



## Family and Relationships

Informal email: organising a family celebration

### 1. Lead-in discussion

Talk with a partner before you write.

1. What makes a family celebration memorable?
2. What can go wrong when people organise a surprise?
3. Would you enjoy planning a celebration? Why or why not?

#### 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 helped organise a family celebration. It was enjoyable, but something nearly went wrong.

Write an email to a friend about it.

In your email you should:

- say what you helped to plan
- explain what nearly went wrong
- give your friend advice for planning a celebration

Write about 120 to 160 words.

### 3. Model email

**Subject: The birthday surprise nearly went wrong!**

Hi Ellie,

How's everything? How did that school play of yours go in the end? I hope you remembered your words!

Anyway, we had my cousin's surprise birthday meal on Sunday, and I was in charge of the decorations.

I put up photos from when we were younger and made a playlist of songs she used to love. I also arranged little cards for everyone to write on. She looked really touched when she walked in, so all the rushing around felt worth it.

The problem was that my uncle nearly gave the game away. He phoned her and asked what time she was arriving at the restaurant! Luckily, she didn't notice, but the rest of us were panicking in the kitchen until she turned up.

Anyway, if you ever plan a surprise, you should keep the details in one group chat and remind everyone not to mention the event. It saves a lot of stress!

Write back soon,

Maya

P.S. Never trust my uncle with a secret.

## 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 say what they helped to plan?	
Content point 2	Where does the writer mention what nearly went wrong?	
Content point 3	Where does the writer give advice about planning a celebration?	
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 helped to plan	used to + past simple	The writer describes past memories and completed preparations.	songs she used to love / I also arranged...
what nearly went wrong	nearly + past simple	The writer explains the problem that almost happened.	nearly gave... / she didn't notice
the advice for a friend	if + present + should	The writer gives practical advice for a future situation.	if you ever plan... / you should keep...

## 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, / Anyhow, / we had... / I was in charge of...
add detail or reaction	I also arranged... / when she walked in / so... / felt worth it
introduce a problem	The problem was that... / nearly... / Luckily, / but... / until...
make a plan	Anyway, if you ever... / you should... / and remind everyone...

## 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 celebration	surprise birthday meal / decorations / playlist / little cards	
describe a problem	gave the game away / phoned her / panicking / turned up	
sound informal	How's everything? / go in the end / rushing around / worth it	
give advice	plan a surprise / group chat / remind everyone / saves a lot of stress	
upgrade with adverbs	really / nearly / luckily / ever / never	

## 8. Plan your own email

Use the same task, or change the celebration to another family event.

Prompt	My idea	Useful language	Link to next part
what I helped to plan			
what nearly went wrong			
advice for my friend			
opening / ending			

