

RESOURCE · REFERENCE

Email phrase bank

Thirty phrases for the emails that are actually difficult: asking for something, chasing it, saying no, and apologising when it goes wrong. English and Spanish side by side, with a note on what each one signals.

Politeness in English lives in sentence structure rather than in the word please. Politeness in Spanish leans more on warmth and on the relationship. That difference is why a literal translation so often lands wrong.

Opening

Thanks for getting back to me so quickly.

Gracias por responder tan rápido.

Opens warm and acknowledges effort. Nearly always better than going straight to business.

I hope the launch went well last week.

Espero que el lanzamiento de la semana pasada fuera bien.

One specific reference beats any generic pleasantries. It shows you were paying attention.

Quick one –

Una cosa rápida:

Sets expectations honestly for a short email. Only use it when the email really is short.

Following up on our call this morning,

Retomando nuestra llamada de esta mañana,

Anchors the email to a shared moment so the reader knows the context immediately.

I'm copying in Marta, who looks after this side.

Pongo en copia a Marta, que se encarga de esta parte.

Explain why you added someone. Silent CCs make people uneasy in both cultures.

Making a request

Could you send me the figures by Thursday?

¿Me podrías enviar las cifras antes del jueves?

The question form is what makes English polite, not the word please.

Would you be able to take a look before Friday?

¿Podrías echarle un vistazo antes del viernes?

Softer than the previous one. Use it when you are asking for a favour rather than expecting the work.

When you have a moment, could you confirm the numbers?

Cuando tengas un momento, ¿me confirmas las cifras?

Signals the request is not urgent. Do not use it if it is.

It would really help me if I had this by Wednesday.

Me vendría muy bien tenerlo para el miércoles.

Gives a reason and a date without making it an order.

Is there anything you need from me to move this forward?

¿Necesitas algo de mi parte para avanzar con esto?

Turns a chase into an offer of help. Remarkably effective.

Chasing without nagging

Just bumping this up your inbox.

Te subo esto en la bandeja de entrada.

Light and friendly. Assumes the email was missed rather than ignored, which is usually true.

I know you're busy — is this still on the radar?

Sé que estás liado, ¿esto sigue en el radar?

Gives the other person an easy way to say no or not yet.

Is this something you're still able to help with?

¿Sigue siendo algo con lo que puedas ayudar?

For the second chase. Politely asks whether to stop waiting.

No rush at all, just keeping it on the list.

Sin prisa, solo para no perderlo de vista.

Removes pressure while keeping the item alive.

If it's easier, we could cover this in five minutes on a call.

Si te resulta más fácil, lo vemos en cinco minutos por teléfono.

Offers an escape route when email has clearly stalled.

Saying no, or pushing back

I'd love to help, but I can't get to it this week.

Me encantaría ayudarte, pero esta semana no llego.

Warm refusal with a reason. The reason matters more than the apology.

We can do that, but it would push the testing to March.

Se puede hacer, pero retrasaría las pruebas a marzo.

Says yes to the request and no to the timeline. The most useful sentence in this list.

Can I suggest a different approach?

¿Puedo proponer otro enfoque?

Opens a disagreement without contradicting anyone directly.

That's not something I can commit to yet.

Todavía no puedo comprometerme a eso.

Firm but not final. Leaves the door open for later.

I'd rather do it properly next month than badly this month.

Prefiero hacerlo bien el mes que viene que mal este mes.

Reframes a delay as quality rather than reluctance.

When something has gone wrong

You're right, and I'm sorry — here's what happened.

Tienes razón, lo siento. Te cuento qué ha pasado.

Own it first, explain second. Reversing the order sounds like an excuse in both languages.

That was my mistake. I've corrected it and re-sent the file.

Ha sido un error mío. Ya lo he corregido y te reenvío el archivo.

Specific, past tense, already fixed. This is what a professional apology looks like.

Thanks for flagging it.

Gracias por avisar.

Treats the complaint as a favour, which de-escalates almost anything.

To make sure this doesn't happen again, we've

Para que no vuelva a pasar, hemos

Only write this if you can finish the sentence honestly.

Apologies for the delay in coming back to you.

Disculpa la tardanza en responder.

Short and sufficient. Long apologies draw more attention to the delay.

Closing

Let me know if that works for you.

Dime si te encaja.

Hands the decision over and invites a reply.

Happy to talk it through if that's easier.

Si prefieres, lo hablamos.

Offers a call without insisting on one.

Thanks in advance.

Gracias de antemano.

Common in both languages. Slightly presumptuous in English if the request is large.

Any questions, just shout.

Cualquier duda, me dices.

Informal and warm. Fine with colleagues, avoid with a new client.

Looking forward to hearing what you think.

Quedo a la espera de tus comentarios.

The Spanish is noticeably more formal than the English. Match it to the relationship.

This one is on me. Print it, share it with your team, put it next to your screen. No signup, no strings.

If you want these worked through against your own meetings, emails and documents, the first session is free:
wordroot.de/booking.html

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