Email writing tasks for learners of English.

Paying and replying to compliments by email.

1) Choose words from list below to fit into each sentence. Only one final solution should be attempted.

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appreciate / allow / certainly / congratulations / kindness / take /
compliment / of / made / saying / much / kind
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a) That's a really useful answer. You (1. ___ ) know your job!
b) Thanks for that! You've (2. ___ ) my day!
c) Thanks for the (3. ___ )!
d) It's very (4. ___ ) of you to say that.
e) I appreciate your (5. ___ )
f) I (6. ___ ) it as a compliment that...
g) We much (7. ___ ) all your suggestions.
h) It's really an excellent piece of work and I'm not just (8. ___ ) that.
i) (9. ___ ) me to compliment you on...
j) We very (10. ___ ) appreciate your generous gift. Thank you.
k) I am very grateful for your kind comments (11. ___ ) praise.
l) (12. ___ ) on such a useful and comprehensive publication.

2) Analysis. General questions and activities for discussion and practice.

a) The sentences towards the top of the list above are less formal than those lower down. Discuss why?
b) Turn over your worksheet. Your teacher will now ask you a question.
c) Your teacher will now ask you to carry out a short activity to practise these sentences.
Teacher’s notes.
(Time for activity: 35 mins approx. Level: intermediate.)

Paying and replying to compliments by email.

Correct answers to question 1.
1. certainly
2. made
3. compliment
4. kind
5. kindness
6. take
7. appreciate
8. saying
9. Allow
10. much
11. of
12. Congratulations

Answers to question 2.
a) Less formal because: contractions (that's); shortened words (thanks); more Anglo Saxon words or expressions, (made my day) instead of Latin-based words (appreciate, generous); shorter sentences (Thanks for that! compared with sentence (j), for example).

b) Ask the students to turn over their worksheets. Write these prepositions on the board: "for", "on". In pairs or small groups, ask the students to try to remember and write down the phrases from the list that use these prepositions. Answers: Thanks for, I am very grateful for, Allow me to compliment you on, Congratulations on. Groups report back to the class.

c) Give out one or two pieces of card to each student. On each card a student writes a sentence complimenting somebody in the class on his/her clothes, some work he/she has done recently, a new car just bought, etc. No student names are mentioned. The compliment should be specific so that when it is drawn from the box, the person complimented will recognise it as directed towards him/her (eg. a leather jacket). All the cards should then go into a box or placed in a pile face down on the table. A student draws a card and reads it aloud. The person complimented should then say who he/she thinks wrote the card and reply orally using the set phrases practised. (Explain that the more formal sentences here, in practice, would mostly be used only in written English.)

Follow up: students may have confused "congratulations on" and "compliment on". Explain the difference. ("Congratulations" for events, achievements eg. a new baby, passing an exam, but "compliments" on the quality or attractiveness of something eg. clothes, a well-presented piece of work.

Enjoy the class!