

**Email Etiquette**

Email is a convenient communication medium for sending or requesting information, transmitting documents, and/or prompting discussion. However, there are differences between emailing a friend or peer and emailing your supervisor or professor. This handout provides suggestions and strategies for effectively composing email messages in a professional or academic setting.

**The Basic Structure**

Use a concise and informative subject line.

Subject: Question over Annotated bib. Project

Dr. Smith,

I am in your ENGL 1301 class and I have a few questions about integrating sources and the annotated bibliography entries that are due on Friday, July 20th.

I’m not completely sure about the assignment’s requirements and I was hoping we could discuss the assignment during your office hours on Wednesday, July 11th?

If you are unavailable at that time, I could also come by on Thursday after 12:00p.m.

Please reply with a time that is most convenient for you.

Thank you,

Jane Doe

Address the recipient by name.

Identify yourself – name, course number or meeting time.

Clearly state your purpose, followed by additional details as necessary.

Conclude the email.

Thank the recipient for their time.

Sign your name.

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**Email Etiquette**

**The Dos and Don'ts of Writing an Email**

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| Consider your audience. To whom are you writing this email?  | Do not resort to a one-size-fits-all email. Different recipients require different approaches and language.  |
| Focus on your purpose. What do you hope to accomplish by writing this email? | Do not assume the recipient will know what you are talking about. Be specific.  |
| Use a professional and identifiable email address.  | Do not assume email is private. Do not write anything you do not want to share. |
| Be mindful of your tone. In the absence of non-verbal cues, your message could be misinterpreted by the reader(s). | Do not expect an immediate response. Most instructors have a 24–48-hour response window. |
| Keep message brief and to the point. Your reader does not need to know everything that goes on in your life. | Do not respond to or write an email when you are angry or upset. Give yourself time to think before writing. |
| Write, read, and revise your message before sending. Use spell-check! | Do not write in ALL CAPS – your reader may perceive this as SHOUTING! Also, limit your use of exclamation points!!!!!  |
| Follow the conventions for effective paragraph writing. Each paragraph (section) should focus on one idea. | Do not email your professor to ask them what you missed in class. Check the course website, talk to a peer, and/or make an appointment to visit them during office hours. |
| Use complete sentences. | Do not write in textese or txt-speak. Avoid the use of emoticons.  |
| Use the top-down method: Begin with the most important information, followed by additional information and an explanation.  | Do not try to be funny in your email. Humor does not translate well in a text-based format.  |

The information for this handout was compiled from the following source:

University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill. (2014). *Effective email communication.*

http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/effective-e-mail-communication/