



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 5-part structure that is similar to that of traditional letters. Students then analyze the parts of an email, making note of the subtle differences. Lastly, 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) 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).

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) 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 (colon used 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's "Arthur's Letter Writer Helper: Email" (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

Extension Activity

Have students brainstorm a list of additional greetings (Hi, Hey, Good morning, etc.) and closings (Love, Thank you, Talk to you soon) that they can use in letters and emails. They also could create a 2x2 matrix to categorize the greetings and closings as either informal (friendly letters/emails) or as formal (business letters/emails).

	greeting	closing
informal	Hey,	TTYL,
formal	To Whom It May Concern:	Sincerely,

At-Home Activity

Internet slang, otherwise known as textspeak or netlingo, seems to change daily. Often such Internet slang is used in emails, IMs, and text messages. Challenge students to work with family members to figure out what the following acronyms mean:

- LOL – laugh out loud
- TTYL – talk to you later
- G2G – got to go
- L8R – later

Have students brainstorm with their families all of the different Internet slang examples they know. Have them discuss when it’s appropriate to use this kind of slang and with whom. Ask students to compile a list to bring back to the class to challenge or share with others.

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.

○	<p style="text-align: right;">321 Main Street Township, MA 10749 November 1, 2012</p>	← header
○	<p>Dear Serena,</p>	← greeting
○	<p>How are you? How is school? I like my new teacher. We have school lunches that are yummy! Write back soon.</p>	← message body
○	<p>From, <i>Clayton</i></p>	← closing ← signature

<p>From: bestfriend1@fastemail.com To: tbone@fastemail.com Sent: Thursday, November 1, 2012 at 3:34 pm Subject: playdate</p>	← header
<p>Hey Tyrone,</p>	← greeting
<p>How are you? Can you come over on Saturday?</p>	← message body
<p>From, Tanya</p>	← closing
<p></p>	← 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, October 15, 2012 at 5:21 pm

Subject: hi!

I like your new pet! Your rabit 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:

- a clear and specific subject
- a greeting, closing, and signature
- proper capitalization
- proper punctuation
- correct spelling

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
November 1, 2012

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: thone@fastemail.com
Sent: Thursday, November 1, 2012 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, October 15, 2012 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 rabbit Molly is great? What do you feed Molly? let's play with your rabbit again soon.

(incorrect punctuation)

(needs a capital letter)

(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:

- a clear and specific subject
- a greeting, closing, and signature
- proper capitalization
- proper punctuation
- correct spelling

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

Writing Good Emails

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

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 (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 reader/receiver 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 should proofread any of your writing — emails, letters, reports, etc. — before sharing it with others.

