

# Writing Good Emails

## Essential Question

*How is writing an email similar to or different from writing a letter?*

## Lesson Overview

Students explore the components of a well-written email. They learn that such emails have a five-part structure that is similar to that of traditional letters. Students then analyze the parts of an email, making note of the subtle differences. Last, students try to identify and correct seven errors in an email, keeping in mind five proofreading guidelines.

## Learning Objectives

*Students will be able to ...*

- identify the five main parts of letter/email writing.
- compare and contrast the format of letter writing to that of writing emails.
- proofread a draft of an email.

## Materials and Preparation

- Chalkboard or whiteboard
- Optional: Preview the Venn diagram tool at ClassTools.net ([www.classtools.net/education-games-php/venn\\_intro](http://www classtools.net/education-games-php/venn_intro)) prepare to project it for students to see.
- Copy the **You've Got Mail Student Handout**, one for each student.
- Review the **You've Got Mail Student Handout – Teacher Version**.
- Preview PBS Kids's Arthur's Letter Writer Helper: Email ([www.pbskids.org/arthur/games/letterwriter/email.html](http://www.pbskids.org/arthur/games/letterwriter/email.html)).

## Family Resources

- Send home the **Effective Email Communication Family Tip Sheet (Elementary School)**

**Estimated time:** 45 minutes

## Standards Alignment –

### Common Core:

**grade K:** RI.1, RI.10, RF.1a, RF.1b, RF.1c, RF.4, W.2, SL.1a, SL.1b, SL.2, SL.3, SL.5, SL.6, L.1f, L.2a, L.2b, L.6

**grade 1:** RI.1, RI.10, RF.1c, RF.4a, RF.4b, W.2, SL.1a, SL.1b, SL.1c, SL.2, SL.3, SL.6, L.2a, L.2b, L.6

**grade 2:** RI.1, RI.10, RF.4a, RF.4b, W.2, SL.1a, SL.1b, SL.1c, SL.3, SL.6, L.2b, L.6

**NETS•S:** 2b, 5a, 5b, 5d

## Key Vocabulary –

**email:** electronic mail sent through the Internet

**header:** information at the top of a message that contains the sender's address and the date

**greeting:** the opening or salutation

**body:** the main part of a message

**closing:** the sign-off or goodbye

**signature:** the sender's name

## introduction

### Warm-up (10 minutes)

**DEFINE** the Key Vocabulary term **email**.

**DRAW** a Venn diagram on the board or on chart paper. Label one circle “EMAIL” and the other “LETTERS.” You can create the Venn diagram online at ClassTools.net ([www.classools.net/education-games-php/venn\\_intro](http://www.classools.net/education-games-php/venn_intro)) and project it for students to see.

#### ASK:

*How are emails and letters similar?*

Sample responses:

- People use them to communicate.
- People write them.
- They can be sent to people you know or don’t know.
- They can be formal or informal.

*How are emails and letters different?*

Sample responses:

- Emails are digital. People create emails on a computer, tablet, or smartphone.
- Emails can be sent and received right away through the Internet.
- Emails can be deleted.
- People write letters on paper.
- Letters go through the U.S. Postal System and require a stamp.
- Letters take longer to receive.

**EXPLAIN** that email is a popular way to send messages to one another digitally. If a person has an email account, that person can send and receive emails through the Internet. Tell students that, as a class, they are going to explore how writing emails and writing letters are similar, as well as different.

## teach 1

### You’ve Got Mail (15 minutes)

**DISTRIBUTE** the **You’ve Got Mail Student Handout**. Work through the student handout as a class. Use the **You’ve Got Mail Student Handout – Teacher Version** as a guide.

