Course Name: Writing and submitting business plans in English.

Lesson Title: Fundamentals of Business Correspondence

Lesson Overview

Welcome to the study of business correspondence, a vital skill in the professional world. Business correspondence is any form of written communication used in a business context.[1][2] This can range from emails and memos within a company to formal letters sent to clients or other organizations.[1][2][3] Think of it as the way professionals talk to each other in writing, ensuring that messages are clear, professional, and properly recorded.[1][4]

In our digitally connected world, the way you write can significantly impact your professional image and the success of your interactions. Whether you're sending a quick email to a colleague or a formal proposal to a new client, understanding the principles of good business correspondence is essential.[3] This lesson will introduce you to the basic types of business communication and the key elements that make them effective and professional.

Throughout this lesson, we will explore the different forms your professional writing can take, from internal memos to external letters.[5][6] We'll also cover the importance of maintaining a professional tone, being clear and concise, and structuring your communications for the best results.[2][7] By mastering these fundamentals, you will be better equipped to communicate effectively in any professional setting.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Define business correspondence and its importance in a professional setting.
- Identify and differentiate between various types of business correspondence, such as emails, memos, and formal letters.
- Understand and use key vocabulary related to business correspondence.
- Recognize the components of a professional email and a formal business letter.
- Apply basic principles of clarity, conciseness, and professionalism in their writing.

Key Vocabulary and Concepts

Term	Definition	Example
Salutation	The greeting at the beginning of a letter or email.[8][9]	"Dear Mr. Smith," or "Hello Team,"

Body	The main part of the letter or email where the message is written.[9][10]	This section contains the detailed information or request.
Closing	The sign-off phrase used before the signature.[9][10]	"Sincerely," or "Best regards,"
Signature	The writer's name and often their title and contact information.[10][11]	"Jane Doe, Project Manager"
Memo (Memorandum)	A brief, internal communication used within an organization.[1][12]	A message to all staff about a new office policy.[13]
Attachment	A separate file (e.g., a document, image) sent with an email.[9]	"Please find the report attached."
BCC (Blind Carbon Copy)	A way to send an email to someone without the other recipients knowing.	Used to confidentially include a manager on an email to a client.
CC (Carbon Copy)	A way to send a copy of an email to someone who is not the primary recipient.[14]	Used to keep a team member informed on a project update.
Tone	The writer's attitude toward the subject and the reader.[9][10]	A professional tone is respectful, formal, and courteous.[10][11]
Clarity	The quality of being easy to understand.[9]	Using simple language and avoiding jargon ensures clarity.[2]
Conciseness	Being brief and to the point without unnecessary words.[9][11]	A concise email respects the reader's time.[15][16]

Main Content Summary

Types of Business Correspondence:

- **Internal Correspondence:** Communication that takes place *within* an organization.[1][3][5]

    - **Memos:** Used for official announcements or procedures within the company.[12] They are typically direct and formal.
    - **Emails:** The most common form for daily internal communication.[17] Can be formal or informal depending on the context and relationship with the recipient.

- **External Correspondence:** Communication between an organization and outside parties (e.g., clients, suppliers, other businesses).[18]
    - **Business Letters:** Used for formal communication such as job offers, official complaints, or legal matters. They often follow a specific format.[7][19]
    - **Emails:** Used for routine communication with external parties, such as inquiries, order confirmations, and follow-ups.[17]

- **Sales Correspondence:** Communication related to sales activities, including marketing letters, proposals, and invoices.[3][5]

- **Routine Correspondence:** Everyday communication such as inquiries, appointment confirmations, and thank-you notes.[5][6]

Key Principles of Professional Writing:

- **Be Clear and Concise:** Get straight to the point. Use simple language and short paragraphs.[2][15]
- **Maintain a Professional Tone:** Always be respectful and courteous. Avoid slang, emojis, and overly casual language.[10][11]
- **Proofread Your Work:** Always check for spelling and grammar errors before sending.[10] This shows attention to detail and professionalism.
- **Organize Your Message:** Structure your communication logically. For emails, use a clear subject line.[11][15] For letters, follow a standard format.

Basic Structure of a Professional Email:

1. **Subject Line:** A brief, descriptive summary of the email's content.[10][11]
2. **Salutation:** A professional greeting (e.g., "Dear Ms. Jones,").[10]
3. **Body:** The main message, clearly stating the purpose of the email.
4. **Closing:** A polite sign-off (e.g., "Sincerely,").[10]
5. **Signature:** Your name and professional title.[10]

Student Tasks or Activities

Activity 1: True or False

Instructions: Read the following statements and circle whether they are True or False.

1. It is acceptable to use slang and emojis in all business emails. (True / False)
2. A memo is a type of communication used mainly for external purposes. (True / False)
3. "Sincerely" is an example of a closing in a letter. (True / False)
4. Proofreading is not important for internal emails. (True / False)
5. The subject line of an email should be clear and descriptive.[20] (True / False)

Activity 2: Fill in the Blanks

Instructions: Complete the sentences below using the vocabulary words provided.

Word Bank: Tone, Attachment, Body, Salutation, Concise

1. The greeting at the beginning of an email, such as "Dear Dr. Evans," is called the _____.
2. To respect the reader's time, it is important to be _____ and get straight to the point.
3. The main message and details are included in the _____ of the email.
4. When sending a file with your email, you should mention in the body that there is an _____.
5. The professional _____ of your writing should always be respectful and courteous.

Reflection or Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think maintaining a professional tone in written communication is important for your future career?
2. Describe a situation where sending a formal business letter would be more appropriate than sending an email.
3. How can poorly written business correspondence negatively affect a company or an individual's professional reputation?

Homework / Extension Task

Write a Professional Email:

Draft a short, professional email (approximately 100-150 words) for the following scenario:

You are a student representative for your class. You need to email your course instructor, Dr. Evelyn Reed, to request a one-week extension on the upcoming project deadline for the entire class due to a university-wide event that conflicts with the submission date. Remember to include a clear subject line, a proper salutation, a concise body explaining the reason for the request, a polite closing, and your signature.

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