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# 1B

## Identify and select the most appropriate application for communication

***Once you have identified the purpose, intended audience and content, you must select an appropriate application to communicate the information.***

There are many different systems to communicate digitally with those internal and external to the organisation (including colleagues who work remotely).

These include, but are not limited to:

- emails
- text messages sent to a mobile phone
- text or voice messages sent via a messaging app
- video or web-conferencing software.

These applications are generally used to communicate information between a select group of individuals. For example, an email may be sent to an individual, a team of people or to a mailing list of customers. Anyone who was not sent the message directly is not likely to read it (unless the message has been forwarded to them by someone else).

However, other forms of digital communication are accessible by the general public, meaning anyone can access and read the information. This includes:

- blogs and online forums
- podcasts
- other content that is published directly to a website.

When publishing anything online, be careful not to breach privacy and confidentiality requirements.

### Mobile applications

***Mobile device technology means it is possible to access your email account wherever you are, as long as you have an internet connection.***

All you need to get started is a tablet or smartphone that provides access to email, as well as a connection to the internet, either through WiFi or through mobile data. There are many applications that allow people to communicate using smartphones and tablets.

Wireless connection to the internet from a mobile can reduce phone call costs and help employees use their time more effectively. However, you may need to consider the software, hardware and connectivity costs, as well as the operational costs.

A text message (also called an SMS) enables mobile phone users to receive and send short messages on their mobiles. Most text messages can be received free of charge, but in order to send texts, phone users usually have to pay a monthly fee to their service provider or a small fee for each message. Many mobile service providers offer SMS texts free of charge as part of a contract or mobile phone plan. Just like an email, a text message can be sent to one person or to multiple people at once.



| Type of application                      | Features   | Strengths   | Limitations   |
|--|--|---|---|
| <p><b>Emails</b></p>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Messages may be targeted to individuals or groups</li> <li>• Commonly used in most organisations</li> <li>• Suitable for short and long messages</li> <li>• Common email service providers include:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Microsoft Outlook</li> <li>– Google Gmail</li> <li>– Yahoo Mail</li> <li>– Telstra Mail (Bigpond)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help to keep a record of communication</li> <li>• Have a number of formatting options, including adding dot points and emphasis to text</li> <li>• Usually free to install and use</li> <li>• A range of documents and files can be attached to the email</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Require internet access to send and receive messages</li> <li>• It is often unclear whether the message has been received and read</li> <li>• Messages may be undeliverable if the email address is incorrect or if attachments are too large</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Text messages sent via SMS</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Messages may be targeted to individuals or groups</li> <li>• Suitable for sending short messages</li> <li>• Messages may be sent from any mobile phone to any other mobile phone</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be used to send links and small attachments</li> <li>• Allow you to track a conversation</li> <li>• Messages are generally more instant, as they do not require users to be logged in to an account</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Usually a cost involved</li> <li>• It is often unclear whether the message has been received and read</li> <li>• Older mobile phones may not be able to receive certain types of messages (such as pictures or videos sent as attachments)</li> </ul>    |

### Replies

If you receive a message, you may need to acknowledge that you have received it, particularly if it is a request that you cannot follow up on immediately. If someone has provided you with something useful, such as information you have requested, thank them when you receive it. Always use the same polite behaviour as you would if you were face to face with someone.

### Aggressive messages and criticism

Do not send aggressive messages, sometimes called 'flames'. Also be careful about criticising other people in messages. This is not ethical and, moreover, you cannot assume that you and the addressee will be the only people to read your message. Remember, digital messages are not strictly private as others may be included in the message that you were not aware of, or your message may be forwarded on to someone else without your knowledge.

## Example

### Email usage policy

The following example is an extract from Larger Than Life's email usage policy.

#### Larger Than Life

##### Email Usage Policy

- Allow time for emails to be received and replied to, keeping in mind time differences around the world and other colleagues' busy schedules.
- Do not send abusive or heated messages (flames). If you receive a flame, it is best to ignore it.
- Don't assume any internet communication is completely secure.
- If you are replying to a message, quote only the relevant parts.
- If you want your message to be read, don't make it too long (i.e. no more than 100 lines).
- Ensure the subject line reflects the content of the email.
- Never send chain emails. Notify the system administrator if you receive any.
- Immediately notify the system administrator or IT support person if you receive any suspicious messages that may contain a virus.
- Remember that unsolicited email advertising is unwelcome (and forbidden in many countries).

