



Culture and Traditions

Informal email: attending a lantern festival

1. Lead-in discussion

Talk with a partner before you write.

1. Which celebrations or traditions are important where you live?
2. What might surprise someone at a large cultural event?
3. Which festival would you like to attend with a friend? Why?

Exercise 5 at a glance

Write an informal email to a friend.

Cover all the prompts.

Develop ideas with details and reactions.

Use relaxed, natural language.

Make the email flow naturally.

2. Exam-style task

You recently attended a traditional festival. You enjoyed it, but one part was confusing.

Write an email to a friend about it.

In your email you should:

- describe what you saw and enjoyed
- explain what was confusing
- suggest attending the festival with your friend next year

Write about 120 to 160 words.

3. Model email

Subject: The lantern festival was incredible!

Hi Priya,

How's it going? Did your family celebration go well, or were you rushed off your feet all day? Anyway, I went to the lantern festival last weekend, and I was completely blown away by it.

Hundreds of colourful lanterns were hung above the streets, and musicians played near the old temple. I especially enjoyed the parade, which included enormous paper animals and dancers in traditional costumes. The whole area felt full of life.

The confusing part was knowing where to stand for the lantern release. We had wandered around for ages before someone explained that our tickets were for a different entrance. Luckily, a volunteer pointed us in the right direction, and we turned up just in time.

You should come with me next year if you're free. We could arrive earlier, look around the food stalls and then find a good place before the crowds build up.

Write back soon,

Maya

P.S. I am still finding glitter in my bag.

4. Explore the model: structure, content and tone

Work with the model email. You do not need to copy long answers. Underline, label or make short notes.

Focus	What to find	Done?
Email structure	Find the subject line, greeting, opening chat, main message, plan and sign-off.	
Content point 1	Where does the writer describe what they saw and enjoyed?	
Content point 2	Where does the writer mention something that was confusing?	
Content point 3	Where does the writer suggest attending with their friend next year?	
Informal audience	Find two places where the email sounds friendly or relaxed, such as a contraction, exclamation mark or chatty phrase.	
Development	Find one extra detail, reason or reaction that improves the answer.	

5. Language from the prompts

The prompts can guide your grammar choices. Notice which language each prompt naturally needs.

Prompt	Useful grammar	Why it fits	Example from the model
what the writer saw and enjoyed	passive + relative clause	The writer describes sights and adds detail about the parade.	lanterns were hung... / which included...
what was confusing	past perfect + before	The writer shows what happened before the explanation.	had wandered around / someone explained
the suggestion for next year	should / could + if	The writer suggests a future visit and plan.	You should come... / if you're free / We could arrive earlier

6. Make it flow

Read the informal linking phrases. Underline one you could use for each purpose.

Job	Useful informal linkers
move into the topic	Anyway, / I went to... / completely blown away
add detail or reaction	I especially enjoyed... / which included... / The whole area felt...
introduce a problem	The confusing part was... / before someone explained... / Luckily, / just in time
make a plan	You should come... / if you're free / We could arrive earlier / and then...

7. Vocabulary and useful phrases

Use chunks that sound natural for this task. You can also upgrade your writing with precise words and phrases.

Purpose	Useful chunks / language	Add your own
describe the festival	colourful lanterns / old temple / traditional costumes / full of life	
describe confusion	knowing where to stand / different entrance / right direction / just in time	
sound informal	How's it going? / rushed off your feet / blown away / for ages	
make a plan	come with me / next year / arrive earlier / look around the stalls	
upgrade with adverbs	completely / especially / luckily / earlier / still	

8. Plan your own email

Use the same task, or change the details to another cultural celebration or tradition.

Prompt	My idea	Useful language	Link to next part
what I saw and enjoyed			
what was confusing			
plan for next year			
opening / ending			

