

18. ACTES DE LANGAGE: écrire une lettre et un mail (plutôt) formels [Writing a (rather) formal letter and email]

In this section, we will look at how to best understand and write a simple formal email or letter.

You write a formal email or letter to people you don't know (well) and with whom you don't have a close relationship. The formal letter/email also differs from the informal one in its purpose: the formal letter is used for business or professional purposes. For example, you would use a formal letter or email to order a product (e.g., shoes), request a service (e.g., a Netflix subscription), make a confirmation (e.g., of a reservation), or inquire about information (about a product, prices, etc.).

It is clear that the formal letter/email takes a different form from the informal letter you write to a friend: for example, we always use the "vous" form in formal letters or emails. The salutation and closing formulas are also different (so no more « Bises » or « Coucou » here!). In business communication, the *conditionnel de politesse* is also often used.

Below, we provide in 18a an overview of the appropriate salutation and closing formulas, and in 18b, we give some expressions and formulations to help you get started with a business letter/email.

18a. les formules d'appel (salutation) et de politesse (closing formula)

- Formules d'appel (salutation)

- *Monsieur Le Commissaire/Monsieur Le Directeur/Madame La directrice* [you know the title!]
- *Monsieur, Madame* [You know nor the name nor the title]
- *Monsieur Legrand / Madame Lafayette* [you know the recipient's name]

- Formules de politesse (closing formulas)

→ for an email :

Respectueusement.
Salutations respectueuses.
Salutations distinguées
Sincères salutations

→ for al letter (These are much longer than for an email; remember these for now.):

Veillez agréer, Madame, Monsieur, mes salutations distinguées.
Veillez agréer, Madame, Monsieur, mes meilleures salutations.

Formal English closings formulas : *Yours faithfully / Yours sincerely / Kind regards / Best regards / Sincerely*

18b. What can be done with a formal letter

- To place an order for products, a service,... / to cancel (passer une commande (de qc), commander qc / annuler une commande) :

- passer commande de qc (= commander qc)	- to place an order for something
- Je voudrais passer commande de (trois pots de peinture blanche / deux pizzas / ...).	- I would like to place an order for (three cans of white paint / two pizzas / ...).
- Je voudrais commander deux ordinateurs portables de la marque Dell.	- I would like to order two Dell laptops.
- Je voudrais (réserver une chambre simple).	- I would like to book a single room.
- annuler qc	- to cancel something
- Je voudrais annuler ma commande, référence 43434RE.	- I would like to cancel my order, reference 43434RE.
- Je voudrais annuler ma réservation.	- I would like to cancel my reservation.

- to ask for information (demander des informations) :

- Pourriez-vous me dire si (vous avez encore des chambres libres / je peux payer par carte / Vous avez encore des fauteuils de bureau ? / les chambres ont du wifi) ?	- Could you tell me if (you still have rooms available / I can pay by credit card / you still have office chairs / the rooms have wifi ...)?
- Pourriez-vous m'envoyer (vos prix / votre catalogue / une brochure /...) ?	- Could you send me (your price list / your catalog / a brochure / ...)?
- Pourriez-vous me dire combien coute un séjour de 4 jours ? / A quelle heure on sert le petit-déjeuner ?	- Could you tell me how much a 4-day stay costs ? / At what time breakfast is served?
- J'aimerais / voudrais (avoir) plus d'informations : Quel est le prix de la webcam ? Est-ce que la webcam fonctionne avec Windows ?	- I would like more information: How much does the webcam cost? Does the webcam work with Windows?

- to thank someone (remercier qn de / pour qc)

- Je vous remercie pour / de l'organisation de la randonnée en montagne.	- I thank you for organizing the hiking trip in the mountains.
- Je voudrais vous remercier pour / de (l'invitation au mariage de votre fils).	- I would like to thank you for (the invitation to your son's wedding).
- Je voudrais exprimer mes remerciements pour (votre invitation) .	- I would like to express my thanks (for your invitation).

- to invite someone (inviter qn à qc)

- Nous voudrions / aimerions vous inviter à notre mariage.	- We would like to invite you to our wedding.
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- zich verontschuldigen (s'excuser de qc)

- s'excuser de qc	- to apologize for sth
> je m'excuse des problèmes que j'ai causés / de mon retard / de ma faute /...	> I apologize for the problems I have caused / for my delay / for my mistake.
- des excuses (une)	- apologies
> Acceptez mes excuses !	> Please accept my apologies.
> Je vous (te) présente mes excuses (pour les problèmes...)	> I offer you my apologies (for the problems...)

- To confirm sth (confirmer qc)

- Nous aimerions / voudrions confirmer notre présence à la fête de mariage de votre fils	- We would like to confirm our attendance at your son's wedding.
- une confirmation	- a confirmation