

An email to request time off

Learn how to write an email to request time off.

Before reading

Do the preparation task first. Then read the text and tips and do the exercises.

Preparation task

Match the definitions (a–h) with the vocabulary (1–8).

Vocabulary

1. to cover for somebody
2. annual leave
3. to be due
4. expertise
5. to exceed (something)
6. time off in lieu
7. a playbook
8. an MBA

Definitions

- a. To be expected or owed at a certain time
- b. To be greater in number or size than (something)
- c. A number of paid days off work which employees may take every year
- d. The time that an employee who has worked extra hours may take as leave
- e. A reference document with information about a company's tasks and how to carry them out, including the roles and responsibilities of team members
- f. To do someone's work because they are ill or away
- g. A high level of skill or knowledge in a particular field
- h. Master of Business Administration; a higher university degree in business

An email to request time off

From: Stefan Bauer

To: Emma Louise Jensen

Subject: Request for time off

Dear Ms Jensen,

I'm writing to request some time off between Monday 18 February and Friday 8 March in order to work on my MBA dissertation, which is due for submission on 30 March.

I understand that the three weeks I am requesting exceeds my remaining annual leave by four days. I would like to ask if those four days may be taken in lieu of the extra working hours I put in during the two weekends of the Chicago International Management Conference last November.

I have spoken to Kristian Sander and Jasmine Riber, who have both agreed to cover for me during my absence. I would also distribute a playbook for my team members so that everyone

is clear on the tasks they are in charge of and the deadlines they have to meet. During my leave, I would be fully reachable by phone and email to answer any questions or provide any assistance needed. I would also be happy to discuss any further plans to ensure my workload is covered.

I believe that the research I am doing and the resulting MBA will contribute greatly to my professional development, and my improved expertise and qualifications will in turn benefit the company.

Please let me know if you need any additional information. Thank you for your consideration of my request.

Best regards,
Stefan Bauer

.....

Tips

1. This is a formal request for time off, so unless you know the recipient very well, start your email with *Dear ...* ,
2. State the dates of your absence clearly.
3. Be clear right from the beginning what it is you are asking for. In some cultures, it might be more common to start by providing full background information about why time off is needed. However, when communicating across cultures, it is better to be direct (but polite) and clear about what you are requesting, so as to avoid possible miscommunication.
4. Give clear reasons why you need the time off, but don't go into too much unnecessary detail.
5. Assure your manager that your work can be covered and that any problems during your absence can be dealt with.
6. If possible, show how your company or team can benefit from your request being approved.
7. End by thanking your manager for considering your request.

Tasks

Task 1

Are the sentences true or false?

	Answer	
1. Stefan is asking for time off to complete his studies.	True	False
2. Stefan's dissertation deadline is 8 March.	True	False
3. In addition to his annual leave, Stefan wants to take four days of unpaid leave.	True	False
4. Kristian and Jasmine will take over Stefan's work.	True	False
5. Stefan will suggest to his team ideas on how to play and relax in his absence.	True	False
6. Stefan thinks that the studying he is doing will be good for both himself and his company.	True	False

Task 2

Complete the sentences.

cover	advance	leave	approval	considering
ask	taken	ensure	reachable	receiving

Dear Mr Pennant,

I am writing to (1)..... for some time off from Monday 22 July through to Friday 26 July. It has been a while since I have (2)..... time off work and I wish to use some of my annual (3)..... to spend some much needed time with my family. Upon your (4)....., I will make plans to arrange for (5)..... of my responsibilities and I will also (6)..... that all pending work will be completed in (7)..... before I leave. I will be checking my email every day when I'm off and will be (8)..... if urgently needed. Thank you for (9)..... my request and I look forward to (10)..... your response.

Best regards,

Jingmei Yuan

Task 3

Choose the correct answer.

1. Which is the best greeting?
 - a. Hi Jennifer,
 - b. Dear Ms Smith,
 - c. Dear Sir/Madam,
2. Which is the best first line?
 - a. I'm writing to request annual leave soon because of an important event.
 - b. I'm writing to request a day of annual leave on Friday 2 May to attend my son's graduation ceremony.
 - c. As my youngest son has recently graduated from university and the graduation ceremony will be held on Friday 2 May, I would like to take a day of annual leave.
3. Which is the best request?
 - a. I would like to take five days of annual leave.
 - b. I want to take five days of annual leave.
 - c. I need to take five days of annual leave.
4. Which is the best justification?
 - a. Attending this training course will be a great experience for me.
 - b. Attending this training course is more important than my daily work.
 - c. Attending this training course will benefit both myself and the company, as I will share what I learn with my team.
5. Which is the best way to assure the manager that your work will be covered while you're away?
 - a. If I have time, I will leave detailed instructions for the team to cover my work.
 - b. Upon your approval, I will leave detailed instructions for the team to cover my work.
 - c. It will be difficult for the team to cover my work while I'm away, but I hope they will be able to manage.
6. Which is the best ending?
 - a. Please approve my request.
 - b. Please let me know when you give your approval. Thank you.
 - c. Please let me know if you need any additional information. Thank you for your consideration of my request.

Discussion

How much annual leave do people normally get in your country? In your workplace, what is the general attitude to taking time off work?

Answers

Preparation task

1. f
2. c
3. a
4. g
5. b
6. d
7. e
8. h

Task 1

1. True
2. False
3. False
4. True
5. False
6. True

Task 2

1. ask
2. taken
3. leave
4. approval
5. cover
6. ensure
7. advance
8. reachable
9. considering
10. receiving

Task 3

1. b
2. b
3. a
4. c
5. b
6. c