**DEFINE** the remaining Key Vocabulary terms by reviewing the five main parts of a friendly letter:

- **Header:** sender’s address (street, town, state, ZIP code) and the date
- **Greeting:** also known as the salutation; commonly “Dear \_\_\_\_\_” followed by a comma (or a colon, in business letters)
- **Body:** letter’s message
- **Closing:** a sign-off such as “From” or “Sincerely,” followed by a comma
- **Signature:** signed name (handwritten, often in cursive)

**POINT OUT** similarities between the parts of the letter and the email on page 1 of the **You've Got Mail Student Handout** by comparing how both examples have a header, greeting, body, closing, and signature.

**HAVE** students circle the subtle differences in formatting as they answer the following question.

**ASK:**

*What differences do you notice between the email and the letter?*

Sample responses:

- The addresses in the headers look different. The email shows an email address (username@email provider/organization), but the letter shows a street address.
- The greeting in the email is more casual.
- In the email, you can see the time it was sent.
- The email has a subject line (what the message is about), but the letter does not.
- The signature on the letter is handwritten. In the email, the signature is electronic. (And email signatures can include more than just a name, such as a title, contact information, a quote or image.)

**Note:** If possible, show students PBS Kids' "Arthur's Letter Writer Helper: Email" ([www.pbskids.org/arthur/games/letterwriter/email.html](http://www.pbskids.org/arthur/games/letterwriter/email.html)) to highlight the different parts of an email.

## teach 2

### Email Errors (15 minutes)

**READ** aloud the directions for page 2 of the **You've Got Mail Student Handout**.

**HAVE** students complete page 2 of the **You've Got Mail Student Handout** in pairs. Refer to the **You've Got Mail Student Handout – Teacher Version** for guidance.

**DISCUSS** students' email correlations as a class.

**REMINDE** students that they should always proofread their emails by double-checking their work. They should consider the following five guidelines.

Does the email have ...

1. a clear and specific subject line?
2. a greeting, closing and signature?
3. proper capitalization?
4. proper punctuation?
5. correct spelling?

## closing

### Wrap-up (5 minutes)

You can use these questions to assess your students' understanding of the lesson objectives.

#### ASK:

*What are some ways that letters and emails are similar?*

Sample responses:

- Both letters and emails are examples of written communication.
- Both letters and emails have a header, greeting, body, closing, and signature.

*What are some ways that letters and emails are different?*

Sample responses:

- Emails are digital. People receive them right away.
- Letters are sent through the U.S. Postal System, and emails are sent through the Internet via an email provider.
- They have different types of addresses in the header.
- Emails have a subject field.
- Letter signatures are handwritten. Email signatures are typed and often include more information about the sender.

*When editing both emails and letters, what are some things you should double-check?*

- that the main five parts are included (header, greeting, message body, closing, and signature)
- correct spelling
- proper punctuation
- proper grammar

# Writing Good Emails

## Directions

Compare and contrast the letter to the email. Do you see the parts that are the same? On the email, circle or highlight the parts that are different.

321 Main Street ← header  
 Township, MA 10749  
 January 1, 2015

Dear Serena, ← greeting

How are you? How is school? I like my new teacher. We have school lunches that are yummy! Write back soon. ← message body

From, ← closing  
 Clayton ← signature

**From:** bestfriend1@fastemail.com ← header  
**To:** tbone@fastemail.com  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 1, 2015 at 3:34 pm  
**Subject:** playdate

Hey Tyrone, ← greeting

How are you? Can you come over on Saturday? ← message body

From, ← closing  
 Tanya ← signature

☺  
 (o.o)  
 > ^ <

## Directions

Sondra has sent an email to her friend Jim about his pet rabbit. But she made 7 errors in the email below. Work with a partner to circle or highlight all 7 errors.

