

B1 Preliminary · Writing Part 1: the responsive email

B1 Preliminary strategy notes; invented examples, not official Cambridge items.

The baton with four ribbons

The incoming email is a baton with four ribbons on it. Your reply must touch every ribbon.

The anatomy of the reply

Greeting: Hi Sam, / Dear Mia,



React first: Thanks for your email!
Great news about the competition!



Answer each cue, in the email's order.



Close: Write soon. / See you Friday! + your name.

The model reply

The weekend trip — a full 101-word model

Hi Alex, thanks for the invite — I'd love to come! A weekend at the lake sounds brilliant.

You asked what to bring: I'll pack my sleeping bag and some snacks for the journey, because the village shop is always closed. Tell me if we need anything else.

Leaving at eight on Saturday is fine with me; I'm an early bird anyway, so I'll meet you at the station ten minutes before.

And don't worry about the rain! Last time it rained we just played cards in the tent, and it was the best part of the trip. See you soon, Lin

Your turn: the reaction

Your turn

The friend's email opens with an apology for missing your party. Your reply opens with...

- A. I am writing to inform you that your apology is accepted.
- B. Don't worry at all — we'll miss you!
- C. You asked about the party.
- D. Dear Sir or Madam,

Your turn: report or answer

Your turn

The email asks which day is better. Your sentence:

- A. You asked which day is better for me.
- B. Sunday is better for me, because Monday is football day.
- C. Which day is better is a good question.
- D. I will answer the question now.

The wardrobe of closings

Small wardrobe, friendly clothes

Write soon. / See you Friday! / Best, / Take care,

No fixed closing wishes; no business register.

Try it

- 1 **The email** Ana can't come to your party: an apology, a new plan, a day question, and tell me how the party goes.
- 2 **The four ribbons** the apology · the new plan · the day · the party news.
- 3 **The model** Hi Ana, don't worry at all — we'll miss you, but these things happen! Next weekend works well for me; how about Sunday afternoon? I could come at about three. Saturday is harder — football practice until six. Don't be sad about the party: silly games planned, Mum is baking a huge chocolate cake, and I'll take photos and tell you all the gossip on Sunday. Write soon! — Bo

Decision

Four ribbons, warm tone, 98 words — a full-length model.

Check yourself

- Four cues — touch every ribbon.
- Open with a reaction — replies react; forms don't.
- Answer, don't report — Sunday is better for me.
- About 100 words, twenty minutes — then Part 2.