

Routine Messages (Intercultural Email Exchange) Instructions

Yuxiang Du

You are paired with a student at X University in X country. This project consists of three parts.

Routine Messages (Email) 1:

You will write an email to your correspondent following the instructions below:

1. The body of the email should include:

- a. Greeting.
- b. State the primary message/purpose of the email.
- c. Introduce yourself.
- d. Ask a few questions. Some areas and topics for your self-introduction (c) and questions (d) could be cultural identities, family, college life, major and future career, organizational culture, social media and technology, values and worldview, tradition and change, etc.
- e. State goodwill and closing.

2. The minimum length of the email is 300 words, and the suggested maximum length is 600 words.

3. Please follow the following rules:

- a. Do not ask questions or discuss issues that may put them in a risky position. Avoid politically sensitive topics in general.
- b. Be respectful and avoid stereotypes.
- c. Do not disclose or share any information that you would not like the class and me to know.
- d. If you are not sure about the intercultural appropriateness of something, discuss it with me first.

4. Send out your email and save a print version, then upload it to Canvas/Blackboard by the deadline.

Routine Messages (Email) 2:

You will write a response to your correspondent's email reply following the instructions below:

1. The body of the email should include:
 - a. Greeting.
 - b. Responding to their questions/email.
 - c. Further discussing some topics by adding information and perspective.
 - d. Asking further questions (optional).
 - e. Stating goodwill and closing.
3. The minimum length of the email is 300 words, and the suggested maximum length is 600 words.
4. The same rules apply.
5. Send out your email and save a print version, then upload it to Canvas/Blackboard by the deadline.

Routine Messages Discussion

In the discussion board, you will briefly share your experience of corresponding with your Chinese peers. Further instructions will be given in the discussion board.

1. Make a post to reflect on your email exchange experience (16 points)
 - Choose **TWO to FOUR topics** from the following list.
 - Answer questions within each selected topic, providing details and examples where available.
 - Ensure that your post contains at least **250 words**.
 - Clearly label your chosen topics in your post.
2. Reply to at least **THREE students'** posts with a minimum of 50 words each (9 points).

Topics and Questions

- **Communication Styles:**
 - How did the communication styles between you and your counterparts differ in the email exchange?
 - Were there any cultural nuances or language differences that stood out to you?
- **Cultural Awareness:**
 - What cultural aspects did you learn about X country through the email exchange?
 - How did your preconceptions or stereotypes about X culture change or evolve?

- **Challenges Faced:**

- Were there any challenges in understanding or interpreting the content of the emails?
- How did you address or overcome these challenges in your communication?

- **Interpersonal Skills:**

- What interpersonal skills did you find most crucial in bridging cultural gaps during the exchange?
- How did you adapt your communication style to ensure effective interaction?

- **Perspective Taking:**

- Did the email exchange provide insights into the daily lives of your counterparts? How did this impact your understanding of their culture?
- Were there moments where you had to consider things from their perspective to avoid misunderstandings?

- **Cultural Sensitivity:**

- How did you ensure cultural sensitivity in your emails?
- Were there any instances where you felt you needed to be more mindful of cultural differences?

- **Learning Outcomes:**

- What did you learn about yourself through this cross-cultural communication experience?
- How has this email exchange impacted your views on global communication and collaboration?

- **Suggestions for Improvement:**

- What suggestions do you have for improving future cross-cultural communication activities?
- Are there specific strategies or resources you would recommend for enhancing intercultural competence?

Grading Rubric

Email Composition (Part 1):

- **Clarity and Structure:**
 - 4 points: Clear and well-structured email, with logical flow and organization.
 - 3 points: Generally clear and structured, but some areas could be improved for better coherence.
 - 2 points: Some clarity and structure, but lacking in organization and flow.
 - 1 point: Unclear and poorly structured email, difficult to follow.
- **Tone and Intercultural Sensitivity:**
 - 4 points: Demonstrates a respectful and culturally sensitive tone throughout the email.
 - 3 points: Generally respectful, but some instances of cultural insensitivity or inappropriate language.
 - 2 points: Shows limited awareness of cultural differences, with occasional lapses in sensitivity.
 - 1 point: Tone is disrespectful or inappropriate, showing little regard for cultural differences.
- **Adherence to Guidelines:**
 - 4 points: Fully adheres to all guidelines provided, covering all required elements in detail.
 - 3 points: Mostly follows guidelines, but may miss some minor elements or lack depth in certain areas.
 - 2 points: Partially follows guidelines, with significant omissions or lack of detail.
 - 1 point: Does not follow guidelines, missing key elements and lacking in detail.
- **Depth of Engagement:**
 - 4 points: Provides thorough and insightful responses to each topic, demonstrating deep engagement.
 - 3 points: Engages with most topics adequately, but lacks depth in some areas.

- 2 points: Superficial engagement with topics, lacking depth and insight.
- 1 point: Minimal engagement with topics, offering little to no depth or insight.

Response Email (Part 2):

- **Clarity and Structure:**
 - (same criteria as Email Composition)
- **Tone and Intercultural Sensitivity:**
 - (same criteria as Email Composition)
- **Adherence to Guidelines:**
 - (same criteria as Email Composition)
- **Responsiveness:**
 - 4 points: Responds thoughtfully to all aspects of the original email, addressing questions and providing additional perspectives.
 - 3 points: Mostly responsive, but may overlook or only briefly address some aspects of the original email.
 - 2 points: Partially responsive, with significant omissions or lack of engagement with the original email.
 - 1 point: Minimal responsiveness, failing to address most aspects of the original email.

