

# Unit 1 Making enquiries

## 1A Study section

- emails
- opening and closing a message
- subject headings
- asking for and sending information
- email style
- being polite

### Test yourself

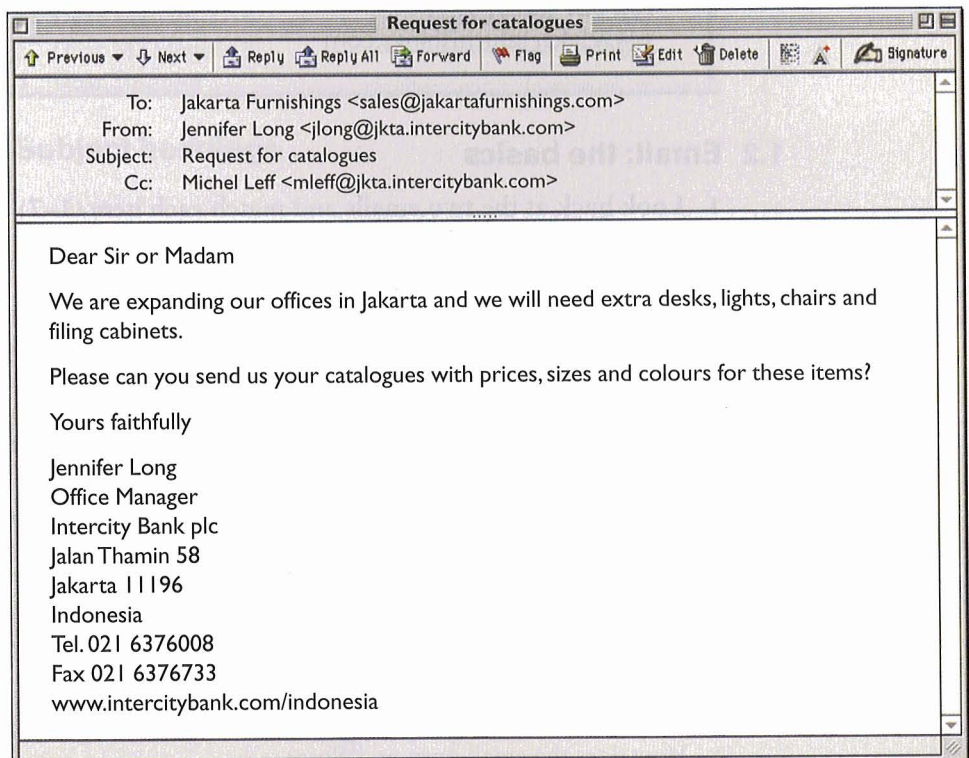
You want a new printer for your computer. You have seen an advertisement for the Solar EX43. Write an email to Computer World, sales@computerworld.com, and ask them how much the printer costs and how long they would take to deliver it. Write a complete email, with a subject heading, names, etc. (Invent any details you need.)

