



HOW STANDARD OPENING AND CLOSING PHRASES INSTANTLY  
ESTABLISH AUTHORITY AND TRUST

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**Abstract.** *This thesis examines how standard opening and closing phrases help establish authority and trust in professional, academic and institutional communication. Such phrases are not empty formalities; they perform important pragmatic and rhetorical functions. Openings define the speaker's position, clarify communicative intent and create expectations, while closings complete the interaction, reinforce responsibility and preserve a respectful relationship with the audience.*

**Keywords:** *opening phrases, closing phrases, authority, trust, professional communication.*

## INTRODUCTION

In professional communication, the first and last phrases often determine how the whole message is perceived. A letter that begins with “Dear colleagues,” “I am writing to inform you,” or “Thank you for your inquiry” immediately signals order, purpose and respect. A presentation that starts with “Today I will focus on three key issues” creates a sense of control and competence. A closing such as “I look forward to your response,” “Thank you for your consideration,” or “Please do not hesitate to contact me for further clarification” leaves the impression of openness, responsibility and reliability. These expressions may seem standard, but their communicative effect is substantial.

## MAIN PART

The first function of standard opening phrases is to establish communicative order. An opening does not only begin a text; it frames the interaction. In business correspondence, “I am writing to request information regarding...” differs from a vague beginning such as “I need something from you.” The first version is clear, polite and institutionally appropriate. It shows that the sender respects the receiver's time and understands formal communication norms. Such clarity immediately increases trust because the reader does not have to guess the purpose of the message.

Standard openings also create authority by showing genre competence. Every communicative situation has expected forms. Academic writing, official letters, business emails, legal notices and public speeches follow different conventions. Swales argues that discourse communities use recognizable genres to achieve shared communicative purposes





[4]. This means that a person who uses the expected opening phrase correctly demonstrates membership in a professional discourse community. For example, an academic article beginning with “This study examines...” signals research orientation, while a business proposal beginning with “The purpose of this proposal is...” signals practical planning. The phrase itself is simple, but it places the speaker within a recognized professional genre.

The second function is the management of social distance and politeness. Communication is not only the transfer of information; it also regulates relationships. Brown and Levinson’s politeness theory explains how speakers use linguistic strategies to protect the “face” of participants in interaction [3]. Standard phrases such as “Thank you for your time,” “I appreciate your consideration,” or “With respect to your previous message” reduce directness and soften potential tension. This is especially important when the message contains a request, correction, refusal or criticism. A polite opening prepares the reader to receive the message without perceiving it as aggressive or careless.

Openings can also establish confidence by presenting structure. In oral communication, phrases such as “Let me begin by outlining the main problem” or “I will first explain the background and then discuss the solution” help the audience follow the speaker. This is a form of discourse management. The speaker appears authoritative because the direction of communication is clear. Without such framing, even useful information may seem scattered. Authority is therefore connected not only with what is said, but also with how the message is organized.

Closing phrases perform a different but equally important function. They create completion. A message that ends abruptly may seem careless, cold or unfinished. A closing such as “I would be grateful for your feedback,” “Thank you for your attention,” or “Sincerely” provides a clear end point and indicates the next expected step. This helps maintain professional order. In written communication, the closing is often the final element the reader remembers; therefore, it strongly influences the emotional and pragmatic aftereffect of the message.

Closings also reinforce accountability. A phrase such as “Please let me know if further information is required” signals that the sender is ready to continue the interaction and clarify responsibility. In institutional communication, this is particularly important. Trust grows when the receiver feels that the sender is not merely delivering information, but remains available for follow-up. This final gesture supports reliability. Goffman’s work on interaction rituals shows that communication includes socially organized acts that maintain mutual respect and order [2]. Standard closings are one of these ritualized acts.

Another important aspect is the relation between standard phrases and metadiscourse. Hyland defines metadiscourse as linguistic material that helps writers organize a text and engage readers [5]. Opening and closing phrases are part of this interactional system. They guide the reader through the communicative situation and indicate the writer’s attitude toward the audience. For example, “The purpose of this article is to...” helps organize the text, while





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“These findings suggest that...” guides interpretation at the end. Such expressions do not add new factual content, but they shape how the content is understood.

### CONCLUSION

Standard opening and closing phrases instantly establish authority and trust because they organize communication, signal professionalism, regulate politeness and clarify the relationship between speaker and audience. Openings define purpose, create structure and present the speaker as competent. Closings complete the interaction, maintain respect and indicate readiness for further communication. Their importance is especially visible in professional, academic, institutional and digital contexts, where messages are evaluated quickly and tone must be created through words alone.

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