



TOEFL Writing Templates

Write an Email Task

By the experts at [Magoosh](#)

The TOEFL Write an Email task gives you **seven minutes** to read a scenario, plan your response, write a complete email, and proofread it. This guide gives you a **universal email skeleton** that works for any prompt, plus **phrase menus for five specific task types**. Walk in with structural language ready to go. These phrases give you scaffolding, not a script — ETS rewards original language and real substance, so use them as a starting point, not a fill-in-the-blank formula.

Preparing for the Academic Discussion task too? We've got a [companion set of templates](#).

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How Templates Fit Into Your Strategy

If you've watched our Write an Email lessons, you already know the core strategy: use the three bullet points in the prompt as your outline, write about two sentences per bullet, aim for 100–120 words, and keep the tone polite and professional.

Templates don't replace any of that. They sit on top of it. Think of it this way:

The lessons teach you what to do — address each bullet point, invent realistic details, manage your time, match the tone to the situation.

Templates give you language for how to say it — preset phrases for opening, transitioning, requesting, suggesting, and closing.

Both matter. But content always comes first. A beautifully structured email that doesn't actually respond to the prompt won't score well. And a response full of relevant ideas but no clear structure will also lose points.

What templates can do

- **Save you time.** You won't stare at a blank screen wondering how to start.
- **Help you sound natural.** Idiomatic phrases like "I was wondering if you could..." read as fluent and confident.
- **Support social conventions.** The ETS rubric scores politeness, register, and the formulation of requests, refusals, and criticisms.

What templates cannot do

- **Supply your content.** The three body paragraphs need specific details, reasoning, and ideas that respond to the prompt.
- **Teach timing.** You still need to practice writing a complete email in seven minutes.
- **Guarantee variety.** The rubric at Score 5 requires "effective syntactic variety and precise, idiomatic word choice." Use these menus as a starting library, not a permanent crutch.

The goal is to use these menus as a starting library, not a permanent crutch. As you practice, you'll naturally start replacing template phrases with your own voice. That's the point.

The Universal Email Skeleton

Every Write an Email response follows this structure, regardless of the task type.

Greeting

Match your greeting to the recipient. The prompt will tell you who you're writing to. Most prompts call for a neutral, professional register — think everyday email English, not an academic paper and not a text message. When in doubt, aim for the middle of the spectrum.

Don't spend more than a few seconds on this. Pick the greeting, type the name, and move on.

GREETING OPTIONS	RECIPIENT
Hi [First Name], / Hi [First Name]! / Hello [First Name],	Friend or peer
Hi [First Name], / Hello [First Name], / Dear [First Name],	Semi-formal (club leader, coworker, neighbor)
Dear [Title] [Last Name], / Hello [Title] [Last Name],	Authority figure (professor, manager, director)
Dear [Role/Title], / Hello,	Role-based (editor, coordinator, committee)

Opening sentence

One sentence that sets the context before you dive into the body. Optional but helpful.

PHRASE	BEST FOR
I'm writing to you about...	Universal — works in any situation
I wanted to reach out about...	Peers, semi-formal
Thank you for [specific thing].	When gratitude is relevant
I hope you're doing well.	Semi-formal or formal, warm opening
I have a quick question about...	Informal — email centers on a specific ask

Body paragraphs

One short paragraph per bullet point — about two sentences each. Use the task-type phrase menus that follow for how to begin and connect these paragraphs.

Closing sentence

PHRASE	BEST FOR
Thank you for your time, and I look forward to hearing from you.	Formal or semi-formal requests
I really appreciate your help with this.	When you've asked for something
Please let me know if you have any questions.	When you've provided information or suggestions
I hope we can [specific action] soon.	Informal — friends, peers
Thanks again, and I hope this is helpful.	When you've given feedback or advice
Thank you for all of your help with [specific thing]. I really appreciate it.	Acknowledging someone's effort

Sign-off

Match the register of your greeting. Then your name on the next line. That's it.

SIGN-OFF OPTIONS	REGISTER
Best, / Take care, / Thanks, / See you soon,	Informal
Best regards, / Thank you, / All the best,	Semi-formal
Sincerely, / Kind regards, / Respectfully,	Formal

Pro tip: Don't spend much time on the greeting, opening, closing, and sign-off. They matter for register, but they don't really earn you points on their own. Spend your time on the body paragraphs.

TYPE 1 Requesting Help or Action

When you'll see this: The prompt asks you to write to someone because you need something — help with a project, academic support, information about a service, or access to an opportunity.