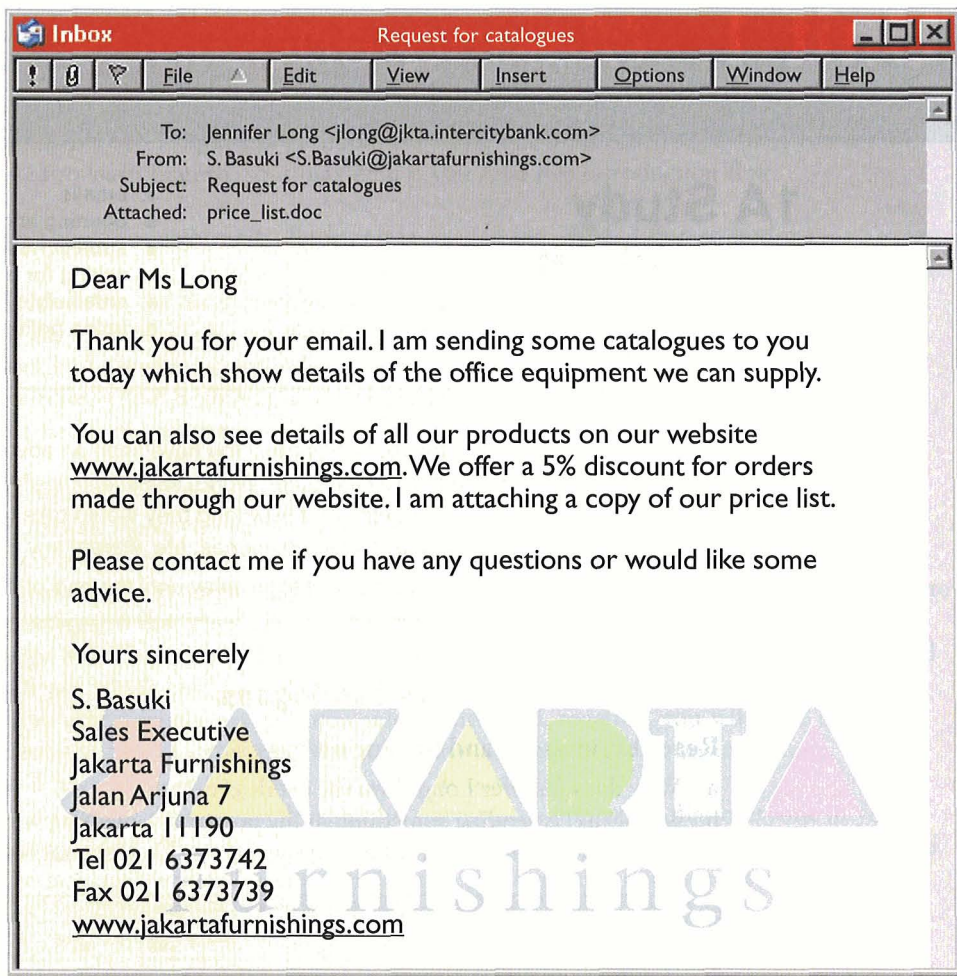
When you have finished, put the message away until the end of this section.

### 1.1 Intercity Bank ask for catalogues

Read this message and the one on page 8.

- Why does Jennifer Long want the catalogues?
- Mr Basuki is sending something in the post and something with his email. What?
- Why do you think Jakarta Furnishings offer a 5% discount for web sales?





## 1.2 Email: the basics

- 1 Look back at the two emails and match each item (1–7) to the correct meaning (a–g).
 

1 To:	a A document or other file you want to send with the email
2 From:	b The name and email address of the person you are writing to
3 Subject:	c The name and email address of someone you want to send a 'blind copy' to (i.e. the other people who receive the message can't see that this person has also received a copy)
4 Cc:	d Your full name, address and other details that are automatically put at the end of your email
5 Bcc:	e The topic you are writing about
6 Attached:	f Your name and email address
7 Signature	g The name and email address of someone you want to send a copy to
- 2 Notice the layout of the email messages.
  - a Where does each paragraph start?
  - b How are the paragraphs separated?
  - c How does the email open and close?

### 1.3 Dear ... / Yours ...

Here are some ways to start your message.

Dear Sir or Madam	<i>to a company</i>
Dear Sir	<i>to a man if you do not know his name</i>
Dear Madam	<i>to a woman if you do not know her name</i>
Dear Mr Smith	<i>to a married or unmarried man</i>
Dear Ms Smith	<i>to a married or unmarried woman</i>
Dear Mrs Smith	<i>to a married woman</i>
Dear Miss Smith	<i>to an unmarried woman</i>
Dear John	<i>to a friend or someone you know well</i>

**Writing tip** Be careful how you open a message.

- Do not use *Mr/Mrs/Ms* with a first name (e.g. *Dear Mr John* is not correct).
- Unless you know that a woman prefers to be called *Miss* or *Mrs*, use *Ms*.

The way you close a message depends on how you open it.

Dear Sir or Madam	Yours faithfully
Dear Mr/Ms/Mrs/Miss Smith	Yours sincerely
Dear John	Best wishes

Choose the correct close from the box for each of the openings (a–g).