Discussion Board Post and Replies (Part 3):

- **Reflection and Insight:**
 - 4 points: Demonstrates deep reflection and insight into the communication experience, offering meaningful analysis and self-awareness.
 - 3 points: Shows some reflection and insight, but could go deeper or be more self-critical.
 - 2 points: Limited reflection and insight, with superficial analysis and little self-awareness.
 - 1 point: Minimal reflection and insight, lacking in analysis and self-awareness.

- **Engagement with Peers:**

- 4 points: Actively engages with peers' posts, providing constructive feedback and fostering discussion.
- 3 points: Engages with peers' posts, but may lack depth or fail to offer constructive feedback.
- 2 points: Limited engagement with peers' posts, with minimal feedback or contribution to discussion.
- 1 point: Little to no engagement with peers' posts, failing to contribute meaningfully to discussion.

FAQs

Q: What is the purpose of the email-based intercultural learning project?

A: The project aims to enhance intercultural competence among U.S. business communication students by facilitating email exchanges with peers from a foreign university. It serves as a platform to improve routine message-writing skills while fostering cultural awareness and understanding.

Q: How can instructors find partners to work with for this project?

A: Instructors can find partners by reaching out to instructors or directors of appropriate programs, such as English/Business English, at foreign universities. They will provide a list of students along with their emails for pairing, initiating the intercultural email exchange.

Q: What are the key components of the project?

A: The project comprises three parts:

1. Email Composition (Part 1): U.S. students compose a 300-600 word email covering greetings, purpose, self-introduction, questions on cultural topics, and goodwill.
2. Response Email (Part 2): Students respond to their foreign correspondents' emails, addressing questions, providing perspectives, and expressing goodwill.
3. Discussion Board (Part 3): Participants reflect on communication styles, cultural awareness, challenges, and learning outcomes.

Q: How is the project evaluated and what are the learning objectives?

A: The project is evaluated based on clarity, structure, tone, intercultural sensitivity, adherence to guidelines, responsiveness, and engagement. The learning objectives include cultivating advanced intercultural communication skills, enhancing cultural awareness, and applying refined writing strategies in cross-cultural contexts.

Sample Student Work

First Email

Subject: Introduction from Clara Rivers - Business Communications Exchange

Dear [Recipient's Name],

Allow me to introduce myself, I'm Clara Rivers, delighted to connect with you today. Currently in my fourth year, I'm studying at Delta University, nestled in the heart of Riverdale, a quaint town known for its scenic beauty and vibrant community.

I'm reaching out as part of a Business Communications course at Delta University, where we engage with students from diverse backgrounds to refine our communication skills. I'm genuinely excited to share a bit about myself and learn more about you and your culture through our future exchanges. Please let me know your preferred name for our communication; most of my peers refer to me as Clara.

Let me paint a picture of my background for you. At 22 years old, I've traversed different cities but have a soft spot for the tranquility of Riverdale. At Delta University, I'm pursuing a degree in Marketing and International Business, fascinated by the intricacies of global markets and consumer behavior. Beyond academics, I find solace in artistic pursuits like painting, exploring nature trails, attending cultural events, and sampling diverse cuisines.

To kickstart our dialogue, here are some introductory questions:

- Could you share a bit about your background?
- Where did you grow up?
- What aspect of your current school do you find most appealing?
- How do you typically spend your leisure time?
- Which cultural aspects hold special significance for you?
- Do you have a favorite dish that embodies your cultural heritage?

Your participation in this exchange program is greatly appreciated. It promises to be an enriching experience as we exchange insights and broaden our perspectives. Please feel free to respond to any of these questions and share any additional anecdotes you find intriguing. I'm equally eager to address any queries you may have for me.

Wishing you a splendid week ahead, and I eagerly await your response.

Best regards,

Clara Rivers

Second Email

Subject: Re: Exchange of Experiences and Insights

Dear [Recipient's Name],

I trust this message finds you in good health and high spirits. I am grateful for your thoughtful response; gaining insight into your academic pursuits and daily life at Dongbei University of Finance and Economics was truly enlightening.

Your major in Computer Science and Technology sounds like a challenging yet fulfilling journey. It's truly inspiring to see how you've managed to navigate such a demanding academic path while still finding time for your personal interests. Your dedication to your studies is truly admirable, especially your commitment to attending classes and optimizing your free time. Prioritizing our time resonates deeply with me, as maintaining a balance has been crucial in my own university experience.

Reflecting on my own journey, I found my junior year at Delta University to be particularly demanding. The pressure to excel academically to secure future opportunities was quite daunting. However, through careful organization and adhering to a strict schedule, I was able to effectively manage my coursework.

I also noticed your mention of hobbies such as hiking, photography, and cooking. I share your passion for outdoor activities and often find solace in exploring nature trails and capturing scenic landscapes through my camera lens.

Your description of the Mid-Autumn Festival and its traditions was captivating. Celebrating with loved ones and partaking in customs like mooncake tasting and lantern parades seems like a joyous and culturally rich experience. It's truly heartwarming to see how these traditions foster strong familial bonds and community spirit.

Following our exchange, I'm eager to learn more about your experiences. If you wouldn't mind, could you share with me:

- What strategies or tools do you utilize to manage your academic workload and cope with stress?
- Do you have any favorite hiking spots or photography locations in your area?
- What is your fondest memory associated with the Mid-Autumn Festival?

Once again, thank you for sharing your story and providing me with a glimpse into your university life. Your approach to balancing academic rigor with personal pursuits is truly commendable. I eagerly anticipate our continued communication and look forward to hearing more about your experiences and insights.

Wishing you continued success and happiness in all your endeavors.

Warm regards,

Ethan Thompson