

# Unit 2

## Let's keep in touch

### Get ready to write

- Which of these methods do you use to keep in touch with friends? Rank them in order of frequency (1 = most used, 5 = least used).
  - traditional letter sent by post
  - email
  - internet messaging (MSN etc.)
  - telephone (landline or mobile)
  - text message from your mobile
- Which of the above methods would you use:
  - if you needed to contact someone very quickly or urgently? .....
  - if you needed to convey a very personal message, for example to ask for advice or to express sympathy? .....
  - if it had been a long time since you contacted someone? .....
  - if you had no money? .....
  - if you were very short of time? .....
- Think of the three people you contact most frequently. Which methods do you use?

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### Writing an informal email

#### Look at examples

1 Look at the three examples of written correspondence on this page and the opposite page.

a Why was each one written?

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b In what ways are they similar and different?

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2 Read the three examples again.

a What type of text is each example?

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b Which is the most formal, and which is the most informal?

c Highlight examples of informal language in texts 1 and 3. Look for the following features:

- Short verb forms *I've been trying*
- Colloquial vocabulary *hang out with his mates*
- Words left out (ellipsis) *(It was) Good to hear from you.*
- Abbreviations *Jon 'n' Jo*

1

From: Matt Greenfield  
Sent: 29 October 2007 13:09  
To: Jon Stewart  
Subject: Holidays and stuff

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Hi Jon 'n' Jo  
Had a great time in Turkey – nice people, nice hotel, good food, perfect weather, interesting trips. Only real prob was flights – both delayed more than 2 hours. Got home last night at 1 o'clock. Glad you had a good time with Pete and Chris and others. Getting together – great idea but Tuesdays aren't good for us – how about Wednesday 21st?  
See you soon  
Cheers  
Matt and Tina  
BTW Hope you enjoy Libya.

2

22, Ashley Gardens  
 Chelwood Gate  
 West Sussex  
 RH12 2LF  
 28th Sept. 2006

Dear Finko,

I've just realized that I haven't thanked you for the CD you sent for my birthday. Sorry! I really love The Goran Project, so much so that I've just started going to a tango dance class that's started in the town. It's amazingly popular.

Things are fine with us. I'm still working part-time at the school, and giving private music lessons, so I don't have much free time. Alex has decided he wants to train to be a radiographer and has just started the long complicated process. He did a preliminary nursing course last year - and he's about to apply for a place on a specialist radiography course. There are usually more applicants than there are places - so it's by no means certain that he'll get accepted. We're all okay. Do you remember my brother Matt, who went to Australia? Well, he's back - this time it looks as though he's here to stay. He was getting fed up with working as a chauffeur and is looking for a different kind of job. Anyway, that's about it for now. Write when you have time. Email me if you'd prefer. I can't believe it's nearly two years since you were here. Do you have any plans to come to Europe again? If so, you must let us know when and where, so that we can meet up.

Thanks again for the present.

Best wishes,

Germa

3

From: Silvia

To: Ed

Subject: Re: FW: Summer

Date: Thu, 15 Jun 2006 15:21:14

Hi Marco and Silvia,

I've been trying to email you but the mails keep bouncing back - probably an old email address. I hope this one gets through. Hi Ed,

Good to hear from you! Sorry about our home email - clever idea to send it to Marco's work address! Marco's really busy, so he's forwarded it to me.

We're writing to tell you that we'll be staying at the campsite near you again this summer. First two weeks of August. This time we're flying, then hiring a car. Hope we can meet again.

Great news! Call us when you're here and we'll arrange a get-together. Perhaps we could go out for a meal - there's several good restaurants near here, like the pizzeria we went to last time. Remember?

Things are really busy here. Jackie's just started working as an assistant in a primary school and I have more freelance photographic work than I can cope with - suppose we shouldn't complain.

Know what you mean. I've just started a new job as a receptionist in a hotel just down the road - very handy, but I have to work weekends and evenings - so no holiday this year and big changes to family life!

Becky's just finished her first exams. In September she'll go to the local college (for 16-18-year-olds). Jo's just coming to the end of her third year at secondary school.