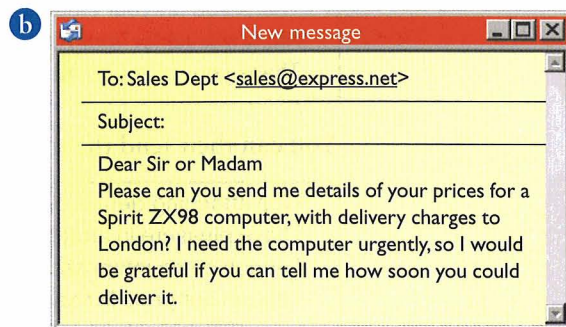
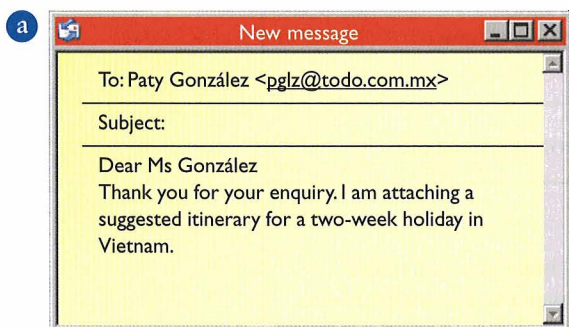
Best wishes    Yours faithfully    Yours sincerely

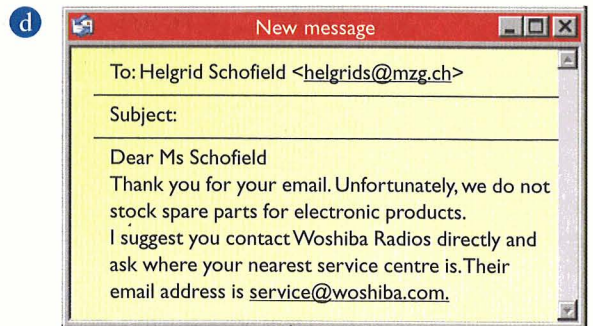
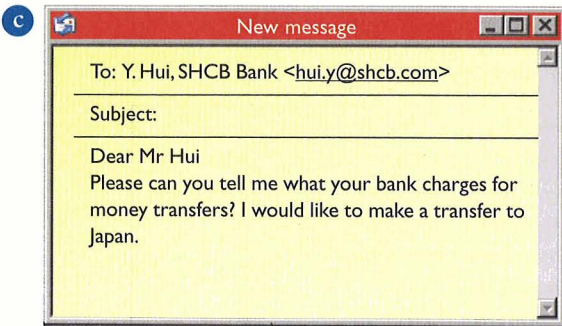
- |                    |                     |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| a Dear Mrs Wilson  | e Dear Mr González  |
| b Dear Madam       | f Dear David        |
| c Dear Ms Hemsuchi | g Dear Sir or Madam |
| d Dear Susanna     |                     |

### 1.4 Subject headings

**Writing tip** Many businesses receive hundreds of emails every day. Unfortunately, a lot of these messages are 'junk mail', usually advertising. Many people do not even open these messages – they delete them straight away. For this reason, it is important that your emails have a short, clear subject heading which encourages the reader to open the message. This can also help to ensure that the message goes to the right person.

What subject headings can you put for these messages (a–d)?





## 1.5 Practice

What's wrong with this email? Look at 1.1–1.4 again and write it out correctly.



## 1.6 Asking for and sending information

You can ask for information in different ways.

Please can you tell me ...  
 Please can you send me ...  
 Please can you send me details of ...

If you are replying, you can first thank the person for their message.

Thank you for your email.  
 Thank you for your email, dated 6 June.  
 Many thanks for your message, dated 6 June.  
 Thank you for your enquiry.

You can then send the information they want.

I am attaching details of ...  
 I have pleasure in attaching ...  
 I attach some information which I hope you find useful.  
 I attach our price list and look forward to hearing from you.

You work for a company that sells mobile phones. What can you write in these situations?

- a Someone has written asking for details of mobile phones that include a camera.
- b Someone has written to ask you for details of the types of accounts you offer.
- c You want to know more information about the new MI300 Henrison mobile phone and when it will be available.
- d The air conditioner in your shop doesn't work. You want a list of service centres.

