

Business Foundations: Writing a Simple Sales Email

This lesson teaches working professionals how to write clear, professional sales emails in English. Students learn to research a prospect, structure an email with all essential components, write effective subject lines, and use polite professional language that builds trust and gets responses.

CEFR Level:	B1–B2	Duration:	60 minutes
Industry:	Business / Sales	Format:	Instructor-led with slides

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Research a prospect before writing a sales email
- Structure a professional sales email with all essential components (subject line, greeting, introduction, key message, call to action, closing)
- Write clear subject lines that increase open rates
- Use polite, professional English in business correspondence

Materials

- Slide deck (Business_Foundations_Writing_a_Simple_Sales_Email.pptx)
- Whiteboard / shared screen for live annotation
- Timer (for practice activity)
- Optional: printed email template handout for the guided writing activity

Lesson Procedure

Phase 1: Warm-Up & Context Setting

Time: 0:00–0:08 | **Duration:** 8 min | **Slides:** 1–3

- Display title slide. Ask: *"Do you use email at work? Have you ever written an email in English?"* Allow 3–4 responses to gauge experience levels.
- Present Slide 3 (Why This Matters). Read the scenario: two salespeople, same product, different approaches. Ask: *"Why did one get a meeting and the other didn't?"*
- Walk through the stats on the right side of Slide 3. Ask: *"Which number surprises you most?"*
- Frame the lesson: *"Today we're learning to write sales emails that actually get opened and get responses. It's not about writing more — it's about writing better."*

→ Many students will have experience sending emails in Vietnamese but limited experience in English. Use this warm-up to identify their current comfort level.

→ The stats on Slide 3 are illustrative. If students question them, acknowledge they're approximate and use it as a teaching moment about hedging language ("approximately," "around," "studies suggest").

Phase 2: Before You Write: Do Your Homework

Time: 0:08–0:18 | **Duration:** 10 min | **Slides:** 4

- Present Slide 4 (four research steps). Walk through each step, explaining why research comes before writing.
- For step 1 (Know Whom to Email): *"Sending to a general inbox like info@company.com almost never works. Find the name of the decision-maker."*
- For step 2 (Get Details Online): Demonstrate briefly how to find information on LinkedIn or a company website. Ask students to share what they'd look for.
- **Quick pair exercise (3 minutes):** Give each pair a fictitious company name and product. They spend 2 minutes deciding: who would they email and what problem might that company have? Share answers briefly.
- Read the tip at the bottom of the slide. Connect personalisation to response rates.

→ This phase is about mindset, not email writing yet. The key message: never write a cold email without researching first.

→ The pair exercise doesn't need to be long — it's just to activate the research-first thinking before they see the model email.

Phase 3: Model Email & Structure

Time: 0:18–0:30 | **Duration:** 12 min | **Slides:** 5–6

- Display Slide 5 (Model Email). Read the complete email aloud. Ask: *"What do you notice about this email? Is it long or short? Is it formal or casual?"*
- Display Slide 6 (Anatomy of a Sales Email). Walk through each of the six parts: subject line, greeting, introduction, key message, call to action, closing + signature.
- For each part, read the example and the annotation. Ask students to identify the corresponding section in the model email on Slide 5.
- Focus on the **call to action**: *"This is the most important sentence. You're making it easy for them to say yes. 'Can we schedule a meeting?' is better than 'Please contact me if interested.'"*
- Read the bottom callout: *"Every sales email needs these six parts. Missing any one reduces your chance of a response."*

→ Spend the most time on the call to action and subject line — these are the two elements students most commonly get wrong or omit.

→ For B1 students, consider projecting Slides 5 and 6 side by side (if screen allows) so they can visually map structure to example.

→ The model email is intentionally simple. Resist the urge to add complexity — students need to master the basic structure first.

Phase 4: Email Writing Tips

Time: 0:30–0:38 | **Duration:** 8 min | **Slides:** 7

- Display Slide 7 (two-column: Subject Lines + Professional Language). Walk through the subject line tips first.
- **Quick drill (2 minutes)**: Give 3–4 bad subject lines (e.g., "SALE!!!", "Hello", "Important", no subject). Students fix each one using the tips. Share answers.
- Walk through the professional language column. Focus on the difference between formal and cold: *"'Dear Mr. Nam' is formal. 'Hi' is casual. Both can be warm — it's about matching the context."*
- Ask: *"What closing do you normally use in emails? Is it different in Vietnamese versus English?"* Discuss appropriate closings for different levels of formality.