## Replying to and forwarding emails

*You may need to reply to emails or forward them on to someone else.*

To reply to a message, open or select it from the inbox. Select **Reply** to reply to the sender only or select **Reply All** to send a reply to all recipients of the original message.

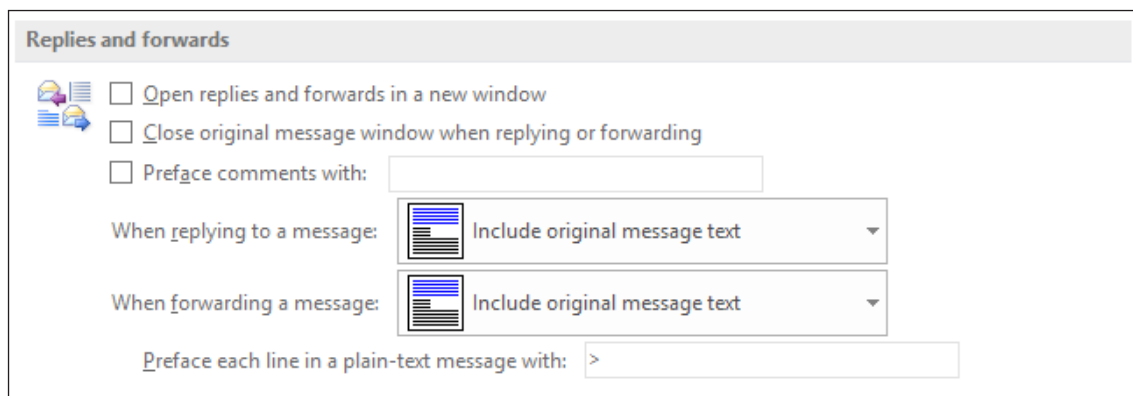
The reply window is then displayed with the **To** and **Subject** fields complete. The original message is also displayed in the reply window, usually with 'RE:' inserted before it.

When replying to emails, you might want to include all or part of the original message in your reply. This can help recipients understand which parts of their message you are referring to. Depending on your email software, there are different ways to format the original email to make it stand out from your new email.

However, there may be instances when you don't want to include the original message. This could be because it:

