

elusive, illusory. The confusion here has been greatly reduced by the virtual disappearance from the scene of the forms *elusory* and *illusive*. This leaves *elusive* as the adjective from *elude*, meaning ‘difficult to grasp (physically or mentally)’, and *illusory* as the adjective corresponding to *illusion*, meaning ‘deceptive, not real or actual’. Examples of each: *Preparations are now complete and they set off in a few days’ time to try and capture that elusive denizen of the deep—the Loch Ness Monster—Stornoway Gazette, 1971* | *The notion that Britain has suddenly been rendered entirely ‘safe’ or ‘secure’ is illusory—Times, 2005.*

email, short for *electronic mail*, is a term that has become familiar enough to be spelt as one word. Its grammatical behaviour follows that of *mail*, i.e. it is a noun and a verb; you can *email* messages and you can *email* people. See E-.

emails. 1 Writing and receiving emails has become a common enough activity during the last ten years or so to warrant guidance comparable to that for writing letters (see LETTER FORMS). Generally speaking, emails tend to combine the immediacy of conversation with the formality or semi-formality of letter writing, a situation that gives rise to dangers. The main areas of uncertainty concern method of address, closing salutation, and level of formality (or style) in the message.

2 METHOD OF ADDRESS. A salutation (*Dear—*) is optional, and tends to raise the level of formality of the email. Affinities to

conversation encourage much more casual salutations such as *Hello*—and *Hi*—, as in a hastily written message or in text messaging (see TEXT MESSAGE).

3 SALUTATION. Similarly, a closing salutation such as *Yours* or *Yours sincerely* increases the formality of the message. (If you feel the need to write *Yours faithfully* you should be writing a conventional letter with a proper letterhead.) It is quite legitimate to close the email with a simple statement of the sender's name, without any salutation. An intermediate solution is to use a more informal conversational salutation such as *Best wishes* or *All the best*.

4 LEVEL OF FORMALITY. The tendency is to err on the side of informality and even to omit punctuation and capitalization and to adopt the conventions of text messaging (*i dont want to go to france this year do u*). This is inadvisable except in the most informal communication with contacts the writer knows well enough not to offend by such an approach. Another habit, that of writing emails entirely in capital letters, should be avoided.

embargo has the plural form *embargoes*.

embarrass, embarrassment are spelt with two *rs* and two *s*'s.

embed is spelt *em-*, not *im-*.