EdRugby Online Educational Resource

LESSON: Email writing

LEVEL
Upper primary
Lower secondary

THEME: Rugby media

DESCRIPTION:

Students are introduced to the form of an email. They explore the elements of an email and use the conventions and features in their own email.

OUTCOMES

This lesson contributes to the achievement of the following unit outcomes:

English

- With teacher guidance, identifies and discusses how linguistic structures and features work to shape readers' and viewers' understanding of texts.
- Uses writing to develop familiar ideas, events and information.
- Controls most distinguishing linguistic structures and features of basic text types such as stories, procedures, reports and arguments.

SUGGESTED TIME:

50 minutes

WHAT YOU NEED:

– class copies of student handouts (at the end of this lesson plan)

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australian RUGBY

PART 1 INTRODUCTION

a. Discuss emails in the students' own experience. Suggested questions could include:

   Who has sent or received an email?

   Why was it sent?

   Who was it sent to or from?

   Record this information as a brainstorm. As a group, look at the range of purposes and audiences represented. If some have no experience, discuss the reason – no computer access, no interest, no audience, religious belief.

b. Distribute copies of the handout sample emails and focus attention on the layout and format before reading. Suggested questions could include:

   How can you tell it's an email? How is it different from a letter?

   Who is it to and who is it from?

   What other information is there? (date, time, subject, if forwarded)

   Discuss detail in the 'from' field – from a .com or .gov or .edu and what country?

   Discuss details in the 'to' field – who else has it gone to?

   Discuss the form of the email address, including dots, @ and au.

   Discuss detail in the subject field – whether you can decide if it's worth reading.

c. Distribute copies of the student handout 'Annotated Email' with labels showing the different fields. Read sample emails looking for the types of language that create a relationship with the reader – first person pronouns, feeling and thinking verbs, personal information, jokes, abbreviations, misspelling. Students circle the features and annotate the samples.

d. After reading, ask if students could detect a typical email text structure. For example, is it arranged in spaced paragraphs? Did it start with general information and move to detail? Did it have an introduction and conclusion?

   Students annotate their own sample sheet. It is very likely that no consistent structure will be evident as email is a particularly flexible form.

e. Draw attention to any indication of ongoing interaction.

   Are some parts of the email answering questions or commenting on previous emails? How can you tell? Students may note the fact that some emails include the original message. The subject field also shows a reply.

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PART 2 WRITING AN EMAIL

a. Discuss use of the medium. Why would you use an email when you could write or phone?

b. Distribute student handout 'Writing email' and ask students to read the section 'Why use email?'. Discuss any comments that arise. Ask 'What if…?' questions such as, 'What if there was no subject entered?'.

c. Discuss a purpose and audience for the students' own email and the level of formality or structure required. Suggest friends, family or epal groups.

d. Refer students to the handout 'Writing email', read it and discuss any issues raised. For example you could raise the fact that not everyone uses email or can type so the audience is not as wide as the telephone or mail.

e. Plan and write emails. Remind students to refer to the student handout 'Writing email' and the annotated sample during planning and to check their work.

PART 3 REFLECTION

Why is email a good medium for some types of communication?
Consider the point of view of the sender and the recipient.

Discuss ways in which friends and other groups can use email.

PART 4 EXTENSION

- Show other sample emails to demonstrate different structures and language features for different purposes and audiences.
- Help students set up email groups amongst themselves to share information and opinions.
- Demonstrate features of various email systems–reply, forward, delete, spam filters, colour and font options, automatic signatures, attachments, viruses, sending graphics.
- Investigate the use of and design some original emoticons.
- Construct a poster warning of the pitfalls of using email (hasty messages, misinterpretation, sent to the wrong person, read by others, viruses, spam etc).
- Explore www.surfnetkids.com/penpal.htm and EdRugby Wallaby E-Pals.

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STUDENT HANDOUT SAMPLE EMAIL 1

From: Baz@sample.com.au
Sent: Monday, 5 May 2003
To: Jan@EdRugby.com.au
Subject: g'day from us

G'day Grimbo,

How you doing you old dog you?

Just thought I'd drop you a line to let you know how things are progressing here and to congratulate you on what seems like a cushy number you've landed back in OZ, you lucky sod!

