

Writing skills practice: An informal email – exercises

Look at the exam question and answer, and do the exercises to practise and improve your writing skills.

Preparation

Write the advice in the correct group.

| | | |
|--|------------------------------------|---|
| miss out any of the necessary information. | use contractions. | write more than the word limit. |
| read the question/task carefully. | use a formal beginning and ending. | sound 'chatty' like you're talking to a friend. |

| you should ... | you shouldn't ... |
|----------------|-------------------|
| | |

Answer this question.

You are going to spend a weekend with your friend from Scotland called Chris Stewart. Read the email you have just received from Chris and the notes you've made. Write a reply to Chris using **all** the notes (in red). You should write approximately **150 words**.

New message from Chris Stewart

Subject: Coming to Glasgow

Hi,

I'm really happy that we'll see each other next weekend! A friend of mine plays in a band and they're going to play a small concert on Friday evening. Would you like to go and see my friend playing with her group?

We need to decide what to do on Saturday. We could either take a trip down the River Clyde in a boat (I'm sure you'd love the beautiful scenery) or we could go and see a football match. Can you tell me which activity you'd rather do?

I wanted to ask your advice about something. I've just started to learn Italian but I only have one hour of lessons every week. Can you give me some advice on how to improve my Italian as quickly as possible?

Just one final thing. You told me in your last message that you have a new skateboard. Could you bring it with you to Scotland? I'd love to have a go on it.

All the best,
Chris

Great idea!

Give some advice.

Tell Chris.

Not possible. Say why.

To: Chris Stewart
Subject: Re: Coming to Glasgow

Hi Chris,

Thanks for your email. It's great to hear from you. I can't wait to come and visit!

So, about Friday ... I'd love to see your friend's band! What kind of music do they play? I'm thinking of starting my own band so it'll be good to meet your friends and ask them about it.

On Saturday, I'd prefer to go on the boat trip on the river. I'm not really a football fan to be honest. The boat trip sounds much more chilled out!

So, you're learning Italian? I'm impressed! Why don't you try and find an Italian to practise speaking with? If you find someone who's learning English, you could do a language exchange. It's the best way to learn. You should try to read some books in Italian as well.

You asked about my skateboard. I'm sorry but I can't bring it with me to Scotland. I've got loads of stuff and it's too big to fit in my suitcase.

I'm really looking forward to seeing you!

Best wishes,
Sira

Top Tips for writing

- Use formulaic expressions to start and finish your email.
- Use 'I'd prefer' + infinitive to say which option you want to do.
- Use informal words and expressions.
- Respond to your friend's email in a friendly, chatty style.
- Use a variety of structures for giving advice.
- Don't forget to respond to all the points in your friend's email.

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1. Check your understanding: multiple choice

Circle the best answer for these questions.

1. Who is Chris?
 - a. A teacher
 - b. A friend
 - c. A person you met on holiday
2. Which sentence below is true?
 - a. You have invited Chris to come to your country.
 - b. You are going to Scotland together next summer.
 - c. You are going to visit Chris in Scotland next weekend.
3. Which sentence is true?
 - a. Chris is a boy.
 - b. Chris is a girl.
 - c. Chris could be a boy or a girl.
4. Which of the following points do you NOT need to include in your email?
 - a. Say you want to see Chris's friend's concert.
 - b. Tell Chris which activity you want to do on Saturday.
 - c. Give Chris some advice on learning Italian.
 - d. Tell Chris that you can't bring your skateboard to Scotland.
 - e. Say why you can't bring your skateboard.
 - f. Tell Chris what your favourite type of music is.
5. How long should the email you write to Chris be?
 - a. More or less 100 words
 - b. More or less 150 words
 - c. More or less 200 words
6. You need to give Chris some advice. Which option has three correct ways to give advice in English?
 - a. You should ...
You will ...
Would you like to ... ?
 - b. If I were you, I would ...
Why don't you ...?
You should ...
 - c. If I were you, I would ...
You will ...
You have to ...

2. Check your writing: matching

Match the sentence with its purpose.

- | | | |
|--------|---|--|
| 1..... | I'm really looking forward to seeing you! | a. Starting the email. |
| 2..... | If I were you, I would ... | b. Referring to one of Chris's questions. |
| 3..... | Hi Chris, Great to hear from you! | c. Giving advice. |
| 4..... | Best wishes, Sira | d. Pre-closing formula. (Something friendly to say just before the end.) |
| 5..... | So, about Saturday, ... | e. Finishing the email and signing your name. |

3. Check your writing: error correction

Correct and write these sentences on the line below.

1. hi chris,

.....

2. Great to know about you!

.....

3. Thanks of your email.

.....

4. If I were you, I will find an Italian to practise with.

.....

5. You should to read some books in Italian as well.

.....

6. I'm really looking forward to see you!

.....

Discussion

Do you have friends living in other countries? Have you ever gone to visit them?

What do you like to do on holiday?