



Email Etiquette

Introduction

When sending any written communication, it's important to use appropriate language, keep your tone professional, and use proper etiquette. Email, texts, and social media posts give first impressions, so it is best to keep all of these communications professional. No matter what college or career pathway you choose, you will certainly need to send emails.

Instructions

- Review the attached tips for writing a professional email.
- If you don't need to send a professional email right now, try writing a mock (pretend) email using the guidelines below. You may want to use one of these imaginary scenarios:
 - Asking a professor for an extension for a paper that is due tomorrow
 - Inquiring about an internship related to your career interests
 - Submitting a resume for an after-school job
 - Inviting a guest to speak to your class about their career
 - Asking a local business to sponsor an event at your school
 - Setting up a meeting with your teacher or counselor
 - Checking with a college admissions office about application deadlines
 - Asking a teacher to write you a formal recommendation letter
 - Thanking a local organization for giving you a scholarship
- Now, try writing a mock email that gets everything wrong! Trade drafts of your "bad example" email with a classmate or peer mentor, and circle every instance where this email makes the writer seem unprofessional. Go over your email drafts together to discuss how the sender comes across, and ways they could be corrected.

Tips for Writing a Professional Email

1. Check Your Email Address

Before giving out your email address, make sure it is professional. Create an appropriate personal email address to email teachers, professors, and employers. Feel free to use your school email address if you have one.

Good example: `firstname.lastname@example.com`

Bad example: `pizzalover123456@example.com`

2. Compose a Clear Subject Line

Any email you send should have a concise subject line that gives the recipient an idea of the email's content. It should not be left blank.



Good example: Application for Management Position; Math Assignment Question

Bad Example: <No Subject>; Hi :)

3. Use a Formal Greeting

Start your email with a formal greeting like “Dear,” “Good afternoon,” or “Hello” and the recipient’s title (Mr., Mrs., Dr., Miss, etc.) and last name. Until you are on a first name basis with someone, assume you should continue to use their professional title.

If you don’t know the recipient of the email, you can simply start the email with “Good morning”, “Greetings” or “Hello.”

Good example: Dear Mr. Smith; Good afternoon Dr. Johnson;

Bad example: What’s up John?; Hey John

4. Create a Brief & Professional Message

When you are sending an email, make your message clear and get to the point quickly. People prefer to read short emails that get the point across without unnecessary details. If the topic requires more than a paragraph to explain, ask if you can schedule a phone call to discuss. After you write your message, review it and edit before sending it off.

Unlike a text, you should spell out all words in an email instead of using abbreviations like “lol”, “u”, “idk”, etc. Proofread your email for grammar and punctuation before sending. Use punctuation - ending sentences with periods is expected (and does not come across as rude like it might in a text message). Limit your exclamation points only to truly exciting statements.

Good example: What time is our meeting on Monday, January 15th?

Bad example: idk when the meeting is! do u know? thx!!!!

5. Closing/Sign-off

Close your email by saying, “Please let me know at your earliest convenience,” “I hope to hear from you soon,” “Thank you for your time,” etc. Then sign off with a salutation like, “Thank you,” “Best wishes,” “Best,” “Take care,” or “Sincerely,” and your name.

Good example: Thank you,
John Smith

Bad example: Peace; Later; Bye; Love;
Boss man

6. Other Tips

- It’s a good idea to read your email aloud before you send it to double check grammar and clarity.



CORE PRACTICES

PATHWAYS

- Fill in the recipient's email address last, after every other part of the email is proofread and finalized and any documents are attached. This prevents accidentally sending an email that is not completed.
- Never send an email while you are angry! Once it is sent, it cannot be taken back so it is safest to write your email as a draft and then reread, edit, and send it the next day.
- Read your email from the point of view of the recipient before sending. Could anything come off as passive-aggressive, too informal, or rude? People interpret things in different ways and tone is hard to read through email.
- Double check the title and spelling of the recipient's name before sending, especially if it is your first time emailing them. First impressions are important!
- Follow the example of the adult in the conversation. If they sign their email using their first name, you can use that in your response. If they don't use a greeting and skip to the body of the email, you can do that as well.
- When in doubt, be more formal than you think you need to be.
- If you do not receive a response within a few days and would like to try again, considering forwarding your original email and adding "I wanted to follow up on... and look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience," but only do this once. If you do not hear back after the second try, verify that you have the correct address or try reaching the person by phone. Be mindful of busy times of the year and weekends or breaks. If you email someone on a Friday afternoon before a break, you may not hear from them until mid-week or later.
- Check your email frequently and respond in an appropriate amount of time. Consider sharing your boundaries with those you email frequently. For example, if you generally do not do work on the weekends or after a certain time of day, let those in your network know so they don't expect a response from you during those times.