Starting and ending business communications jigsaw texts
emailing/ telephoning/ meeting and greeting
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 connected to the card below.

Give out the 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 one is a request to more than one person
- one 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 read out the whole thing while they aren't allowed to touch it then let them try again. Especially if you have just covered one skill, you can also make it easier by getting them to only look for one of the three kinds of communication first before going on to look at the others.

For further practice, they can:

- try to say and/ or 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 each 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)
- do the roleplays on the final below

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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

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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, CASUAL, FRIENDLY) GROUP EMAIL
Let me know if you need more info before volunteering. Cheers.
Best wishes
Gus

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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 ask her to…?
BODY OF THE PHONE CALL WITH SOMEONE YOU DON'T KNOW (LEAVING A MESSAGE FOR SOMEONE)
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.

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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 WITH SOMEONE YOU KNOW WELL
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.

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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 a catalogue. Here’s my business card. My email address 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.

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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.

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Different levels of formality presentation
Without looking above, write more formal or less formal phrases in the gaps below to match the levels of formality above. Other phrases not above are also usually possible.

	Hi Alex
	Thanks for your mail.
	Here's a copy of the schedule.
	If you need any more info, just let me know.
	Looking forward to meeting you next month.
	Best wishes
	Kim

To: All staff	
I hope you all had a good weekend.	
Thank you in advance.	
Best regards/ Sincerely yours	

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	Hello?
	Hi. Can I speak to Jane?/ Hi. Is Jane around?/ Hi. Is Jane there?
	Sorry, she's in a meeting. Do you want to leave a message?
	Yes, please. Can you ask her to/ tell her that…?
	Anything else?
	No, that's it, thanks.
	Bye.

	Speak to you later, then. Bye.
	Bye.

Look above to help and/ or start checking your answers.

Optional extension: Brainstorm medium-formality phrases between the ones in italics above.

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Suggested answers

Dear Mr Case	Dear Alex	Hi Alex
Thank you for your email.		Thanks for your mail.
Please find a copy of the schedule attached.	I've attached a copy of the schedule.	Here's a copy of the schedule.
If you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.	If you need any more information, please (feel free to) contact me.	If you need any more info, just let me know.
I look forward to meeting you next month.		Looking forward to meeting you next month.
Best regards/ Sincerely yours	Regards/ Yours/ All the best	Best wishes
Kim Parker (Ms) Head of Training, ABC Limited	Kim Parker	Kim

To: All staff	Dear all/ Hi everyone	Hi guys
I hope you all had a good weekend.		Hope you all had a good weekend.
Thank you in advance.		Thanks./ Cheers.
Best regards/ Sincerely yours	Yours/ Regards/ All the best	Best wishes

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Good afternoon. ABC Limited. John Smith speaking. How can I help you?		Hello?
Good afternoon. Could I speak to Jane Brown, please?		Hi. Can I speak to Jane?/ Is Jane around?/ Is Jane there?
I'm afraid she's in a meeting at the moment. Can I take a message?/ Would you like to leave a message?		Sorry, she's in a meeting. Do you want to leave a message?
Yes, please. Could you (possibly) tell her that…?		Yes, please. Can you tell her that…?
Can I help you with anything else?		Anything else?
No, that's all, thanks. Thank you for your help.		No, that's it, thanks.
Goodbye.		Bye.

I look forward to your call.		Speak to you later, then. Bye.
Goodbye.		Bye.

Test each other on the phrases above:

- Read out a phrase and see if your partner can identify the level of formality
- Read out two levels of formality and see if your partner can say the third one
- Read out a phrase and see if your partner can say the same thing with different formality
- Read out a phrase and see if your partner can continue the communication with the same level of formality

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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

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Phone calls
Starting phone calls
Answering the phone (receiver)

Introducing yourself (caller)

Friendly language at the start of a call (receiver or maybe caller)

Asking to speak to someone, and replying to that (caller and then receiver)

Ending phone calls
Checking if the call is finished (receiver)

Giving reasons for ending the call (caller or receiver)

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

Talking about future contact

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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.

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Starting and ending business communications roleplays

Roleplay those situations, just saying what you would write in emails (not writing):

- Email someone asking about the schedule for your visit to their country. (Formal/ polite)
- Write to everyone in the office to ask them to help with something. One person replies, asking for more information. (Casual/ informal/ friendly).
- Phone, ask to speak to Jane Brown, and leave a message with someone who you don't know. (Formal/ polite). She then phones you back. (Casual/ informal/ friendly)
- Phone John Smith, have some small talk, make a request, finish the call, then John phones you back to speak about it more. (Casual/ informal/ friendly).
- Start speaking to someone you don't know in the audience at a workshop/ presentation at a trade fair.
- Start speaking to someone you met at the same trade fair last year, catch up with their news, then discuss something more serious.

Do the same with informal leaving messages and formal requests phone calls.

----------cut----------

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