

## Starting and ending business communications simplest responses game

### Instructions for teachers

*Give out one of each of the cards below to each student. Students race to hold up the right card as you read phrases from below one at a time. If anyone holds up the wrong card, explain why that would be wrong.*

*When students have got the idea of the activity, give out the worksheet for them to label each section with S for starting and E for ending. Then ask them to go through again to label them with T for telephone, F for face to face or M for (e)mail. Explain that the ones in italics could be more than one of those, but one use is more common and anyway the other phrase(s) in that section will only be possible for one of the three ways of communicating.*

*Check their answers as a class. Before or after the brainstorming stage, they can test each other in pairs or groups by:*

- Playing the same raising cards game
- Racing to identify which kind of communication is being read out
- Brainstorming suitable phrases for starting or ending one of the kinds of brainstorm (with the help of the person looking at the worksheet)
- Replying to the phrases (but only the ones which have obvious replies, e.g. not the emailing phrases)

Cards for students to hold up

<b>Starting</b>	<b>Ending</b>
<b>Starting</b>	<b>Ending</b>
<b>Starting</b>	<b>Ending</b>
<b>Starting</b>	<b>Ending</b>
<b>Starting</b>	<b>Ending</b>
<b>Starting</b>	<b>Ending</b>
<b>Starting</b>	<b>Ending</b>

*Label the sections below with S for starting or E for ending. All the phrases in one section are the same, so if you aren't sure about one phrase look at the ones above and/ or below it.*

Best wishes  
Best  
ATB

Can you put me through to John Smith, please?  
Hi. Is Alex there?

Dear Mr Case/ Dear Ms Smith  
Dear Alex  
*Hi Alex*

Dear Sir or Madam  
Dear Sir/ Madam

Do you have to go straight back to your office?  
Are you finished for today?

Do you have many more meetings today?  
Do you have any plans for the weekend?

Good evening. ABC Limited. Alex Case speaking. How can I help you?  
Hello?  
Jim Thompson's desk.

Hi John, this is Steve.  
Is that Alex?

Hi, you must be John.  
Can I introduce myself?

Okay then, same time same place next week.  
*I hope we have the chance to meet again soon.*  
See you then/ again/ soon/ on...

I know it's very late over there, so we are really grateful for you making the time to speak to us.  
Thanks for agreeing to this conference call.

I'd like to talk more about this but I'm afraid someone has just come in, so...  
I'd love to chat more, but I have someone on another line, so...  
*So, can I help you with anything else (today)?*

I'll check (...) and call you (right) back.

*Okay. Speak to you then/ tomorrow/ soon/ later/... (, then).*

Please call again if you have any other questions/ problems/...

(I'm very) pleased to meet you.

(We've emailed many times but) it's so nice to finally meet you.

I'm writing to you about/ concerning/ in connection with/ regarding/ with regards to...

I'm writing to you because...

I'm writing to you (in order) to...

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

*If you have any more questions, please feel free to contact me.*

*Any more questions, just drop me a line.*

Is this seat free?/ Is anyone sitting here?

Is this the right place for...?

I don't think we've met, have we?

What time is it over there?/ It's about 3 pm over there, right?

I guess things are really busy over there at the moment.

How's the weather over there?

It's a pleasure to welcome you to.../ Welcome to....

Thanks for coming all this way (to...)

Would anyone like tea or coffee before we start?

It's so nice to see you again.

Long time no see. (How have you been?)

It's really crowded, isn't it?

Is this your first time here?

Did you have any trouble finding us?/ Did you have any problems getting here?

It was a pleasure to meet you.

It was so nice to see you again.

*Look forward to hearing from you soon.*

I look forward to your reply.

Please come in and take a seat.

This way please.

Sincerely (yours)

Best regards

*So, what can I do for you today?*  
Anyway, the reason I'm phoning is...

Sorry to phone so late in the evening/ at lunchtime/ last thing on Friday....  
Sorry to ring again so soon (but...)

