Emailing cultural differences and useful phrases
Read the descriptions of emailing in English below and write the name of any other country/ culture which you think is the same next to each line, e.g. "France" *next to one of the lines if you think that aspect is also true of French emails. If you don't know any countries/ cultures which are also that way, leave that line blank and move onto the next one. Phrases with "X" are wrong in English emails, so you should think about whether they are also wrong in other languages/ places to write that place name.*

Opening and closing emails cultural differences and useful phrases
Opening emails cultural differences and useful phrases
Email opening greetings cultural differences and useful phrases
- Most emails start with a greeting and the person's name ("Dear Mr Smith", "Dear John", "Hi John", etc)
- Opening greetings in formal business emails and informal business emails are very different
- Formal business emails usually start with a greeting plus someone's title and family name ("Dear Ms Parker", not "Dear Parker" X, and not "Dear Ms Jane" X, rarely "Dear Ms Jane Parker", and only "Dear Jane Parker" if you don't know which title to use)
- You can start informal emails with the same words as when you greet someone informally face to face ("Hi John")
- You can start very informal emails with just a friendly greeting and no name ("Hi") or just their first name ("John"), with the former being friendlier than the latter
- We almost never use people's job titles in the opening greeting (so not "Dear my teacher" X, "Dear section manager" X, "Dear CEO" X)
- We never use the name of the division, section, etc in a normal opening greeting (so not "Dear HR department" X)
- We almost always use the same one or two fixed phrases if we don't know someone's name ("Dear Sir or Madam", "Dear Sir/ Madam")
- There are different ways of starting emails to large groups of people ("To: All staff", "Dear all", "Hi everyone", "Hi guys", etc), so you need to think carefully about formality

Email opening lines cultural differences and useful phrases
- You can use the same two or three kinds of opening lines in about 90% of your business emails (similar to "I'm writing to you about…", "Thank you for your email about…" and "Hope you had a good weekend")
- Opening lines with "Thank you" should always be very specific to what that person did ("Thank you for meeting me last week", "Thanks for your quick reply", "Thanks for your help with my presentation PowerPoint", "Thanks for sending me…", etc, so not "Thank you for your continuing support" X, "Thank you for your hard work" X, "Thanks for your help" X)
- It's common to start emails by mentioning the last contact between you ("I was a pleasure to meet you last week", "It was so nice to see you again yesterday", "It was great to speak again on Friday", "Thanks for phoning me last week", "Thanks for your rapid response", "Thanks for getting back to me so quickly", "Thanks for making the time to meet me yesterday")
- It's common to start emails with the topic/ the reason for writing ("I'm writing in order to…", "I am writing to you in connection with…", "I'm writing because…")

- It's fairly common to start emails with a small talk question or other social phrase, often similar to what people say when they meet someone again face to face ("How's it going?", "Hope you had a good weekend")
- We almost never start emails by saying who we are (so not "This is Alex", and not "Dear Mr Smith, My name is Alex Case.")
- When introducing yourself, it is usually best to give the reason for writing before you give your name ("Dear Mr Smith, I'm writing to you about a new product we have just launched which I believe would be perfect for your company. My name is… and…")
- When contacting someone for the first time, it's usually best to say how you got their contact details and/ or why you decided to contact them ("I'm writing because I was told my colleague by Rashid that you were the best person to ask about…")
- We almost never apologise in the opening line, apart from mentioning the lateness of our reply (so "Sorry for my late reply" and "Sorry it took me so long to get back to you" are OK, but not "Sorry to bother you" X, "Sorry for the late delivery last week")

Ending emails cultural differences and useful phrases
Email closing lines cultural differences and useful phrases
- You can use versions of just two or three different closing lines to end around 90% of formal business emails (similar to "I'm looking forward to hearing from you", "If you need any more information, please let me know" and "Thank you in advance")
- People often end emails with an offer of (more) info ("If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me", "If anything isn't clear, just let me know")
- People often end emails by mentioning the next contact ("I'm looking forward to seeing you then", "Looking forward to hearing from you", "See you on Monday", "I hope we have the chance to meet again soon")
- If you need a quick reply, that should be mentioned in the body of the email, not in the closing line (so not "I look forward to your quick reply" X "I'm looking forward to hearing from you by Friday" X)
- Small requests such as asking for information usually end by just mentioning their reply ("I'm looking forward to hearing from you")
- Formal endings of (big) requests ("Thank you in advance") are different from endings of formal commands/ instructions ("Thank you for your cooperation")
- Informal requests and informal commands/ instructions can end with the same phrases ("Thanks", "Cheers")

Email closing greetings cultural differences and useful phrases
- Formal business closing greetings ("Sincerely yours", "Sincerely", etc) are very different from informal business closing greetings ("Best wishes", "ATB", "Cheers", etc)
- Using a formal closing greeting ("Yours sincerely", "Yours", "Best regards") in an email with someone who you have had a lot of contact with is too unfriendly

