

EMAIL ETIQUETTE: HOW TO WRITE E-MAILS TO YOUR PROFESSORS

1. **Use your college or university e-mail account.** This will guarantee that your professor will receive your e-mail, and that your message will not go into a spam folder. Also, through your email, your professor will be able to know immediately who you are, instead of guessing who qtpie2@unknown.com is.
2. **Start with a new message.** Avoid replying to an old message from your instructor, especially if you are addressing a new issue in your message.
3. **In the Subject Line include the course number and the days your class meets.** For example, "WRT111 MWF 8:00-9:00 AM". Include in few words the reason for your message. For example, "WRT111 MWF 8:00-9:00 AM, Request for a space in your class".
4. **Address your instructors appropriately.** "Professor Smith" and "Dr. Smith" are appropriate ways to address your instructors. **NEVER** use "Hey" or "Yo!" or "Hey Yo!" Also, avoid writing as salutation "Hi Professor Smith." "Hi" is very informal, and some instructors do not like to be addressed in such informal way. Do not also use "Dear Professor Smith" as this is not a letter. "Hello Professor Smith" is an appropriate salutation.
5. **Write a clear and concise message.** Avoid wordiness; get to the point. Follow the following format: A. State your problem by being specific and detailed (I will not be in class on Monday; I apologize for missing class on Wednesday; I would like to schedule an appointment to meet with you to discuss my assignment; I was hoping you could provide me with more information in regard to our homework...). B. Include the question relevant to your problem; C. Justify why you need an answer; D. If you need a response, politely ask for one.
6. **Always express your gratitude.**
7. **Sign with your full name.** After "Regards," or "Sincerely," or "Best Regards," sign your full name.
8. **Unless instructed otherwise, do not send attachments.** If you are going to miss class, and your assignment is due in class, do not send it to your professor with the message "I will miss class today; here is my assignment." You should check with your professor in advance to make sure that sending your document is appropriate.
9. **Proofread your message.** Never click on "Send" before proofreading your message. Make sure you have complete sentences and that you use punctuation correctly. Check for spelling mistakes; make particularly sure you are not misspelling the instructor's name. Pay attention to mechanics (proper capitalization) and grammar mistakes. Do not use texting abbreviations. Whenever possible, use paragraph breaks to organize your message.
10. **Allow adequate time for a reply.** Your 2:00 am question may need to wait until morning for an answer. If your assignment is due at 8:00 am, and at 5:00 am you have a question pertaining to the assignment, do not expect a prompt reply from your instructor. Do not assume that instructors check their emails several times a day; most instructors check their email only twice a day. A growing number of instructors check their email only once a day (professors generally receive an average of 50 messages a day). Also, not all messages from students require answers. If you need an answer, make sure to kindly ask for one, always allowing adequate time for a proper reply.
11. **Be nice and thank your instructor for answering.** When your instructor replies to your message, make sure to thank him/her. This is not only polite but it serves as confirmation that you received his or her reply

IMPORTANT TIPS

- Before you send out an email to your instructor, make sure to check the syllabus and all other material you have been provided with at the beginning of the semester to see if you can answer your own question.
- When you miss class, contact one of your classmates before you contact your instructor to learn about homework assignment.
- Do not use your email message to rant or to whine. If you have a concern or a complaint, make sure to word it correctly, and be concise. Then, make an appointment to follow up.
- When inquiring about the reasons for a grade on a specific assignment, consider making an appointment to meet in person with your instructor. Inform your instructor about the reason for your appointment: “RE: Schedule an appointment to discuss my mid-term grade”; this will give your instructor time to prepare for the meeting, thus gathering all the material necessary to explain your grade. Do not expect this kind of question to be answered via email.
- When you realize that you have a conflict with the date of your quizzes, mid-term or final exams, email your instructor immediately, and ask for an appointment to discuss alternatives. Again, do not expect to address this concern by email only.
- Do not email your instructor to ask about his/her office hours. Office hours are usually on the syllabus, or posted outside your instructor’s office door.
- When asking for a letter of recommendation, it is usually best to meet with the instructor in person.
- Do not write in CAPITALS. When you write your message in CAPITAL LETTERS, you come across as if YOU ARE SHOUTING.
- You are what you email. Instructors will shape their opinion of you according to the quality of the email messages you are sending.

REASONS TO SEND AN E-MAIL

- Inform your teacher about your future absence.
- Inform your teacher about serious illnesses or other emergencies.
- Request an appointment to see your instructor (when your instructor’s office hours are not convenient to you).
- Ask a specific question about the course material that is not clear to you.
- Thank your instructor for an appointment he/she scheduled with you.
- Apologize for rude behavior in class.