University Writing & Speaking Center

Email Etiquette for Students

What is Email Etiquette?

Email etiquette is how we maintain a respectful, appropriate, and professional tone in the context of an email. This includes but is not limited to using correct spelling and grammar, addressing the reader with correct titles, and identifying oneself and one's needs clearly. Email etiquette is especially relevant for students communicating with professors.

Where to Begin:

- Decide whether or not the question, concern, or comment you have can be answered quickly over an email. If not, consider speaking with them in person after class or during office hours.
- Be sure you are using an email with a professional address. For example, "johnexample@university.edu" is more appropriate than "partygirl800@hotmail.com." Most universities will prompt you to create a student email upon your enrollment, so this is often easily done.
- Include a brief, clear, and specific subject line ("ENG 300 Exam Question")
- Begin by addressing the email to a professor using the correct titles.
    - Professor Johnson,
    - Dr. Yin,
- Briefly introduce yourself and be sure to include:
    - Your full name
    - The class you are in
    - The time and/or section of the class you are in

When Writing an Email to a Professor…

- Begin and end with a professional salutations:
    - Good Morning, Good Afternoon,
    - Sincerely,
    - Best,
    - Thanks,
- Make sure to use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation throughout the email.
    - To check for this, re-read the email before you send it, use spell check, and consider reading the email aloud or having a friend look it over before sending it.

- Utilize a professional tone
    - Tone is the writer's character or emotion that is being perceived by the reader as a result of how the email was written. One can write with an angry, positive, constructive, or respectful tone to name a few.
    - When emailing a professor, you want your tone to come across as calm, positive, and respectful
        - "I can't believe u gave me an F on that test!!!!!" – angry, disrespectful, unprofessional tone
        - "Dr. Stevens, Thank you for getting back to me so quickly." – respectful, positive, professional tone
    - Be aware of your emotional state when you are writing the email. Think before you send.
- Avoid using internet slang (totes, facepalm, etc.), text language (lol, brb, etc.), emojis, and distracting fonts that may portray an unprofessional image.
- Always re-read your email before you send it to edit spelling, grammar, and punctuation as well as for the overall tone and content of the email.
- <u>Remember that professors are people and have busy schedules too, so be understanding and respectful of their time and consideration.</u>
    - Email them well in advance if possible and avoid emailing them at unreasonable hours (outside of business hours).
    - Give professors a decent amount of time to respond (at least a day) before sending additional emails.

University **Writing & Speaking** Center

Email Structure

1.) Briefly describe the problem you are having

Professor Ellis,
My name is Jen Collins, and I have been struggling to complete the homework in your MATH 181- Calculus 1 course.

2.) Explain how you have tried to solve said problem

I have been to the Math Center and attended every lecture, but I am still having difficulties.

3.) Emphasize why this problem needs to be solved

I am not doing very well right now, but I really want to be successful in this class.

4.) Specifically state what assistance you may need of the professor and that you are willing to take the necessary steps to fix the problem

I would appreciate it if I could meet with you regularly each week to go over the homework. I have class during your office hours, so if you could let me know what days and times work best for you to meet, I would greatly appreciate it.

Thank you for your time,
Jen Collins

5.) Final email should look resemble

Professor Ellis,
My name is Jen Collins, and I have been struggling to complete the homework in your MATH 181- Calculus 1 course. I have been to the Math Center and attended every lecture, but I am still having difficulties. I am not doing very well right now, but I really want to be successful in this class.

I would appreciate it if I could meet with you regularly each week to go over the homework. I have class during your office hours, so if you could let me know what days and times work best for you to meet, I would greatly appreciate it.

Thank you for your time,
Jen Collins