**From:** sunnysmile@myschool.edu

**To:** soccerfan#1@myschool.edu

**Sent:** Monday, January 15, 2015 at 5:21 pm

**Subject:** hi!

I like your new pet! Your rabbit Molly is great? What do you feed Molly? let's play with your rabbit again soon.

me

### Use Common Sense!

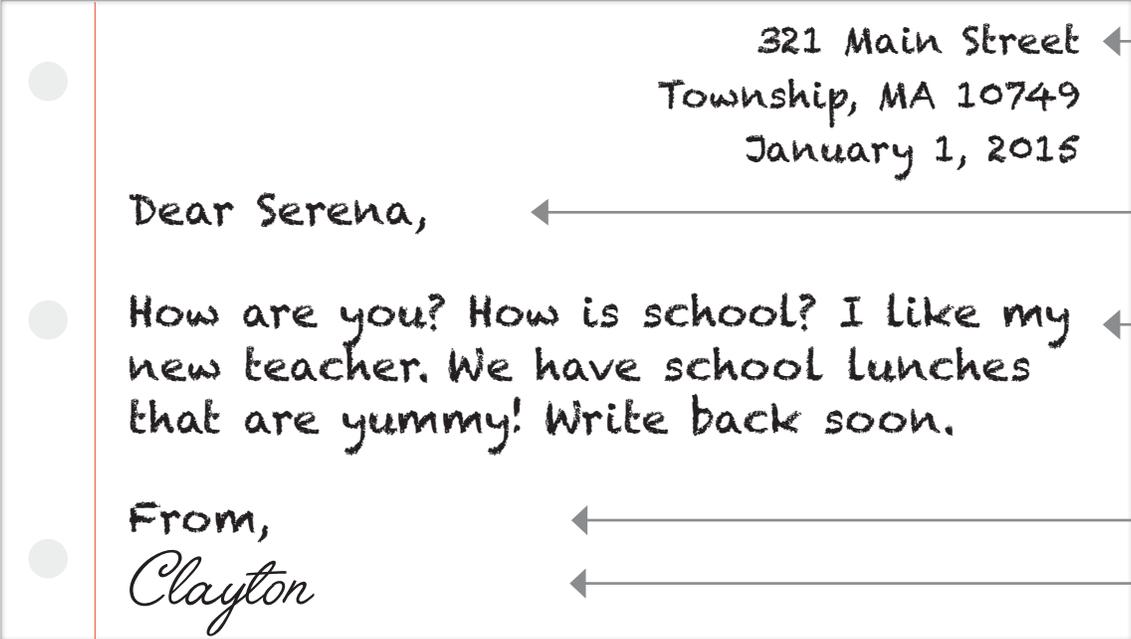
It's always a good idea to proofread an email before you send it. Double-check for the following:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a clear and specific subject       | <input type="checkbox"/> proper punctuation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> a greeting, closing, and signature | <input type="checkbox"/> correct spelling   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> proper capitalization              |   |

# Writing Good Emails

## Directions

Compare and contrast the letter to the email. Do you see the parts that are the same? On the email, circle or highlight the parts that are different.



A handwritten letter on a white background. The text is written in a cursive, child-like font. The letter is addressed to Serena and includes a greeting, a message body, and a closing signature. Labels with arrows point to various parts of the letter: 'header' points to the address and date, 'greeting' points to 'Dear Serena,', 'message body' points to the main text, 'closing' points to 'From,', and 'signature' points to 'Clayton'.

321 Main Street  
Township, MA 10749  
January 1, 2015

Dear Serena,

How are you? How is school? I like my new teacher. We have school lunches that are yummy! Write back soon.