The boys have just started their summer holidays. Gianfranco just scraped through his exams! He'd much rather hang out with his mates. Adriano's done pretty well, but he's got a different attitude to life. Both the boys've got scooters now. They seem to spend all their free time on them. The only good thing is, they're making less phone calls - they didn't used to go out at all.

Anyway, we hope you'll be at home when we're in Italy and that the weather's better than last time we met.

I'm sure we'll be around - just come round or give us a ring.

Best wishes to you all,

Ed and Jackie

Love

Silvia

## Plan

- 3 You are going to reply by email to a letter from an old friend, saying what you have been doing since you last met a year ago.

This is part of your friend's letter.

Anyway, the real reason I'm writing is to tell you that Sam and I are getting married in June and we'd like you to be at the wedding. We really hope you can make it. When you write back, don't forget to tell us what you've been up to.

I can't wait to hear from you – email me if you like.

Make a list of things to tell your friend. Include some of these areas of your life.

- major changes in your life or circumstances
- family news and news of mutual friends
- education or work

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- 4 Plan your email paragraph by paragraph.

## Example:

- Paragraph 1 respond to the news in the extract above.
- Paragraph 2 changes in your life
- Paragraph 3 news about family and friends
- Paragraph 4 what has happened to you at school, college or work
- Paragraph 5 suggest the two of you keep in touch more regularly

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## Focus on ...

## the language of informal emails

- Starting and finishing informal emails:  
*Hi (Laura) / Hello (Laura) / Laura (name only)*  
*Good to hear from you. / Got the email – thanks / See you (then) / Stay in touch / Hope to see you soon / Love / Cheers / Speak soon / Take care / Best /*  
*Nick (name only)*
- Acronyms used to save time in emails:  
**BTW** – by the way / **IMO** – in my opinion / **FYI** – for your information
- Short verb forms:  
*we've been having ... / we'll arrange ... / my friends've all got ...*
- Colloquial vocabulary:  
*loads of (instead of a lot of) / give someone a ring (instead of phone) / glad (instead of pleased) / get (instead of receive)*
- Non-standard grammar (Errors!):  
**There's** (*There are*) *twenty students in my class. That's less (fewer) students than in my last class. We didn't used (use) to work very hard.*

In your notebook, rewrite these extracts from formal letters using informal language.

1

Dear Matthew

I am writing to thank you for attending our meeting yesterday. In my opinion, it was very useful. We are sure you will enjoy working with Debbie and John.

I will be in touch again soon.

With best wishes,

Jenny

2

Dear Juan,

Thank you for your letter which we received this morning. We are sorry to hear that you have been made redundant, but very pleased that you are having an interview for another job next Wednesday. We will be very interested to know whether you are successful. We wish you the best of luck.

Yours sincerely,

Pieter

## Learning tip

Anyway at the start of a sentence or paragraph indicates a change of subject. It is especially useful if you want to signal a return to a previous subject, or to show that you are coming to the end of your letter. It can be used in a similar way in conversation.

**Write**

- 5 Imagine that you only have about 15–20 minutes to write your email, so write quickly. Write 200–225 words. Use informal language and end your email by suggesting how the two of you could keep in touch more regularly in the future.

**Check**

- 6 Read your email carefully, checking these points.
- Content Have you responded to the news in your friend's letter?  
Have you managed to include all your own news?
  - Structure Does your email look reader-friendly? Have you broken the information down into easy-to-read chunks?
  - Style Is the language informal?
- 7 Write the final version of your email, making any necessary corrections and improvements.

**Did you know ...?**

Email is older than the Internet. It started in 1965, and by 1966 it was already possible to send messages between different computers. The @ sign was introduced into email addresses in 1971 and quickly became standard.

**Class bonus**

- 1 Exchange emails with another student and read your partner's email as though you were the person who had written the letter extract on page 16.
- 2 Write a brief reply, acknowledging the email and responding to the key information and news it contains.

**Extra practice**

- 12 Listen to a message left on your answerphone. Write a brief email reply, responding to the speaker's suggestions.

**Can-do checklist**

Tick what you can do.

- I can distinguish between letters and emails in terms of style and structure.
- I can plan and write personal letters and emails.
- I can write emails using features of informal English typically associated with email writing.

Can do

Need more practice