How to recognize it: The bullet points will typically ask you to (1) explain your situation or why you need help, (2) describe what you specifically need, and (3) make a direct request or propose a next step.

Typical scenarios: Emailing a professor about difficulty in a course, writing a friend for help planning an event, applying for a volunteer position, or inquiring about availability and rates for a service.

Bullet 1 — Explain the situation

PHRASE	BEST FOR
I'm writing because I could use some help with...	Peers, semi-formal
I've been [situation], and I was hoping you might be able to help.	Authority figures, formal
As you may know, [context], so I could really use some guidance.	Semi-formal, when recipient has background knowledge
I recently [situation], and I wanted to reach out for your help.	Universal
I'm interested in [opportunity], and I'd like to learn more about it.	Inquiries, applications

Bullet 2 — Describe what you need

PHRASE	BEST FOR
Specifically, what I need help with is...	Universal — clear and direct
The main challenge I'm facing is...	Academic or professional contexts
What I'm hoping for is someone who could...	Asking for a specific type of help
In particular, it would be really helpful if...	Polite, semi-formal
I have experience with [skill], and I'd be happy to [contribution].	Applications, describing qualifications

Bullet 3 — Make the request

PHRASE	BEST FOR
Would you be available to [specific action]?	Universal — polite question form
If possible, could we meet on [day] to discuss this?	When proposing a meeting
I was wondering if you could [specific request].	Authority figures — soft, polite
Would it work for you to [proposed action]?	Peers, semi-formal
I'd really appreciate it if you could let me know by [timeframe].	When a deadline is involved

TRANSITIONS FOR REQUESTS

- With that in mind,
- That's why I'm reaching out to ask if
- Given the situation,
- So I was hoping
- Because of that,

Pro tip: Every request phrase uses a **question or conditional form** — “Would you...?”, “Could we...?”, “I was wondering if...” This is deliberate. Direct commands like “Help me with this” or “Meet me on Friday” sound demanding in English emails. The rubric scores politeness, so keep your requests soft.

TYPE 2 Giving Feedback and Suggestions

When you'll see this: The prompt asks you to write to someone about an experience you had — an event you attended, a service you used, a product you tried — and share your thoughts, including suggestions for improvement.

How to recognize it: The bullet points will typically ask you to (1) describe what you enjoyed or your overall experience, (2) identify a specific issue or area for improvement, and (3) suggest a change or addition.

Typical scenarios: Writing to a venue manager about a concert you attended, emailing a restaurant with praise and a menu suggestion, or contacting an organization about a problem you experienced with their service.

Bullet 1 — Describe the experience

PHRASE	BEST FOR
I wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed...	Positive feedback — warm, appreciative
I recently had the chance to [attend/visit/try]..., and I wanted to share my thoughts.	Universal — neutral entry
Overall, my experience with [thing] was very positive.	Semi-formal — balanced tone
I have some feedback I'd like to share about...	Direct, professional
I've been a [customer/member/reader] for [time], and I wanted to reach out about...	When you have an established relationship

Bullet 2 — Identify what worked or what needs improvement

PHRASE	BEST FOR
One thing I particularly enjoyed was...	Highlighting a positive before transitioning to a concern
However, I did notice that...	Transitioning to a concern — polite
The one area that I think could be improved is...	Constructive criticism — diplomatic
While most of the experience was great, [specific issue] stood out to me.	Balanced — acknowledges the good before the concern
Unfortunately, I ran into a problem with...	When reporting a clear issue

Bullet 3 — Suggest an improvement or addition

PHRASE	BEST FOR
One idea that might help is...	Soft suggestion — not pushy
Have you considered [suggestion]?	Conversational, collaborative
I think it would make a big difference if...	When you feel strongly about the suggestion
For future [events/issues], it might be worth...	Forward-looking
A small change that could really help is...	Positioning the suggestion as easy to implement

TRANSITIONS FOR FEEDBACK

- That said,
- On the other hand,
- With that in mind, I had a suggestion.
- Even so,
- Alongside that,

Pro tip: Feedback emails test your ability to be **honest without being rude**. The rubric scores social conventions, and in English email culture, that means softening criticism. Notice the difference between “The sound quality was terrible” and “I did notice that the sound quality could have been better.” Same message, very different tone. Use phrases that **describe** the issue rather than **judge** it.

TYPE 3 Offering Advice or Perspective

When you'll see this: Someone in the scenario has come to you with a decision or dilemma, and the prompt asks you to share your thoughts, weigh the options, and help them think through it.

