



How to Write an Informal Email in German

onewholearns.com/learn/writing/informal-email

A printable informal email template with the annotated example, useful phrases, and common mistakes.

The example

Betreff:¹ Bist du am Samstag da?

Lieber Jonas,²

ich hoffe³, es geht dir⁴ gut! Bei mir ist gerade ziemlich viel los, aber ich wollte dir unbedingt schreiben.

Ich komme am Samstag für ein Konzert in die Stadt und dachte, wir könnten uns endlich mal wiedersehen. Hättest du vielleicht Lust⁵, danach noch einen Kaffee zu trinken? Ach, und eine Bitte hätte ich auch: Könntest du mich am Bahnhof abholen? Mein Zug kommt schon um neun an, und ein Taxi ist mir viel zu teuer.

Übrigens,⁶ ich habe super Neuigkeiten: Ich habe endlich die Wohnung in der Innenstadt bekommen! Ich kann's⁷ kaum glauben.

Schreib mir einfach kurz, ob es bei dir passt.⁸

Liebe Grüße⁹ ¹⁰

Mira

Ten things to notice

1. Subject line

Keep an informal subject line short and casual. It can even be a question, unlike a formal statement of purpose.

2. Informal greeting

Write "Lieber" to a man or "Liebe" to a woman, then the first name and a comma. The comma is part of the greeting, just as in a formal one.

3. Lowercase continuation

The word right after the greeting comma stays lowercase, because the greeting and what follows count as one sentence. English speakers often capitalise it out of habit.

4. Informal pronouns

Du, dich, dir, and dein are the informal "you" forms. Unlike formal Sie, they are normally lowercase in a modern email, though capitalising them is still allowed.

5. Casual suggestion

Use Konjunktiv II, a German verb form for polite or hypothetical language, even informally. "Hättest du Lust ..." floats a plan without pressure.

6. Conversational filler

Words such as "übrigens" or "ach" introduce a new thought the way spoken conversation does. They read as casual, not formal.

7. Contractions

Informal writing allows spoken contractions such as "kann's" for "kann es". Avoid these in a formal email.

8. Casual sign-off request

Ask for a reply briefly and directly, such as "Schreib mir kurz ...". A formal email uses a longer, more elaborate phrase instead.

9. Informal closing

Close with "Liebe Grüße", "Viele Grüße", or "Bis bald", then put your name on the next line.

10. No comma

Do not add a comma after "Liebe Grüße". Just like the formal closing, the name goes directly on the next line.

Common mistakes

Wrong

Ich hoffe, es geht Ihnen gut, lieber Jonas!

Right

Ich hoffe, es geht dir gut, lieber Jonas!

Why

Sie belongs in a formal email; switch to du and dir once you are writing to a friend.

Wrong

Wie geht es Dir? Hast Du Lust auf Samstag?

Right

Wie geht es dir? Hast du Lust auf Samstag?

Why

Unlike Sie, the informal du-forms are normally lowercase in modern German, even mid-sentence.

Wrong

Ich würde mich sehr freuen, bald von dir zu hören.

Right

Schreib mir doch mal!

Why

Elaborate, formal-sounding sentences feel stiff between friends; keep informal requests short and direct.

Wrong

Ich freue mich total mega!!! Bis bald!!!

Right

Ich freue mich total! Bis bald!

Why

One exclamation mark shows enthusiasm; a row of them reads as try-hard rather than genuinely friendly.

Wrong

Hey, kommst du am Samstag zum Konzert mit?

Right

Lieber Jonas, kommst du am Samstag zum Konzert mit?

Why

Even a short, casual email usually opens with "Lieber/Liebe + name," rather than starting straight in.

When informal is the wrong choice

Write an informal email only to people who already know you that way: friends, family, and classmates on du terms with you. Work is trickier. Some German colleagues move to du quickly, but a boss, teacher, or anyone more senior should offer it first. Using du before they do can read as overly familiar, so wait for their lead, and default to Sie when in doubt.

Informal does not mean careless. A friendly email still needs a clear point, a greeting, and a closing; it just uses warmer words to get there. Skipping the greeting or piling on exclamation marks does not make an email more casual; it just makes it harder to read. Keep the structure, relax the tone.