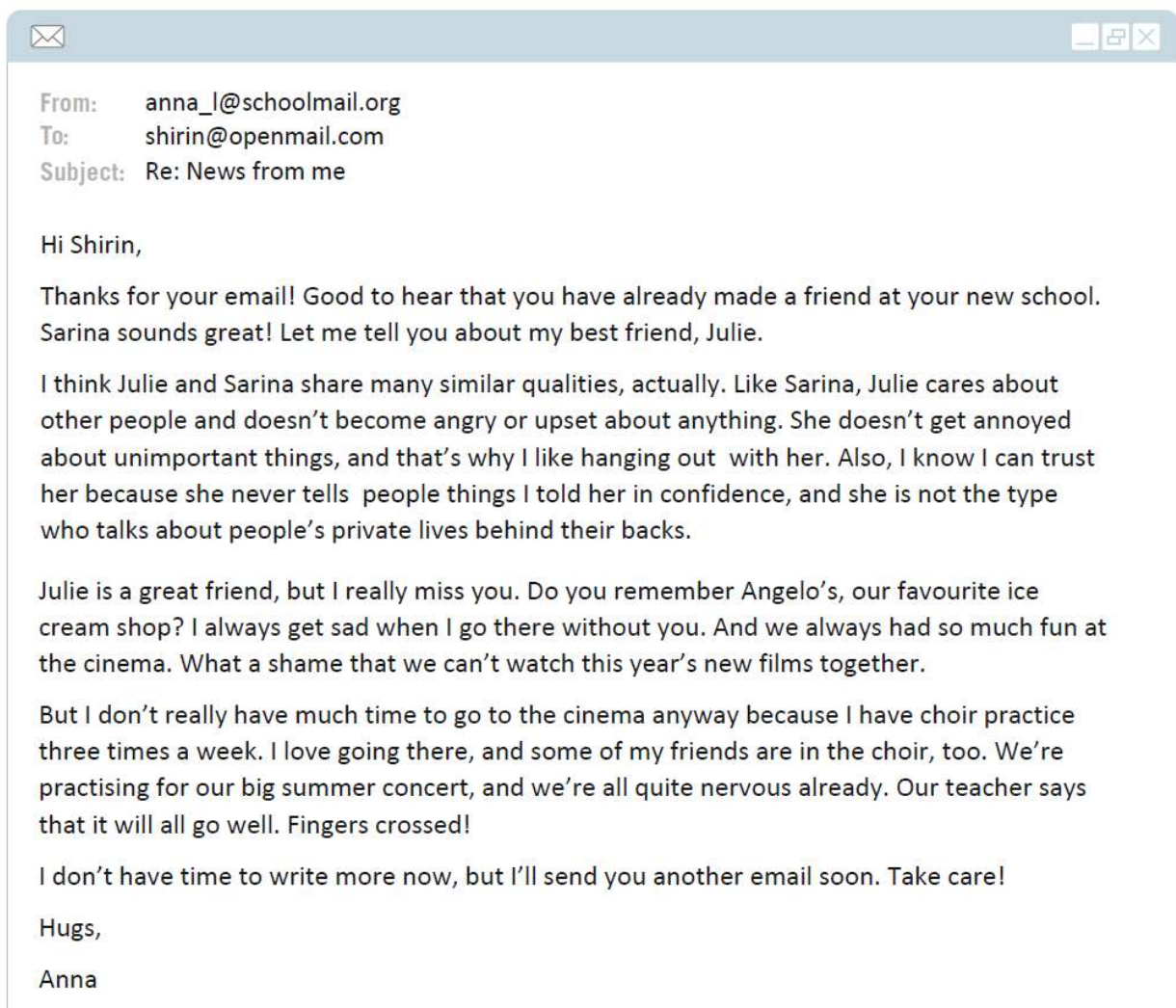
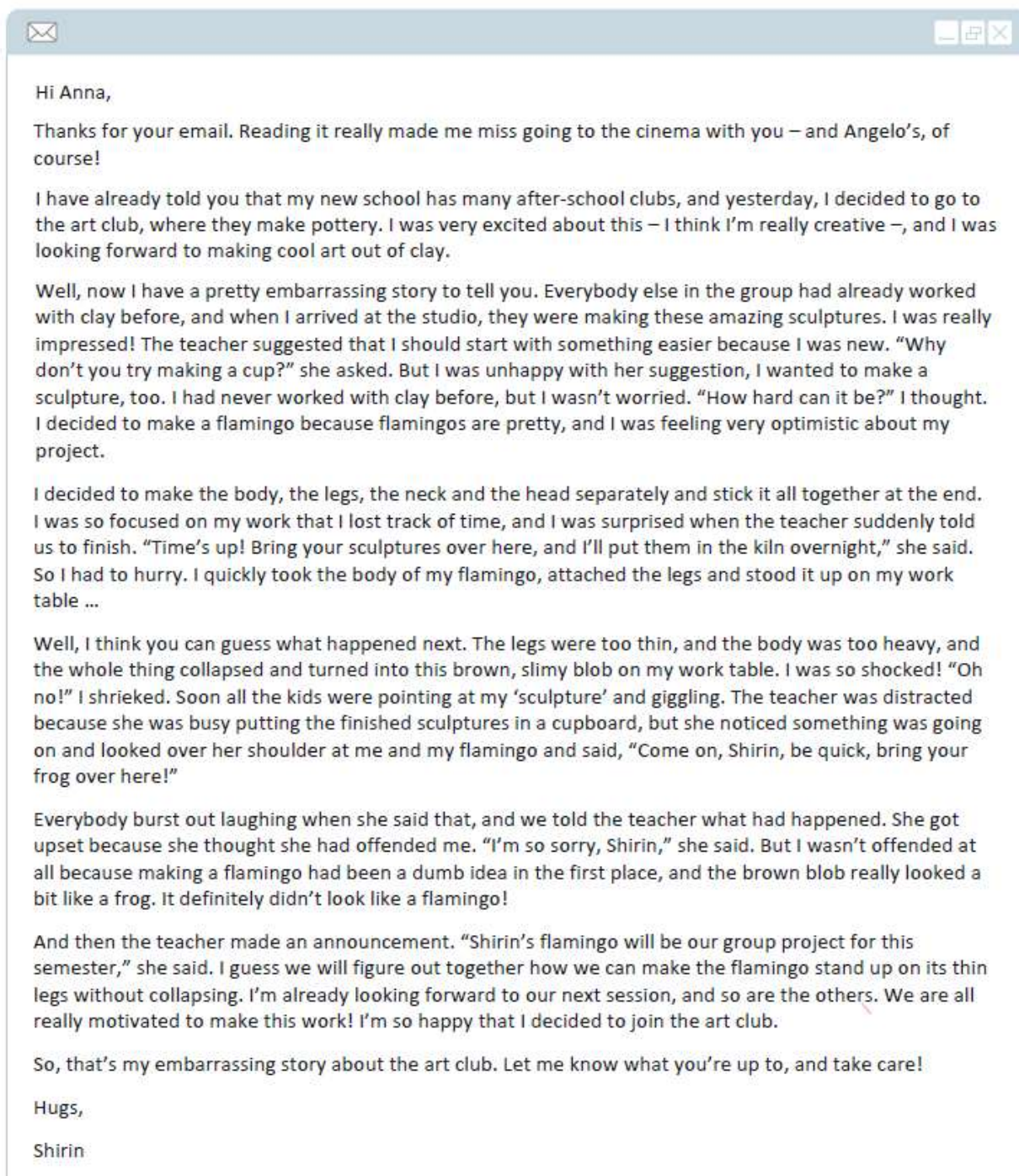