## 1.7 Message style

**Writing tip** There are many different styles of writing. For a student of English, this can be a problem, because if you use the wrong style, you can cause offence or give the wrong impression. For this reason, in *Company to Company* you will learn a style that you can use in most situations.

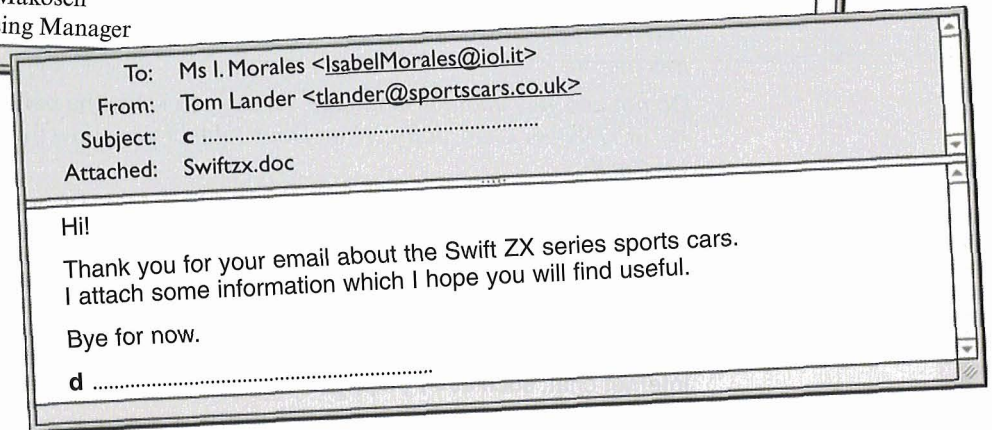
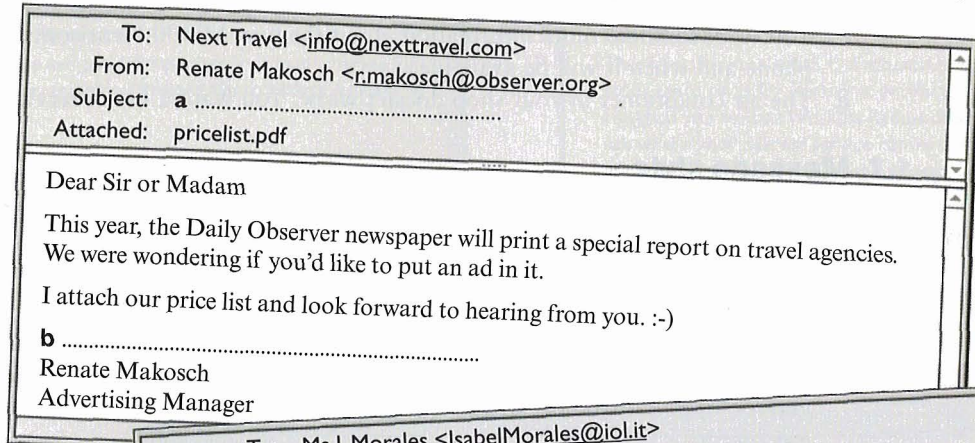
- Write in a natural style. Do not use an old-fashioned, very formal style. Say *Thank you for your letter, dated 14 June*, not *We have received your letter of the 14<sup>th</sup> of this month*.
- Do not use very informal language, unless you know the person well. Do not write *Hi!* or *Hello!* or *Ciao, John!* Write *Dear John* (if you know the person) or *Dear Mr Smith*.
- Do not use text-message abbreviations such as *I hope I can c u soon* or *Yr order is waiting 4 u*.
- Do not use slang. Write *Someone in the office can help*, not *A guy here can help*.
- Do not use 'emoticons'. Emoticons are symbols which people often use in Internet chat, such as :- ) (happy), :-( (sad).

**What's wrong with these messages? Write them correctly.**

- a Hello, Steven!  
Thx for yr email. I'm gld u recvd the pkt OK. Great 2 hear u like the pics. :-)
- b Dear Mr Wilson,  
We are in receipt of your message, dated 15th of this month. I can confirm that we have despatched your order according to your instructions.
- c Hi there  
How r you? I've passed your msg to Bill, a guy in my office, and he'll contact you u soon. Bye.
- d Dear Ms Brown  
We are awaiting your instructions concerning the address for the despatch of your order.