How to recognize it: The bullet points will typically ask you to (1) acknowledge their situation or concern, (2) share your perspective on the options, including advantages and disadvantages, and (3) suggest an alternative or a next step.

Typical scenarios: A friend might be considering a major life change — like switching jobs or moving to a new city — and is asking for your honest opinion and suggestions.

Bullet 1 — Acknowledge their situation

PHRASE	BEST FOR
I've been thinking about what you told me, and I have some thoughts.	Friends, peers — warm
I can see why you're having a hard time deciding.	Empathetic — validates the difficulty
That sounds like a big decision, and I'm glad you reached out.	Supportive, semi-formal
I completely understand your concern about...	When they've expressed a specific worry
It's great that you're thinking this through carefully.	Encouraging — positive framing

Bullet 2 — Share your perspective

PHRASE	BEST FOR
In my opinion, [option] would be a good choice because...	Clear recommendation
From what you've told me, I think... would work well for you.	Personalized advice
One advantage of [option] is that... On the other hand,...	Weighing pros and cons
Based on my own experience, I'd suggest...	Personal credibility
Something to keep in mind is that...	Raising a consideration they may have missed

Bullet 3 — Suggest alternatives or next steps

PHRASE	BEST FOR
Another thing you might want to consider is...	Introducing an alternative
Have you thought about [alternative]?	Conversational, non-pushy
In the meantime, you could also try...	Suggesting a short-term action
Whatever you decide, I think [specific step] would be a good place to start.	Wrapping up with a concrete next step
If you want, we could [action] together to help you figure it out.	Offering ongoing support

TRANSITIONS FOR ADVICE

- Then again, there's another side to consider.
- At the same time,
- Regardless of what you choose,
- Here's what I'd keep in mind:
- One more thing to think about:

Pro tip: Advice emails are where **inventing details** pays off the most. The prompt won't give you a personal story — but you can make one up. “When I was deciding whether to get a cat last year, I found that...” adds specificity, makes your advice feel authentic, and gives you more to write. Details like this are encouraged. They don't need to be true — they need to be realistic.

TYPE 4 Recruiting, Inviting, or Recommending

When you'll see this: You're the one leading or organizing something — an event, a project, a group — and the prompt asks you to get someone else involved, whether that's volunteering, participating, or collaborating.

How to recognize it: The bullet points will typically ask you to (1) explain what's happening or what you're organizing, (2) describe what's needed or why this person would be a good fit, and (3) invite them to participate or ask for their involvement.

Typical scenarios: Organizing a company event and needing volunteers, reaching out to a colleague about a collaboration, or writing to a group to invite them to participate in something you're planning.

Bullet 1 — Explain the initiative

PHRASE	BEST FOR
I'm writing to let you know about...	Universal — clean, direct
I'm excited to share that we're planning...	Enthusiastic — events, group activities
As some of you may have heard, [organization] is organizing...	Group emails
I wanted to reach out because I think you'd be a great fit for...	Targeted recruitment
We've been working on [project], and it's coming together nicely.	Updates with an ask

Bullet 2 — Describe what's needed or why they're a good fit

PHRASE	BEST FOR
We're looking for people who can help with...	Group calls for volunteers
The reason I thought of you is that...	Personal appeal — flattering, specific
Your experience with [relevant skill] would be a great fit.	Targeted — acknowledges their strengths
To make this work, we'll need help with...	Practical, task-oriented
Here's what's involved:...	Before describing specific responsibilities

Bullet 3 — Invite them or call to action

PHRASE	BEST FOR
Would you be interested in joining us?	Universal — open, friendly
If you'd like to get involved, please let me know by...	When there's a deadline
I think this would be a great opportunity, and I'd love for you to be part of it.	Warm, encouraging
Could we set up a time to talk about how you might contribute?	Semi-formal — proposing a follow-up
Please reach out if you have any questions or want to learn more.	Low-pressure invitation

TRANSITIONS FOR RECRUITING

- Here's where I could use your help.
- That's why I'm reaching out.
- I immediately thought of you because
- With that in mind, I wanted to ask
- So here's what I'm thinking:

Pro tip: Recruiting emails have a built-in tension: you're asking someone for their time. The key is to make the opportunity sound appealing — not just the obligation. Instead of “We need someone to set up tables,” try “We're looking for someone to help with setup — it's a great way to be involved from the start.” Frame the ask as an invitation, not a chore.

