

TOEFL Write an Email

Closings & Sign-offs: Skill-Building Exercises

Introduction

In the TOEFL *Write an Email* task, you are evaluated not only on grammar and organization, but also on **register**—how appropriate your language is for the relationship you have with the reader.

Closings and sign-offs play a small but important role. An email that ends too casually or too formally can reduce your score, even if the rest of the message is strong.

In this section, you will practice **choosing the most appropriate closing and sign-off** based on who the student is writing to:

- A **professor**
- A **university staff member**
- Another **student**

Read each situation carefully and choose the **best answer**.

Part 1: Multiple-Choice Practice

Choose the most appropriate closing and sign-off.

1. The student is writing to a professor to ask for clarification about an assignment deadline.

A. Thanks so much!!!

Best,

Alex

B. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Alex Martinez

C. Let me know what you think.

Cheers,

Alex

D. Have a great day!

Alex

2. The student is writing to a classmate about meeting to study for an exam.

A. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Alex

B. Let me know if that works for you.

Best,

Alex

C. I look forward to your response.

Respectfully,

Alex

3. The student is emailing a university advisor to schedule an appointment.

A. Thanks!

Alex

B. I appreciate your help.

Best regards,

Alex Martinez

C. Talk to you soon.

Cheers,

Alex

D. Have a nice day.

Alex

4. The student is writing to a professor to apologize for missing class.

A. Sorry about that!

Best,

Alex

B. Thanks for understanding.

Cheers,

Alex

C. I appreciate your understanding.

Sincerely,

Alex Martinez

D. Let me know ASAP.

Alex

5. The student is writing to another student in a group project.

A. Thank you for your assistance.

Kind regards,

Alex

B. Looking forward to working together.

Best,

Alex

C. I respectfully request your response.

Alex

6. The student is emailing IT support staff about a login problem.

A. Thanks a bunch!

Cheers,

Alex

B. Please help me fix this.

Alex

C. Thank you for your assistance.

Best regards,

Alex Martinez

D. Let me know what's up.

Alex

7. The student is writing to a professor to request a letter of recommendation.

A. Thanks for everything!

Best,
Alex

B. I appreciate your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Alex Martinez

C. Let me know soon.

Alex

D. Talk soon!

Cheers,
Alex

8. The student is emailing a classmate about sharing lecture notes.

A. I appreciate your assistance with this matter.

Sincerely,
Alex

B. I look forward to your response.

Best regards,
Alex

C. Thanks for your help.

Best,
Alex

D. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kind regards,
Alex

9. The student is writing to a department administrator about course registration.

A. Have a great one!

Alex

B. I look forward to your response.

Best regards,

Alex Martinez

C. Thanks!!!

Alex

D. Let me know when you can.

Cheers,

Alex

10. The student is writing to another student to confirm a meeting time.

A. I appreciate your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Alex

B. Thank you for reviewing my request.

Kind regards,

Alex

C. See you then.

Best,

Alex

D. I respectfully await your reply.

Alex

11. The student is emailing a professor with a follow-up question after office hours.

A. Thanks a lot!

Cheers,
Alex

B. I appreciate your help.

Best regards,
Alex Martinez

C. Let me know ASAP.

Alex

D. Talk to you soon.

Best,
Alex

12. The student is writing to a student tutor.

A. Thank you for your assistance.

Best regards,
Alex

B. Please advise.

Sincerely,
Alex

C. Thanks for the help!

Best,
Alex

D. I look forward to your response.

Respectfully,
Alex

13. The student is writing to a professor about submitting an assignment late.

A. Sorry about that!

Best,
Alex

B. Thanks for understanding.

Cheers,
Alex

C. I appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,
Alex Martinez

D. Let me know soon.

Alex

14. The student is emailing financial aid staff with a question.

A. Have a nice day!

Alex

B. Thank you for your assistance.

Best regards,
Alex Martinez

C. Thanks!!!

Alex

D. Talk soon.

Cheers,
Alex

15. The student is writing to another student to ask for clarification about homework.

A. I appreciate your help.

Sincerely,

Alex

B. Thanks for your time and consideration.

Kind regards,

Alex

C. Let me know if you can help.