B1 | Unit 01, p. 5 | Sample informal email: Anna writing her friend Shirin





Hi Anna,

Thanks for your email. Reading it really made me miss going to the cinema with you – and Angelo's, of course!

I have already told you that my new school has many after-school clubs, and yesterday, I decided to go to the art club, where they make pottery. I was very excited about this – I think I'm really creative –, and I was looking forward to making cool art out of clay.

Well, now I have a pretty embarrassing story to tell you. Everybody else in the group had already worked with clay before, and when I arrived at the studio, they were making these amazing sculptures. I was really impressed! The teacher suggested that I should start with something easier because I was new. "Why don't you try making a cup?" she asked. But I was unhappy with her suggestion, I wanted to make a sculpture, too. I had never worked with clay before, but I wasn't worried. "How hard can it be?" I thought. I decided to make a flamingo because flamingos are pretty, and I was feeling very optimistic about my project.

I decided to make the body, the legs, the neck and the head separately and stick it all together at the end. I was so focused on my work that I lost track of time, and I was surprised when the teacher suddenly told us to finish. "Time's up! Bring your sculptures over here, and I'll put them in the kiln overnight," she said. So I had to hurry. I quickly took the body of my flamingo, attached the legs and stood it up on my work table ...

Well, I think you can guess what happened next. The legs were too thin, and the body was too heavy, and the whole thing collapsed and turned into this brown, slimy blob on my work table. I was so shocked! "Oh no!" I shrieked. Soon all the kids were pointing at my 'sculpture' and giggling. The teacher was distracted because she was busy putting the finished sculptures in a cupboard, but she noticed something was going on and looked over her shoulder at me and my flamingo and said, "Come on, Shirin, be quick, bring your frog over here!"

Everybody burst out laughing when she said that, and we told the teacher what had happened. She got upset because she thought she had offended me. "I'm so sorry, Shirin," she said. But I wasn't offended at all because making a flamingo had been a dumb idea in the first place, and the brown blob really looked a bit like a frog. It definitely didn't look like a flamingo!

And then the teacher made an announcement. "Shirin's flamingo will be our group project for this semester," she said. I guess we will figure out together how we can make the flamingo stand up on its thin legs without collapsing. I'm already looking forward to our next session, and so are the others. We are all really motivated to make this work! I'm so happy that I decided to join the art club.

So, that's my embarrassing story about the art club. Let me know what you're up to, and take care!

Hugs,
Shirin

 MeenaR

Who cares where the royal children go to school?

Have you seen the articles about the children of the royal family returning to school in their cute school uniforms? I have, and I am fed up with all the fuss. I don't understand how anyone can be excited about this.

The articles that I've read say that their posh private school was chosen very carefully. They go to a day school in London, and their parents take them to school every day. They follow the same national curriculum and study the same compulsory subjects as all the other kids in England, but they can enjoy many other extracurricular activities as well, for example, judo, gardening, ballet and a debating and public speaking club. (Yes, this is a school for six- to thirteen-year-olds.) The buildings look a bit old, but I think the teaching methods are really modern, with lots of laboratories and a rooftop playground. The food is amazing as well because the children get organic snacks and lunches. In short, this sounds like an ideal place for young people. (But maybe only to parents?)

In my opinion, every child should be able to go to a great school. Unfortunately, only very few people can afford to send their children to such a fancy place. The children who attend all come from rich families and often have famous parents because it is very expensive. It costs about £20,000 a year, and pupils (or parents) have to buy the special uniform, which costs £550. These prices are ridiculous!

A good education in a great building, interesting subjects and good food during the school day should be available to everyone in England. Instead of reading about the perfect school two very rich kids go to, we should think about improving the whole system. Do you have any ideas? What is your school like? Share what you think in the comments.