Your name at the end of an email cultural differences
- Formal business emails usually end with your full name ("Alex Case")
- Informal business emails usually end with just your first name ("Alex")
- Super-formal business emails can end with initials, family name, and title in brackets ("A. M. Case (Mr)")
- We almost never end emails with just our family names (so not "Case" X)

Body of an email cultural differences
- You can't use the language of commands/ instructions/ orders ("Please send me some information on…", "Would you send me some information on…?", "I'd like you to send me some information on…") for requests ("Can you…?", "Could you…?", "Could you possibly…?", "I'd be grateful if you could…")
- It's usually best to give specific deadlines with reasons ("Can you send it to me by close of business on Thursday? This is because…", so not "Can you do it as soon as possible?", "Could you send it to me as soon as you can?")
- If you say no to an invitation, it is best to give as much detail as possible when you reject their invitation ("I'd love to come, but unfortunately I'm going to New York next week and I'll still be on my way back at that time")
- Formal apologies ("Please accept our apologies for…", "We would like to apologise for…") are quite different from informal apologies ("Sorry about…")
- You need to give specific reasons why something happened when you apologise ("Please accept our apologies for the late delivery of your order. This was because…")
- It's better to use language to make important information stand out ("Please note that…", "NB") rather than bold script, capital letters or punctuation (so not "**Important**" X, "BY FRIDAY" X or "The deadline is Friday!" X)
- It's better to use words and phrases to list things ("My second question is about…", "You also asked us about…") because just numbers or bullet points can seem unfriendly (so not usually "2. Can you tell me…?")

Paragraphing in emails cultural differences
- Each paragraph should have one topic
- If you change topic, you should start a new paragraph
- It's best not to have one-sentence paragraphs
- You can put a blank line between paragraphs
- You can put an indent (= two or three spaces at the beginning of the line) between paragraphs
- We don't usually put both a blank line and an indent between paragraphs
- We don't start a new line with each new sentence
- Email paragraphs look exactly the same as report paragraphs or essay paragraphs – not like a poem or the words of a song

Discuss any above which you are not sure about in your country/ culture, are not sure the reasons for in English, etc.

Brainstorming stage
Without looking above for now, brainstorm useful phrases into each of the gaps below.
Phrases which aren't above are also okay as long as they match the tip they are given with.
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Opening emails cultural differences and useful phrases
Email opening greetings cultural differences and useful phrases
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You can start informal emails with the same words as when you greet someone informally face to face

You can start very informal emails with just a friendly greeting and no name or just their first name, with the former being friendlier than the latter

We almost always use the same one or two fixed phrases if we don't know someone's name

There are different ways of starting emails to large groups of people, so you need to think carefully about formality

Email opening lines cultural differences and useful phrases
You can use the same two or three kinds of opening lines in about 90% of your business emails

Opening lines with "Thank you" should always be very specific to what that person did (so not "Thank you for your continuing support" X, "Thank you for your hard work" X, "Thanks for your help" X)

It's common to start emails by mentioning the last contact between you

It's common to start emails with the topic/ the reason for writing

It's fairly common to start emails with a small talk question or other social phrase, often similar to what people say when they meet someone again face to face

When introducing yourself, it is usually best to give the reason for writing before you give your name

When contacting someone for the first time, it's usually best to say how you got their contact details and/ or why you decided to contact them

We almost never apologise in the opening line, apart from mentioning the lateness of our reply (so not "Sorry to bother you" X, "Sorry for the late delivery last week")

Ending emails cultural differences and useful phrases
Email closing lines cultural differences and useful phrases
You can use versions of just two or three different closing lines to end around 90% of formal business emails

People often end emails with an offer of (more) info

People often end emails by mentioning the next contact

Small requests such as asking for information usually end by just mentioning their reply

Formal endings of (big) requests are very different from endings of formal commands/ instructions ("Thank you for your cooperation")

Informal requests and informal commands/ instructions can end with the same phrases

Email closing greetings cultural differences and useful phrases
Formal business closing greetings are very different from informal business closing greetings

Your name at the end of an email cultural differences
Formal business emails usually end with your full name

Informal business emails usually end with just your first name

Super-formal business emails can end with initials, family name, and title in brackets

Body of an email cultural differences
You can't use the language of commands/ instructions/ orders ("Please send me some information on…", "Would you send me some information on…?", "I'd like you to send me some information on…") for requests

It's usually best to give specific deadlines with reasons

If you say no to an invitation, it is best to give as much detail as possible when you reject their invitation

Formal apologies are quite different from informal apologies ("Sorry about…")

You need to give specific reasons why something happened when you apologise

It's better to use language to make important information stand out rather than bold script, capital letters or punctuation (so not "**Important**" X, "BY FRIDAY" X or "The deadline is Friday!" X)

It's better to use words and phrases to list things because just numbers or bullet points can seem unfriendly (so not usually "2. Can you tell me…?")

Check above. Many other phrases are possible, so please check if you wrote something different.