Best,

Alex

D. I respectfully request your guidance.

Alex

16. The student is emailing a professor to confirm receipt of an email.

A. Got it, thanks!

Cheers,

Alex

B. Thank you for the information.

Best regards,

Alex Martinez

C. Talk soon.

Alex

D. Appreciate it.

Best,

Alex

17. The student is writing to a classmate about switching presentation times.

A. I appreciate your understanding.

Sincerely,

Alex

B. Thank you for considering my request.

Kind regards,

Alex

C. Let me know if that works.

Best,

Alex

D. I look forward to your response.

Respectfully,

Alex

18. The student is emailing a program coordinator.

A. Thanks a bunch!

Alex

B. Please get back to me.

Alex

C. Thank you for your time.

Best regards,

Alex Martinez

D. Talk to you soon.

Cheers,

Alex

19. The student is writing to a professor to ask about exam format.

A. Thanks!

Best,
Alex

B. I appreciate your help.

Sincerely,
Alex Martinez

C. Let me know ASAP.

Alex

D. Have a great day!

Alex

20. The student is writing to another student after completing a group task.

A. Thank you for your cooperation.

Kind regards,
Alex

B. Thanks for working on this with me.

Best,
Alex

C. I appreciate your assistance.

Sincerely,
Alex

D. Please confirm receipt.

Alex

21. The student is emailing a professor to request a meeting.

A. Let me know soon.

Alex

B. Thanks so much!

Cheers,

Alex

C. I look forward to meeting with you.

Best regards,

Alex Martinez

D. Talk to you later.

Best,

Alex

22. The student is writing to a classmate about missing notes.

A. I appreciate your time.

Kind regards,

Alex

B. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Alex

C. Thanks for your help.

Best,

Alex

D. I respectfully request your response.

Alex

23. The student is emailing library staff about a fine.

A. Thanks!

Alex

B. Please fix this.

Alex

C. Thank you for your assistance.

Best regards,

Alex Martinez

D. Talk soon.

Cheers,

Alex

24. The student is writing to another student to follow up on a message.

A. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Alex

B. Just checking in.

Best,

Alex

C. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kind regards,

Alex

D. Please respond at your earliest convenience.

Alex

25. The student is emailing a professor at the end of the semester to say thank you.

A. Thanks a lot!

Cheers,
Alex

B. I appreciate everything you've done this term.

Sincerely,
Alex Martinez

C. Have a great break!

Alex

D. Talk soon.

Best,
Alex

Answer Key: Closings & Sign-offs

(With Brief Analysis)

1. Correct answer: B

Formal request to a professor → polite, professional closing; no casual tone or emojis.

2. Correct answer: B

Peer-to-peer communication → neutral and friendly; avoids unnecessary formality.

3. Correct answer: B

Advisor = staff role → professional but not overly stiff; full sign-off is appropriate.

4. Correct answer: C

Apology to professor → respectful language and formal sign-off required.

5. Correct answer: B

Group project with another student → collaborative, friendly tone fits best.

6. Correct answer: C

IT support = institutional staff → polite, neutral, professional closing.

7. Correct answer: B

Letter of recommendation request → high-stakes academic context requires formality.

8. Correct answer: C

Classmate request → simple, friendly, and natural; avoids over-formality.

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9. Correct answer: B

Department administrator → formal institutional relationship; professional tone needed.

10. Correct answer: C

Confirming plans with another student → short, casual but appropriate.

11. Correct answer: B

Follow-up to professor → polite appreciation without being overly casual.

12. Correct answer: C

Student tutor = peer-support role → friendly, conversational closing is appropriate.

13. Correct answer: C

Late submission request → respectful acknowledgment of professor's authority.

14. Correct answer: B

Financial aid staff → professional, courteous institutional register.

15. Correct answer: C

Homework question to another student → informal and direct, but polite.

16. Correct answer: B

Confirming receipt to professor → brief, professional acknowledgment.

17. Correct answer: C

Schedule change with classmate → neutral and cooperative peer tone.

18. Correct answer: C

Program coordinator → administrative role requires formal, respectful closing.

19. Correct answer: B

Academic question to professor → polite appreciation and formal sign-off.