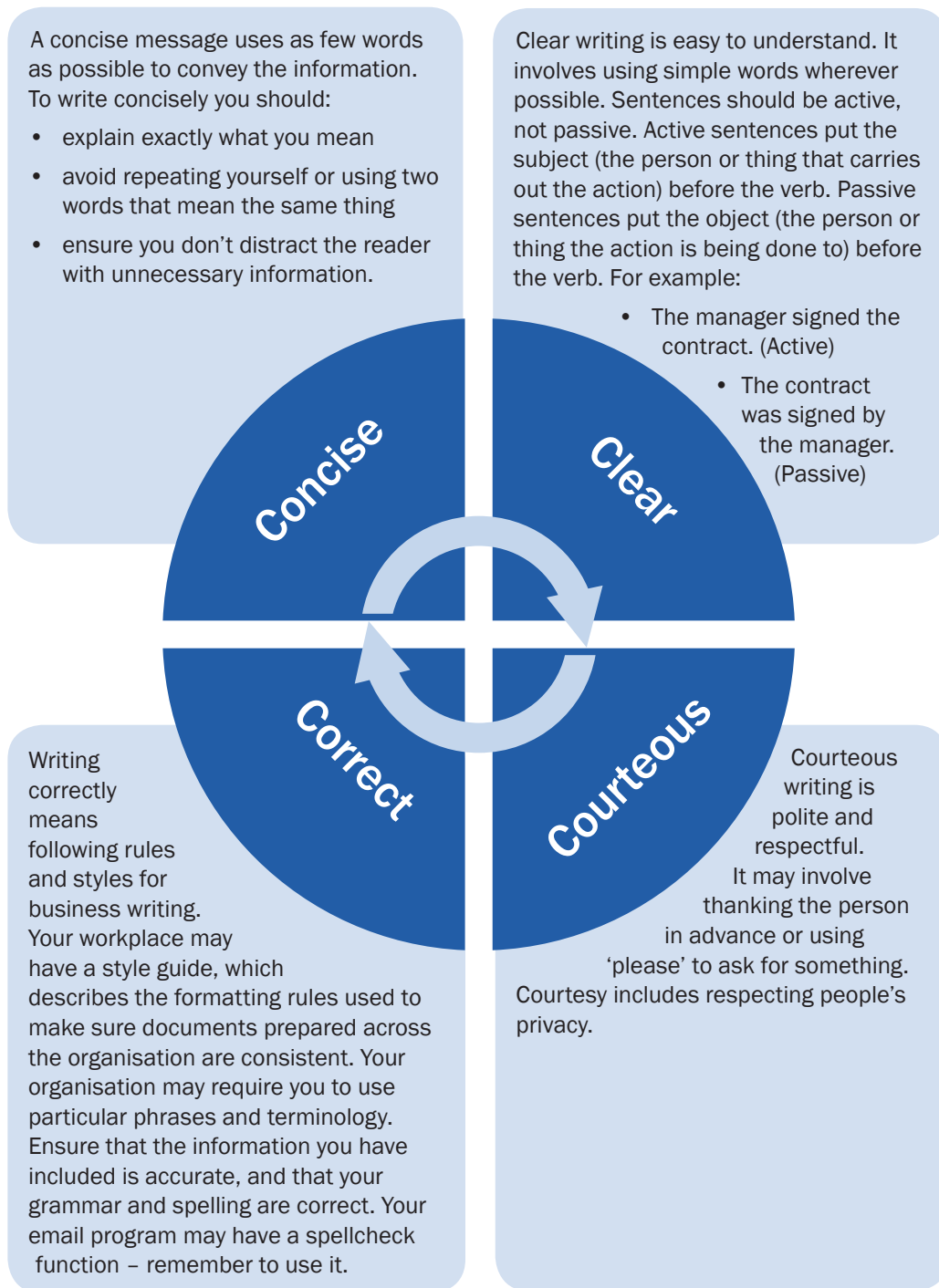
- contains sensitive comments
- is too long
- includes unnecessary or irrelevant responses from several other contributors.

If you don't want to send the original message or you want to indent or attach a prefix in your replies, you can set your email accordingly. To do this, select **File**, then **Options**. Select the **Mail** tab, then scroll down to Replies and forwards and update your preferences, as in the following example.



You may also wish to forward emails. For example, you might need to forward an email to your manager for advice when you don't know how to respond. You might also receive an email that others need to know about.

It's important to know who to forward emails to and when. If you are unsure about when it is appropriate to forward an email, or who you should forward it to, ask your supervisor or colleagues for help.



Some organisations expect you to write emails using formal language (a more serious tone). Other organisations may instruct staff to use a more casual or conversational tone when communicating with customers.

The use of language, tone and type of message all vary according to the purpose of the message and the audience. For example, if you have to tell an important client about a problem with a delivery, you would write a message using formal business language. If you want to invite staff to morning tea to welcome the new manager, you could send an informal email or text message.

## 2B

### Determine appropriate action in response to incoming communication

*You have a responsibility to ensure that your email processes comply with your workplace policies and procedures.*

This means that you must be able to identify and take appropriate action with regard to urgent, confidential, personal, suspicious or potentially dangerous emails.

Email programs offer a range of tools that allow you to effectively and efficiently manage your email.

An email can be marked with a symbol that provides you with some information. For example:

- An exclamation mark indicates the email is important or urgent.
- A flag indicates that some follow-up action is required.
- A paperclip shows there is an attachment to the email.



The symbols and the contents of the subject line will help you decide what to do next.

### Prioritise emails

*Ensure you deal with urgent emails first, according to what your organisation expects.*

Urgent emails may be marked with an exclamation mark by the sender, indicating 'High Importance'. They may require you to carry out an action or respond to the email within a set time.