Sorry, who shall I say is calling?  
Sorry, who am I speaking to, please?

Thank you for your quick reply.  
*Thank you for your email yesterday about...*  
Sorry for my late reply.

Thank you in advance.  
Thanks.

Thanks for calling me back.  
Thanks for getting back to me (so quickly).

Thanks for your help.  
Thanks for your call./ Thanks for calling.

This is Steve. I've also got John and Jane here. And who's over there?  
I'm Alex and my colleagues Steve and Geoff are here too. Can I check who's that end?

To: All staff  
Dear all  
*Hi guys*

Well, just a quick call to say...  
Good morning. I'm calling to...

Well, I'm afraid I have to meet a few more people, but...  
I'm sorry but I have another meeting at five, but...

Yours  
Regards  
All the best

*Label the sections above with T for telephone/ teleconference, F for face to face or M for (e)mail. The phrases in italics could match more than one situation, but all the phrases in one section can only match one of three kinds of communication.*

### Brainstorming stage

First of all without looking above, brainstorm suitable phrases into each of the categories below.

<b>Emails</b>
<b>Starting emails</b>
<b>Email opening greeting when you know someone's name</b>
<b>Email opening greeting when you don't know someone's name</b>
<b>Email opening greeting to more than one person</b>
<b>Email opening line</b>
<b>Email opening line mentioning the last contact between you</b>
<b>Email opening line with the topic</b>
<b>Ending emails</b>
<b>Email closing line</b>
<b>Email closing line mentioning the next contact between you</b>
<b>Emailing closing line for a (big) request</b>
<b>Email closing greeting</b>

<b>Phone calls and teleconferences</b>
<b>Starting phone calls and teleconferences</b>
<b>Answering the phone</b>
<b>Asking to speak to someone on the phone</b>
<b>Mentioning names at the beginning of a phone call or teleconference</b>
<b>Small talk at the beginning of a phone call or teleconference</b>
<b>Polite language at the beginning of a phone call or teleconference</b>
<b>Talking about the reason for the call</b>
<b>Ending telephone calls and teleconferences</b>
<b>Smoothly ending the call or teleconference</b>
<b>Talking about the next (telephone) contact between you</b>
<b>Polite language at the end of a call</b>

<b>Face to face conversations</b>
<b>Starting face to face conversations</b>
<b>Smoothly starting conversations with strangers</b>
<b>Talking about names (face to face)</b>
<b>Polite and friendly language when you meet someone (for the first time or again)</b>
<b>Small talk at the beginning of a (face to face) conversation</b>
<b>Ending face to face conversations</b>
<b>Giving reasons for ending the (face to face) conversation</b>
<b>Polite and friendly language at the end of a (face to face) conversation</b>
<b>Small talk questions at the end of a conversation</b>
<b>Talking about the next (face to face) contact between you</b>

*Look at the mixed phrases on the first pages for more examples, brainstorm any more you can, compare your phrases with the key below. Many more phrases are possible, so if you have different ones please check them with your teacher.*



## Suggested answers

*Italics means phrases which could go in other boxes (as above)*

<b>Emails</b>
<b>Starting emails</b>
<b>Email opening greeting when you know someone's name</b>
Dear Mr Case/ Dear Ms Smith Dear Alex <i>Hi Alex</i>
<b>Email opening greeting when you don't know someone's name</b>
Dear Sir or Madam Dear Sir/ Madam
<b>Email opening greeting to more than one person</b>
To: All staff Dear all <i>Hi guys</i>
<b>Email opening line</b>
<b>Email opening line mentioning the last contact between you</b>
Thank you for your quick reply. <i>Thank you for your email yesterday about...</i> Sorry for my late reply.
<b>Email opening line with the topic</b>
I'm writing to you about/ concerning/ in connection with/ regarding/ with regards to... I'm writing to you because... I'm writing to you (in order) to...
<b>Ending emails</b>
<b>Email closing line</b>
<b>Email closing line mentioning the next contact between you</b>
<i>Look forward to hearing from you soon.</i> I look forward to your reply. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me. <i>If you have any more questions, please feel free to contact me.</i> <i>Any more questions, just drop me a line.</i>
<b>Emailing closing line for a (big) request</b>
Thank you in advance. Thanks.
<b>Email closing greeting</b>
Sincerely (yours) Best regards Yours Regards All the best Best wishes Best ATB
<b>Phone calls and teleconferences</b>