20. Correct answer: B

Post-task message to student → friendly and collaborative tone fits best.

21. Correct answer: C

Meeting request to professor → professional and forward-looking closing.

22. Correct answer: C

Requesting notes from classmate → simple gratitude, not institutional language.

23. Correct answer: C

Library staff inquiry → formal, service-oriented register.

24. Correct answer: B

Peer follow-up → brief, informal, and natural; avoids sounding demanding.

25. Correct answer: B

End-of-term thank-you to professor → respectful gratitude with formal sign-off.

Part 2: Rewrite the Closing & Sign-off

In the TOEFL *Write an Email* task, you may lose points if your closing and sign-off do **not match the relationship** between you and the reader. Even when the grammar is correct, an email can sound **too casual, too formal, or inappropriate** for the situation.

In this section, you will:

1. Read the email context
2. Identify why the closing and sign-off are inappropriate
3. Rewrite them so they better match the situation

Focus on **register**, not creativity.

Item 1

Context:

The student is writing to a professor to ask a question about an upcoming exam.

Inappropriate closing & sign-off:

Thanks a lot!

Cheers,

Alex

Your task:

Rewrite the closing and sign-off so they are appropriate for this situation.

Item 2

Context:

The student is writing to a university staff member (financial aid office) to ask about a missing document.

Inappropriate closing & sign-off:

Let me know ASAP.

Thanks!!!

Alex

Your task:

Rewrite the closing and sign-off so they are appropriate for this situation.

Item 3

Context:

The student is writing to a classmate to ask for lecture notes from a class they missed.

Inappropriate closing & sign-off:

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kind regards,

Alex

Your task:

Rewrite the closing and sign-off so they are appropriate for this situation.

Item 4

Context:

The student is writing to a professor to apologize for submitting an assignment late.

Inappropriate closing & sign-off:

Sorry about that!
Talk to you later,
Alex

Your task:

Rewrite the closing and sign-off so they are appropriate for this situation.

Item 5

Context:

The student is writing to a program coordinator to request approval to enroll in a full course.

Inappropriate closing & sign-off:

Thanks a bunch!
Best,
Alex

Your task:

Rewrite the closing and sign-off so they are appropriate for this situation.

Item 6

Context:

The student is emailing IT support staff about an ongoing technical problem with their student account.

Inappropriate closing & sign-off:

Please fix this as soon as possible.

Alex

Your task:

Rewrite the closing and sign-off so they are appropriate for this situation.

Item 7

Context:

The student is writing to a professor to request a letter of recommendation for graduate school.

Inappropriate closing & sign-off:

Let me know soon!

Thanks,

Alex

Your task:

Rewrite the closing and sign-off so they are appropriate for this situation.

Item 8

Context:

The student is writing to a classmate in a group project to confirm who will present first.

Inappropriate closing & sign-off:

I appreciate your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Alex

Your task:

Rewrite the closing and sign-off so they are appropriate for this situation.

Item 9

Context:

The student is writing to a department administrator to ask about a course waitlist.

Inappropriate closing & sign-off:

Have a great one!

Cheers,

Alex

Your task:

Rewrite the closing and sign-off so they are appropriate for this situation.

Item 10

Context:

The student is writing to another student to follow up on a meeting they planned earlier.

Inappropriate closing & sign-off:

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Alex

Your task:

Rewrite the closing and sign-off so they are appropriate for this situation.

Item 1 — Possible Answer & Analysis**Possible Answer**

Thank you for your time.

Best regards,

Alex Martinez

Brief Analysis

The original closing is too casual for a professor. Expressions like “*Thanks a lot*” and “*Cheers*” are appropriate for peers, not academic faculty. The revised version uses a polite, professional tone and a formal sign-off that aligns with TOEFL expectations.

Item 2 — Possible Answer & Analysis**Possible Answer**

Thank you for your assistance.

Best regards,

Alex Martinez

Brief Analysis

Using “ASAP” and multiple exclamation points sounds demanding and informal in institutional emails. The revision softens the request, expresses appreciation, and uses a professional sign-off suitable for university staff.

Item 3 — Possible Answer & Analysis**Possible Answer**

Thanks for your help.

