Chapitre 2 : Email writing

Communication by email has become today the norm in almost all formal university and workplace relationships, and for this reason it requires a careful planning and skill in its writing.

1. Definition

Email is a method of communication that uses electronic devices to transmit messages between a sender and one or more recipients via the Internet.

A professional (formal) email address is an email account associated with your organization or professional identity. It typically includes your name and that of your organization, and uses a domain name specific to your organization.

2. Types of email

Formal vs. Informal

Formal :

- Written to a professor, colleague, boss, etc.
- Must always be professional
- Accurate grammar, punctuation, and spelling necessary

Informal :

- Written to friends and family
- Accuracy and grammar (spelling and punctuation) are not important
- You can make up your own rules

3. Professional (formal) email style

The email must be simple, dynamic, informative and maintaining a certain formality. You have a message to convey : it must be clear and concise, correct and courteous, friendly and convincing.

4. The Format of Mail Writing

*To : This shows the name of the recipient.

*Cc : It stands for Carbon Copy. It is that part of the mail that is used to send the same mail to other individuals. The email ids of other individuals are visible to all.

*Bcc : It stands for Blind Carbon Copy. It is that part of the mail which is used to send the same mail to other individuals without showing their ids.

*Subject line : The subject line of your email is the first impression given to your recipient and tells him what your email is about. The best subject lines are short, clear, descriptive, and give the reader a reason to explore your message further.

*Greeting/Salutation : It is always important to open your email with a greeting such as : Hello, Hi, Dear Sir/Madam, etc.

*Main body : The first paragraph in writing an email should briefly establish who you are and state the reason for writing. The second paragraph of an email should generally expand on the theme and purpose, providing adequate explanations and details. And get straight to the point, politely and succinctly.

Next comes the conclusion of the email, which can start with what you expect from the recipient in terms of response, then at the end of your last paragraph you should thank him for his time and consideration (ex : thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing from you, thank you for your consideration, feel free to email me if you have any questions, etc.)

The body of the mail is categorized into :

- Introduction
- Matter in detail
- Conclusion

*Closing : The email must end with an appropriate closing, always end your mail by courteous words such as "Best regards", "Cordially", "Sincerely", etc.

*Signature line : An electronic signature is the sender's name signed or typed at the end of an email that indicates who you are followed by your contact information. It's also beneficial to add your phone number, email address and job title, as well as your company name.

*Attachments : An attachment is a file attached to an email message. Pay attention to the size of your attached file : if it is too large, your recipient may have difficulty opening it. It's generally a good rule of thumb to only send attachments, like a CV or cover letter, only when requested.
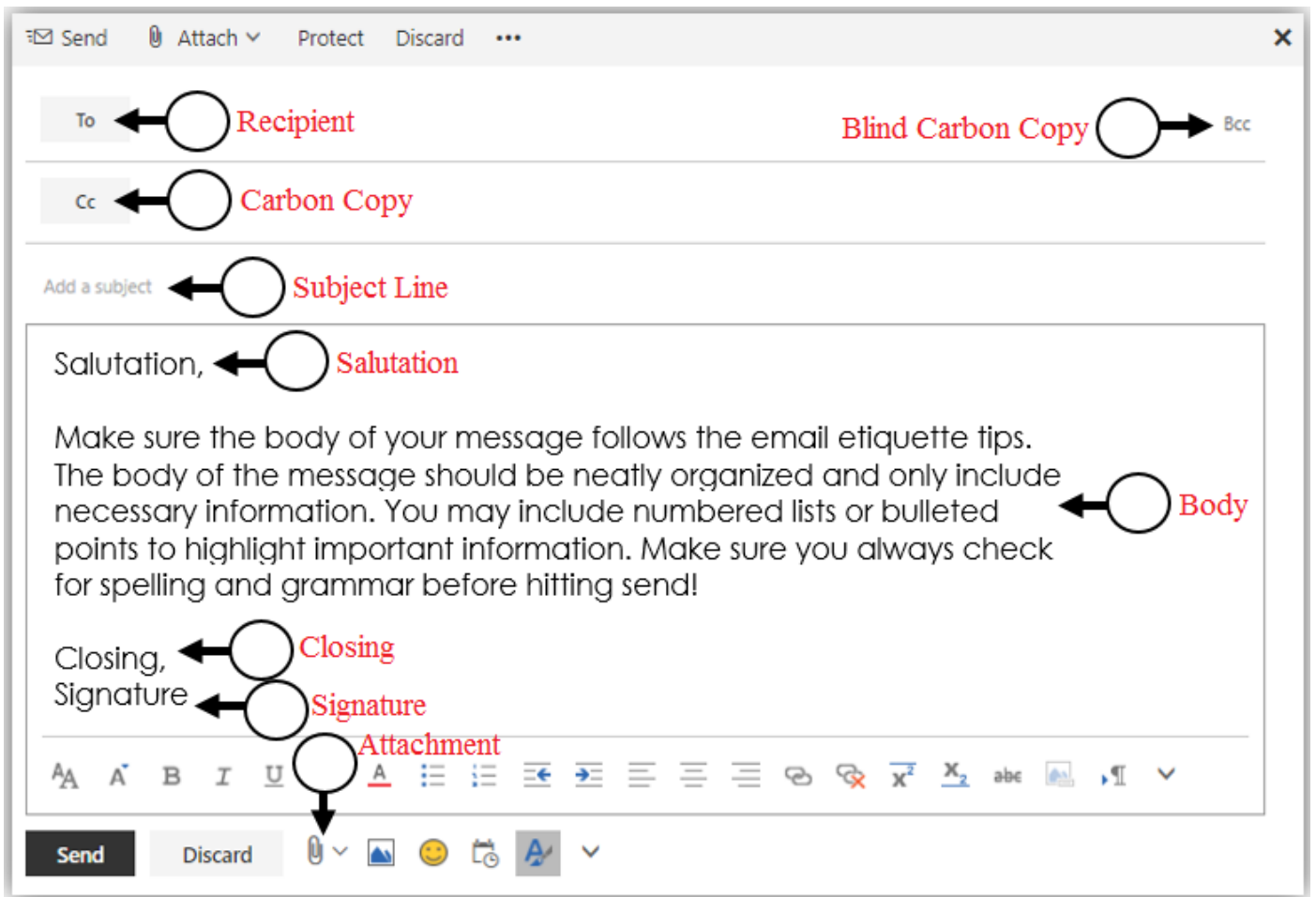
Figure 1 : Parts of email.

5. Tips :

- Do not use contractions (ex : don't, haven't, I'm, isn't).
- Do not write in all capital letters.
- Use formal vocabulary and sentence structure. Do not use slang.
- Proofread the email at least twice and get a second opinion if possible.

6. Advantages of Email Writing

- It is a cheaper form of communication.
- Email helps to contact or send information to a large group of people.
- It provides a written record of the communication.
- Email writing is an instantaneous form of communication.
- It can be used anytime and anywhere.

7. Disadvantages of Email Writing

- We need to have the internet to receive or send email.
- Viruses are easily spread via email attachments.
- One can get many junk emails.
- There is no guarantee if the reader reads the email or not.
- The details can be used for identity theft.