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Dear Coach,

Hello. I hope you are well.<sup>1</sup> It's been a year since I began my maternity leave,<sup>2</sup> but I have kept up with<sup>3</sup> most of the company's news through hearing from colleagues.<sup>4</sup> It seems that things are going very well with the new CEO. I really miss the job, with all the chances to practice English and work with colleagues who are always curious and trying to improve themselves, too.<sup>5, 6</sup>

書式変更：フォントの色：黒

削除：left the office

削除：knew the

削除：

削除：the

削除：and i

削除：doing

削除：that gave me many

削除：study better

削除：get to know the

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削除：Well,

削除：need

削除：when to

削除：to

削除：a

削除：2

削除：training

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I am writing you now<sup>8</sup> to talk about my return to work. My daughter started going to nursery school two<sup>9</sup> weeks ago and is learning to play, eat, drink, and sleep

<sup>1</sup> Hana, I will be giving you some coaching in this email not just about your English, but also about what you are saying. I realize that you are the expert in what to say to a Japanese boss, but I have asked you to write this to an American boss (me!), and I will therefore make some comments about American business writing. This may or may not come in handy for you someday. ☺ I have inserted this sentence because it is customary in a note like this to inquire about the other person first, before launching into your business.

<sup>2</sup> “Left the office” can be interpreted in a negative way. “She screamed at the boss, then left the office.” “Began my maternity leave” is a much more neutral phrase. Can you hear the difference?

<sup>3</sup> Saying “I knew” is a past tense statement. “I knew them when I worked there before my maternity leave.” It doesn't carry into the present. “I have kept up with them since my maternity leave began” makes it clear that you kept up with them in the past and you are keeping up with them at present. For instance, smart people try to keep up with the news!

<sup>4</sup> “Colleagues” is an English noun that doesn't pair well with “the.” To say “some colleagues” or “my colleagues” sounds fine. However, you don't interact with “the colleagues.” It just doesn't work with this word. Almost all nouns need some sort of modifier in front of them and usually “the” will work with a plural noun, but it doesn't work here. I wish I could give you a rule for this but a lot of these are on a case-by-case basis that your ear has to learn. “Colleagues” is a weird word in that you can use it alone without being incorrect. For instance, you can say “I have kept up with colleagues.” You can't say “I have kept up with news.” It would have to be “I have kept up with the news.” Or “I have kept up with local news,” where “local” is the word modifying the noun, “news.” I hope this makes sense. Let me know if you have questions.

<sup>5</sup> You do a wonderful job in this paragraph in setting a positive tone. In English, we call this “buttering up” the boss. However, buttering up is not always a positive comment. Sometimes the phrase is accompanied with a negative feeling. For example, you're just saying that to butter me up means you want something from me: a raise, a promotion, a good recommendation.

<sup>6</sup> By adding “too” to the end of this sentence, you remind your boss that you, too, are working to improve yourself.

<sup>7</sup> “Well” at the start of the sentence like this is what we call a throat clearing, i.e., getting ready to speak before saying something. It is not necessary in a business email like this. It's too casual to be used here.

<sup>8</sup> Here's another standard piece of language in American business correspondence. “I am writing you now because....” “I am emailing you this week to....” “I am contacting you today in order to....” You don't need to use the word “need” in this sentence because it is implicit; it is understood. After all, would you be writing this email if you didn't need to? ☺

<sup>9</sup> In business, English, numbers zero through ten are spelled out, not written numerically.

without me. School starts at 9:00 a.m.<sup>10</sup> She is having trouble adjusting. The problem is that she can't sleep without being breastfed first and her teacher has asked me to pick her up at 2:00 p.m. for a while, concerned that she was eating every meal while half-asleep.<sup>11, 12</sup>

I would like to<sup>13</sup> extend my maternity leave for an additional month. Although I could continue to leave her at school until 5:00 p.m. I would like to wait a little longer if possible before she has such a long day's schedule. I know that my daughter's good start at school will be the key to my success in resuming work.<sup>14, 15</sup>

I hope you will give serious consideration to my request.<sup>16</sup> I look forward to hearing from you soon.<sup>17</sup>

Respectfully yours,<sup>18</sup>

Hana<sup>19</sup>

<sup>10</sup> These are the standard ways of expressing time. A.m. and p.m. are lower case and have periods after them. A colon separates the hours and the minutes. The minutes are still expressed, even when at the top of the hour, i.e., 7:00 a.m.

<sup>11</sup> I'm not sure this last part of this sentence makes sense. Why is it a problem that she's eating while half asleep?

<sup>12</sup> This paragraph is nicely structured. In paragraph one, you explain your reason for writing and demonstrate a positive, concerned attitude about your place of employment. In this paragraph, paragraph number two, you state the facts; you describe the situation with your daughter.

<sup>13</sup> I think this asking for what you want is every bit as respectful as the "May I" but sounds more grownup. You are expressing what you would like, yet still in a very formal and respectful tone.

<sup>14</sup> The last sentence in this paragraph does a terrific job of bringing your identity back to concerned employee, thinking about your work performance. Bravo! Well said!

<sup>15</sup> In this, your third paragraph, you ask for what you want. Hana, I find that the structure of this email correspondence is excellent. Although I've made some word choice changes, your original email was very solidly thought out and written. ☺

<sup>16</sup> This sentence is the last place in this email where you ask for what you want. Everything past this sentence is respectful formalities.

<sup>17</sup> This is a very standard sort of ending line whenever you expect an answer to something.

<sup>18</sup> "Respectfully yours" is a very formal sign-off and I think it is appropriate when you are asking a boss for something. Other people might have different ideas of how to sign off, like "Sincerely yours," or "Best regards." I chose "Respectfully yours" because it is very formal and would be a good one to use if you and your boss have an extremely professional relationship, not a casual, friendly one.

<sup>19</sup> You can choose to use your last name or not. I think it might be too formal to use it here. After all, your boss knows who you are!

- 削除 : from
- 削除 : AM.
- 削除 : a
- 削除 : PM
- 削除 : saying
- 削除 : ate
- 削除 : May I
- 削除 : a
- 削除 : ?
- 削除 : I know children will learn to live anyhow and can
- 削除 : till
- 削除 : PM
- 削除 : but
- 削除 : and see
- 削除 : .
- 削除 : , because her
- 削除 : there
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Director's comments: The coach uses a number of approaches to working with Hana.

The coach lets Hana know when she has done a good job. Look at item 12. The coach tells Hana that she has written two good paragraphs. The coach explains why the paragraphs are well written. Notice item 17. The coach is affirming that Hana has ended the paragraph in a standard style.

The coach provides Hana with some of the writing rules for English. Look at item 9, the rule for writing out numbers. Look at item 4. Here the coach explains colleagues. In another situation, a coach may explain that all words are like players on a baseball team. Each player has a position. We have to respect the positions and the territories of words. A coach may explain collocations, a concept that helps students to understand the territories of words and how some words go together and some do not. Item 8 provides another rule for standard business communication. Notice how the coach provides the rule and then gives three examples to illustrate the rule.

The coach adds a subtle comment in item 6. Adding 'too' reminds Hana's boss that she too belongs to the team. I'm sure the boss has not forgotten, but the addition of 'too' creates a stronger connection.