From,  
Clayton

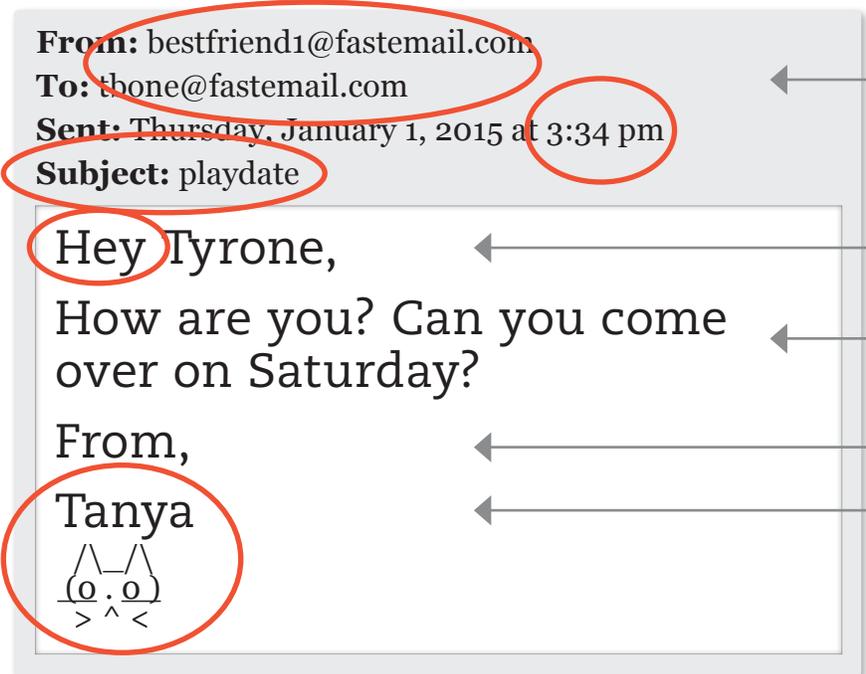
header

greeting

message body

closing

signature



A printed email interface with a light gray background. The email header and subject line are circled in red. The greeting 'Hey Tyrone,' and the signature 'Tanya' with a drawing are also circled in red. Labels with arrows point to the header, greeting, message body, closing, and signature.

From: bestfriend1@fastemail.com  
To: thone@fastemail.com  
Sent: Thursday, January 1, 2015 at 3:34 pm  
Subject: playdate

Hey Tyrone,

How are you? Can you come over on Saturday?

From,  
Tanya

(o.o)  
> ^ <

header

greeting

message body

closing

signature

## Directions

Sondra has sent an email to her friend Jim about his pet rabbit. But she made 7 errors in the email below. Work with a partner to circle or highlight all 7 errors.

**From:** sunnysmile@myschool.edu

**To:** soccerfan#1@myschool.edu

**Sent:** Monday, January 15, 2015 at 5:21 pm

**Subject:** hi! (should be specific to the email's message content)

(missing a greeting) (incorrect spelling of "rabbit")  
I like your new pet! Your rabit Molly is  
great? (incorrect punctuation) What do you feed Molly? (needs a capital letter)  
play with your rabbit again soon.  
(missing a closing)  
me (should be a name)

### Use Common Sense!

It's always a good idea to proofread an email before you send it. Double-check for the following:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a clear and specific subject       | <input type="checkbox"/> proper punctuation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> a greeting, closing, and signature | <input type="checkbox"/> correct spelling   |

- proper capitalization (Encourage students to check the boxes once they have proofread the corrected email.)

# Writing Good Emails

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1. Letters and emails both have five parts: a heading, a greeting, the body, a \_\_\_\_\_, and a signature.

- a) closing
- b) conclusion
- c) cat

2. What does the subject line on an email tell the reader?

- a) when the email was sent
- b) what the email is about
- c) who wrote the email

3. True or False: You always should proofread your emails.

- a) True
- b) False



# Writing Good Emails

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1. Letters and emails both have five parts: a heading, a greeting, the body, a \_\_\_\_\_, and a signature.

- a) closing
- b) conclusion
- c) cat

*Answer feedback*

The correct answer is **a**. A letter and an email both ought to have a closing (e.g., “From,” “Love,” “Thank you”) before the signature.

2. What does the subject line on an email tell the reader?

- a) when the email was sent
- b) what the email is about**
- c) who wrote the email

*Answer feedback*

The correct answer is **b**. The subject line tells the recipient what the email’s message is about.

3. TRUE or FALSE: You always should proofread your emails.

- a) True**
- b) False

*Answer feedback*

The correct answer is **a**, True. Always proofread any of your writing – emails, letters, reports, etc. – before sharing it with others.

