamad, isn't it? It's so nice to see you again. How have you been?

It's great to see you too. Things have been great, thanks. I've had a promotion and moved here to Tokyo, actually. How about you?

That's great. Congratulations! I'm still based in Seoul, working on new websites.

So, about websites, I'm really glad I've run into you because ...

BODY OF THE FACE-TO-FACE CONVERSATION WITH SOMEONE YOU KNOW

Well, I'm afraid I need to get back to our booth, but you should come by later and say hi to Joseph and Guillaume.

Sure. Will do. I'll see you later, then. It was so nice to see you again.

It was great to see you too. See you then. Bye.

Brainstorming stage

Without looking above for now, write as many suitable phrases as you can in each of the gaps below. Many answers not above are also possible.

Emails

Opening emails

Email opening greeting to one person

Email opening greeting to more than one person (= group email)

Email opening line

Closing emails

Email closing lines

Email closing greetings

Name at the end of emails

Phone calls
Starting phone calls
Answering the phone

Introducing yourself

Friendly language at the start of a call

Asking to speak to someone, and replying to that

Ending phone calls
Giving reasons for ending the call

Polite and/ or friendly language at the end of phone calls

Talking about future contact

Face-to-face conversations
Starting face-to-face conversations

Polite language when meeting someone

Small talk questions/ Friendly language near the beginning of a conversation

Ending face-to-face conversations
Giving reasons for ending the conversation

Exchanging business cards

Polite and/ or friendly language at the end of a conversation

Talking about future contact

Look at the cards for answers, then brainstorm more. Many other phrases are possible.