Looks like the Briars Club is something special if the website is anything to go by. You seem to have them working hard over there mate and that's a good sign. Here mine and Fish's High School team is awaiting the arrival of an English team from Berkshire for a game on the 29th July, this will be our last game until December so it will be one to savour.

FYI We finished this season with a 5-3 ratio scoring 171-92 which considering most of our kids hadn't played before December 2002 is pretty impressive, I think! We managed to finish 3rd in the Socal HS Championships too, so all in all not a bad 6 months! We are hoping to run 2 XV's next year and a woman's team also so wish us luck!

On the family front Simey is now 18 months old and enjoying the pleasures of walking, talking and throwing a rugger ball around! He really is coming on in leaps and bounds lately and I have him marked in for the Eagles tighthead prop position for the 2020 WC! Danny is now playing loosehead for the HS team and loving it! At 5'10 and 220 lb he really enjoys the rough and tumble of the rucks and mauls and he is so looking forward to next year. Dannii and I are still working in the mortgage industry but are looking to get out of the states asap, as I have no interest in going back to the UK, we may end up some where else entirely, who knows we may even end up is OZ!

Anyway drop me a line asap and fill in the gaps...

Baz, Dannii and Kids

PS looking to maybe tour Aussie 2004/2005 - do you have a youth setup that won't thrash us too badly? LOL

PSS enjoy the 'no smiling' pic! Does this place look familiar? LOL

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STUDENT HANDOUT SAMPLE EMAIL 2

From: jmgeo0@josparkss.qld.edu.au
Sent: Monday, 5 Feb 2003
To: b.tune@EdRugby.com.au
Subject: hello

Dear Mr Tune,
We are excited about having you as our wallaby e-pal. One of our teachers, Mr George, registered us for EdRugby which was quite a suprise because no one in our class plays Rugby and not many of us know much about the game. We are in class GS at Joseph Park State School (years 5,6 and 7).
Next term we are hoping to learn how to play Rugby and to also learn more about you and the Australian Wallabies. We are almost as excited as Mr George that we might even be able to watch a game in the World Cup later this year. Mr G is English and he thinks they will do really well - as long as they don't play Australia!
We have done a little bit of research on you and we would like to know:
1.Do you prefer playing for Queensland or Australia?
2.When did you first start playing Rugby?
3.Did you always play Rugby or where you good at other sports?
4.Are you married?
5.Does your family come and watch you play?

Thank you Mr Tune.
We are looking forward to hearing from you soon.
From
567GS
Joseph Park State School

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jmgeo0@josparkss.qld.edu.au

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STUDENT HANDOUT SAMPLE EMAIL 3

From: Bob Sample [bobsamp@hotmail.com]
To: P.Noriega@wallabyepals.com.au
Subject: Wallaby E-Pals - Burgess High School

Hi Patricio, how are you going.

My name is Jack and I'm in Year 7 at Burgess High School, I play Rugby myself and am very honoured to write this letter to you. I follow the Wallabies on every tour and match, but I am very disappointed to say that I have not yet brought tickets to the World Cup. But as always the best seat in the House is on your couch at home watching television

I'm playing Rugby for my school this year. I also play for Southern Beaches in Club Rugby which is in the Hunter competition. Our team is not going too well but we have got some new talent which should fire up mid-season.
I tried out for the Hunter Rep team last year, but I was not successful. This year I did not try because I thought that I had to improve my game to beat the biased selectors.

I do hope that your back injury recovers fully for your next matches leading up to the world Cup. Wish good luck in the future (and especially the World Cup) to all of your teammates, and I hope you play your best Rugby for Australia. Hopefully you will win again.

Best wishes

Yours in Rugby

Jack Bocca - Burgess High School

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Gives the address of the sender

Tells what country it is from

Tells when the message was sent

Gives the email address of the recipient

Subject line tells what the message is about

Jane Balmer

From: C.Latham@wallabyepals.com.au
Sent: Monday, 5 May 2003 11:34 AM
To: Jane.Balmer@rugby.com.au
Subject: Wallaby E-Pals - Chris Latham

Wallaby E-Pals

Dear Jane

Thanks for your wonderful support this month. Actually, it hasn't been a great month for me or the mighty Reds. We've had a couple of great wins, especially the one against the 'old enemy', the Waratahs, and it looked like we might be an outside chance for the Super 12 semi-finals. Unfortunately we might struggle to finish in the top half of the ladder now, but we've been really training and playing hard. I've been injured again (it has been one of THOSE seasons) but I'm positive I'll be fit and healthy by World Cup time.