Best,

Alex

Brief Analysis

The original closing is overly formal for a message between classmates. The revised version uses a friendly, natural tone that fits peer-to-peer communication while remaining polite and clear.

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Item 4 — Possible Answer & Analysis**Possible Answer**

Thank you for your understanding.

Sincerely,

Alex Martinez

Brief Analysis

An academic apology requires a respectful and serious tone. Casual language like “*Sorry about that!*” minimizes the situation. The revision demonstrates accountability and appropriate formality.

Item 5 — Possible Answer & Analysis**Possible Answer**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best regards,

Alex Martinez

Brief Analysis

A program coordinator is an administrative authority, so casual expressions like “*Thanks a bunch!*” are inappropriate. The revised closing reflects professionalism and proper register.

Item 6 — Possible Answer & Analysis**Possible Answer**

Thank you for your assistance.

Best regards,

Alex Martinez

Brief Analysis

Direct commands such as “*Please fix this*” sound impolite, even when the issue is urgent. TOEFL expects polite, service-oriented language when writing to staff.

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TOEFL Speaking & Writing Feedback: <https://bettertoeflscores.com>

Item 7 — Possible Answer & Analysis**Possible Answer**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Alex Martinez

Brief Analysis

A letter of recommendation request is a high-stakes academic situation. The revision removes urgency and casual tone, replacing them with respectful and professional language.

Item 8 — Possible Answer & Analysis**Possible Answer**

Let me know if that works for you.

Best,

Alex

Brief Analysis

Overly formal closings like “*Respectfully*” are unnatural between classmates. The revised version uses a cooperative, peer-appropriate tone.

Item 9 — Possible Answer & Analysis**Possible Answer**

Thank you for your assistance.

Best regards,

Alex Martinez

Brief Analysis

Friendly expressions like “*Have a great one!*” suggest a personal relationship. Administrative communication requires a neutral, professional tone, which the revision provides.

Item 10 — Possible Answer & Analysis

Possible Answer

Just checking in.

Best,

Alex

Brief Analysis

Institutional phrasing such as “*I look forward to your response*” sounds stiff between students. The revision reflects natural peer communication while remaining polite.

Part 3: Complete the Closing & Sign-off

In this section, you will see a **full email** based on a realistic TOEFL-style scenario. The email is **almost complete**, but the **closing sentence and sign-off are missing**.

Your task is to:

- Read the situation carefully
- Pay attention to **who the student is writing to**
- Write an appropriate **closing sentence** and **sign-off** to finish the email

Focus on **tone, register, and clarity**, not creativity.

Item 1**Scenario:**

You are a student in a university course. You are writing to your **professor** to ask for clarification about the format of an upcoming exam.

Points to include (already addressed in the email):

- You reviewed the syllabus
 - You are unsure whether the exam will include short-answer questions
 - You are asking for clarification
-

Email

Subject: Question About Exam Format

Dear Professor Lee,

I hope you are doing well. I have reviewed the syllabus and the course announcements, but I am still unclear about one detail related to the upcoming exam. Specifically, I was wondering whether the exam will include short-answer questions in addition to multiple-choice questions.

Thank you for taking the time to read my message.

[Write an appropriate closing sentence and sign-off here.]

Item 2

Scenario:

You are a student writing to a **university staff member** in the advising office to request an appointment.

Points to include (already addressed in the email):

- You would like to discuss course planning
- You are available next week
- You are flexible with times

Email

Subject: Advising Appointment Request

Dear Advising Office,

I am writing to ask if it would be possible to schedule an advising appointment. I would like to discuss my course plan for the upcoming semester and make sure I am on track to meet my program requirements.

I am generally available next week and can adjust my schedule if needed.

[Write an appropriate closing sentence and sign-off here.]

Item 3**Scenario:**

You are writing to a **classmate** to ask for notes from a lecture you missed.

Points to include (already addressed in the email):

- You were absent due to illness
 - You are asking for lecture notes
 - You are polite and appreciative
-

Email

Subject: Lecture Notes from Monday

Hi Jordan,

I wasn't able to attend class on Monday because I wasn't feeling well, and I wanted to ask if you would be willing to share your notes from that lecture. I would really appreciate it, as I want to make sure I didn't miss any important information.