→ The subject line drill is high-value. Bad subject lines are the #1 reason emails go unread — make sure students understand this.

→ For Vietnamese learners, the formal/informal distinction maps differently than in English. Spend a moment on when to use first names vs. titles in English business culture.

Phase 5: Before & After

Time: 0:38–0:43 | **Duration:** 5 min | **Slides:** 8

- Display Slide 8. Read the BEFORE version aloud. Ask: *"What's wrong with this email? How many problems can you find?"* Students call out issues.
- Read the AFTER version. Ask: *"What specific improvements do you notice?"*
- Elicit key differences: subject line added, proper greeting with name, one-line introduction, specific benefit, clear call to action, professional signature.
- Key point: *"The AFTER email is actually shorter. Better doesn't mean longer — it means more focused."*

→ Students should be able to name at least 4–5 specific improvements. If they struggle, point them back to the six parts on Slide 6.

→ This slide is the bridge to the practice activity. Students should feel confident about what a good email looks like before they write their own.

Phase 6: Practice Activity: Write Your Own Sales Email

Time: 0:43–0:55 | **Duration:** 12 min | **Slides:** 9

- Display Slide 9. Read the instructions: students write their own sales email using the template, for their own product/service or an imagined one.
- Students work individually for 7 minutes. They should include all six parts: subject line, greeting, introduction, key message, call to action, closing + signature.
- Students share with a partner for 3 minutes. Partners check: Does the email have all six parts? Is the subject line specific? Is there a clear call to action?
- Class debrief (2 minutes): Ask 1–2 volunteers to read their email aloud. Class identifies the six parts and gives one improvement suggestion.

→ Circulate during individual work. The most common gaps: missing subject line, vague call to action ("please contact me"), no signature block.

→ If a student finishes early, ask them to write a second email to a different prospect — this time without looking at the template.

→ During partner sharing, listen for students who are peer-correcting effectively. Highlight good feedback in the debrief.

Phase 7: Wrap-Up & Key Takeaways

Time: 0:55–1:00 | **Duration:** 5 min | **Slides:** 10

- Display Slide 10 (Key Takeaways). Read each takeaway and briefly reinforce with a question.
- *"What do we do first?"* → Research (do your homework). *"What do we write first?"* → Subject line. *"What's the most important sentence?"* → Call to action. *"What goes at the bottom?"* → Full signature block.
- Quick round-robin: each student shares one thing they'll do differently next time they write a business email in English.
- Close with: *"A good sales email is short, specific, and makes it easy for the reader to say yes. You now have the structure to write one every time."*
 - *The question-and-answer recap mirrors the original EIV demo wrap-up structure. It's effective because students are recalling, not just listening.*
 - *Keep this tight — the practice activity is the real capstone.*

Differentiation Notes

For stronger students (B2): During the practice activity, add a follow-up task: after writing their initial email, they must write a follow-up email for a prospect who didn't respond. This requires them to maintain a professional tone while being persistent — a critical skill in real sales. They should reference their original email and propose a new meeting time.

For students at B1: Provide the printed email template from Slide 9 as a handout and a word bank of useful phrases (e.g., "I would like to introduce...", "Our product can help you...", "Would you be available for..."). Focus assessment on correctly including all six email parts rather than language sophistication. Allow students to use their native language for brainstorming before writing in English.

Assessment

Formative assessment throughout via student responses and the email writing activity. Evaluate against these criteria:

- **Research awareness:** Does the student understand why prospect research must come before writing, and can they explain what to look for?
- **Email structure:** Does the student's email include all six essential components (subject line, greeting, introduction, key message, call to action, closing + signature)?
- **Subject line quality:** Is the subject line specific, under 50 characters, and relevant to the recipient's needs?
- **Professional tone:** Does the student use appropriate greetings, closings, and polite language that is formal but warm?