

Spam Emails - David Petrie



Aims:

- To develop learners' ability to recognise features of spam emails
- To develop learners' ability to write persuasively



Materials:

- Whiteboard & Pens
- One copy of each handout per student



Timings:

75 minutes. The writing stage may be finished as homework.



Procedure:

[**\(NB – this lesson is aimed at advanced and proficiency groups\)**](#)

Lead in: Ask students to tell you who they get emails from and what about. (If they use email anymore....)

Give students a copy of Handout #01. Ask them to tell you who received it, who sent it, and why. In feedback point out it was a real email received (by me, but why not pretend it was you?), sent by Olivia Borrego, asking for help. Ask the students if they believe it.

Give Students a copy of Handout #02 (Deconstruction). Ask them to re-read Handout #01 and to complete the different sections of Handout #02. Look at the handout and check they understand what's wanted in each section. For the sake of this exercise, we'll pretend it's a real email and treat it seriously.

Do content feedback with the group based on their answers.

Now ask students how they know it's a spam email. Elicit that it's poorly written – there are a number of linguistic errors in the text: in pairs, ask students to highlight and correct the mistakes.

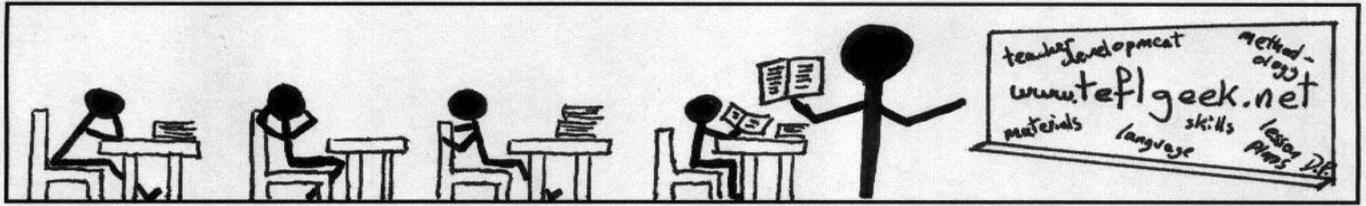
Point out / Elicit that it also has an odd structure. What should the structure be? Collaboratively elicit a better structure and organisation to the board. Use the template in Handout #03 if need be: Greeting / Reason for writing / three main paragraphs / reference to future action and interaction / Closing. Ask students to think about the main paragraphs and which aspects of the original they would regroup in which new sections. For this re-organisation, you can give students a copy of handout #03 to work on.

Ask students if it achieves its communicative purpose? No – it's not persuasive. Why not? Because we can see the con. So it fails to achieve communicative competence or a positive effect on the target reader.... How can we change that? (you may or may not want to point out that the best con – is no con at all.) In pairs, ask students to highlight what they might change in order to try and persuade someone to respond. Monitor and supply language as necessary.

For feedback, split the pairs into two large groups, and ask the groups to share and compare their ideas. Monitor and assist as necessary.

Put students back in their previous pairs and ask them to re-write the letter. Monitor and assist as necessary. This stage may be completed as homework if need be.

If possible, display the rewritten letters around the room and students vote for the one they think most effective.



Handout #01

My Dearest One,

This is Miss Olivia Borrego from Trinidad & Tobago. I am writing from the hospital in Ivory Coast ,this mail is very urgent,i believe that i can trust you, as you can see that I'm dying in the hospital which I don't know what tomorrow will be. I was told by my doctor that I was poisoned and has got my liver damaged and can only live for some months.

I inherited some money (\$4.5 Million) from my late father and I cannot think of anybody trying to kill me apart from my step mother in order to inherit my late father properties and the money, she is an Ivorian by nationality.

I have a little orphan child named Jonathan Walter who has being with me,my step mother and her children are after him and because of that he ran far away where he is hiding now in a mission,this is the primary objective why i contacted you I want you to help him out of this country with the money:

I want you to contact Jonathan Walter with this information below:

Servant Jonathan Walter.

Address: Rue De La Princess L /G 152 Cocody

Abidjan, Cote D'Ivoire.

Phone Number: +225 54188563

He will give you the documents of the money and will direct you to a well known lawyer that I have appointed to him, the lawyer will assist you to change the documents of the money to your name to enable the bank transfer the money to you.

This is the favor I need when you have gotten the money :-

(1) Give 20% of the money to my servant Walter as he has been there for me through my illness and I have promised to support him in life. I want you to take him along with you to your country and establish him as your son.

(2) Give 30% of the money to handicap people and charity organization, then the remaining one is yours.
Note; This should be a code between you and my Servant Walter in this transaction "Hospital" any mail from him, the barrister he will direct you to, without this code "Hospital" is not from the barrister, Walter, the bank or myself as I don't know what will happen to me in the next few hours.

(3) The lawyer's name is Bar Rufus Allen . And Let Walter send you his International passport to be sure of whom you are dealing with. Walter is so little therefore guide him.

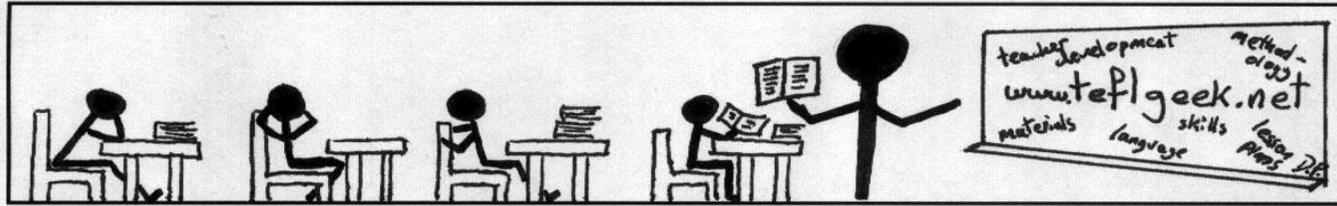
And if I don't hear from you, I will look for another person or an organization.

Please do not forget to contact Jonathan Walter

May Almighty God bless you and use you to accomplish my wish.

Pray for me always.

Miss Olivia Borrego



Handout #02

When and where might you read this?



What is the source of this text?



Why might you read a text like this?



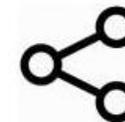
What are your top three takeaways from this text?

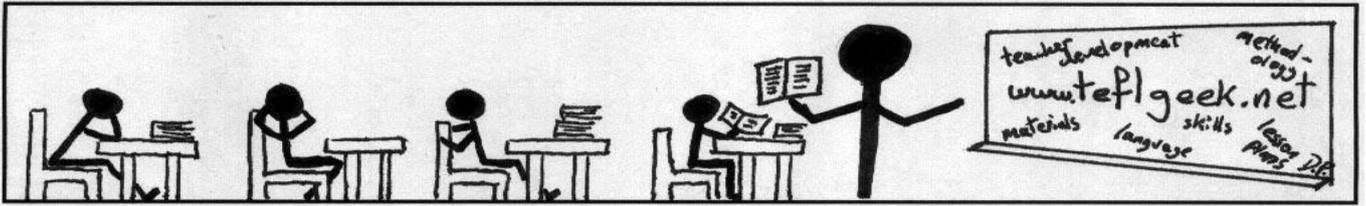


What might you do with this information?



Who might you share this information with?





Handout #03