[Write an appropriate closing sentence and sign-off here.]

Item 4**Scenario:**

You are writing to a **professor** to apologize for submitting an assignment late.

Points to include (already addressed in the email):

- You acknowledge the late submission
 - You briefly explain the situation
 - You take responsibility
-

Email

Subject: Apology for Late Assignment Submission

Dear Professor Smith,

I am writing to apologize for submitting my assignment after the deadline. Unfortunately, I experienced a technical issue while uploading the file, and I was unable to resolve it before the due time. I understand that this is my responsibility, and I appreciate your consideration.

[Write an appropriate closing sentence and sign-off here.]

Item 5**Scenario:**

You are writing to another **student** in your group project to confirm meeting details.

Points to include (already addressed in the email):

- You propose a meeting time
 - You mention the purpose of the meeting
 - You ask for confirmation
-

Email

Subject: Group Project Meeting

Hi Maria,

I wanted to confirm whether you are available to meet on Thursday afternoon to work on the final presentation. I think it would be helpful to review our slides together and decide who will present each section.

[Write an appropriate closing sentence and sign-off here.]

Item 6

Scenario:

You are writing to **IT support staff** about a login issue with your student account.

Points to include (already addressed in the email):

- You explain the problem
 - You mention when it started
 - You request assistance
-

Email

Subject: Student Account Login Issue

Dear IT Support Team,

I am currently unable to log in to my student account, and the issue began earlier this morning. I have already tried resetting my password, but the problem still persists. I would appreciate any assistance you can provide.

[Write an appropriate closing sentence and sign-off here.]

Item 7**Scenario:**

You are writing to a **professor** to request a letter of recommendation.

Points to include (already addressed in the email):

- You explain why you are applying
 - You mention the deadline
 - You ask politely
-

Email

Subject: Letter of Recommendation Request

Dear Professor Johnson,

I hope you are doing well. I am applying to several graduate programs this fall, and I was wondering if you would be willing to write a letter of recommendation on my behalf. The application deadline is October 15, and I would be happy to provide any additional materials you might need.

[Write an appropriate closing sentence and sign-off here.]

Item 8**Scenario:**

You are writing to a **program coordinator** to ask about enrolling in a full course.

Points to include (already addressed in the email):

- You explain your interest in the course
 - You acknowledge the course is full
 - You ask about possible options
-

Email

Subject: Enrollment Question for Fall Semester

Dear Program Coordinator,

I am very interested in enrolling in PSYC 320 this fall; however, I noticed that the course is currently full. I wanted to ask whether there is a waitlist or any possibility of adding another section.

[Write an appropriate closing sentence and sign-off here.]

Item 9**Scenario:**

You are writing to another **student** to follow up on a message you sent earlier.

Points to include (already addressed in the email):

- You are following up politely
 - You restate your question
 - You keep the tone friendly
-

Email

Subject: Quick Follow-Up

Hi Daniel,

I just wanted to follow up on the message I sent earlier regarding our presentation schedule. I wanted to check whether you had a chance to look it over.

[Write an appropriate closing sentence and sign-off here.]

Item 10**Scenario:**

You are writing to a **professor** at the end of the semester to say thank you.

Points to include (already addressed in the email):

- You express appreciation
 - You mention the course
 - You keep the tone respectful
-

Email

Subject: Thank You for This Semester

Dear Professor Nguyen,

As the semester comes to an end, I wanted to take a moment to thank you for a very engaging and informative course. I really appreciated the feedback you provided throughout the term, and I learned a great deal from the class.

[Write an appropriate closing sentence and sign-off here.]

Part 3 — Model Responses (Answer Key)

Item 1 — Professor / Exam Clarification

Email

Subject: Question About Exam Format

Dear Professor Lee,

I hope you are doing well. I have reviewed the syllabus carefully as well as the recent course announcements, but I am still unclear about one detail related to the upcoming exam. Specifically, I wanted to ask whether the exam will include short-answer questions in addition to multiple-choice questions, or if it will focus only on one format. I want to make sure that I prepare appropriately and focus my review on the correct types of questions.

Thank you for taking the time to read my message.

