

Corporate emails *that get answered.*

A 15-minute crash course in writing clear, confident business email in English, with phrases you can copy today.

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- 01 The 5-part email
 - 02 Phrase bank
 - 03 Fix the Portuguese-English habits
 - 04 Tone and tricky emails
 - 05 Pre-send checklist



By Carla Barroso

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01 · STRUCTURE

The 5-part *email*.

Busy people read the subject and the first line. Put everything that matters there.

Subject **Approval needed: Q4 training budget by Thu 14 Nov**

GREETING

Hi Sarah,

PURPOSE

I'm writing to ask for approval of the Q4 training budget.

DETAILS

The total is €12,400 for two groups of six. The breakdown is attached.

ASK + DEADLINE

Could you approve it by Thursday 14 November, so we can start on the 18th?

SIGN-OFF

Thanks in advance,
Miguel

RULE 01

One ask per email

Two requests in one email usually means one gets ignored.

RULE 02

Subject = the ask

Write the subject as an action, with a date if there is one.

RULE 03

Short paragraphs

Two or three lines each. White space is easier to read on a phone.

02 · PHRASE BANK

Copy, paste, *adapt.*

Neutral, professional phrases that work with clients, colleagues and senior leaders.

OPENING

I'm writing about...

Following up on our call,

Quick question about...

Thanks for your email.

ASKING

Could you...?

Would you be able to ... by Friday?

Do you have time to...?

I'd appreciate it if you could...

ATTACHING

Please find attached...

I've attached...

You'll find the details below.

Here's the link to...

FOLLOWING UP

Just following up on...

Any update on...?

Have you had a chance to look at...?

Bumping this to the top of your inbox.

AGREEING

That works for me.

Sounds good.

Happy to go ahead.

Agreed. Let's do that.

CLOSING

Let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks in advance.

Speak soon,

Best regards,

03 · FIX THE HABITS

Translated from Portuguese?

Portuguese business writing is formal and indirect. Translated word for word, it sounds stiff in English. Here's the fix.

× VENHO POR ESTE MEIO

~~I come by this means to inform you that...~~

✓ SAY THIS

I'm writing to let you know that...

× FICO AO DISPOR PARA QUALQUER DÚVIDA

~~I remain at your disposal for any doubt.~~

✓ SAY THIS

Let me know if you have any questions.

× ATÉ SEXTA-FEIRA = BY FRIDAY

~~Please send me the informations until Friday.~~

✓ SAY THIS

Could you send me the information by Friday?

× PEDIMOS QUE CONFIRME A RECEÇÃO

~~Kindly request you to confirm the reception.~~

✓ SAY THIS

Could you confirm you've received it?

× SEM OUTRO ASSUNTO

~~Without other subject, my best regards.~~

✓ SAY THIS

Best regards,

04 · TONE

Pick the *right register*.

Match the other person. If they write "Hi", you can too.

	FORMAL	NEUTRAL	FRIENDLY
Greeting	Dear Ms Silva,	Hello Ana,	Hi Ana,
Thanks	Thank you for your email.	Thanks for getting back to me.	Thanks!
Sign-off	Kind regards,	Best regards,	Best, / Cheers,

SAYING NO

Unfortunately, we can't ... this time.

I'm afraid that won't be possible, but we could...

CHASING POLITELY

I know you're busy, so just a quick reminder about...

Could you let me know where we are with...?

BAD NEWS

I wanted to let you know straight away that...

Here's what happened, and here's what we're doing about it.

APOLOGISING

Sorry for the delay in getting back to you.

Apologies for the confusion. Here's the correct version.

05 • BEFORE YOU HIT SEND

The 30-second *check*.

Read your email once, as the person receiving it.

☐ The subject line says what I need, and by when

☐ The first sentence says why I'm writing

☐ There is one clear ask, with a deadline

☐ Paragraphs are two or three lines

☐ No "informations", "advices" or "doubts"

☐ The tone matches theirs

☐ Attachments are actually attached

☐ Names, dates and figures are correct

COACH'S TIP

If the email is longer than your phone screen, it's probably a call.

PRACTISE IT LIVE

Reading helps. *Rehearsing works.*

A playbook gives you the words. Confidence comes from saying them out loud, in your real situations, with feedback.



Carla Barroso

Founder of Spoken. Carla spent 20 years leading and training teams at global energy, engineering and infrastructure companies in London, including KBR, Statoil and JGC, and has taught business English full-time since 2021. She works with teams and executives in Lisbon and online, and she speaks Portuguese.

Book a free 15-minute call.

Tell us about your team or your next big meeting. We'll suggest the fastest way to get there. No test, no sales pitch.

[cal.com/spoken/15min →](https://cal.com/spoken/15min)

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MORE FREE PLAYBOOKS

PLAYBOOK 01

Corporate emails

Structure, copy-ready phrases and the habits that make Portuguese speakers sound overly formal.

PLAYBOOK 02

LinkedIn outreach

A profile, connection notes and first messages in English that people actually reply to.

PLAYBOOK 03

Teams & Meet

Phrases and etiquette for international video calls, from joining to the follow-up email.