

Unit 3: Dealing with long emails

How to read long emails

Go through the advice with your learners, explaining any difficulties (e.g. *gist*). Get learners to discuss the four points in pairs, thinking about whether the advice is useful in their own work or study contexts, and then ask them to report back for a whole class discussion.

Getting started

1. Give your learners time to read the alternative choice question and explain any difficulties.
2. Give your learners exactly one minute to skim the email. (For this exercise, you can decide whether to help them with vocabulary or not, depending on the learners' level.)
3. With the whole class, get learners to answer the question and to justify and explain their response.

Understanding

Exercise 1

1. Tell learners to go through the email in *Getting started* in more detail, underlining each complaint. (Ensure they are looking at the email from Li Sung, the events organizer, not the reply from Nicola Mann, the hotel manager.)
2. Then give the learners time to read the rubric and make sure they understand the email. Explain any difficulties, e.g. *paramount importance*, *isolated incident*, etc.

Exercise 2

Instruct learners to do the exercise in pairs and then elicit answers with the whole class. Depending on level, you can ask learners to rephrase the explanations in different ways, varying the original language, for example, use *owing to* instead of *due to*. This could be developed further with expressions such as *The reason for this was*, *As a consequence*, etc.

Developing your reading skills

Exercises 1 and 2

1. Again, complete as pair work and check the answers with the whole class.
2. Ask everyone to suggest variations on the answers given in the key to Exercise 1.

Language focus

1. Complete as pair work and check the answers with the whole class, explaining any difficulties. (Point out that *reoccur* is used instead of *recur* – both are acceptable.)
2. Ask learners about bad customer service they have encountered as consumers, any compensation or gestures of goodwill they were offered, and whether or not they thought these were adequate.

Review

1. You could organize this as parallel pair role-plays, with Learner A as the Conference Organizer and Learner B as either the Conference Planner, Housekeeping Manager or the Head of Catering – make sure that each Learner B knows who they should be. Pairs should discuss the cause of the problems that led to Li Sung's complaints.
2. When the situation is clear, start the role-play in parallel pairs. Circulate, monitor and assist if necessary, but don't interrupt if they are working well. Note any difficulties, especially ones relating to the language of this unit.
3. Call the class to order and go through any difficulties.
4. Get one or two pairs to repeat their role-play for the class, incorporating your improvements and corrections.

Extended Learning through COBUILD

Get learners to look at page 103 and go through the different sections with them. For section 1, point out that this use of *regard* has nothing to do with the expression *Best regards* sometimes used at the end of emails.

Extension activity

1. Allocate each section in *Extended Learning through COBUILD* above to a different pair and ask them to write similar sentences relating to their own contexts, not necessarily complaints. For example, for the first section, get them to write an email about their own organization's products or services (in-work learners) or about their school's courses (pre-work learners). For example:

Thank you for your email about the cost of our evening language courses. As regards the Italian course, it costs £100 per term...

2. Circulate, monitor and assist if necessary, but don't interrupt if they are working well.
3. Ask learners working on each section to read out their sentences. Discuss any remaining difficulties.

Homework task

Ask learners to write two more emails: one from Li Sung saying that the compensation offered is not adequate, and a reply from Nicola Mann either a) saying that she cannot do more, or b) offering better compensation, giving details of what this is. Get learners to email these to you if possible, and go over any problems in the next lesson.