I appreciate your clarification.

Best regards,

Alex Martinez

Item 2 — University Staff / Advising Appointment

Email

Subject: Advising Appointment Request

Dear Advising Office,

I am writing to ask if it would be possible to schedule an advising appointment. I would like to discuss my course plan for the upcoming semester and make sure that I am meeting all of my program requirements. In particular, I have some questions about course sequencing and elective options.

I am generally available next week and can be flexible with times if needed. Please let me know if there are any available appointment slots or if additional information is required from me.

Thank you for your assistance.

**Best regards,
Alex Martinez**

Item 3 — Classmate / Lecture Notes

Email

Subject: Lecture Notes from Monday

Hi Jordan,

I hope you're doing well. I wasn't able to attend class on Monday because I wasn't feeling well, and I wanted to ask if you would be willing to share your notes from that lecture. I checked the course website, but I want to be sure I didn't miss any explanations or examples that were discussed in class.

If it's convenient for you, I would really appreciate the help. Please let me know, and I can pick them up or review them online.

Thanks for your help.

**Best,
Alex**

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Item 4 — Professor / Late Assignment Apology**Email**

Subject: Apology for Late Assignment Submission

Dear Professor Smith,

I am writing to apologize for submitting my assignment after the deadline. Unfortunately, I experienced a technical issue while uploading the file, and I was unable to resolve it before the due time. I understand that I should have planned for potential problems and that this delay is my responsibility.

I take full responsibility for the late submission and understand if any penalty applies. I appreciate you taking the time to review my work despite the delay.

Thank you for your understanding.

Sincerely,

Alex Martinez

Item 5 — Classmate / Group Project Meeting**Email**

Subject: Group Project Meeting

Hi Maria,

I wanted to check whether you are available to meet on Thursday afternoon to work on the final presentation. I think it would be helpful for us to review the slides together, make sure everything is organized clearly, and decide who will present each section. That way, we can be confident we are prepared before the deadline.

Please let me know if Thursday works for you, or if another time would be better. I'm happy to adjust my schedule if needed.

Let me know if that works for you.

Best,

Alex

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Item 6 — IT Support / Login Issue**Email**

Subject: Student Account Login Issue

Dear IT Support Team,

I am currently unable to log in to my student account, and the issue began earlier this morning. When I try to access the system, I receive an error message stating that my credentials are invalid. I have already attempted to reset my password and restarted my device, but the problem still persists.

Since I need access to my account for coursework, I would appreciate any guidance you can provide to help resolve this issue as soon as possible.

Thank you for your assistance.

Best regards,

Alex Martinez

Item 7 — Professor / Letter of Recommendation**Email**

Subject: Letter of Recommendation Request

Dear Professor Johnson,

I hope you are doing well. I am applying to several graduate programs this fall, and I was wondering if you would be willing to write a letter of recommendation on my behalf. I greatly valued your course and believe that your perspective on my academic work would be very helpful.

The application deadline is October 15, and I would be happy to provide my résumé, personal statement, or any additional materials you might need.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Alex Martinez

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Item 8 — Program Coordinator / Full Course**Email**

Subject: Enrollment Question for Fall Semester

Dear Program Coordinator,

I am very interested in enrolling in PSYC 320 this fall because it aligns closely with my academic goals. However, I noticed that the course is currently full. I wanted to ask whether there is a waitlist available or if there may be any opportunity to add another section.

I understand that enrollment is limited, but I would appreciate any advice you can offer regarding possible options or next steps.

Thank you for your assistance.

Best regards,

Alex Martinez

Item 9 — Classmate / Follow-Up**Email**

Subject: Quick Follow-Up

Hi Daniel,

I just wanted to follow up on the message I sent earlier regarding our presentation schedule. I wanted to check whether you had a chance to review it and see if the proposed timing works for you. I know things can get busy, so I completely understand if you haven't had time yet.

Let me know when you get a chance, and we can make any necessary adjustments.

Just checking in.

Best,

Alex

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Item 10 — Professor / End-of-Semester Thank You

Email

Subject: Thank You for This Semester

Dear Professor Nguyen,

As the semester comes to an end, I wanted to take a moment to thank you for a very engaging and informative course. I really appreciated the detailed feedback you provided on assignments, as well as the way you explained complex concepts clearly during lectures. The class helped me develop stronger analytical and writing skills.

