DELTA
Business
Communication
Skills

Louise Pile

E-mailing

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UNIT 3

Being clear and concise

THIS UNIT LOOKS AT:

- **factors affecting clarity, such as layout and language**
- **language for linking ideas (*however* …), giving examples (*such as* …) and explaining (*that is to say* …)**

Context

Look at the e-mail extracts below and answer these questions.

1 In A, is it clear what June is writing about?
2 In B, do we know what is postponed?
3 In C, what do you think are the words missing from the screen?
4 In D, do we know when the interviews are exactly?
5 In E, what jobs are available?

A

To: P.Schmidt@IGR.com
From: J.Daws@IGR.com
Subject:

Dear Peter
I've got an appointment to see my son's teacher at ten o'clock in the morning – that's up in the centre. I was supposed to go today, but she called me up just as I was about to drive there and said that she would have to postpone it – not sure why, though. Anyway, I'm not likely to be back much before lunchtime, I wouldn't think, so I suggest we meet on * 21st* instead in Room 123 to discuss NECTP23, if the room's available on that day, of course, but if it isn't, we'll have to use another room, possibly on the floor below. Could you perhaps give me a call, or if you prefer you could just send me an e-mail to let me know if you can make it or not.

Cheers,
June

B

To: sales@ivt.fi
From: jari-mikkonen@ivt.fi
Subject:

Please note that it has been postponed until 4th January.
Jari

C

Markus
you for your help yesterday with processing the applications for the marketing assis

D

To: alisonjacob@aol.com
From: mk1@compuserve.com
Subject: Marketing Officer interviews

Dear Ms Jacob
I am writing to confirm that you have been shortlisted for the post of Marketing Officer at MK1 Consulting. Interviews will take place next month. I would be grateful if you could confirm that you will be able to attend.
Yours sincerely

Jackie Price
Personnel Officer

E

Dear Mrs Reilly
Thank you for your e-mail in which you enquired about vacancies at HRT International.
We are currently recruiting personnel for the following posts:
- financial advisor
- clerical assistant
- legal secretary

For information on all current vacancies, visit our website:
http://www.letsgo.com or contact our HR department on 08978 384938.

Presentation

Being clear and concise

1 Look at the e-mails on these pages again and consider these questions.

1 How easy or difficult is it to find key information in these e-mails? Give your reasons.
2 What would make it easier for you to find key information?
3 Which of the five e-mails is the clearest in terms of content and layout?

2 Complete the guidelines below with these words and phrases.

graphics repetition subject paragraphs sentences length italics linking jargon consistent

Best practice – being clear and concise

1 Keep your e-mail as short as possible to keep scrolling to a minimum. Your message is then more likely to be read.
2 Keep your _____ short and simple (15–20 words maximum).
3 Use short _____ (e.g. four to six sentences), with generous spacing in between.
4 Limit your line _____ to about 65–70 characters.
5 Where possible, use active verb forms to make it clear who needs to do what.
6 Be _____ in your use of key terms to avoid confusion.
7 Give examples or explanations, where appropriate, of _____ and any other language that the reader may not know.
8 Use _____ words like *however* or *and* to organise your ideas.
9 Avoid unnecessary _____ .
10 Use shorter words rather than long phrases where appropriate.
11 Use clear _____ lines – you don't want the receiver to think your mail is spam.
12 Use bold type or _____ to emphasise important points. But remember that formatting and special characters do not always transfer well between different systems. Avoid underlining key points – they look like web links.
13 Avoid sending large _____ or images.

Tip Avoid jargon wherever possible. Remember that the receiver may not be familiar with your area of business.

3 Choose two of the e-mails from these pages. To what extent do they follow the guidelines?