First, read the information about email writing styles.

It is helpful to think about three writing styles, although in real life the differences are not so clear.

Formal   This is the style of an old-fashioned letter. Ideas are presented politely and carefully, and there is much use of fixed expressions and long words. Grammar and punctuation are important. This style is not so common, but you can find it if the subject matter is serious (for example a complaint), in emails to customers where you want to make a good impression, or in some cultures where a more formal style is expected.

Neutral   This is the most common style in professional/work emails. The writer and reader are both busy, so the language is simple, clear and direct. There is often a friendly opening line. Sentences are short and there is use of contractions (*I've* for *I have* etc.).

Informal   This is the style for emails between friends. The email might include personal news, funny comments etc. This style is close to speech, and has informal words and conversational expressions. Many people now choose social media rather than email to communicate with friends: with social media the style is even more informal.

Most real emails are basically neutral, but with some elements of formality or informality depending on the context. Mixing styles is okay to some extent, but don't mix styles at the two extremes.

Now match the more informal phrases (1–16) with the more formal phrases (a–p).

Informal	Formal
1 What do you need? __d__	a) Unfortunately I will not be able to attend the meeting.
2 Thanks for your email. ☐	b) I can assure you that …
3 Sorry, I can't make it. ☐	c) I will take the necessary action to solve this issue.
4 Could you …? ☐	d) Please let us know your requirements.
5 I promise … ☐	e) I was wondering if you could …?
6 You haven't … ☐	f) We regret to advise you that …
7 I'm sorry to tell you that … ☐	g) Thank you for your email of 12 February.
8 I'll deal with this. ☐	h) We note from our records that you have not …
9 Don't forget that … ☐	i) I look forward to meeting you next week.
10 I need to … ☐	j) With reference to … (*or* Regarding …)
11 Shall I …? ☐	k) Would you like me to …?
12 But … / Also … / So … ☐	l) I would be grateful if you could …
13 Please … ☐	m) Please accept my apologies for …
14 I'm really sorry about … ☐	n) It is necessary for me to …
15 Re … ☐	o) We would like to remind you that …
16 See you next week. ☐	p) However … / In addition … / Therefore …

Match the more formal words in box A with the more informal words in box B.

A

1 ~~assistance~~	5 inform	9 possess
2 due to	6 information	10 provide
3 in the near future	7 receive	11 request
4 further	8 occupation	12 requirements

B

a) soon	e) job	i) give
b) facts	f) because of	j) needs
c) ~~help~~	g) get	k) have
d) ask for	h) more	l) tell

Rewrite the formal emails below by replacing the phrases *in italics* with more informal phrases.

Email 1

Unfortunately I will not be able to attend the meeting on Friday. As *I will* miss the meeting, *I was wondering if you could* send me a copy of the minutes? *I will* write to Rina as well, to *inform* her that *I will not* be there. Once again, *please accept my apologies for* this.

Sorry I can't make it on Friday. As I'll miss the meeting,

Email 2

Thank you for your email of 25 January where you *requested assistance* on how to *receive* an online discount. *It is necessary for me to know* your a/c number before I can *take action to solve this issue*. *I would be grateful if you could* also let me know which browser *you are* using.