I truly enjoyed the course and learned a great deal this term.

Thank you again for a great semester.

Sincerely,

Alex Martinez

TOEFL Writing Task 2: Write an Email

Practical Strategies (A–Z)

Use these strategies to plan, write, and revise your email efficiently during the TOEFL exam.

A — Audience Awareness

Always identify who you are writing to:

- Professor → formal
- University staff → professional
- Classmate → neutral or friendly

Your tone, greeting, and closing must match the relationship.

B — Be Polite, Not Emotional

Politeness is expected; emotion is not.

- ✓ *Thank you for your time.*
- ✗ *I'm really stressed and upset!!!*

Avoid emojis, exclamation points, and emotional language.

C — Closing Sentence

Your closing sentence should:

- Show appreciation (*Thank you for your assistance.*)
- Or signal next steps (*I look forward to your response.*)

Do not introduce new requests in the closing.

D — Directness

State your purpose clearly and early.

Avoid long stories or unnecessary background.

E — Email Structure

A strong TOEFL email usually follows this structure:

1. Greeting
 2. Purpose (first paragraph)
 3. Explanation / details
 4. Request or action
 5. Closing sentence + sign-off
-

F — First Line

Your first sentence should state the reason for writing.

- *I am writing to ask about...*
- *I am writing to request...*

Avoid casual openers like *Hope you're having a great day!!!*

G — Greetings

Choose the greeting based on the relationship:

- Professor / Staff → *Dear Professor Lee, / Dear Advising Office,*
- Classmate → *Hi Jordan,*

Never skip the greeting.

H — Hedging (Softening Requests)

Use polite modal verbs:

- *could*
- *would*
- *might*

Example:

✓ *I was wondering if you could...*

✗ *I need you to...*

I — Informal Language (Avoid When Needed)

Avoid informal expressions in academic or institutional emails:

- *ASAP*
 - *Thanks a bunch*
 - *Cheers*
 - *Let me know soon!*
-

J — Job of the Email

Always ask yourself:

What is this email supposed to do?

- Ask
- Apologize
- Request
- Thank

Every sentence should support that purpose.

K — Keep It Focused

Stay on topic.

One email = one main purpose.

L — Length

Aim for 100–130 words.

Too short can sound incomplete; too long wastes time.

M — Modals for Politeness

Use:

- *could*
- *would*
- *may*

They improve tone without changing meaning.

N — Neutral Tone

Especially important when writing to staff or administrators.

Avoid sounding demanding, urgent, or emotional.

O — Organization

Use short paragraphs (2–4 sentences).

Clear paragraphing improves coherence and readability.

P — Proofread Quickly

Before time ends, check:

- Capitalization
 - Missing words
 - Verb tense
 - Politeness
-

Q — Question Placement

Ask questions clearly and directly.

Do not hide questions in long sentences.

R — Requests

Requests should be:

- Polite
- Clear
- Realistic

Example:

✓ *I would appreciate any guidance you can provide.*

S — Sign-offs

Match the relationship:

- Professor / Staff → *Sincerely, / Best regards,*
- Classmate → *Best, / Thanks,*

Always include your name.

T — Titles

Use titles in greetings (*Professor Smith*),
but do not include titles in the sign-off.

U — Urgency (Use Carefully)

If something is urgent, state it politely:

- *at your convenience*
- *when possible*

Avoid commands.

V — Vocabulary

Use simple, accurate academic vocabulary.
Do not try to sound advanced if it risks mistakes.

W — Word Choice

Prefer:

- *assistance over help* (formal)
- *appreciate over thanks* (formal)

Adjust based on audience.

X — eXtra Requests (Avoid)

Do not add new requests in the final sentence.
Finish cleanly.

Y — Your Name

First name is usually acceptable.

Full name is safer and more professional.

Z — Zero Creativity Needed

This is not a creative writing task.

Clarity, appropriateness, and tone matter more than originality.

Final Reminder

A polite, clear, well-organized email with an appropriate closing can score very well— even with simple grammar and vocabulary.