



SUCCESSFUL E-MAILS IN ENGLISH

GENERAL DOS AND DON'TS

- Keep your e-mails short and concise
- Put the most important information first
- Use paragraphs to structure your e-mails
- State at the end if any action is required
- Use a spellchecker before you send your e-mail
- Be polite, don't flame (even you think someone is being rude)
- If it's about a complicated, confidential or sensitive matter, don't use e-mail, use telephone instead
- Use a more formal style with people you don't know or who have a more senior position, and a more informal style with those you know well and who have similar status

STRUCTURE

"To" | "Cc" | "Bcc"

- Use the "To" field for those people who are equally important
Use the "Cc" field for those people who need to know about the topic but not to reply
- Use "Bcc" if you want to hide the mailing address of a recipient



Speak with Confidence

Costa Rica

San Pedro (506) 2253-9191
Sabana Norte (506) 2291-4327
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STRUCTURE

Subject line

This is the first thing your reader will see - make sure it is relevant and a short summary of your e-mail. Be specific if any action or reply is required, especially if it's urgent!

- Use abbreviations at the beginning of the subject line, e.g. "URGENT" (if it really is), REQ (if you require something) and "FYI" (if you don't expect a reply)
- KISS: Keep it short and simple.
- Avoid using punctuation marks or too many capital letters (it could be mistaken for spam)
- Use the subject line as the first part of the first sentence in short **informal letters**, e.g. "Tomorrow's presentation..." "...was canceled. Let's reschedule."
- Make sure the subject line is still readable and relevant when responding to or forwarding an e-mail
- For very short messages, write it all in the subject line followed by <EOM> (end of message), e.g. Next presentation on Monday 10 am <EOM>

Signature

Your signature for formal e-mails should contain:

- Full name
- Title or position (if advantageous in more than one language)
- Full company name
- Address
- Contact details: Phone number, e-mail address, fax number and website address
- Optional: a short summary of services with a link for more information and/or a legal disclaimer

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STRUCTURE

Message

Formal e-mails

- Use standard greetings ("Dear Mr./Ms. Smith") in formal e-mails or "Dear Sir or Madam" if you don't know the person
- Use "we" instead of "I"
- Use expressions such as "We would appreciate it." instead of "It would be great..."
- Avoid abbreviations and emoticons
- Use "Yours sincerely" (if you know the person) or "Yours faithfully" (if you don't) to close your formal e-mail. You can use "Best regards" and "Kind regards" in all types of e-mails.

Informal e-mails

- Begin with "Dear Tom", "Hi Tom" or just "Tom"
- Idiomatic and direct language is common in informal e-mails
- It is common to use short forms ("There's")
- Avoid using too many abbreviations, only use the common ones: "asap" (as soon as possible), "BTW" (by the way) and "thx" (thanks)
- Don't overuse emoticons
- Close your e-mails with "Best regards", "Kind regards", "Take care" or "All the best"



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