<b>Starting phone calls and teleconferences</b>
<b>Answering the phone</b>
Good evening. ABC Limited. Alex Case speaking. How can I help you? Hello? Jim Thompson's desk.
<b>Asking to speak to someone on the phone</b>
Can you put me through to John Smith, please? Hi. Is Alex there?
<b>Mentioning names at the beginning of a phone call or teleconference</b>
Hi John, this is Steve. Is that Alex? Sorry, who shall I say is calling? Sorry, who am I speaking to, please? This is Steve. I've also got John and Jane here. And who's over there? I'm Alex and my colleagues Steve and Geoff are here too. Can I check who's that end?
<b>Small talk at the beginning of a phone call or teleconference</b>
What time is it over there?/ It's about 3 pm over there, right? I guess things are really busy over there at the moment. How's the weather over there?
<b>Polite language at the beginning of a phone call or teleconference</b>
Sorry to phone so late in the evening/ at lunchtime/ last thing on Friday.... Sorry to ring again so soon (but...) Thanks for calling me back. Thanks for getting back to me (so quickly). I know it's very late over there, so we are really grateful for you making the time to speak to us. Thanks for agreeing to this conference call.
<b>Talking about the reason for the call</b>
Well, just a quick call to say... Good morning. I'm calling to... <i>So, what can I do for you today?</i> Anyway, the reason I'm phoning is...
<b>Ending telephone calls and teleconferences</b>
<b>Smoothly ending the call or teleconference</b>
I'd like to talk more about this but I'm afraid someone has just come in, so... I'd love to chat more, but I have someone on another line, so... <i>So, can I help you with anything else (today)?</i>
<b>Talking about the next (telephone) contact between you</b>
I'll check (...) and call you (right) back. <i>Okay. Speak to you then/ tomorrow/ soon/ later/... (, then).</i> Please call again if you have any other questions/ problems/...
<b>Polite language at the end of a call</b>
<i>Thanks for your help.</i> Thanks for your call./ Thanks for calling.
<b>Face to face conversations</b>

<b>Starting face to face conversations</b>
<b>Smoothly starting conversations with strangers</b>
Is this seat free?/ Is anyone sitting here? Is this the right place for...? I don't think we've met, have we?
<b>Talking about names (face to face)</b>
Hi, you must be John. Can I introduce myself?
<b>Polite and friendly language when you meet someone (for the first time or again)</b>
(I'm very) pleased to meet you. (We've emailed many times but) it's so nice to finally meet you. It's so nice to see you again. Long time no see. (How have you been?) Please come in and take a seat. This way please. It's a pleasure to welcome you to.../ Welcome to.... Thanks for coming all this way (to...) Would anyone like tea or coffee before we start?
<b>Small talk at the beginning of a (face to face) conversation</b>
It's really crowded, isn't it? Is this your first time here? Did you have any trouble finding us?/ Did you have any problems getting here?
<b>Ending face to face conversations</b>
<b>Giving reasons for ending the (face to face) conversation</b>
Well, I'm afraid I have to meet a few more people, but... I'm sorry but I have another meeting at five, but...
<b>Polite and friendly language at the end of a (face to face) conversation</b>
It was a pleasure to meet you. It was so nice to see you again.
<b>Small talk questions at the end of a conversation</b>
Do you have to go straight back to your office? Are you finished for today? Do you have many more meetings today? Do you have any plans for the weekend?
<b>Talking about the next (face to face) contact between you</b>
Okay then, same time same place next week. <i>I hope we have the chance to meet again soon.</i> See you then/ again/ soon/ on...