

Email Etiquette (How to Write Formal/Professional E-Mails)

1. Always fill in the subject line with a topic that means something to your reader. Not "Decals" or "Important!" but "Deadline for New Parking Decals."
2. Put your main point in the opening sentence. Most readers won't stick around for a surprise ending.
3. Never begin a message with a vague "This." ("This needs to be done by 5:00.") Always specify what you're writing about.
4. Don't use ALL CAPITALS (no shouting!), or all lower-case letters either (unless you're e. cummings).
5. As a general rule, PLZ avoid chat-room abbreviations and acronyms: *you* may be ROFLOL (rolling on the floor laughing out loud), but your reader may be left wondering WUWT (what's up with that).
6. Be brief *and* polite. If your message runs longer than two or three short paragraphs, consider (a) reducing the message, or (b) providing an attachment. But in any case, don't snap, growl, or bark.
7. Remember to say "please" and "thank you." And mean it. "Thank you for understanding why afternoon breaks have been eliminated" is prissy and petty. It's *not* polite.
8. Add a signature block with appropriate contact information (in most cases, your name, business address, and phone number, along with a legal disclaimer if required by your company). Do you *need* to clutter the signature block with a clever quotation and artwork? Probably not.
9. Edit and proofread before hitting "send." You may think you're too busy to sweat the small stuff, but unfortunately your reader may think you're a careless dolt.
10. Finally, reply promptly to serious messages. If you need more than 24 hours to collect information or make a decision, send a brief response explaining the delay.

Source: <http://grammar.about.com/od/developingessays/a/profemails.htm>

**** For further assistance, we would like to refer you to the Arts and Sciences Career and Development Center at IU: <http://www.indiana.edu/~career/>**