

Barbara McClintock, MA, Certified Translator and Certified Terminologist*

Good day, good morning – Bonjour et Bon matin 😊

Although good day and bon matin are quite popular greetings, they are not appropriate in business correspondence. The dictionary entry for “good day” notes that it is a slightly formal, old-fashioned greeting. It is similar to goodbye, and you might hear it in an old movie when someone is taking their leave or dismissing someone and says, “Good day, Sir.”

It’s hard to say where its recent popularity in Quebec comes from. Good day is more likely a literal translation of *bonjour* than Australian slang, sometimes written g’day. Similarly, *bon matin* is considered a calque of good morning according to Marie-Èva de Villers, author of the *Multidictionnaire*.¹

Patrick Lagacé’s article in *La Presse* on the topic raises an interesting issue: Is French now influenced by usage the way English is? The fact is that the *Le Petit Robert* and *Larousse* dictionaries accept new terms, including English words, based on usage. Having said that, they generally mark such terms as foreign or calques, so I’m not sure I would use them in a written text. Moreover, *bon matin* has not been entered in a dictionary yet to mean good morning as far as I know.

In conclusion, dear, good morning or good afternoon, hi and hello are all acceptable email greetings in English, and you can’t go wrong with *bonjour* or even *bonsoir* in French!

1. Patrick Lagacé, “Quand j’entends certaines expressions, certaines tournures de phrases, mes tympans veulent appeler le 911,” *La Presse, Actualités*, Accessed on August 22, 2021
https://www.lapresse.ca/actualites/chroniques/2021-08-22/bonjour-parlons-de-bon-matin.php?fbclid=IwAR3hJ5r0aNO3yid15MVxWwDeK_JEBIcGIIncmZ1TOmSPtx4zuixM0fz63fPQ#

* Author’s note: I would like to thank Pamela Lee, Certified Translator, for her assistance with this series of blog posts of which this is the last one. Please note that the opinions expressed here are solely those of the author.