

Whether you are e-mailing a professor, colleague, co-worker, or boss, it is absolutely essential to understand and practice proper e-mail etiquette. Writing well is a powerful tool in any field-- it allows you to be heard, to be understood, and to be successful. E-mail correspondence can say a lot about the person you are, regardless of whether the recipient has directly met you or not. It may be the one opportunity you have to make an impression, so make it count!

Steps to writing a professional e-mail:

- 1. Include a subject.** Keep the subject short and appropriate to the e-mail's content. Use key words and information so the sender has a good idea of what the e-mail is about. If you are including an attachment in the e-mail, keep the file name meaningful and professional.
- 2. Begin with a greeting.** For formal e-mails, begin with "Dear" followed by the professional form of the recipient's name (Dr., Mrs./Ms., Mr., Professor).
- 3. State your purpose.** It is important to make your purpose clear early on before moving into the main text of your e-mail. The entire e-mail should be brief (no more than one screen length when possible). Vary your sentence structure. Remember that several very short sentences together may make your message sound abrupt.
- 4. Closing remarks.** Thank your reader again and add a courteous closing remark before you end the e-mail, such as "Thank you for your consideration." Then, follow up with "I look forward to hearing from you."
- 5. End with a closing.** Keep the ending professional. "Sincerely," "Best regards," and "Thank you" are all appropriate. Endings such as "Yours truly," "Best Wishes," and "Cheers" are better for casual and more personal e-mails.
- 6. Proofread!** Read your e-mail again to ensure proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

Quick E-mail Tips

- Make sure your e-mail address is professional. Consider making a separate e-mail account for professional correspondences.
- Don't use text talk or slang.
- Before you click send, be sure to proofread for clarity, grammar, spelling, etc. If you're unsure about anything, ask someone to look over your e-mail.