

How to Use Proper Email Etiquette When Writing to Professor

Simple steps to send a respectful email that won't get you on your professor's bad side.

1. **Use your college or university email.** This marks the message as legitimate and not spam. It also gives the professor an idea of who's sending the message. It also saves you from looking uncouth to your professor because of your off-color personal email username. (Using an email address like 'bootiephantum1985@mail.com' is not a way to make a positive impression on your professor or anyone else for that matter.)
2. **Always use subject lines.** When filling the subject line, make sure that you mention what the email is for or in regards to. You don't want it to seem like a randomly generated subject and end up in your professor's spam folder.
3. Address your professor directly; don't just launch straight into a request. Examples: 'Dear Dr. Smith', 'Hi, Dr. Jones', 'Dr. Zimmerman, I hope all's well with you...!'
4. If your college or university email address doesn't use your full last name (in other words, it uses your initials or some other abbreviation of your name), then make sure your first sentence identifies who you are by name. If your class is large, or taught in multiple sections, you may want to include your class and meeting time as well. Example: 'This is John Jacob Jingleheimer Schmidt from your American Literature class.'
5. **Be polite:** Don't make demands, don't accuse, remember to write please and thank you.
6. **Be succinct:** Keep your message short and to the point. Your professor is going to have probably hundreds of email messages to wade through each day. Just get to the point and politely, respectfully, ask your request.
7. **Be specific:** This may seem to conflict with the previous step, but it needn't be. Make sure you are as clear as possible about what it is you need to ask of your professor without writing a novel.
8. Do not use your email to argue and never send an email when angry. You want to be sure that you maintain a professional demeanor.
9. If you're going to have to miss class, offer to bring written proof up front, don't make your professor have to ask.
10. Close your email with something polite like 'Thanks', 'Thanks for your time', 'See you in class Wednesday', 'regards', etc. Then re-type your first name
11. **Grammar and Spell check.** Prior to sending your email, be sure that you proofread your message. You shouldn't write your email as though you are texting your friend. Make sure it's got full sentences, proper grammar, and real spelling. **DON'T USE TEXTING ABBREVIATIONS OR JARGON.**
12. Do not write in all capital letters. This is generally interpreted as SHOUTING.