

More on Professional Correspondence

Your e-mail correspondence to all your instructors should be professional.

Include the following in every e-mail you write:

1. **Subject line w/ Course & Section Number AND a general subject (ENGL 1010-14: Essay 1)** I have approximately 75 online students. I cannot and should not be expected to keep track of everyone. You must identify the course & section number so I can quickly know who you are and can help you efficiently & effectively.
2. **Salutation (Dear Mrs. De Deo; Hello Professor: Hi Keri)**
3. **End with a closing and your name. (Take care, Suzy; Have a great day! Suzy)**
4. **Don't assume I know who you are based on your email address.**
5. **Proper grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization:** Please leave the chat lingo for Facebook or whatever - do not type something that is not English, such as "L8 papers." This is might be okay with your friends, but it is not appropriate in any professional setting. Messages written in ALL CAPS usually imply yelling; while messages in all lowercase letters are unacceptable. Punctuate and capitalize as you would in a formal document. Remember that an email provides an impression of who you are. If you're sloppy in your writing to your instructors, then your instructors may think you are a sloppy student and don't really care about your education. Do you really want to come across like that?
6. **If needing help with a problem, provide enough information about the problem so I can help you quickly and effectively: what, when, where, how, etc.** Simply saying there was a problem with a quiz tells me nothing. Telling me there was a power outage while you were taking Week 4 Quiz and you couldn't finish it tells me more, and I can fix it quickly without another email asking you about the details. In addition, when replying to my messages, please make sure to answer all the questions or respond to each point I make. Often, students only answer one part of the message and it takes several more email passes to get a complete response.
7. **Respect & common decency.** I suggest that if you're angry or frustrated about an issue (technical, a grade, etc.), take a time out before sending an email. I wish I had a dollar for every rude e-mail I have received from students; I would be rich. When things go wrong, please remember that I am human. I make mistakes, but I am truly here to help you. I will do what I can on my end to make the situation right, and I will treat you with respect and fairness to the best of my ability. I simply expect the same treatment. Emoticons can come in handy (such as smiling or frowning faces) in your correspondence. However, please do not get carried away.

General Points

Chances are you will continue to use all types of electronic correspondence in whatever you do after college, so it is a good idea to learn "netiquette" and apply it in everything you do.

- The golden rule of netiquette, as stated in Virginia Shea's *Netiquette*, is simply to "Remember the Human." Before you send an e-mail message, ask yourself if you would say this to the recipient's face. Sometimes in cyberspace, people lose their sense of tact and common courtesy. Don't let this happen to you.
- E-mail and social networking is NOT private correspondence; anything you write creates a permanent record. As your instructor, I tend to save your correspondence to me (for organization purposes) and it will become part of your file (and, as stated in the syllabus, your grade).

"In general, strive for a polite, friendly tone, using the clearest, most precise words you can muster" (from Jean Wyrick's *Steps to Writing Well* 468). Keep the golden rule in mind as well: Treat others the way you want to be treated. This holds true with words as well.

Please see the following links for more information.

- More on " Netiquette": <http://www.albion.com/netiquette/index.html>