

# EMAIL TIPS FOR STUDENTS

You've got mail! Now what?

# SUBJECT LINE

- Always include a subject line.
- Be specific rather than general; include the course name or number.
- “Subject: Question about chapters covered in EN132 midterm” is better than “Subject: Question”.

# EMAIL TEXT

- Always (well, almost always) include text in your email, even when you are just sending an attachment.
- The exception is when using NT (or n/t) to indicate that all of the information is in the subject line.

# SALUTATION

- Follow the lead of the superior in your relationship.
- Err on the side of formality.
- “Dear [name]” is never inappropriate, but lack of a salutation or “Hey!” may be seen as unprofessional or too chummy.

# WRITING THE EMAIL

- Use the standard (but short) writing format of introduction, body, conclusion.
- Introduction: Introduce yourself or refer to the reason for the email.
- Body: Concisely state the content.
- Conclusion: Request action.

# EMAIL LENGTH

- If possible try to keep emails to one or at most two screen lengths.
- Anything longer should probably be attached as a Word file or pdf.
- For longer emails, use headings and bulleted lists to organize information.

# INFORMALITIES

- When in doubt, avoid these in work-related email:
  - *Smileys and emoticons*
  - *Exclamation points (especially multiple exclamation points!!!!!!)*
  - *YMMV, BTW, CYA and other alphabet soups*
- Follow the lead of whomever is your employer or superior, but err on the side of formality.

# CLOSING

- Again, follow your superior's lead.
- These are some popular closings:
  - *Best wishes,*
  - *Best,*
  - *Kind regards,*
  - *Thanks,*
  - *Thanks very much,*

# SIGNATURE

Use an informative, professional signature.

Example:

*Jane Smith*

*Milwaukee School of Engineering*

*Mechanical Engineering, Class of 2017*

*Email address*

*Phone number*

# ATTACHMENTS

- Refer to the attachment in the email text (e.g., “I have attached my memo that is due tomorrow.”).
- Name the attached file clearly, and include your name in the file name (e.g., EN132 003 Proposal Memo from Nancy Drew).

# ATTACHMENTS, CONT.

- Always ask first before emailing large attachments or if the recipient isn't expecting an attachment.
- If using Word, send a .doc file or pdf rather than a .docx file.
- Consider using a cloud-based or other file-sharing service such as Dropbox or Google Drive for frequent sharing of large files.

# SUBMITTING STUDENT WORK

- Never submit an assignment through email unless the instructor has explicitly said it is okay to do so.
- In the text of your email, explain what the assignment is (“I have attached my first essay for EN131, which is due today.”).
- Use a subject line that clearly states the purpose of the email (e.g., “Subject: EN131 Essay Submission”).

# GOOD EMAIL HABITS

- Try to respond to emails within 24 hours if possible.
- Plan time in your daily or weekly schedule for email maintenance to keep your inbox and folders clean and well organized.
- Consider adopting the “Inbox Zero” habit.
- Process rather than simply check email.

# MERLIN MANN: INBOX ZERO

<http://inboxzero.com>



ADAPTED LOOSELY FROM PURDUE OWL ONLINE  
WRITING LAB'S "EMAIL ETIQUETTE FOR STUDENTS"  
[HTTPS://OWL.ENGLISH.PURDUE.EDU/OWL/RESOURCE/694/01/](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/694/01/)

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