## 1.8 Practice

There are two things missing and two style problems in each of these messages. Check 1.1–1.7 again and complete and correct each message.



## 1.9 Be polite!

In business, if you are polite, you will usually get a better response and better service. Users of English often do the following to show politeness.

- Say please and thank you:  
*Thank you for your email. Please can you send me your catalogue?*
- Say more:  
*Thank you for your order for 10 boxes of Sunlight Wallpaper. Our price for each box is \$250, plus an additional \$50 for postage. Our normal delivery time is 3–5 days, not We got your order. The cost is \$250 per box plus \$50 for delivery. Delivery is 3–5 days.*
- Avoid being very direct:  
*We think your prices are rather high, not Your prices are not acceptable.*
- Ask rather than order:  
*Please could you send it as soon as possible? not You must send it straight away.*
- Use indirect questions:  
*I was wondering if you could help me, not Can you help me?*
- Avoid blaming or accusing the addressee:  
*I am afraid there is a problem with the order, not You've made a mistake with my order.*
- Understate the point:  
*It seems we have a small problem, not There is a problem.*

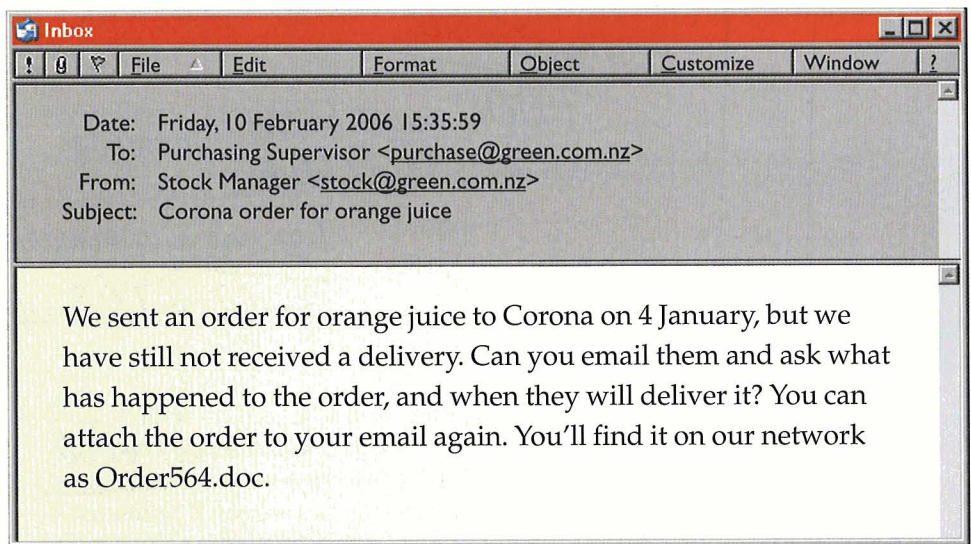
There are many examples of polite letters and emails in *Company to Company*. As you read them, compare with what you would say in your language.

These messages sound impolite in English. Make them more polite.

- a Dear Mr Brown  
Your company delivered the goods very late. This is very bad service.  
Please deliver on time in future.
- b Dear Sharon  
Let's meet next Monday at 1 p.m. We can meet at The Mousetrap restaurant.  
I have to leave at 2 p.m., so come on time.
- c Dear Ms Mustapha  
I received your letter. I have sent the goods. You will get them on Tuesday.
- d Mr Smith  
Send me your price list. I need it now, so send it immediately.
- e What's your price for a Delphi ZX45 modem?

### 1.10 Consolidation: a complete email

You are the Purchasing Supervisor at Green Supermarkets. Your manager has just sent you this email. Write a polite email to Corona (sales@corona.com.nz) with a copy to your manager.



#### What have you learned?

Look back at the message you wrote to Computer World at the beginning of this section. Compare it with your message to Corona. Can you see an improvement?

Think about:

- email layout
- opening/close
- subject headings
- how to ask for information
- style
- politeness.