

COMMUNICATE

Intermediate

20 MIN

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UPDATED 2026-09-30

# Clear a return-from-leave inbox backlog fast.

Filter to your time away and ask Copilot to summarize everything that came in, turning a hundred unread emails into a short catch-up read.

MICROSOFT 365

Outlook

WORKS WITH

Copilot

## Business Outcome

Returning from leave takes minutes of reading instead of a full day lost to inbox archaeology.

## Workflow Steps

### Step 1: Filter to unread mail within your leave dates

Outlook

Set an Outlook filter for unread email within the exact date range you were out, so the summary doesn't include mail you already handled before leaving or after returning.

## Step 2: Run the catch-up summary

Copilot

With the filtered view still active, open Copilot in Outlook and ask it to summarize the current filtered results specifically — not your whole inbox — grouped in a way you can act on rather than a flat chronological list.

PROMPT

Summarize everything in this filtered set by topic or project. For each topic, tell me if it's already resolved, still needs my input, or was handled by someone else while I was out.

## Step 3: Confirm what's marked as resolved

Outlook

Before archiving anything the summary calls "already resolved," check the thread's last message yourself — a thread that went quiet isn't always a thread that got resolved.

## Step 4: Work the "still needs input" list first

Outlook

Prioritize your reply time on the items the summary flagged as still needing you, since those are the ones most likely to be time-sensitive by now.

## ✓ Check the work

- Spot-check a few "resolved" threads to confirm they actually closed out, not just went silent.
- Verify nothing outside your leave date range slipped into the summary.
- Confirm the still-needs-input list doesn't miss a thread where you were cc'd but directly asked something.

## Expected Outcome

A summarized catch-up covering everything that arrived while you were out, organized by what still needs action.



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