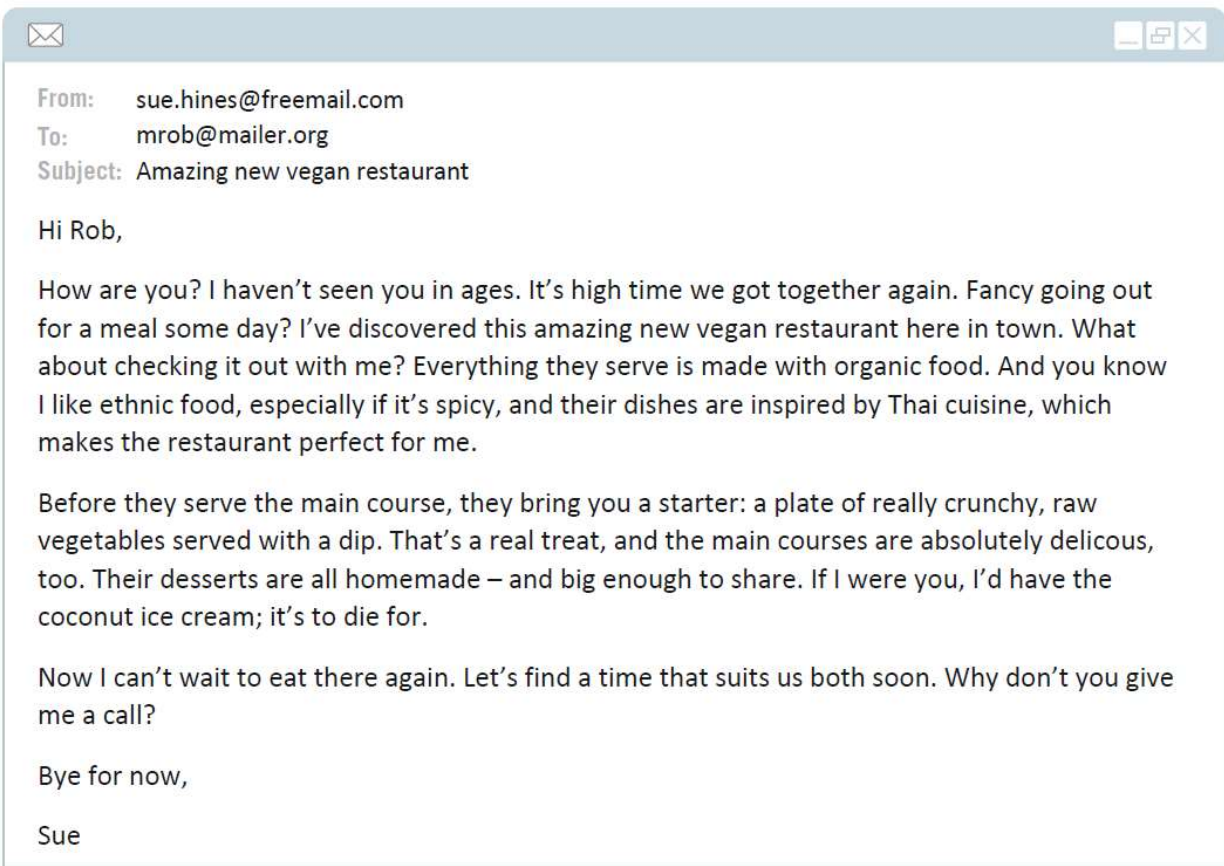
 Rita commented

There should be more electives in our school system. These subjects, which the students can choose for themselves, allow students to develop their interests and talents and learn skills they can use in later life. For example, a student who is really good at science can take an extra physics course. This is good preparation for a job or for university. This is why I think a greater variety of electives should be offered at every school.