You may need to decide whether to forward the email to a colleague or manager for their attention or whether you can deal with it yourself. Let the sender know you have received their email, even if they are expecting you to forward it or take some other follow-up action. You can use your reply to tell the sender what you are going to do.

After you have dealt with urgent emails, you still have to prioritise your other emails. There may be a large number of them, depending on your job role. Some will be less relevant than others. For example, they may have been forwarded to everyone in the workplace unnecessarily or may be spam emails or junk mail.

Look at the subject line and who has sent the email to determine its importance. Open the most urgent and important ones first and take note of what they require you to do, replying if necessary. You may need to flag them for follow-up.

To do this, you can either click on the flag icon for the message or right-click the email and hover over **Follow Up**, then assign a follow-up date to it, such as tomorrow, next week or your own custom date. This will create a red flag icon and highlight the email in your inbox. Once you have dealt with it, click on the flag icon to change it to a tick.



## Practice task 6

Research the various forms of virus protection that are currently available. Use the following table to record the name, features and other important characteristics of a virus protection program. Remember that different products may contain different features and you should briefly explain in plain language not only the feature's name, but also what this means in terms of protecting your emails and computer system.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Name:                                       |  |
| Available from:                             |  |
| Cost:                                       |  |
| Support available:<br>(after sales service) |  |
| Features:                                   |  |
| Availability of updates:                    |  |

### Tracking options

*Unlike most messaging applications, you do not immediately know whether the recipient of your email has received it.*

While you expect your email and internet services to be reliable, there may be server or connection difficulties that present temporary technical problems. For this reason, setting your email software to track messages can be very useful. You can then be confident the message has been received.

You can access tracking options by selecting the **File** tab and then selecting **Options**. Click on the **Mail** tab, then scroll down to Tracking. The following example shows the options for tracking.



## Privacy, integrity and confidentiality

***Think about other people's privacy and confidentiality when forwarding messages.***

The sender might have intended that only you read the message. They may not approve of you passing their message on to others. Think carefully before forwarding emails and other messages, as they can contain confidential information that is illegal to pass on to others, such as private information about a client. Sometimes you will need to ask permission from the original sender.

When you forward emails and other messages, never change the content of the original message. This is dishonest because you are not forwarding the true words of the original sender. Before you forward a message, check that the message is complete and includes all the necessary information.

Respect your organisation's policy regarding forwarding emails. Policies are likely to include not using your work email system to forward jokes, memes or other non-work-related information. Such messages quickly fill up your inbox, making it difficult to identify important work-related messages.



## Disclaimers

***You must be careful not to expose your organisation to litigation by disclosing any sensitive or confidential information in your emails and other messages.***

A disclaimer is a paragraph of text that protects the organisation against liability should the message be misrepresented or received by the wrong person. It is designed to minimise legal culpability in the event of either of these problems occurring.

Sometimes legal and/or copyright information is included after an email signature. There may be a warning about the confidentiality of information included in the email. It is not possible to disclaim or foresee every possible type of damage that may occur. However, including a disclaimer does reduce the risk of harm. It also serves as a reminder that you should be careful how you word emails.

Here are two examples of disclaimers.



## Learning checkpoint 2

### Implement procedures to send and receive digital communications

#### Part A

Read the case study, then answer the question that follows.

#### Case study

Lyn receives an urgent email from a customer about the prices of the organisation's products. It requires a reply, but Lyn has to find out some details before she can answer. Once she has found the necessary details, she opens a new email and types in the address, the subject line and a polite note. Then she inserts an attachment that lists the product prices. The email is returned as 'undeliverable'.

List some reasons that could have caused the email to be undeliverable.

#### Part B

- Over a period of two days, complete the following table showing details of:
  - the types of emails you receive, such as customer enquiries, information for staff, details about your tasks, potentially dangerous emails, advertising and personal emails
  - the number you receive of each type
  - the way you responded to each type, such as forward, reply, file, print or delete.

| Type of email | Number of each type | How you responded |
|---------------|---------------------|-------------------|
|               |                     |                   |
|               |                     |                   |