Refers to a supportive relationship

The ACT Brumbies seem to have found some form at the right time but the Waratahs are doing it tough, like the Reds. Let's hope the poor form will be behind us when players from the three Australian teams unite for the World Cup. Having said that, you have to take your hat off to the Kiwi teams who are filling the top spots on the Super 12 ladder. Could the Kiwis have peaked too soon? Let's wait and see!

Informal vocabulary

It is very encouraging to have such great support from the community. Knowing that you have the support of family, friends and supporters is really important to all sportsmen and women, and as a professional Rugby player, I think is vital to my success. I know that my wife Michelle and young Ashley, 4, are 100 percent behind me - and I reckon our pets are too!

Jokes

Personal pronouns

I was always keen on sport right from my primary school days in Narrabri, NSW, and always had very good family support. I didn't play my first game of Rugby until I was 17 - actually I agreed to play that day because it was a way of getting a day off school. I went to Sydney soon after that, joined the Randwick Rugby Club and later played a Super 12 game for the Waratahs in 1997. But I moved to Brisbane and joined the Reds the next year and haven't looked back since.

You need support especially when things aren't going too well, like when the team is not firing as well as it can or when you are injured. I've had my share of injuries over the years, medial ligament problems and a broken finger amongst other things, but I've always bounced back because there was someone I could turn to for sympathy and understanding. I reckon that's important in everyday life too, isn't it?

Informal language

For those of you who aren't aware, my Brisbane Rugby club is Wests whom I play for when I'm not on representative duties. I was the Reds top try scorer in 2000, 2001 and 2002 and have scored 17 tries for Australia.

Now just before I sign off I'd like to urge you to take advantage of all the benefits Club EdRugby has to offer. There is a media competition, a banner competition and a loyalty program to mention but a few of the activities you can join in. Next month I'm looking forward to receiving your questions about my personal interests, like, what do you think my favourite movie and TV shows are, and where would I like to go for a holiday?

This is a big, big year for Rugby in Australia and I'm glad you've joined in the fun. I can hardly wait for the World Cup. How about you?

Questions inviting a response

Electronic Signature

Best wishes to you all,

Chris Latham

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STUDENT HANDOUT WRITING EMAIL

Why use it?

We use emails for their speed of delivery anywhere in the world and their flexibility of timing. You can choose when to read it and when to reply. It can be easily sent to many people at once.

There's a handy record of what you've received and sent if you need it. It can be cheaper and more convenient than other ways of communication.

What's your purpose?

Be clear about why you're writing at the beginning. It could be to give or find specific information, to catch up socially or to arrange an event. Your purpose influences the kind of language and sentence structure you use but should always be clear.

Who's your audience?

It could be a person or a group, a friend or a stranger. This will make a difference to the kinds of language you use and whether it needs to be formal and correct or informal and near enough. You'll need to take care to get the email address correct because the wrong spelling, dots or spacing could send it to the wrong place.

The 'From' field will record your email address but if it's someone you don't know and your email address doesn't include your full name, you could add it in.

What's your subject?

Your subject needs to be clear and brief and tell the person the main topic of the email. People often receive many emails and decide which to read by the subject line. A good subject line tells them what it's about without having to open and read it every time.

What's in it?

Usually you need an introduction and a clear summary of what the email is about, giving detail after that. If it's just a friendly catch up you may not need to organise it that way.

Line spaces between paragraphs make it easier to read. Correct spelling is important for formal emails so learn how to spell check before you send your email. However, if it's just a friend they might still be able to understand your near-enough spelling and punctuation.

Is it ready to send?

Remember your emails can be read by anyone at any time so you won't want to put your secrets in it. Read it over to make sure it can't be misunderstood. Sometimes jokes don't work in print. Take time to reflect on what you have written, you can't take it back.