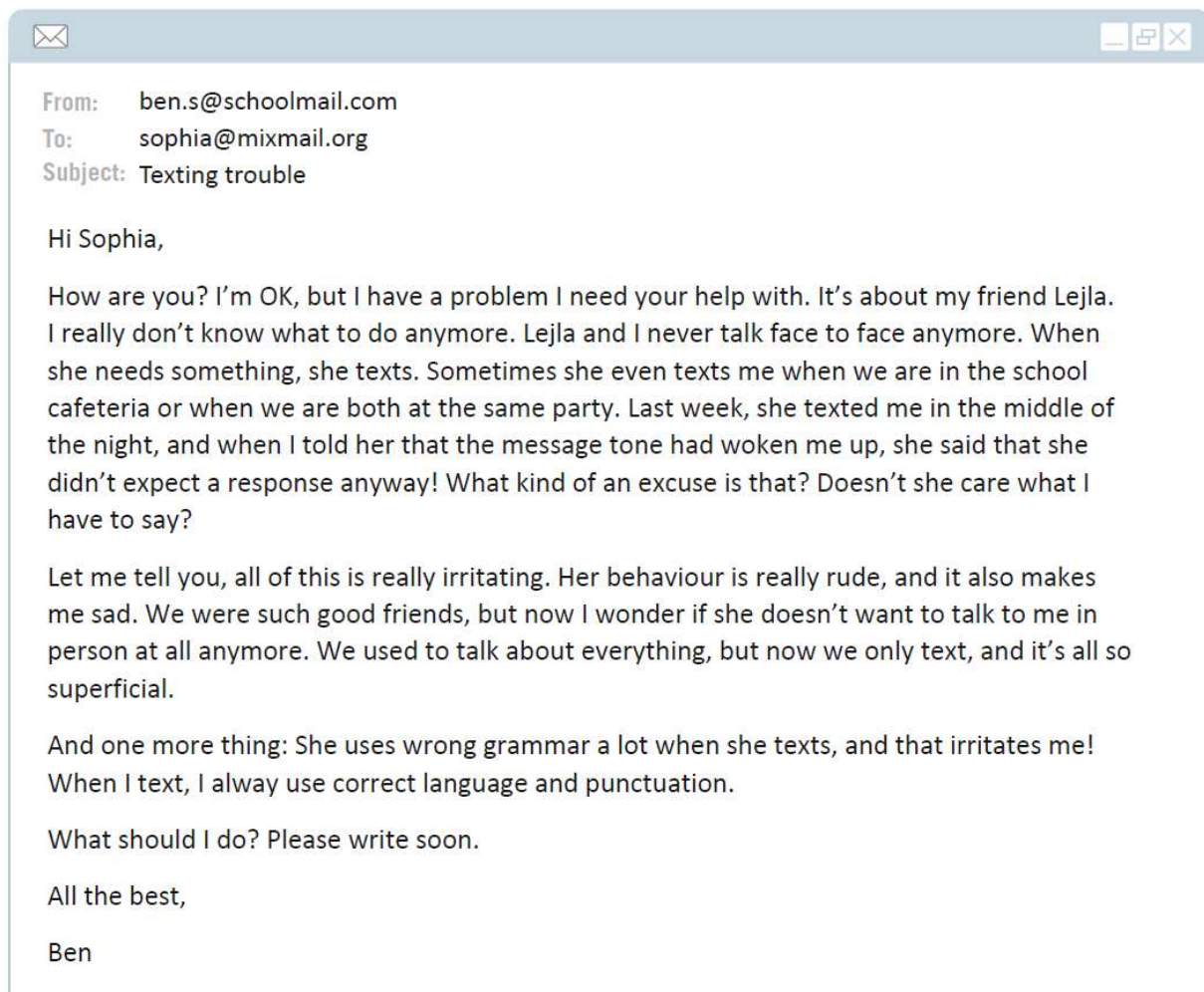
 Mark commented

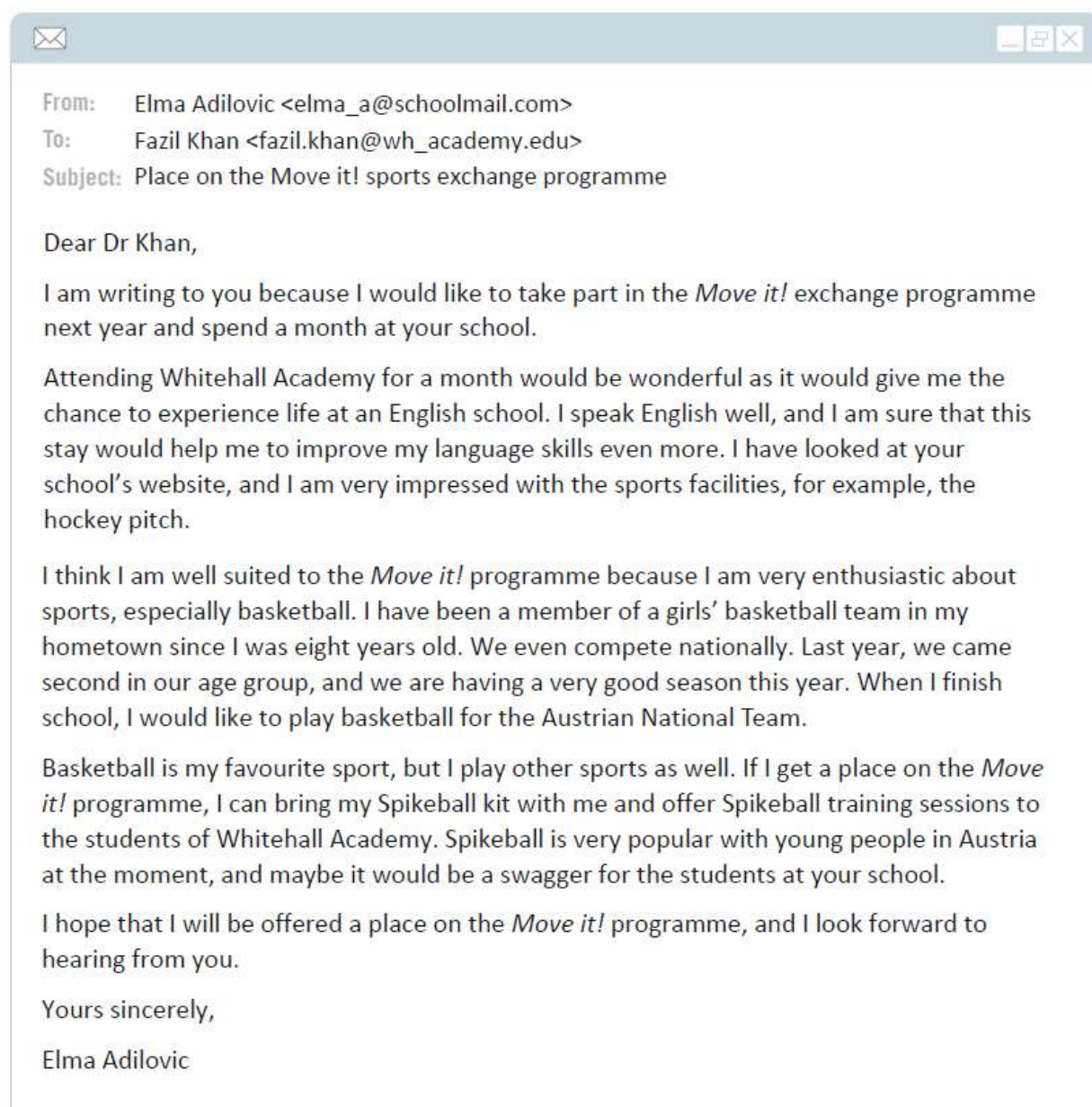
I think the Matura exam is unnecessary. Many other school systems, such as the US one, prove that there is no need for a final exam at the end of the students' school career. Instead, students in the US earn credits for successfully completing courses, and at the end of high school, they receive their high school diploma. In Austria, we get grades in every subject at the end of every semester. All these grades could easily be added up for a secondary school diploma, and we wouldn't need to take a final exam. Therefore, I believe that the Matura exam should be abolished.

