

Email Opening and Closing- Same or Different

Decide if each pair of sentences below has the same or different meaning (don't worry about formality yet)

Opening

- Dear Sir or Madam/ To whom it may concern
- Thank you for your email yesterday/ Thanks for your email yesterday.
- Thank you for writing back to me so quickly./ Thanks for your quick reply.
- This is Alex from the British Council/ My name is Alex Case and I work for the British Council
- I hope you are well./ How are you?/ How's it going?/ How are things?
- I hope you weren't (too) affected by the recent.../ I hope you are okay./ Are you okay?
- This is just a quick note to say.../ I have to go to a meeting in a minute but I thought I'd better let you know...
- I am writing to you in connection with.../ I am writing to you about...
- I am writing to you in order to.../ I am writing to you to...
- Regarding.../ Re:
- Thanks for making the time to see me yesterday./ Thanks for taking the time to meet with me yesterday.
- Long time no see./ Sorry it's taken me so long to reply to your email.

Closing

- Thank you for your cooperation./ Thanks in advance.
- I look forward to your reply./ I look forward to hearing from you.
- I look forward to hearing from you./ I look forward to hearing from you soon.
- I look forward to hearing from you soon./ I expect to hear from you soon.
- I look forward to hearing from you./ I'm looking forward to hearing from you./ Looking forward to hearing from you.
- I'm looking forward to hearing from you./ I am waiting for your reply.
- Please get back to me as soon as you can./ Please reply asap.
- Thanks/ Cheers
- Thanks in advance/ Thanks again
- If you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me./ If you need to know anything else, just let me know.
- Any feedback you can give me on this would be greatly appreciated./ If you have any further questions, please contact me at any time.

With the ones that do have the same meaning, are there any differences in formality?

Answer key

Opening

- Dear Sir or Madam/ To whom it may concern – **Different. With the latter I have absolutely no idea who will read it when, e.g. an open letter, a job reference or a will. With the former I basically know who will read it I just don't know the name.**
- *Thank you for your email yesterday/* Thanks for your email yesterday.- **Same**
- Thank you for writing back to me so quickly./ *Thanks for your quick reply.* - **Same**
- This is Alex from the British Council/ My name is Alex Case and I work for the British Council – **Different. The former is when they already know who I am.**
- *I hope you are well./* How are you?/ How's it going?/ How are things? – **Same**
- *I hope you weren't (too) affected by the recent.../* I hope you are okay./ Are you okay? - **Same**
- This is just a quick note to say.../ I have to go to a meeting in a minute but I thought I'd better let you know... - **Same**
- *I am writing to you in connection with.../* I am writing to you about... - **Same**
- *I am writing to you in order to.../* I am writing to you to... - **Same**
- *Regarding.../* Re: - **Same**
- *It was a pleasure to finally meet you yesterday./* Thanks for making the time to see me yesterday./ Thanks for taking the time to meet with me yesterday. – **Same**
- Long time no see./ Sorry it's taken me so long to reply to your email. – **Different. The former is about meeting face to face.**

Closing

- Thank you for your cooperation./ Thanks in advance. – **Different. The former is only used with an order or new rule or policy.**
- I look forward to your reply./ I look forward to hearing from you. – **Same**
- I look forward to hearing from you./ I look forward to hearing from you soon. – **Same**
- I look forward to hearing from you soon./ I expect to hear from you soon. – **Different. The latter is very direct and usually rather rude.**
- *I look forward to hearing from you./* I'm looking forward to hearing from you./ Looking forward to hearing from you. – **Same.**
- I'm looking forward to hearing from you./ I am waiting for your reply. – **Different. The latter shows impatience and so is usually impolite.**
- *Please get back to me as soon as you can./* Please reply asap. – **Same.**
- *Thanks/* Cheers – **Same**
- Thanks in advance/ Thanks again – **Different.**
- *If you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me./* If you need to know anything else, just let me know. – **Different.**
- Any feedback you can give me on this would be gratefully appreciated./ If you have any further questions, please contact me at any time. – **Different. The former is a request for feedback and the latter is an offer to answer questions.**

The more formal examples are in *italics* above.