

## Unit 2: Emails

### SUMMARY

You can use this summary to guide the learning objectives and target setting for your class.

#### Can-do statements

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

- I can identify the key parts of an email communication.
- I can scan emails for key information and check again later for important facts.
- I can differentiate between formal and informal styles in emails.
- I can identify and contextualize the use of idiomatic language in emails and informal communication.

#### Skill focus

Pre-reading:

#### Before you start

Scanning:

#### Practising your reading skills ② ③

Reading for general understanding:

#### Understanding ① ②

Reading for detail:

#### Practising your reading skills ③

#### Vocabulary

Online buying: *summary, invoice address, delivery address, payment method, account, debited*

Idioms: *reading between the lines, sounding out, a long shot, hard to come by, heart set on, shoot off*

#### Appropriateness

Formal and informal language in emails

The *Before you start* questions also ask students to identify which email is likely to be written in a formal style. Ask students what kinds of written features would identify an email as formal (*formal salutation, few contractions, no slang, very polite language, etc.*) and which would identify an email as informal (*casual language, ellipses, contractions, etc.*).

### Using Unit text and Understanding

1. Ask students to do *Exercise 1* of *Understanding* on their own to confirm the suppositions of *Before you start*. Set a time limit of approximately five minutes.
2. Ask students to answer the questions in *Exercise 2* on their own and then put them in pairs to compare their answers.
3. Get the students to look again and find the examples of the features which make the first email formal (*Dear ..., Thank you for choosing ..., Please note that acceptance of your order ..., Yours sincerely*) and the second informal (*Hi Joanna!, ... How's it going? ..., All is good ... Anyway, must shoot off. Write soon ... Love Sophia Xxx*).
4. Divide the *Unit text* into parts so that it can be read aloud by different students.
5. Put students into small groups and get them to write five new questions about the *Unit text* for the other group(s) to answer.
6. In the same groups, ask students to write some sentences that could be from either a formal or informal letter. Then ask them to show these to another group and get them to identify which is which.

### Using Practising your reading skills

*Practising your reading skills* focuses on identifying the difference between scanning and reading for detail. You might want to spend time helping students to understand different reading styles using the material from *Appendix 1 – How should I read?*

1. You could create your own handout for this matching exercise or just write it on the board. Write four speech bubbles with the words:
 

*I don't have much time and just want a general idea of what this article is about.*

*I'm in a rush and I need some specific information from this text.*

*This is interesting. I'm going to read this to find out about the subject.*

*I'd better read this carefully – there are a lot of important facts in here I need to know.*
2. Ask students to work in pairs to identify the reading style that each speech bubble would require (respectively

### CLASSROOM EXTENSION IDEAS

You can use some or all of these ideas to check and enhance your students' understanding as they work their way through *Unit 2* of *Reading B1+ Intermediate* in class.

#### Using Before you start

This unit is about emails. Before you start using the material from the book, you can personalize the material by starting a discussion on the students' use of emails.

1. Ask the students questions like: *How many emails do you get each day? Who sends the emails: friends, family or businesses? Is there a lot of 'spam'? Do you like to use email to contact people or do you prefer to text, phone, tweet, or write? etc.*
2. Get students to write their answers down individually and then put them in small groups to discuss and compare their answers.

*skimming, scanning, reading for general understanding and reading for detail).*

3. Ask students to identify which reading style they would normally use for each of these reading situations/texts:
  - a quick read of a newspaper story* (skimming)
  - looking for a particular word in a dictionary* (scanning)
  - song lyrics* (reading for general understanding)
  - a legal contract* (reading for detail)
4. Put students back into pairs or small groups and ask them to think of a couple of different reading situations/texts for each of the reading styles.
5. Get the pairs/groups to write the situations down without naming the reading style. Monitor to help frame the ideas (you can use the *Appendix* to assist with ideas).
6. Pairs/groups can then exchange their ideas with each other.
7. Feed back with the whole class.

### Using Language focus

The *Language focus* exercises highlight the use of idioms in informal texts.

1. Photocopy the *Idioms* handout, below, and cut out each idiom separately. You will need about four or five for each student – you can duplicate them or add some more of your own if you need to.
2. Clarify with students that idiomatic language might be used in a business context (it is not slang) but is normally

used where the people know each other. Ask students why that might be (*because it is possible that idiomatic language might be misunderstood, or suggest a certain informal tone*).

3. Distribute the idioms to the students randomly. Get them to read them and find the meaning in their dictionaries, or by asking their partner.
4. Tell the students that you want them to write an informal email using these idioms. They will have to use all the idioms they have been given in the email but you can allow them to swap them with other students if they want to. Ask the students to stand up and walk around the room, finding out what idioms other people have and explaining their own to see if they want to do a swap.
5. Monitor and check the use of the idioms while students write their emails.
6. If students finish early ask them to construct questions for their emails along the lines of those in *Understanding Exercise 2*. You can also set this task for homework.

### Using Active reading

Also for homework, you can ask students to look through the order confirmation of something they have bought over the Internet and check if it has the things listed in *Practising your reading skills Exercise 2*. (You can also set this for homework.)

### PHOTOCOPIABLES

#### Idioms

a shot in the dark	get your act together	drop the ball
burn your bridges	keep your chin up	carry the can
cut someone some slack	down to earth	be in the driver's seat
see eye to eye	have the edge	put your foot in it
put your foot down	get something off your chest	give someone the cold shoulder
stick to your guns	hit the hay	hit the nail on the head
jump to conclusions	know the ropes	keep an eye on
lay your cards on the table	turn over a new leaf	pay lip service
push your luck	speak your mind	put your money where your mouth is
nip something in the bud	on a roll	on the ropes
play it by ear	pass the buck	see red
rock the boat	set someone straight	sleep on it
spill the beans	suck it up	talk shop
bite your tongue	up in the air	under the weather