B1 | Unit 04, p. 20 | Sample informal email: Sue's restaurant review



B1 | Unit 05, p. 23 | Sample informal email: Ben writing his cousin Sophia



An email interface window with a light blue header bar containing an envelope icon on the left and window control icons (minimize, maximize, close) on the right. The email content is displayed in a white area below the header.

From: Elma Adilovic <elma_a@schoolmail.com>
To: Fazil Khan <fazil.khan@wh_academy.edu>
Subject: Place on the Move it! sports exchange programme

Dear Dr Khan,

I am writing to you because I would like to take part in the *Move it!* exchange programme next year and spend a month at your school.

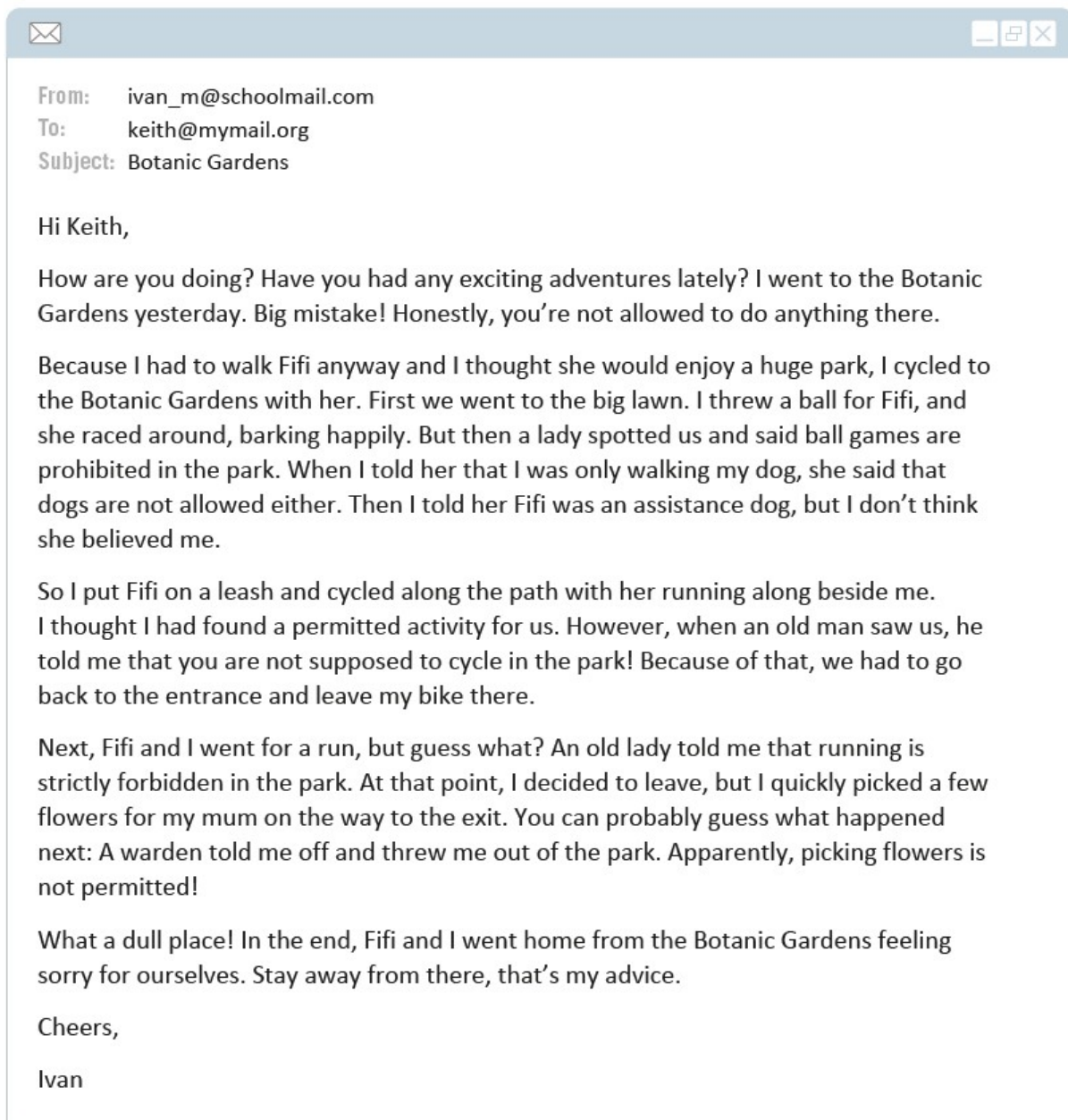
Attending Whitehall Academy for a month would be wonderful as it would give me the chance to experience life at an English school. I speak English well, and I am sure that this stay would help me to improve my language skills even more. I have looked at your school's website, and I am very impressed with the sports facilities, for example, the hockey pitch.

