

## Writing emails

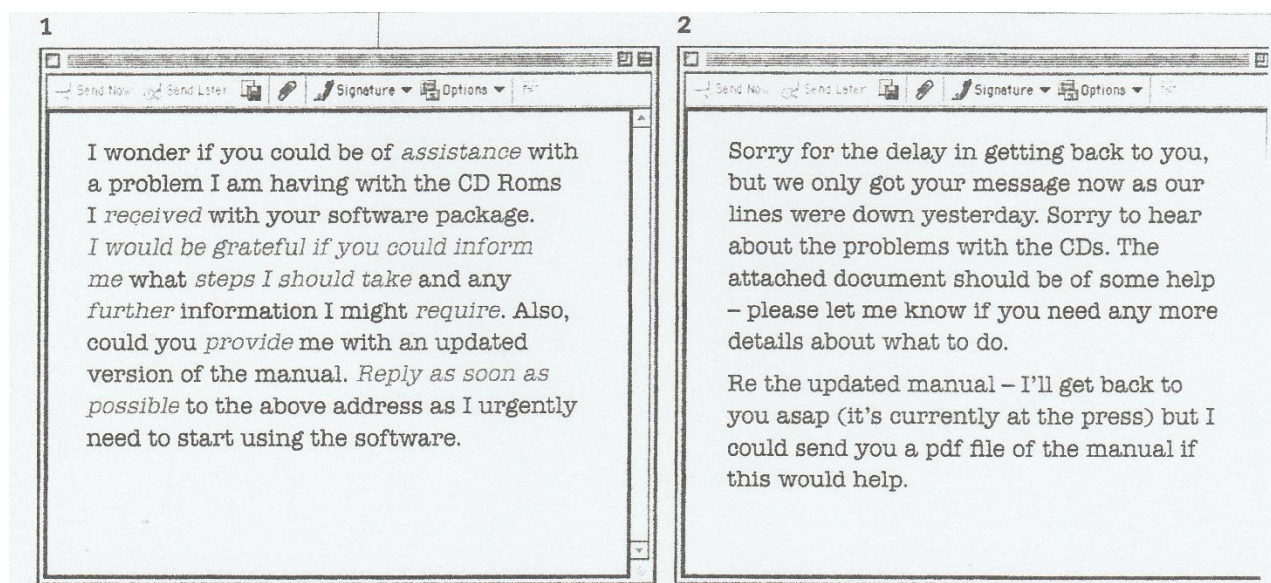
### Levels of formality

1 Look at the following different kinds business correspondence. Which would you not send by email? Why?

- |                             |                                       |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>a</b> a price estimate   | <b>d</b> confirmation of a contract   |
| <b>b</b> a job application  | <b>e</b> request to arrange a meeting |
| <b>c</b> a formal complaint | <b>f</b> an enquiry about a product   |

2 Look at the two emails below. Which is formal and which is informal? Look at the words and expressions in italics in the email 1 and find the equivalent expressions in email 2, as in the example.

e. g. assistance – help



### Formal emails: (email 1)

- ❖ more indirect than spoken English ( I was wondering if you could.....)
- ❖ words of Latin origin (assistance)
- ❖ no contractions and phrasal verbs

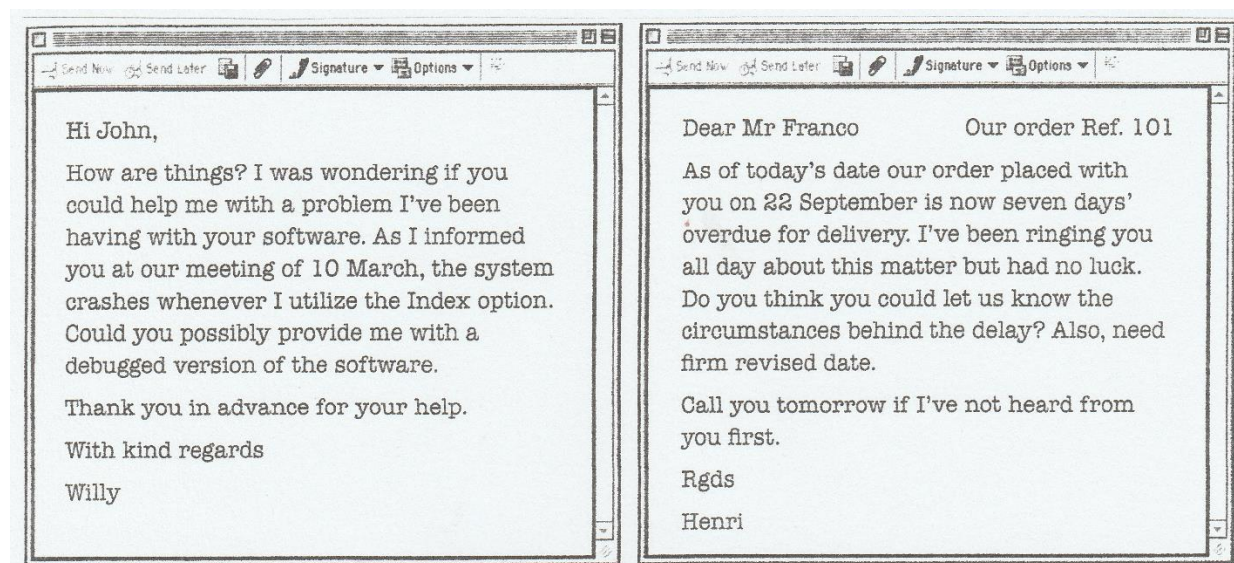
**Informal emails: (email 2)**

- ❖ contractions ( I'll get back...)
- ❖ non – Latin words (help)
- ❖ direct (Could you....)
- ❖ phrasal verbs (get back)

3 Match the formal words 1 – 7 with the less formal equivalents a – g, as in the example.

1 ascertain -----	a find out
2 commence	b use
3 particulars	c start
4 prior to	d payment
5 remittance	e end
6 terminate	f details
7 utilize	g before

4 Look at the email messages below. The first sender wanted to write an informal message, and the second a formal message. Underline any expressions with the wrong level of formality, and rewrite them in a more appropriate way.



### Choosing the appropriate level of formality

- When deciding what register (level of formality) to use, take into account how formal other cultures may be (e. g. USA often informal, Asia often formal).
- If you are making first contact, it is better to be quite formal.
- If you are replying, it is a good idea to match your correspondent's level of formality. If they sign themselves Regards, Henri you can write Dear Henri in your reply. If they write Regards Henri Penn, you may decide to reply Dear Henri Penn or Dear Mr Penn.
- When you have chosen an appropriate level of formality, make sure the whole email (not just parts of it!) is written at such a level.
- You may decide to be less formal when you get to know your correspondent better.
- Informal words tend to be shorter than their formal equivalents  
e. g. try / attempt, have / possess. Phrasal verbs are also generally less formal,  
e. g. go in / enter, carry out / perform.