



Work and Careers

Informal email: helping at a careers event

1. Lead-in discussion

Talk with a partner before you write.

1. What can students learn from volunteering at an event?
2. What might feel difficult when helping visitors?
3. Would you rather organise materials or talk to people? 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 helped at a local careers event. You enjoyed the experience, but one part was challenging.

Write an email to a friend about it.

In your email you should:

- explain what you did and enjoyed
- describe what was challenging
- suggest volunteering together next time

Write about 120 to 160 words.

3. Model email

Subject: My first taste of working life

Hi Zara,

How are things? Did you ever hear back about that weekend job, or are they still keeping you waiting?

Anyway, I helped out at the careers fair on Saturday, and it gave me a real taste of working life!

I was asked to welcome visitors and hand out programmes near the entrance. I enjoyed chatting to people about the different stalls, and it was satisfying when I could point someone in the right direction instead of looking completely lost myself.

The challenging part was dealing with an annoyed parent who couldn't find the nursing talk. I was thrown in at the deep end, but I stayed calm, checked the timetable and worked out which room she needed.

Thankfully, she calmed down too.

Anyway, we could volunteer together at the next fair if you're interested. It would look good on our applications, and we'd have a laugh as well.

Write back soon,

Maya

P.S. I now respect anyone who stands at a desk all day.

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 explain what they did and enjoyed?	
Content point 2	Where does the writer mention what was challenging?	
Content point 3	Where does the writer suggest volunteering together?	
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 did and enjoyed	passive + past simple	The writer describes assigned duties and completed actions.	I was asked to... / I enjoyed chatting...
what was challenging	who + past simple	The writer adds detail about the person involved in the problem.	parent who couldn't... / I stayed calm...
the plan to volunteer together	could / would	The writer suggests a possible future benefit.	we could volunteer... / It would look good...

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, / I helped out... / it gave me a real taste...
add detail or reaction	I was asked to... / I enjoyed... / and it was satisfying...
introduce a problem	The challenging part was... / but I stayed calm / Thankfully, / worked out...
make a plan	Anyway, we could... / if you're interested / It would... / as well

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 event	careers fair / welcome visitors / hand out programmes / different stalls	
describe a problem	annoyed parent / nursing talk / checked the timetable / worked out	
sound informal	How are things? / hear back / deep end / have a laugh	
make a plan	volunteer together / next fair / if you're interested / applications	
upgrade with adverbs	still / completely / thankfully / together / as well	

8. Plan your own email

Use the same task, or change the event to another work or volunteering experience.

Prompt	My idea	Useful language	Link to next part
what I did and liked			
what was challenging			
plan with my friend			
opening / ending			