I think I am well suited to the *Move it!* programme because I am very enthusiastic about sports, especially basketball. I have been a member of a girls' basketball team in my hometown since I was eight years old. We even compete nationally. Last year, we came second in our age group, and we are having a very good season this year. When I finish school, I would like to play basketball for the Austrian National Team.

Basketball is my favourite sport, but I play other sports as well. If I get a place on the *Move it!* programme, I can bring my Spikeball kit with me and offer Spikeball training sessions to the students of Whitehall Academy. Spikeball is very popular with young people in Austria at the moment, and maybe it would be a swagger for the students at your school.

I hope that I will be offered a place on the *Move it!* programme, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,
Elma Adilovic





From: keith@mymail.org
To: ivan_m@schoolmail.com
Subject: Re: Botanic Gardens

Hi Ivan,

Thanks for telling me about your adventure in the Botanic Gardens. It's a shame that you and Fifi didn't have much fun there. I think if you had read the rules before your visit, you would have had a better time. For example, if you had known that bikes are not allowed, you could have taken the bus there. Obviously, if you had been aware that it is forbidden to bring dogs to the Botanic Gardens, you would have left Fifi at home. By the way, of course the lady didn't believe you when you said Fifi was an assistance dog! Fifi is much too naughty. If she had behaved better in the park, maybe the lady would have believed you. You really broke a lot of rules! If you had understood that running is not allowed, maybe you would have walked around slowly. But you're right, that sounds really boring.

Picking flowers in the Botanic Gardens, Ivan? Really? Everybody knows that this is forbidden. If you had thought about it for just a second, I'm sure you wouldn't have done that. I'm sorry the warden threw you out, but if he hadn't told you to leave, I'm sure you would have gone home soon anyway. I don't think the Botanic Gardens are the right place for Fifi and you!

See you soon,

Keith

Posted by ChrisM

A holiday adventure

Have you ever had a holiday where everything went wrong? Let me tell you what happened on a weekend trip to Stonehenge, England, with my family last year.

The trip started well. We arrived at the airport in Graz in plenty of time for our flight to Vienna. But when we were about to board our flight to London Heathrow in Vienna, my daughter Laura suddenly realised that she had left her passport on the plane from Graz. We were already in a queue at the gate, the passengers were already boarding, and we could see our plane through the window! My wife and I said to Laura, "We are going to miss our flight to London!" But, fortunately, with the help of an extremely helpful airline employee and an incredibly patient flight attendant, she managed to get her passport back. Laura was so relieved and promised, "I'm going to look after my passport much better in the future." The three of us were the last passengers who boarded the plane, but we made it.

When we were on the plane, I started to get excited about taking my family to my favourite restaurant in London, and I told them, "We are going to have a nice dinner tonight!"