TYPE 5 Navigating Disagreement or Constraints

When you'll see this: You need to say “no” to something, explain why you can't do what someone asked, or address a situation where you and the recipient don't fully agree. The challenge is doing this while keeping the relationship intact.

How to recognize it: The bullet points will typically ask you to (1) acknowledge the other person's position or concern, (2) explain your constraint or reasoning, and (3) propose a compromise or alternative.

Typical scenarios: Explaining why a group can't switch plans to accommodate one person's preference, responding to a request you're unable to fulfill, or negotiating terms with a service provider.

Bullet 1 — Acknowledge their position

PHRASE	BEST FOR
I completely understand where you're coming from.	Universal — empathetic
Thank you for bringing this up — I appreciate your honesty.	When someone has raised a concern
I want you to know that I've carefully considered your request.	Formal — shows respect for their input
I understand how important this is to you, and I wish I could help.	When you have to decline
You raise a good point, and I can see why you feel that way.	Acknowledging a valid concern before disagreeing

Bullet 2 — Explain the constraint

PHRASE	BEST FOR
Unfortunately, [reason] makes it difficult to...	Universal — clear, direct
The challenge is that...	Neutral — frames it as a situational problem, not a personal refusal
I'm not able to [specific action] at this time because...	Formal, professional
I'd love to accommodate your request, but [constraint].	Warm tone while declining
The reason we decided on [current plan] is that...	When justifying an existing decision

Bullet 3 — Propose a compromise or alternative

PHRASE	BEST FOR
What I can do instead is...	Proactive — shows you're still willing to help
Would it help if we [alternative]?	Collaborative — invites their input
As a compromise, how about...?	Direct, solution-oriented
I'd like to suggest [alternative] as a possible solution.	Formal, professional
Could we find a time to discuss this and work something out?	When the situation needs more conversation

TRANSITIONS FOR DISAGREEMENT

- That said, I do want to find a solution.
- However, I also want to be honest about
- With that in mind, here's what I'd suggest.
- Still, I want to work with you on this.
- I know this isn't what you were hoping to hear, but

Pro tip: The hardest part of this category is explaining a constraint without sounding like you're making excuses. Lead with the fact, not the apology. "Unfortunately, the schedule has already been set" is cleaner than "I'm so sorry, but I really can't change this because I already planned everything and it would be too complicated." Be honest, be brief, and then move to the solution. That's what the reader — and the scorer — want to see.

Putting It All Together: A Sample Email

Let's see how these phrases work inside a complete email.

Imagine the prompt asks you to write to a coworker who organized a team lunch, give feedback on the event, and suggest an idea for next time. That's a **Type 2: Feedback and Suggestions** task. Here's what a response might look like:

Hi Sarah,	
<i>I hope you're doing well.</i>	<i>Opening sentence</i>
<i>I wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed</i> the team lunch last Friday. The restaurant you chose had a great atmosphere, and it was nice to see everyone outside of the office for a change.	<i>Bullet 1 — describe the experience</i>
<i>That said, I did notice that</i> the seating arrangement made it hard to talk to people at the other end of the table. A few of us ended up only chatting with the same two or three people the whole time, which felt like a missed opportunity.	<i>Bullet 2 — identify what needs improvement</i>
<i>One idea that might help is</i> reserving a round table next time, or even splitting into smaller groups at different spots. That way, everyone gets a chance to mix and connect.	<i>Bullet 3 — suggest an improvement</i>
<i>Thanks again for</i> putting this together — I know it's a lot of work to organize.	<i>Closing sentence</i>
<i>Best regards,</i>	<i>Sign-off — semi-formal</i>
Alex	

Notice a few things:

- Every *pink phrase* came from the menus in this guide, but the specific details (the restaurant, the seating problem, the round table idea) are all invented. That's the content part — and it's what makes the email feel real.
- **The tone is consistent** — semi-formal throughout, matching a coworker relationship.
- **Each body paragraph is two sentences**, directly addressing one bullet point. Short and complete.
- **The total length is about 120 words** — right in the target range.

This is what it looks like when templates and content work together. The phrases give you structure. Your ideas give the email substance.

Try it yourself: Magoosh's [free TOEFL practice test](#) includes the Write an Email task with AI-powered feedback — so you can practice with a real prompt and see how your email scores.

How to Practice with These Templates

Having a phrase menu is a start. But the real value comes from how you practice with it. Here's a four-step workflow that builds your skills without letting the templates become a crutch.

Step 1: Identify the task type. Read the prompt and ask yourself: which of the five categories does this fall into? This takes five seconds and immediately tells you which phrase bank to reach for.

Step 2: Write with the menu open. For your first few practice attempts, keep this guide open and actively choose phrases from the menu. Don't just grab the first one — read through the options and pick the one that best fits the specific prompt and recipient.

Step 3: Write with a different set of phrases. Take the same prompt and write a second response, but this time, use different phrases from the menu. This forces you to build flexibility.

Step 4: Write without looking. Now write a third response to the same prompt without looking at the menu at all. Use whatever language feels natural. You'll find that many of the phrases have already become part of your vocabulary.

Pro tip: Do this three-draft exercise with at least five different prompts — one from each category. That's fifteen emails total. If you do this, you'll have internalized the most important structural language for the task, and you'll write faster and more confidently on test day.

Practice smarter: [Magoosh TOEFL](https://www.magoosh.com/toefl) includes an AI Writing Grader that scores your email responses and tells you exactly what to improve — so you're not practicing in the dark.

What Templates Cannot Do (And What to Do Instead)

Templates can't supply your content

The three body paragraphs in your email need specific details, reasoning, and ideas that respond to the prompt. A phrase like “Specifically, what I need help with is...” gives you a great sentence starter — but what comes after it has to come from you. That’s where the skill of inventing realistic details comes in.

If you’re using Magoosh, the Write an Email lesson on [inventing details](#) covers this skill in depth — it’s one of the most important things you can practice before test day.

Templates can't teach timing

Even if you’ve memorized every phrase in this guide, you still need to practice writing a complete email in seven minutes. That means one minute to read and plan, four to five minutes to write, and one to two minutes to proofread. Templates help with the writing phase, but they can’t help you manage the clock.

Over-reliance makes your writing sound average

Here’s the uncomfortable truth: if thousands of students are reading this same guide, and everyone always uses “I completely understand where you’re coming from” in their disagreement emails, those emails start to sound alike.

The ETS rubric at the highest score level rewards “precise, idiomatic word choice” — which means your word choice, not everyone’s. Use the phrase menus to learn the patterns — how polite requests are formed, how feedback is structured, how transitions work. Then push yourself to develop your own variations.

A preset template might not match the tone

A formal phrase in a peer email sounds stiff. A casual phrase in an email to a professor sounds careless. The tone guidance in the phrase tables (the “Best For” column) helps with this, but you still need to read the prompt carefully and adjust. If you default to the same phrases regardless of the recipient, you’ll lose points on social conventions — which the rubric explicitly scores.

The Magoosh lesson on [tone and register](#) walks through how to calibrate your language for different recipients — it’s worth watching before you start practicing with these menus.

What to do instead of memorizing

- **Read real English emails.** Pay attention to how native speakers open, transition, and close. Notice the phrases they use and add them to your personal repertoire.
- **Build your own phrase library.** As you practice, keep a running list of phrases that feel natural to you. Over time, this replaces the menus in this guide — and that’s exactly what should happen.
- **Focus on content first.** On test day, spend your mental energy on what to say, not how to start the sentence. If you’ve practiced enough, the structural language will come automatically.

Frequently Asked Questions

Should I memorize all of these phrases?

No. Pick two or three favorites from each slot and practice with those. The goal is to have a small, flexible toolkit — not to memorize a dictionary. As you practice, you'll naturally develop your own go-to phrases.

What if my task doesn't fit any of these five categories?

Start with the universal skeleton and write naturally. Most tasks will fit one of the five types, but if a prompt genuinely feels different, don't force it into a category. The underlying structure — greeting, three body paragraphs addressing the bullet points, closing — works regardless.

Can I mix phrases from different categories?

Absolutely. Many real prompts blend categories. You might be giving feedback (Type 2) and also making a request (Type 1) in the same email. Use whatever phrases match what you're actually trying to say in each paragraph.

Will using templates get me a 5?

Templates can help you get closer to a 5, but they won't get you there on their own. A score of 5 requires effective elaboration, syntactic variety, precise word choice, and consistent social conventions — all working together. Templates address the structure and social conventions, but the elaboration and variety have to come from practice and skill development.

Ready to practice? Start with a [free TOEFL practice test](#) that includes all three writing tasks — Build a Sentence, Write an Email, and Academic Discussion.

Ready to Put These Templates into Practice?

Magoosh TOEFL Prep gives you everything you need — authentic practice material, expert instruction, and tools that give you real feedback on your writing and speaking.

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You've got the phrases. Now go write!