After we had landed, we followed the signs to the baggage claim and found the correct baggage carousel for our flight. We waited there for a really long time, but our baggage just wouldn't arrive. So we marched to the Lost Baggage counter and filled in a form with all the details about our bags and suitcases. "Hopefully, we'll get our baggage back!" we said to the guy there and left. By that time, we were all completely exhausted, but we still had to pick up our rental car and drive to the hotel in central London we had booked for the first night.

The office of the rental car company is in a car park near the airport, and you can take a shuttle bus there. The security officer at the bus stop told us, "The next shuttle bus leaves at 11 p.m.," but we didn't want to wait and just took a taxi. When we got to the office, I realised that I had left my tablet behind at the airport! I couldn't believe it. I turned to my wife and said, "I'll go back and look for my tablet." I took another taxi back to the airport to look for it anyway. But I didn't find it, so I had to fill in more forms to report my tablet missing.

When we finally arrived at the hotel, it was much too late for the nice dinner I had planned. My daughter was badly disappointed, of course, but I promised her that the next day would be better. I said to her, "We are going to Salisbury tomorrow, and they have nice restaurants there, too!"

On the next day, we drove to Salisbury. Our accommodation there was absolutely wonderful, and we finally got the nice dinner I had been looking forward to since Vienna. On our second day in Salisbury, we visited Stonehenge, and it is totally fascinating, just like everybody always says. Unfortunately, it was pouring with rain when we went for a stroll around the stones, and we weren't dressed for the weather. After all, our baggage still hadn't arrived, and our warmer clothes were all in our suitcases.

On our third day in Salisbury, our baggage finally arrived, and we drove back to London. When I chatted to the receptionist at the hotel about our trip, she advised me to go to the airport to collect my tablet as she was sure that there wouldn't be enough time to do that on the day of our flight home. She said, "You'll wait for hours at the information counter at the airport."

So, while my wife and daughter were exploring the Science Museum and had lunch in Chinatown, I spent hours on the Tube going to Heathrow Airport and back again. Lucky me! But the good news is that I actually got my tablet back.

How do you feel at the end of a holiday? I'm usually pretty sad, but this time, I was more than happy to go home. We didn't have any problems on the flights back, and even our baggage arrived in Graz with us.

Let me give you some advice, though: The next time you travel somewhere, be extremely careful with your possessions, and make sure to put some extra clothes in your carry-on luggage!

Posted by Cal

Oops, I bought a house ... completely by accident!

If somebody told you they bought a house completely by accident, would you believe them? You should! This is exactly what happened to my girlfriend and me. It sounds like a complete disaster, but don't worry, there is a happy ending.

Last year, Claire and I decided to buy our own place. We did a lot of research and found an old flat in Glasgow which we liked very much and which we could afford. As Claire didn't have time, I had to go to the auction by myself. Unfortunately, the auctioneer had a very strong Glaswegian accent, and the screen where you can usually see the houses that are being sold wasn't working. So instead of our dream flat in Glasgow, I bought an old cottage in the village of Dunoon by mistake. It was built in the 1900s and needed a lot of repairs. As you can imagine, I was horrified. Fortunately, Claire was really cool about the whole thing. "It will be an adventure," she said, and she was right. We moved into a caravan in the garden and started work on the house immediately.

People love old houses because they have a charming atmosphere. This is true, but they often don't come with features that are normal in fully equipped, modern houses. For example, our house doesn't have central heating, which isn't great, and it doesn't have a garage. But we aren't bothered by this as we don't have a car anyway. Also, the rooms aren't exactly spacious, but Claire and I think this makes the house really cosy. The only problem is that there isn't a lot of space to store our things, and Claire and I are both a bit messy. I'm sure we will think of a solution, though. But the best thing about our house is the location. It's in the middle of the country, with a view of the mountains because it is close to a famous Scottish national park. This is important to us as Claire and I both love nature.

So, how do I feel about my 'mistake' at the auction a year later? Well, I would definitely buy our house again. Sure, renovating is a lot of hard work, but we have learned so much, and we have really grown as people. What's more, we have been amazed by how friendly and welcoming our neighbours in the village are, and we do not miss city life at all. And, as Claire pointed out, our life has become an adventure thanks to that old cottage. I don't think we would have so much fun if we had followed our original plan and bought the flat in Glasgow.

If you want to learn more about our life in the cottage, keep reading this blog or follow us on Instagram. Let us know what you think. We're always happy to hear from you!

B1 | Unit 12, p. 54 | Sample informal email: Joey's plans for the future

